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SEEKING THE LOST



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SEEKING THE LOST.

INCIDENTS AND SKETCHES

OF

CHRISTIAN WORK IN LONDON.

BY THE

REV. C. J. WHITMORE,

WHITEFIELD MISSION CHURCH, DEURY LANE;

*Author of "Mildred Norman," "The Bible in the Workshop,"
"Harmony of Science and Faith," &c. &c.*

"Scattered in the cloudy and dark day."



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TO
HUGH M. MATHESON, Esq.
OF HEATHLANDS,
WITHOUT WHOSE AID THE FOLLOWING
SKETCHES
WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN,
THEY ARE INSCRIBED
BY
HIS FELLOW-LABOURER UNTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

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INTRODUCTION.


"COME apart and rest," said the Master to His disciples, when the pressure of work was overwhelming them all. Just as much if not far more needed now is attention to the thoughtful and loving direction. We are so much accustomed to continuance in labour, *there is so much to do*, and comparatively so very few to do it, that we do not rest as we should, for the proper recovery of strength and tone in our Christian work; and its efficiency suffers accordingly.

As for retrospection, it is thought the dead past must bury its dead; the living must be pressed into the work, for "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;" nevertheless rest is a necessity, and retrospection may be profitable and encouraging in many ways. Let us, therefore, before taking a fresh plunge, allow ourselves a little rest to gather strength; and while resting, take a retrospective glance at Christian work and the result of it during the past twenty-five years.

It is unquestionable that all sections of the one

Church of Christ are exhibiting most praiseworthy activity, are labouring earnestly for the extension of the kingdom of the Master and the bringing in of those without. It is just as unquestionable that the world is becoming more worldly, more unbelieving, and more opposed to true vital godliness. The conflicting kingdoms of Christ and Satan are more plainly arrayed against each other. It is also true that very large numbers are engaged in attempting hopeless, impossible compromise between the opposing forces, endeavouring to find and occupy neutral ground, when our Captain has declared it cannot be; and while showing a fair face to Jesus, really loving and serving His great but doomed adversary. Concerning all these useless attempts we have little or nothing to say in the following pages, our whole time and attention will be directed to the great conflict between acknowledged subjects and partisans of the Destroyer and the Redeemer.

Battle is joined all along the line; wherever "Satan's seat is," there skirmishers and battalions of the King's great host are ceaselessly seeking to make inroads and captives, whether among high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant. But it is also true that every form of Christian work has been attacked within and without, betrayed by traitors, scoffed and sneered at by pretended friends, hindered by those who should have helped, and weakened by self-seeking



and half-heartedness. Through all the fight has gone on—here a great breach in the enemy's walls, there a capture of some of his best allies; now a mound of ignorance removed, then some of the forts of prejudice stormed and taken. Never was the strife hotter, more varied, and earnest than at present; and, the Lord be praised, never was there more dissatisfaction and murmuring at the small progress made, in comparison with the work to be done.

Glancing over the whole field to ascertain how the battle is going, it is clearly apparent that religion has become respectable; it has inculcated the liberalism of its own thought upon the opposing parties. With such success that the enemy has adopted the weapon and endeavoured to turn it against ourselves, asking that the liberalism we claim and receive be extended to them; that if they allow us to proceed unmolested on the way of life they may then proceed on the way of death; that if we choose to pray, to keep the Lord's-day holy, to worship in numbers together; they will not interfere, provided we in our turn allow them to be prayerless, to open museums, theatres, music halls on the Lord's-day, and for such purposes to take as many of our worshippers from our services as may suit their convenience. It is clear that this is simply feigned liberalism, covering the greatest tyranny and deceit, and not to be thought of or allowed by warriors in Christian ranks.

Although the tactics and the weapons are changed the intent is unaltered, to capture and destroy the greatest outwork of the Christian citadel—the sanctity of the Lord's-day.

Not twenty years ago it was hazardous to life and limb, to character and reputation, to speak a sentence in opposition to enemies on this matter. At a meeting in East London the writer ventured to advocate a full free Lord's-day for all, but so violent was the opposition that it was proposed to escape from the place by a back door, as personal injury, if not murder, was waiting for the speakers on their exit. The pitched battle on this question was fought at a Sunday League meeting at St Martin's Hall, where the defeat of the opponents of the Lord and His day was so complete and crushing that for years the enemy has not attempted to provoke another general conflict. Skirmishings have occurred here and there, but the Lord's-day is now to be undermined, not taken in open war.

As with the Lord's-day, so also with the truth of His Word and His life. Systematic attacks have been made among the learned and the ignorant alike. With the former, what has been miscalled the higher criticism has been employed, facts of history have been distorted and denied. Men who have never entered into communion with the living Lord have taken upon themselves to set forth His life, character, and purposes; and confusion and errors have necessarily resulted. Among

the ignorant, men of loud lungs and little learning have set themselves up as judges and teachers; and while their special success has been small, the general result of their repeated attacks has called attention to the need of counter effort. The facts in this case illustrate the wisdom of not despising "the day of small things." This counter effort commenced in a small room hired for one night in each week. The work grew quietly until workers were able to take larger places, and to form organised places of attack. More and more supporters joined the movement, men of talent and position were induced to help; until from the small room in Clerkenwell, hired by the writer of this volume for the sum of eighteenpence per night, the present Christian Evidence Society was formed, able to obtain bishops, ministers, and clergymen as lecturers and champions of "the Faith once delivered to the saints," and to attack the only citadel of unbelief in the great city.

Surely that solitary citadel is one too many, and only by remissness in some direction can its existence be possible. Only by lack of earnest watchfulness can it have happened that in the centre of the great city there should be a synagogue of Satan open throughout the Lord's-day, crowded with the spiders and flies of unbelief. These flies, male and female, have not long since occupied places in our Sunday schools; but have been caught in this Satanic spiders' web, and are

sporting on the very brink of destruction here and hereafter. How have we lost them? Simply by not sooner remembering they would not be always boys and girls, and sufficiently providing for their increased and increasing need of knowledge.

Turning back in thought to the Sunday-school of twenty years since; its untrained teachers, its long, wearisome readings in the hardest parts of the Old and New Testament; its ignoring by the ministers and deacons of churches; its low, hot, crowded rooms; its hymns and singing; and marking the bright contrast existing in all these things at the present time, we have abundant reasons for thankfulness and hope. But we have also far too much reason to mourn that so many of our former pupils walk with us no more; and it is yet a problem needing earnest thought and prayer—"How are we to keep our scholars in our midst as they advance in years and knowledge?" Bible classes for young men and women, mutual improvement societies, conference and discussion meetings, are all useful in their way, and are doing good work; but we need some attraction that shall be so great as to retain all our scholars as they advance in life and years, and the Lord of the vineyard can and will furnish us therewith in answer to prayer. Our scholars grow to manhood and womanhood, they marry, and settle in life, and where are they? Numbers of them in the house of the Lord, and labouring for Him; but far

larger numbers strayed and lost! Who goes after these lost sheep? At home the question is answered by the gigantic organisations of home missions, spread like a net-work all over the land. Visits to homes paid by millions—thousands of missionaries, Scripture readers, and Bible-women, constantly engaged, assisted by numerous volunteer visitors of every class. Workhouses and hospitals carefully and constantly visited, the printed and spoken Word of God read and heard in every ward. Workshops, manufactories, and railway stations systematically visited; special missionaries appointed to various classes of mechanics and artisans, and to places of public resort. Almost all these vast and detailed ramifications of Christian work have sprung into existence within twenty-five years; nevertheless the abounding characteristic of our day is ungodliness,—men and women, old and young, “of the earth, earthy,” heaping up the “wood, hay, stubble” that are to be burned, and neglecting the “gold, silver, precious stones” that are to endure for ever.

Nor has this deadening worldliness its place without only; its worst influences are mournfully prevalent within the Church of the living God, mildewing, cankering, blighting spiritual life, and almost banishing spiritual power from our midst. This spirit of worldliness has attacked all sections of the Church, and with such withering effect in

some cases as not only to paralyse all progress, but even to threaten extinction at no distant date.

Is it to arouse the Church that so many new agencies are brought to bear upon the masses? Is it to read a plain lesson to blind leaders of the blind, that our Master is bringing into the field gospel preachers of characters unheard of until very recently? Is it to shame *us* that God has used a converted fiddler and his wife to attract nightly thousands to hear the gospel in a cold draughty tent, and two evangelists from America to gather tens of thousands, while all the churches and chapels around were dark, and cold, and closed? Or is it that these are sent in fulfilment of the promise to pour out of the Spirit on all flesh until the world shall be converted to Christ? "Judge not," the Master saith; but we are warned also, "Examine yourselves;" and we may well endeavour to ascertain the reason of these extraordinary manifestations in the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

In fitting companionship with this spread of the gospel among the lower classes, may be placed the efforts made to reach the perishing noble and wealthy by means of drawing-room meetings. This modern revival of a long-neglected practice is accomplishing much good in arousing a spirit of inquiry after God and Christ, and the things that do *not* perish in the using. It is very strik-

ing to pass from mission rooms among the vile and the very poor (alas, for the compelled companionship!), and to hear the same truths pronounced—often by the same lips—in the homes of the wealthy and the great, thus demonstrating the true liberty, equality, and fraternity that so imperishably underlie the glorious gospel, which is sent equally to learned and to ignorant, to bond and to free.

Every effect is traceable to a cause, and this is true of the indifference, worldliness, and ungodliness that prevails so widely. Many earnest Christians are of opinion that much of the evil may be traced to the use of stimulating and intoxicating drink, and this is an opinion that is gaining power in many directions. It is certain that far too much money and precious time is worse than wasted in these drinks. It is not possible for a nation to spend more than a hundred millions of pounds annually upon that which no man in his senses can believe to be a benefit to the community as a whole, and not suffer intensely by the shameful and extravagant waste! Drunkards in every parish, skeletons in thousands of homes, want and misery in every direction, danger, destruction, and death of hourly occurrence, poverty and hunger everywhere; prisons, workhouses, hospitals crowded, self-reliance and respect eaten utterly out, any and every means taken to procure the insidious poison—are some among the many

shameful and dangerous facts that ought to arouse the nation to a knowledge of the precipice to which we *must* be unceasingly advancing with giant strides.

Notwithstanding the vast increase in the number of those who abstain from such drinks; in spite of all their earnest efforts to induce others to follow their example, the intoxicating drink bill of the British people is a dishonour to God, a hideous scandal, disgrace, and danger both to the Church and to the world.

This evil has so intermixed itself with every aspect of our social life, that its eradication seems all but impossible. Among the best and most hopeful efforts made in conflict with it are those that reach and train the children to abstain from its use. "Surely strong drink has had—is having—enough victims, body and soul, without preparing hosts of innocent little ones for the same dark road; therefore, give us the children, and we will train them to walk in paths of health and safety." Such is the plea of many earnest workers, and the success they have met with has unquestionably prevented multitudes from entering upon this path to temporal and eternal ruin.

It is mournful that the Church has not clearly seen her duty, safety, and privilege in this matter; that she has allowed herself to be cajoled with the lie of its need as to health and strength; to be drugged by its insidious influence; blinded to the

ruin it is working to fearful numbers within her pale. It is true that thousands of eyes are opened, thousands of lips abstain ; but still tens of thousands of Christians fail to see the need, or seeing it, ignore their duty to abstain from that whereby a "brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

Though failing to strike at the root of this giant evil by personal abstinence, there are many thousands of the children of God attempting to mollify its direful effects, and thus we have many Christian and philanthropic efforts on very large scales, scarcely any of which would be needed but for the use of strong drink. We have homes for the poor springing up in many directions, the need for these being largely traceable to means wasted by strong drink. We have established rates for the poor and shelter for the homeless, which again are very largely used as means for procuring money to spend in strong drink. We ought not to believe a falsehood, and it is utterly fallacious to suppose that workhouses and casual wards are refuges provided for and used by the deserving, who are simply unfortunate. The very reverse is the case, the industrious and deserving among the poor dread and hate the very idea of such sinks of pollution as workhouse and casual wards ; they starve and die in silence rather than enter either. These are just the outcome and necessary consequence of our national extravagance in strong drink,

our shameful custom of wasting our means upon it, from the highest to the lowest. Abolish strong drink as a beverage, and there would be very little need of hospitals, and less of workhouses or casual wards.

The Christian worker cannot and does not wait for the abolition of strong drink and its concomitant sorrow and suffering, but occupies himself in endeavouring to succour the wounded and the dying as well as to release the captives on this vantage ground of Satan. Hence have sprung numerous agencies which are in truth but palliatives of the evil that is so terribly growing and spreading. In the winter it is customary to provide food and warmth and teaching for the cold, the hungry, and the homeless, the thousands who roam abroad purposeless during the day and occupy the cheapest lodgings, doorways, refuges, and casual wards at night. So widely do these efforts extend that experienced men and women, who are inured to a life of idleness, and would do anything rather than work honestly, know how to go from place to place, mission to mission, and live from Sunday morning to Saturday night without earning a penny or missing scarcely a meal in the week. It would be easy to prevent this by closing all such places, and this, undoubtedly, would be the right course to pursue, if it were not for the opportunity afforded by them of rescuing those who are just entering on this terrible course, of touching the

consciences of others, and offering an opportunity to all who may wish to return to paths of honest industry. But it may certainly be relied upon that to give money or money's worth in food or clothing in indiscriminate charity is the way to accomplish a maximum of evil with the minimum of good.

How many of the boys and girls who crowd the refuges provided for them would be there, if their parents and friends abstained from intoxicating drink? A true answer to this question would reveal the fact that these charitable institutions, like all others, are very largely used as adjuncts to the public-house. How many parents do I know personally who have children thus cared for, who are never sober except upon compulsion? and what is my personal duty in the matter? I have known drunken parents drag their boys and girls about the streets from week to week, teaching them to beg and steal and lie by day, and completing their horrible education in the casual wards at night, until my heart has failed, and I have most unwillingly removed the children from their corrupting and destroying influence; thus accomplishing their desire of being relieved from the burden of their maintenance, and leaving them at liberty to devote all they could procure to the purchase of drink. What could be done? what was right to do?—leave the children to destruction? or relieve the parent from the burden? It is hard to know

that Christian benevolence is used to foster drunkenness and laziness, but to leave innocent children to such certain corruption is harder still. But if the children be removed there should be some way of compelling such parents to labour for themselves and their offspring. This has not yet been achieved, but the sooner it is resolutely attempted the better, even for those who thus shift their lawful burdens upon others.

Glancing thus at the wide field of labour for the Lord, of necessity omitting many points of detail, we proceed to chronicle some little already accomplished, and suggestions for achieving much more to the honour of the Lord of the harvest, and the profit and rejoicing of sowers and reapers together.

SEEKING THE LOST.

"FOR NOTHING."

I WAS recently appointed to labour for a short season down by the sea on the coast of Lancashire. A large building was taken for services on the Lord's day, and some advertisements were sent out; but from uncontrollable circumstances there were no local friends to help in the work. Accordingly, on the morning of the Sabbath I presented myself at the Assembly Rooms, and was shown by the hall-keeper into a very handsome and spacious hall, where all needful preparations had been made for public worship. I had brought a boy with me to distribute hymns, and leaving him without, took my place to wait for the expected audience. The time announced was half-past ten; and at ten o'clock the whole town was notified thereof by the clashing of a great peal of bells—from a Romanist church, the largest and handsomest place of worship in the town (whereof

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let Protestants take note). I waited until the time appointed; but *no one* came. I waited on, with the same result, feeling more miserable and depressed than ever before; still no one came. A few of the theatricals peeped in upon me, and some of the tavern waiters; but none entered; and at eleven o'clock my patience was exhausted, and I left the place, to meet at the door the feigned and mocking condolences of theatricals and waiters aforesaid. The sea-beach was but a few yards distant, and full in view; and the long esplanade fronting the sea was literally black with people, walking, lounging, and sitting in the calm sunshine, and inhaling the gentle breeze from the sea.

As I walked along in utter loneliness, I felt most keenly the Master's wisdom in sending out *two* and *two*. If I had only one friend, the feeling of loneliness would never have been experienced; but I was alone. Then I lifted up my heart to the Lord, asking that my utter failure might yet redound to His glory in the attempt I now resolved to make to speak in the open air.

On a spot where the beach shelved gently down I took my stand, with my back to the sea and my face to the crowded esplanade above. I read, as loudly as possible, Isaiah lv., and then engaged in prayer. So prepared to speak for Jesus, I looked fully around for the first time, and there were hundreds of people stopping to hear. I had to

abandon the sermon I had prepared, and to cast myself on the Lord for a word in season; and then I commenced as follows:—

“I want you to think of a bitter east wind, a declining day, fast falling snow, and a short muddy street in London, at the far east. Put these thoughts together, and add to them the picture of a tall, stout man, in a rough greatcoat, with a large comforter round his neck, buffeting through the wind and storm. The darkness is coming rapidly, as a man with a basket on his head turns the corner of the street, and there are two of us on opposite sides. He cries loudly as he goes, ‘Herrings! three a penny! red herrings, good and cheap, at three a penny!’ So crying he passes along the street, crosses at its end, and comes to where I am standing at the corner. Here he pauses, evidently wishing to fraternise with somebody, as a relief from the dull time and disappointed hopes of trade. I presume I appear a suitable object, as he comes close to me and commences conversation.

“‘Governor’ (the rough coat and comforter look anything but professionally ministerial), ‘what do you think of these ’ere herrings?’

“As he speaks, I note that he has three in his hand, while the remaining stock are deftly balanced in the basket on his head.

“‘Don’t you think they’re good?’ and he offers me the opportunity of testing them by scent, which

I courteously but firmly decline ; ‘and don’t you think they’re cheap as well?’

“I assert my decided opinion that they are good and cheap.

“‘Then look yer, governor, why can’t I sell ’em? yer have I walked a mile and a half along this dismal place, offering these good and cheap ’uns ; and nobody don’t buy none!’

“‘I do not at all wonder at that,’ I answer.

“‘Tell us why not, governor, tell us why not.’

“‘The people have no work at all to do, and they are starving; there are plenty of houses round here that have not had a penny in them for many a day,’ was my convincing but unsatisfactory reply.

“‘Ah! then, governor,’ he rejoined, ‘I’ve put my foot in it this time; I knew they was werry poor, but I thought three a penny ’ud tempt ’em. But if they haven’t the ha’pence, they can’t spend ’em, sure enough: so there’s nothing for it but to carry ’em back, and try and sell ’em elsewhere. I thought by selling cheap arter buying cheap, I could do them good, and earn a trifle for myself. But I’m done this time.’

“‘How much will you take for the lot?’ I inquired.

“‘First a keen look at me—then down came the basket from his head—then a rapid calculation—then a grinning inquiry—

“‘Do yer mean profit an’ all, governor?’

" 'Yes.'

" 'Then I'll take four shillin', and be glad to get 'em.'

" I put my hand in my pocket, produced that amount, and transferred it to him.

" 'Right! governor, thank 'ee! what'll I do with 'em?' he said, as he quickly transferred the coins to his own pocket.

" 'Go round this corner into the middle of the road, shout with all your might, *Herrings for nothing!* and give three to every man, woman, and child that comes to you, till the basket is emptied.'

" On hearing these instructions, he immediately reproduced the money, and carefully examined it piece by piece. Being satisfied of its genuineness, he again replaced it, and then looked very keenly and questioningly at me.

" 'Well,' I said, 'is it all right and good?'

" 'Yes,' said he.

" 'Then the herrings are mine, and I can do as I like with them; but if you don't like to do as I tell you, give me my money back.'

" 'All right! governor, an' they *are* yours, sure enough, so if you says it, here goes!'

" Accordingly he proceeded into the middle of the adjoining street, and went along shouting aloud, 'Herrings for nothing! real good red herrings for nothing.'

" Out of sight myself, I stood at the corner to

watch his progress ; and speedily he neared a house where a tall woman I knew stood at the first-floor window, looking out upon him.

“ ‘ Here you are, missus,’ he bawled, ‘ herrings for nothing! a fine chance for yer; come an’ take ’em!’ ”

“ The woman shook her head unbelievably, and left the window.

“ ‘ Vot a fool!’ said he; ‘ but they won’t be all so. Herrings for nothing!’ ”

“ A little child came out to look at him, and he called to her, ‘ Yer, my dear, take these in to your mother, tell her how cheap they are—herrings for nothing.’ But the child was afraid of him and them, and ran indoors. So down the street, in the snowy slush and mud, went the cheap fish, the vendor crying loudly as he went, ‘ Herrings for nothing!’ and then added, savagely, ‘ Oh, you fools!’ Thus he reached the very end; and then turning to retrace his steps, he continued his double cry, as he came, ‘ Herrings for nothing!’ and then in a lower but very audible key, ‘ Oh, you fools!’ ”

“ ‘ Well!’ I said to him, calmly, as he reached me at the corner.

“ ‘ Well!’ he repeated, ‘ if yer think so! When yer gave the money for herrings as yer didn’t want, I thought yer was training for a lunatic ’sylum! Now I thinks as all the people round here are fit company for yer. But what’ll I do with the herrings? if yer don’t want ’em and they won’t have ’em?’ ”

" 'We'll try again together;' I replied; 'I will come with you this time, and we'll both shout.'

"Into the road we both went, and he shouted once more, and for the last time, 'Herrings for nothing!'

"Then I called out loudly also, 'Will any one have some herrings for tea?'

"They heard the voice, and they knew it well; and they came out at once, in twos and threes and sixes, men and women and children, all striving to reach the welcome food. As fast as I could take them from the basket I handed three to each eager applicant, until all were speedily disposed of. When the basket was empty, the hungry crowd that had none was far greater than those that had been supplied; but they were too late; there were no more 'Herrings for nothing!'

"Foremost among the disappointed was a tall woman of a bitter tongue, who began vehemently, 'Why haven't I got any? Ain't I as good as they? Ain't my children as hungry as theirs? Why haven't I got any?'

"Before I had time to reply, the vendor stretched out his arm towards her, saying, 'Why, governor, that's the very woman as I offered 'em to first, and she turned up her nose at 'em.'


" 'I didn't,' she rejoined passionately; 'I didn't believe you meant it.'

" 'Yer goes without for yer unbelief!' he

replied. 'Good night! and thank 'ee, governor.'"

As I told the story upon the sea-beach the crowd gathered and increased, and looked at each other; first smiled, then laughed outright, and at length roared with laughter.

It was my time then, and I said, "You cannot help laughing at the quaint story, which is strictly true. But are you sure you would not have done as they did, been as unbelieving as they? Nay, are you sure you are not ten thousand times worse than they? Their unbelief only cost them a hungry stomach a little longer; but what may your unbelief cost you? God—not man—God has sent *His* messengers to you repeatedly for many years to offer pardon *for nothing!* peace *for nothing!* salvation *for nothing!* He has sent to your houses, your homes, your hearts, the most loving and tender offers that even an almighty God could frame; and what have you replied? Have you taken the trouble to reply at all? Have you not turned away in utter scornful unbelief, like the woman, or run away in fear, like the little child? Many have heard a voice they believed, and they have received the gifts of God; but you are still without a hope on earth or a home in heaven, because you will not believe God's messengers when they offer you, by His commandments, all that you need for time and eternity—*for nothing!*



"Take warning by that disappointed crowd of hungry applicants. When they were convinced the offer was in good faith, and would gladly have shared with their fellows, they were *too late*! They were thoroughly convinced; they were quite willing then to participate; but their faith and knowledge came only in time to increase their hunger and misery!

"Let it not be so with you. Do not you be in that awfully large crowd of disappointed ones who will be obliged to believe when belief will not help them; whose knowledge, when it comes, as surely it will come, will only increase eternal sorrow that they put off believing until it was *too late*!"

As I looked earnestly upon that vast crowd upon the sea shore the laughter was utterly gone, and an air of uneasy conviction was plainly traceable upon many faces.

"Will you not come to God by Jesus now?" I entreated. "He is waiting, watching for, pleading with you! There is salvation, full, free, and eternal; uttermost complete redemption; forgiveness, help, guidance, and blessing—*all for nothing*! 'without money and without price.' Friends, the food was paid for, though afterward freely given. So your salvation is paid for (by a price which only He who paid it knows); and I am come from the great city to urge you to take, and be safe and happy for ever."

Though we had no place to retire to it was good to walk up and down on the beach, showing the way of God more perfectly to some who were attracted and impressed by this commencement of a sermon by the sea.

"DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?"

"What profit should we have if we pray unto Him?"

THIS is a question that has engaged the attention of thoughtful men in all ages of the world's history; and it has been answered in widely differing ways. Unbelievers have stoutly maintained the inviolability of what they called "the laws of nature," and have affirmed that answers to prayer are impossible. Reasoning wholly from theory, and not at all settled in the premises from which they start, they rush on to the conclusion that prayer cannot be answered.

Some of these unbelievers are atheists, and with them the whole question is easily stated and settled:—There is no one to answer prayer, therefore it cannot be answered. This solution involves the prior question of the existence of God; and it is so utterly useless, so absurd, to attempt to maintain His non-existence, that I feel now and always constrained to reply to atheists in the words of inspiration (see Ps. xiv. and liii. 1).

But there is also another large class of persons, who, while believing in the existence of God, are still greatly in doubt as to the propriety and suc-

cess of prayer. These have had their doubts greatly strengthened by recent articles and speculations which have been published by men who occupy high places in the ranks of physical science. Darwin, whose speculations on the "Origin of Species" have attracted so much attention, and Huxley, whose reputation is widely established, have asserted their belief that physical laws are never changed or altered; consequently, it is useless to pray. Mr Galton, writing in a popular periodical, has endeavoured to bring the question of prayer into the domain of statistics (apparently forgetful of the established axiom that they may be made to prove anything); and Professor Tyndall is credited with a suggestion that an inquiry should be made, and actual experiments undertaken, with a view to test the efficacy of prayer, from a strictly scientific point of view.

There are two things which instantly strike the mind of a believer in reading these suggestions. The first is, that the proposed experiment is an exact reproduction of the unbelieving spirit manifested to our Lord personally, when they said, *tempting Him*, "Master, we would see a sign from Thee;" and the second, that this very unbelieving spirit would take away all *possibility* of the prayer being successful. For true prayer is impossible without prior and present faith, and the suggested experiment assumes the absence of faith altogether.

The good old answer in our "Children's Cate-

chism” is reason amply sufficient why believers should quietly decline to experiment concerning prayer. We are there taught to pray “for things agreeable to His will, and precept, and promise contained in His Word;” and in this experiment we are asked to pray for the very thing—“a sign from heaven to please unbelievers”—which our blessed Lord rebuked and denied. For it must not be forgotten that this is to be an experiment made by believers, at the bidding of unbelievers, who cannot, because they will not, make the experiment for themselves. We are to subject the highest and holiest exercises of our renewed and spiritual nature to the demands of those who will assuredly find some way of rejection. It is written, “If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead.” These scientific sceptics ask for testimony, but it must be evidence of their own choosing. They must be allowed to dictate to God and His people as to the form of the testimony; they ask for a series of miracles carefully cut down to a preconceived size and pattern, to be done in a given place, and at their appointed time. To attempt to comply with such shocking presumption, would be to burlesque the spirit and practice of all genuine prayer; to affront and offend our Father in heaven by dictating terms (instead of reverently accepting His terms); and to insure failure, ridicule, and continued unbelief.

There is "a more excellent way,"—one in every respect satisfactory to any candid and unprejudiced mind—and this is simply to accept as truth the clear, multiplied, and harmonious evidence of those who believe and practise prayer.

"Does God answer prayer?" Let the question be put to single believers all over the world; and let each one of all the *millions of witnesses* be separately examined and tested in every possible way. Under all circumstances, at all times, in all places, it will appear that God our Father has heard and answered the prayers of His believing children. Tested in this plain, common-sense, spiritual way, the question becomes simply one of fact.

I submit three facts from my own experience, of which I invite the strictest possible investigation.

1. Twenty-three years since I was so miserable on account of my sins, that I lost much of the health and strength of my early manhood. I thought of them night and day, and would have given all I had in the world for rest and peace. My wife was a believer; I was not: but she advised me to pray. When she had gone to rest, I was alone in our sitting-room; I sank upon my knees, hid my face in my hands, and prayed earnestly that my sins might be pardoned. There and then, as and while I knelt, there came into my mind such glorious and complete peace, such

unutterable happiness, that I never experienced anything to compare with it before or since; and the sweet remembrance is most vivid as I write twenty-three years afterward. That short experience changed all the direction of my thoughts, intentions, and wishes; its effects have lasted nearly a quarter of a century, and are as powerful to-day as ever—even more consistent, reliable, and settled. "Does God answer prayer?" Is not this a sufficient reply? It is most sufficient and unanswerable to me. I have staked my eternal destiny upon it, and can wait, calmly and trustingly, to death to make manifest the event. How many unbelievers can say the same?

2. About seventeen years after the foregoing, I was stationed as minister in the east end of London, where many thousands were unemployed and famishing. It was winter; and cold was added to hunger among the people. Our relief was exhausted; I had no money, and knew not where to turn (humanly speaking) to obtain help. One of my helpers (also a believer in prayer) was with me; and we agreed in the afternoon that he should go to his home in the east, and I to mine in the west, and that we should pray, asking for money for the need of the people. We did so; and the next morning's post brought me three letters. One of them contained a note for ten pounds, the second a note for fifty pounds, and the third a cheque for one hundred pounds. "Does

God answer prayer?" Is not this a sufficient reply?

3. It was stated in some of the periodicals issued at that time, that some of the Lord's people were among the sufferers. A gentleman who saw the statement sent me a cheque for £100, "to be divided only among the Lord's people who were *wanting bread*." Receiving the money and commission, my first thought was one of great gladness that I could help so many Christians. But immediately a second perplexing thought intervened, How was I to know who was the Lord's? Who made me a ruler and a judge? Thereupon I resolved that "any communicants of any evangelical church who were walking worthily" must be held eligible if they wanted bread. I addressed communications to all my fellow-workers around—Church of England, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Wesleyan; telling them of the gift, and asking them to send cases to me for the money. I waited a week for replies; and at its end there was not one applicant; "in the midst of *thirty thousand* unemployed and famishing men and women and children, there was *not one* of the Lord's people wanting bread." I confess my astonishment and temporary unbelief. I knew what God had said, "Bread shall be given;" but I never fully believed it. Nor did I then. But I carried out the investigation, and have continued it during several

intervening years. During four years I have been occupied in a ceaseless search for “one of the Lord’s people wanting bread.” I have sought through the metropolis ; in many towns, cities, and villages in England and Scotland. I have challenged believers *and unbelievers* in public places scores of times, to produce a starving believer ; and the response has never yet been given. After a careful and ceaseless search extending over several years, I have never seen or heard of one of the Lord’s people wanting bread ; and I appeal fearlessly to all readers of this present volume if their experience does not corroborate my own. Is not this in answer to prayer—a reply to the question, “ Does God answer prayer ? ”

It may be objected to the first case, that the circumstance was mere imagination. But the second case disposes of that objection ; imagination does not produce hundreds of pounds for the poor. It may indeed be surmised that the letters might have come though we had not prayed : to which I answer, That is only surmising, and weighs nothing against the fact that the money did *not* come when it was *not* prayed for.

To the second case it may be objected, that it rests on the testimony of a single individual, which is insufficient. But the third case disposes of that objection, by referring to widespread provable facts, which can be investigated,

disproved, and denied if they do not exist. "Does God answer prayer?" is the inquiry; and we reply by a clear, plain challenge to all the scientific sceptics in existence: Find for us an honest, prayerful believer, wanting bread. If you can meet our challenge and produce such a one, you will have struck a most telling blow at our faith in God and prayer; but if, after due search when and where you please, you cannot produce such an evidence out of millions of possible cases, then we call upon you honestly to own that we have furnished clear evidence of the existence of God and of the efficacy of prayer. We shall wait, with the most profound calmness of utter unbelief, the result of your search for a starving Christian, as we know by other evidence—*impossible to unbelievers*—that "God is" and that "He is faithful that promised—*Bread shall be given, water shall be sure!*"

For the sake of raising a clear and plain issue, I have hitherto confined myself to cases occurring within my own experience. But now I proceed to support our practice of prayer by referring to the experience of others; and having often proved the efficacy of prayer in my own need, I see no reason to doubt the testimony and experience of other Christian believers. And every earnest Christian has more or less testimony to give on this subject.—The witnesses are of every kind; young and old, rich and poor, learned and ignorant; they

are of every colour from white to black, of every clime, and of various denominations. There is no reason whatever that they should bear false witness. Collusion between them is simply impossible ; they never saw or heard of each other ; and their testimony is so clear, so varied, and so minute—time, place, and circumstances being carefully given—that only the prejudice of unbelief, maintained in the face of multiform evidence of every possible kind, can refuse credence to testimony so earnestly, honestly, and truthfully given.

“ Does God answer prayer ? ” Better a place in the ranks of barest and broadest Atheism, than belief in a God who is silent to the cry of man’s utmost need ; who has placed the instinct of supplication in the breast of earth’s purest and truest, and refused to honour the instinct Himself had planted. To be God, He must be *good* ; and to be good, He must answer with sympathy and love the cry that goes from the sorrowing, suffering heart to the footstool of His throne.

“ Does God answer prayer ? ” Starting to their feet in millions over the broad green earth, His children ring out in thundering chorus the unwavering affirmative reply—In our trouble, and pain, and sorrow, in our want and need, in doubt and perplexity ; from infancy to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age, from birth to death ; from sin to holiness ; from earth to heaven—“ He heareth and answereth prayer.”

"DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?"

(Continued.)

"Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts."

MANY months since I wrote the foregoing under the above title, challenging unbelievers all the world over to find "a Christian wanting bread," and by that discovery prove to us that God did not hear and answer prayer.

The oracle has been dumb as wood or stone! Not a single word of response to a clear, plain challenge, has yet reached me from the point of view of unbelievers. But from the communications received from those who believe in prayer, I select one which I think of sufficient interest and importance.

The article above referred to was seen by a lady in Ireland, who had been one of the fruits of the Irish revival in 1859, and who has since been employed in spreading the good news and ministering to the sick and the poor. Noticing the jubilant invitations to all to test for themselves wherever there was a Christian, and knowing that she had many such around her who were also the

poorest of the poor, she resolved to apply the severest possible test to the statement of the Lord's poor not wanting bread; by going from cabin to cabin reading the article to them, and asking their opinion on the question. So strong, so convincing was the testimony thus personally obtained, that the lady felt it a matter of justice, and duty to forward it to me, with permission and desire it might be used as I use it now.

Let us think of an Irish cabin, with a room to let in it for which the rent to be paid is three *pence* per week. The woman who occupied it had been for many years a member of the Wesleyan section of the Church; she had been a farm-servant in her youth, and continued thus until a cancer in her breast unfitted her for hard work, and compelled her to seek food and shelter by knitting and the embroidery of muslin. Her earnings were seldom more than one penny per day, oftentimes not so much; and we may well suppose that food was often scarce, and hard to get, with such remuneration.

Hearing from the aged couple who were landlords, of the condition of their tenant, the lady visited the afflicted Christian, and gently asked—

“ Why did you not, in your need, apply to us, or some other Christian friend? ”

“ I told the Lord,” she replied; “ but I could tell no one else.”

“ Your friends here say,” rejoined the lady,

“that you must often need a little help, as you can earn so little and have the rent to pay; and we are able and willing to help you.”

“The Lord must have put it in their hearts to tell you,” she replied, “and in yours to listen to them; for I would never have told any one but the Lord, and it is He who has raised up friends for me.”

After this, continues the lady, I read your paper to her, and she said, “Well! *I have found that true*, any way; for though I might sometimes not have the kind of food I might have chosen, *I never wanted yet*, thank God! One time I was at a great pinch. I had nothing at all in the house, and no human prospect of receiving anything; and I was so greatly cast down that I could not sleep when I went to bed. So I rose again, and told the Lord all about it, and asked Him to send me something, if it were His will. Then I went to bed again, and slept quietly; and, in the morning, a dear young lady brought me two shillings from her father.”

“Will you tell me who he is?” asked the lady; “and whether he knew, or could know, how great was your need just at that time?”

“He is a Christian gentleman who lives near by,” she replied; “but he knows very little of me, and I am quite sure he could not know I had nothing to eat on that morning. But I have never been in such a strait since that time.”

Last week, continued the lady, I said to her, "Well, Margaret, how are your funds just now?"

"Middling well, thank you," she said.

"Tell me just how much you have now."

"I sold a pair of stockings I made," she replied; "and I have more than a shilling, but not sixpence more. I have some more indeed; but I cannot touch that, because I have laid it by for the rent."

"Why that is the way Mr Müller does at Bristol," said the lady; "did you see it in his book?"

"No," she replied, "I never saw it in any book; but it seemed to me to be right to do it. I should like to get some more knitting to do, then I can get on better."

I told her, continues the lady, that the Lord could easily send it to her. "I know it," she replied, "and have been asking Him to do so."

I quote now a second very striking instance, furnished by the same lady, as a result of her attempt to test the question concerning "the Lord's people wanting bread."

There was known to her a poor man, aged and blind, who had no visible means of subsistence whatever; and the lady thought it would be impossible to find "a Christian" in circumstances more likely to "want bread" than this blind and helpless man. To his cabin she wended her way,

sat down, and read to him the assertion as to the Lord's people not wanting bread.

"It is *true*, every word of it," said he; "I know it by my own life. Oftentimes I have been very poor, oftentimes come to the last, but *never* hungry and nothing to eat since I have followed the Lord Jesus." And having his heart opened, he laid before her the simple but striking facts of his own life-history:—

"I am an old man now, and my sight has left me. But time was when I was young and strong, and desperately wicked. I worked then at the stone quarries, and I was proud of my health and my great strength; and I delighted in lifting heavy weights of stone, for wagers, and to exhibit my strength. In doing this I overstrained myself, and my pride and vanity cost me my precious sight. Never more shall I see until I open other eyes in the glory of God. But though I was thus visited with continual darkness, I did not repent nor turn to the Lord. Unable to labour in the quarries, I procured a fiddle; and went about from place to place—to wakes and fairs and merry-makings, up and down the streets and by the way-side, wherever I could earn a morsel of food or money, or, above all, the drink I loved. Then I would return at night to the cabin I occupied, thankless and godless, blind, drunken, and desperate.

"The cabin was poor and wretched, but it was my own, and I had learned by touch to know it

thoroughly, in the night or day that were alike to me. But there was one who wanted the place, and determined to get it if he could ; and I resolved, sooner than he should have my refuge, that I would have his life. For many days I went with a knife, always ready to murder him if he came, and coolly resolved to do it. But some of the neighbours warned him, and he feared to accomplish his object at that time, or I feel certain I should have been hung for taking his life.

“ Then came 1859, when the dear Lord visited Ireland, and took so many of us by the power of His love made known to us ; and I was one who heard His loving voice and followed Him in willing obedience. Hitherto my heart had been bitter and hard ; I cursed the people around me, and thought and spoke evil of the Lord who had deprived me of my sight. But then He showed me all my sin ; He made me know and feel that my life had been wicked and wrong ; and I went on my way in the dark, with a deeper night within than without. Yes, I went weeping bitter tears of repentance and sorrow, from eyes that could not see His loving promises of pardon and peace. Worn out, and weary and despairing, I well remember how I laid myself, dumb, helpless, and hopeless, at His feet, until with tenderest pity He looked upon the poor blind sinner, and gave me peace and rest.

“ Oh, how good ! how sweet it was then ! How

well I remember that first knowledge of the love of God in Christ. I was walking on a hilly road one day, and I turned my face where Lord Erne's castle stands, about a mile away, and I thought how much happier I was than any noble could be without Jesus. I felt then *what* had been given to me when Jesus gave me rest; and I would not change my blindness and poverty and *the peace within* for all that the world could give in exchange.

"Then I had to trust in Jesus *entirely*. Until then I could get meat and drink by my music; but this I could do no longer. I parted with my fiddle, I shunned all my old haunts and companions, and kept to my cabin that I might enjoy the company of Jesus. For days together I never left my dwelling, even to get the milk that would have been freely given to me for my porridge, because I could not lose the sweet entrancing communion I held with the Lord, with only Him and me in the cabin. I shut the door and bolted it fast, and the presence of the dear loving Lord filled the place with light and blessing that none knew but Himself and me. Many and many a night has He come and so filled my soul with His presence, that I have risen from my bed and shouted aloud for joy.

"But it wasn't to be all rapture: sure the way home is through much tribulation, and my turn of trouble and trial came. I thought the man who


wanted my house was converted as well as I was, and I rejoiced that we should never quarrel or disagree any more. So when he came to me, and owned how wrong he had been, I freely forgave him, and we were friends again. Then he told me if I would give up my poor place to him, he would give me one much better in every way. And I believed he was speaking truth (I was always truthy myself, and scorned a lie in the blackest days); and I agreed to give up the cabin from which I could not be turned out, and to go into another, trusting to his bare word. I found out afterwards that I had trusted him too much. But I thought he was converted to the Lord, and we were all so good that I thought we should never do wrong any more. And he did very well until the devil brought the drink again amongst us, and that fetched him down, as it did many a hundred more; and of course the last state of that man was worse than the first. He promised me fairly that I should never be disturbed, and I gave up the place I could keep for one that I could not. But he didn't keep his promise, and I was soon called upon to turn out upon the road-side, shelterless as well as blind.

“ It was a hard conflict. But the dear Lord gave me the victory, and enabled me to forgive and pray for the man by whom I was deceived and betrayed. And He did better for me even than at first; for the neighbours knew how I had been

treated, and they pitied me and helped me. They determined to build me a better home than ever, and every one worked heartily for him who could not work for himself. Some gave stones, some gave timber; others had nothing but a hand's-turn to give, and they gave that. So the walls went up, and the roof went on, the floor was laid, doors and windows fitted, and I had a far better cabin than ever. I hadn't a penny to pay with, from first to last, and was never asked for one. I take my new home as a special gift from the dear Lord who lived and died for a poor blind sinner like me.

"And ever since, though I cannot see, and cannot work, and have no means whatever of providing for myself, I have never wanted food to eat, or clothing, or shelter. I know, for one, that the London minister speaks truth, when he says the dear Lord does not let *His own* want for 'daily bread;' for He inclines my neighbours to help me and feed me, and they do it willingly and without asking. They know it does not take much to keep one old and sightless, and there are many all round who feel it pleasant, and profitable too, to give a poor blind servant of the Lord Jesus a bite and a sup, on his way to the city of God, where none are blind; where they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads."

So far the blind man's simple witness-bearing as transmitted to me. I feel I have not done



justice to his graphic statement ; but I send it forth as one more proof—unknown to me when I wrote before—that God does hear and answer prayer ! Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge, and His redeemed blood-bought children “ are of more value than many sparrows.”

Our great God and Saviour is as much the author and finisher of our present life as of the life to come, and all its needs are foreseen by Him ; loving and sufficient preparation is made to meet them to the utmost. Oh for the simple child-like faith that believes and realises *all* the truth in the Master’s words of blessing—“ Ask, and ye shall receive ! ”

A CRY HEARD.

"In the hollow of His hand."

"ARE you coming down to-morrow?"

"If the Lord sends me anything for you I will come!"

Question and reply ending a hard day's work among the then famine-stricken inhabitants of a densely-populated district in East London. Public and private collections were made for them, and many churches contributed in aid of their poorer brethren. Among others who did their best to help was the late dearly loved Dr James Hamilton; and, on reaching my home, I found a note requesting me to call on him early the next morning.

The morning came, and found our great city most strangely silent. During the night, snow had fallen heavily and unceasingly; and the dim yellow light revealed it still falling in thick clouds—houses, paths, and streets a mass of dazzling white, almost knee-deep; and the progress of vehicles impossible.

Starving people in the East, relief waiting for them in the north-west, miles of knee-deep snow

between, and my promise pressing like a chain upon my conscience—I set out to keep my appointment. As usually happens, anticipation had been worse than reality; after the first cold shock was overcome, there was real pleasure in buffeting and beating my way along the soundless road, until I arrived at the doctor's dwelling.

How the pleasant, happy face brightened at my coming! How the willing hands helped off the snow-laden coat, ushered me into the warm comfortable room, and then proceeded at once to pour out the various moneys received in answer to his kind appeal! I had seen the doctor in many places at different times, preaching to great congregations, but the best memory I have of that loving face is its bending over the desk, bright as an angel's with the pleasure and help he was rejoicing to send to those in such bitter need. Thus armed with means to procure food and warmth, I went upon my way among the sorrowing and suffering men and women and children, for whom it was then my lot to labour in word and doctrine.

From room to room, in house after house, my work continued; here meeting with a fainting mother, surrounded with children crying for bread; there, relieving a family who were shuddering with the cold; again happening upon a strong man prostrate and sick with famine; and yet again upon a tall, thin, white-haired old man, who was sitting in front of a fireless grate containing only

cold grey ashes, his hands spread over his face, and heavy tears streaming through his long thin fingers. Accustomed to live independently by his labour, he would neither beg nor seek parish relief; it was easier to him to starve and die. Even in telling me his condition, his aged wife had given grievous offence; and when I stood by his side he persistently hid his tear-stained face from view. Alas for him! he had been a Christian, but had wandered in sin for many weary years; until at length it had "found him out," far from his Father's house, hopeless, hungry, and almost despairing.

Fuel and food in abundance from the doctor's liberal supply, and then the kindest words of entreaty to return to Him who loved him and thought of him still, were not spoken in vain.

In the next house a very different scene presented itself—a tall strong young man sitting at a good fire, with his wife and children, just finishing a comfortable meal. A grip of the hand from the father, a smile from the mother while dusting a chair with her print apron, and I sat at ease where I had often been before. The deep red bronze of a sea-life was upon a thoughtful, kindly face, as I turned to speak with him upon the things that make for everlasting peace; his wife and himself had expressed a wish to join us in the fellowship of the Church, and this was the subject of our conversation.

"I shall be glad to hear of your former life," I said; "when you first began really to think about unseen things, and to guide yourself with reference to them. I suppose there was such a beginning, and that until such beginning, your life was as really careless and prayerless as other lives. It will be instructive and helpful to me if you will just tell me, in your own words, why you wish to turn from the people of the world to the people of God."

"I was as careless as I could be, until my return from my last voyage but one," he replied; "but something that happened while I was at home was always in my thoughts; it seemed to come across me in every way, meeting me at every step, and where it was least expected. You remember old Langford, what a dirty, drunken old character he was, filthy in person and thought and speech; griping, selfish, unbelieving old wretch as ever lived. I used to hate the very sight of him, crawling when sober, reeling when drunk, about the streets."

"Your picture is as unsparing as it is true," I replied, "but not at all coloured by gentleness of judgment."

"I want you to see him as I saw him," he replied, with a smile, "that you may understand how he affected me. I saw you and him together one Sunday morning, when you had the great breakfast and service afterwards. I did not want

the breakfast, but intended to go and hear the preaching; and I did so. Then I saw you meet the old man, and speak kindly to him, and offer him a ticket. I heard him blackguard you for your offer; and I thought you were foolish to waste your time over such an old 'rep.' I heard you try and try again, till you got him to take the ticket and promise to come; and I thought you more foolish than ever that you had wasted your breakfast as well as your time. I resolved to watch the old man; and I went into the great breakfast hall, and sat down behind him. I saw him receive a large bag of food and some coffee; and I saw the old man wanted it badly, by the way he ate and drank; and I pitied him, while I scorned his dirty drunken habits. Then the service was announced; and I expected to see him get up and go out, laughing at you for your 'softness;' but he sat still and listened to the singing, and reading, and praying that followed one another. Then that middle-aged man with the pleasant face began to speak, and I forgot old Langford for a little while. It was like long-forgotten music returning to hear him talk of peace, and comfort, of good hope and good cheer, of our loving Father, and the Saviour that gave Himself for us and ours. But when he was done I looked at old Langford, and he was a sight to see; he was all up of a heap, and the big tears had washed two clean lines down his dirty face, and were

dropping from the end of his fiery nose. I could hardly believe it was in the old man; but there he was before my eyes. And there he sat all through the service—all of a heap, and the big tears cleaning his face as he wiped them with the back of his hand. I saw him on Sunday evening creeping into your church, and I said to him, ‘Hallo! old chap! come to the wrong shop, eh?’ He looked up and growled out, ‘No! no! come to the right at last,’ and slinked into a corner for almost the first time in his life, I thought. I watched him next day hanging about—no drink, no tobacco, no swearing, but with a clean face, looking for a job. Day by day I watched till Thursday, and then at your service you gave out the ‘tokens’ for the Lord’s Supper; and I saw the old man come up and try to get one. I was close by, and I heard you refuse him, telling him he was mistaken in supposing it was money that was given. He said he knew they were for the Lord’s Supper, and he wanted to come. Then I saw you hand him over to an elder to be spoken with, and afterwards talk with him yourself. Next I saw him at the Lord’s Table, and I was astounded. Clothed in rags but clean—there he *was*, and there I *was not!* and it went through me like a knife. But I watched on still; I thought him an old hypocrite, and determined to find him out and expose him. All that week I watched; but you remember how well he lived, how true and humble he was; and

I could but feel and own that his conversion was real, and that he was changed as from black to white. On the Saturday he had a job, and fell down with an apoplectic stroke while doing it. He lived unconscious till the next Thursday, and died during your evening service.

“When I heard he was dead I was almost stunned; it was like one of our narrow escapes at sea, only more important. Just a few days to make such a difference! and then I remembered how I thought you a fool for trying to get him, and how you had got him for Jesus, and that he died safe through your perseverance; I remembered also your telling us ‘they that turn many to righteousness shine as the stars;’ and I thought he was *one for you* at any rate; and I was miserable and lonely because I was not another.

“Then I went away to sea, and in the work and change of my life I sought to find ease and forgetfulness. But I could not; I had a horrid feeling of being unsafe, of some unseen danger very near me, and I could not shake it off. Through all the months of our outward passage this feeling clung to me. I dared not speak of it to my shipmates, but kept it secret, and thus suffered from it the more.

“We were upon our way home again, and it was my midnight watch; the sea was rolling her mountain waves in the pitchy darkness, and I was alone on the head of the vessel looking out. Sud-

denly there came a mighty wave and swept me from the vessel far out upon the rolling waters. I could feel that I was borne forward on the crest of a great wave as helplessly as a straw. I knew that I could not be missed from my station for a short time, or seen if I was missed. The roar of the waves around drowned my weak attempt to cry out, and I felt that there was no hope for me. Oh! the horrible, heart-sinking agony! my wife widowed! my children fatherless! only a great void where I had been! Oh, the awful upspringing of unknown powers within me! all my life flashing at once in a blaze of strong blinding light upon me! I thought of Langford, of you, of the sermons I had heard, of my lost chances, and my death close at hand; all this while struggling fiercely with the dashing water, and the wave that was blinding and choking me!

“No hope! no hope! a grave in the black, unfathomable, raging sea; and then from the black water to the scarlet fire of the unforgiven; and it was near me, close upon me—a matter of a few seconds—and then eternal darkness and sorrow! Oh! how I struggled with the choking waters. I was going fast; my strength was failing me; a little more struggling and it would all be over. Then my heart went up in a mighty cry for pardon; all that there was in me of life, and sense, and feeling, was in that cry. I had given up all hope of being saved, but I struggled on

that I might cry and pray; and prayer after prayer, as swift as lightning, went from my heart, as I strove more and more feebly with the raging wave that was killing me.

“My senses were fast going, all hope of life had left me, when I suddenly felt something near my hands, and I clutched in desperation. It was one of the ropes of our ship! She had forged forward while I was in the belly of the wave, and I reached again the deck, safe and uninjured, except by the fright I had passed through. I had not been missed. But when my watch was out and I could go below, the first thing I did, in the presence of all the watch, was to fall upon my knees and humbly and heartily thank God that my life was brought again from the dead. There was no mocking; they stood in respectful appreciating silence, as feeling that I was doing that which it was quite right to do.

“And since then I have always prayed; morning and evening and noon has my cry been unto Him who was out upon the wild waters that night with me, and whose loving, pitying hand snatched me from water and fire, gave me back to my wife and children, and has led me in safety home!”

THE SNARE BROKEN.


"Snares are round about thee."

"How foolish you are, Carry, to be sure. What does it matter what people say, so long as you have good clothes, plenty to eat, and money to spend?"

Words of hideous temptation addressed by one young girl to another in a miserable garret in London. The speaker was passably good looking; the listener of rare beauty. Both orphans, and free to do as they would, with none to guide or control them. Marion had already chosen her life-path of shame and ruin, and now was tempting her fellow-worker of former days to enter the same dark way of sin and sorrow.

"It does matter," was the reply; "for my dead mother's sake, and for somebody's else, I'll starve and strive as long as I possibly can before I come to it."

The tempter departed, and the temptation with her for the time, but only to recur with added force over the poor meal the friendless girl now set herself to prepare. A little tea, without sugar



or milk, and some bread, was all she had, and she sat down to her spare and solitary meal, her only companion the temptation against which she had hitherto fought and triumphed.

"What can I do?"—her thoughts ran—"I have fought work until I didn't know whether my feet or my heart ached the most, and here I am with my last meal, my rent due, no money to pay with, and shall be turned out even from this on Monday; not a friend in the world to help or comfort me. But it *does* matter; I want to keep right, if I can, so that when I see *her* again, I may be able to look up into her dear face, and give her back the kiss she gave me before she went away and left me without a helper or a friend. I have kept these for her sake, and, if I can, I will keep myself too." She opened a torn, discoloured book as she thought thus, and her wet eyes fell upon some dried flowers carefully spread between the leaves. They were memorials from the grave of her Sunday-school teacher, who in the midst of life and usefulness had been called from earth to heaven.

The next day—the last of the week—the poor girl again set forth on her quest for employment, at every application meeting with a chilling repulse. Through the day she ~~tried~~ bravely, returning at night to her ~~home~~ weary, hungry, sick at heart, ~~and~~ by the fierce pangs of hunger.

It ~~was~~ that ~~night~~ which will

turn away with a mingling of horror and unbelief, asking "Are such things really happening around us?" and the answer must be, "Their name is legion." These unwilling victims may be numbered by hundreds, on any given night, in the streets of our great cities. We know how to create and store up wealth; we are not unwilling to distribute it also; but how to do this effectively, how to use wise preventive care, is a problem as yet unsolved. Not unsolvable; when we turn in earnest to comply with the command "to love our neighbour as ourselves," the way will easily be found.

Carry had been without food the whole day, and again the hungry, dreadful, tempting night was upon her. There was no possible prospect of money or food for at least two days, unless she sought out Marion and shared her riotous plenty. This was the lowest ebb, the most fiery trial, to which she had been exposed. Hitherto she had always been able to get food at least; but now she lay—too hungry to sleep—tossing on her poor bed through the miserable hours that as they passed ~~ended~~ in the Lord's day to the garret in the East

the livelong day she cowered in her room like some wild animal famishing in a trap. She was still battling with the temptation, half-dreading her sinning companion. On the morrow she would be

homeless, also; and then she must yield—and why not at once? why bear another night of cold and hunger for nothing? In the evening she went forth hungry and despairing, and as she turned into the blaze and bustle of the main street, she felt as if she had reached the limit of endurance, and could face the terrible hunger and darkness of her garret no more.

Before her, on the path, was a man busily engaged in distributing printed invitations to attend a special service at the theatre, in front of which he was standing. He was approaching middle age, “with a strong good face,” thought Carry. “If I can only speak to him, he will help me.” She laid her hand timidly on his arm, saying, “I should like to speak to you.”

He turned and looked upon her with something of suspicion in his glance, which faded away before the pale, stricken beauty of her face, as she said—“I am out of work, have eaten nothing for two days, and can bear it no longer. I feel as if I must sin for bread, and I don’t want to do so.” “Now the good Lord forbid!” he replied. “I’ve no time to ask even whether it’s true or not, but a meal won’t cost much at any rate; so go and get one and come back to me. If you are cheating me, may He forgive you; if not, you are as welcome as though you were my own dear girl at home.” He stretched out a hard hand with a little money in it as he spoke;

but his words were loving, and the rough hand stretched out with ready sympathy to help and save. To his intense astonishment and dismay the girl caught his hand and pressed it to her lips as she hastened away.

Her hunger speedily satisfied, she returned to seek her friend, but he had departed. More than once she met with such overtures as she had dreaded she must accept but half an hour before, but now passed with loathing. As she proceeded in her search, a hand was laid upon her, and a soft, refined voice said, "May I ask for whom you are seeking?" It was unmistakably the voice of a lady, and the girl turned in astonishment to gaze on her questioner, a woman of short stature, verging upon middle age, very plainly dressed, but certainly a lady, and well-known as one of God's earthly ministering angels, aiding the poorest and vilest of the East of London.

"I am seeking the man who was giving bills," said the girl.

"He is to preach in the theatre," the lady replied.

"Come and I will take you to him presently."

The vast place was rapidly filling with an audience largely composed of the lowest grades of the great city, and thus hundreds were gathered whom no consideration had induced to enter into churches or chapels. Coarse jests, slang phrases, and licentious conversation abounded, the usual order and decorum of places of worship "conspi-

cious by its absence," and all ordinary ideas of public worship turned upside down.

The advent of preacher and committee upon the stage was the signal for a cry of "Hats off!" such as used to be heard at the Old Bailey on execution mornings; in the midst of which Carry saw her rough-handed friend advance to the front of the stage, and address the assembled multitude. He chose for his text the inquiry "Why will ye die?" and proceeded to introduce his subject by an illustration that was almost terrific in its application to present circumstances. "I have been reading," he said, "in a recent volume of travels, of a wooden theatre in Russia, constructed to hold many more people than are now gathered here. One evening when the house was crowded, a fire broke out behind the scenes. At first the actors said nothing, hoping to extinguish it without alarming the audience, and when the brightness became visible, the audience applauded the splendid illumination. Then the buffoon, who had previously performed, rushed again on the stage, crying, —'We are on fire! we are on fire! Save yourselves!' But the audience laughed the louder, considering him as still performing. So loud was the laughter and applause that no voice could be heard, and therefore the scene was drawn up that every one might become aware of the danger. As smoke and flame poured into the body of the house, laughter changed to wildest

terror; shrieks of horror took the place of mirth. All rushed to the outlets, but only the foremost succeeded in escaping; the fire extended to roof and walls; upon a struggling, writhing mass of living men and women the blazing ruins fell; and all other sounds were lost in the roaring and crackling of the fire."

A silence profound and awful fell upon that vast audience as the preacher proceeded:—"Suppose you had been in that preliminary hell, what would you have thought and done? Suppose ye that they were sinners above others because they suffered such things; I tell you, Nay! but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish!"

Having thus attracted attention, the preacher went on to preach repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus, laying before his hearers the whole plan of the common salvation and urging its immediate acceptance. The poor girl drank in the discourse eagerly; with parted lips and eyes fixed she remained until its close, and then only returned to the consideration of herself and her condition.

At the end of the service all who wished to remain were invited to do so, and then Carry saw and spoke to her friend again, and with the lady listening also, he proceeded to speak in more familiar words of the way of Our Father towards returning children, until the happy tears ran down, the snare was broken, and she was delivered.

Then Carry turned to go, but "Where are you

going, and what will you do for to-morrow?" asked the lady with a smile, for she had noted that all such thoughts had passed as completely from Carry's mind as though hunger and darkness were dreams. Then the thought of her condition flashed upon her, but asking nothing more, she turned again to depart. A gentle, loving hand detained her, as the lady said—"I have a home specially for such as you; they are as daughters and sisters to me. Come and be with us. You may be sure of food and shelter and employment, and a hearty, loving welcome!—for Jesus' sake."

In the front of a wide thoroughfare there is an excellent shop occupied by a thriving tradesman. We pass through the shop into the parlour behind, which is the very picture of cosiness and comfort. Here, on a low seat before the fire, nursing her little child, is the tradesman's wife, a strikingly beautiful woman. This is Carry. The snare broken! the brand plucked from the fire!


Whereof let infidels take note, stop their everlasting talking, and go and do likewise.

NIGHT-FISHING.

“I will make you fishers of men.”

HAVE we done all that we can? Is there no class untouched, unreachd, that might be reached and won? Is every mine worked, every gem sought out, cleansed, polished for the diadem of the Master? In all the countless throng of ceaseless Christian activities has no corner escaped notice, no portion of the vast vineyard been left uncared for? Can we say in deed and truth concerning ourselves and others, “We have done what we could?”

Solemn questions, occupying the mind of the busy worker when *forced* by weariness and weakness to “come apart and rest!” Solemn questions, calling for distinct answers when sudden sickness strikes down Christ’s servant, and renders the giving an “account of the stewardship” a probability of a few hours hence. There are possibilities of work for Jesus in great cities, and specially in the great metropolis, which would not be practicable elsewhere; and I now propose to give a brief account of one method of usefulness not often put into practice—work which, so far as



I know, takes up a wholly original portion of the vineyard. I allude to fishing for men and women in the dead of night.

One of our busiest mission-rooms is situated in Drury Lane, open to and on a level with the street without. The street door leads by a short straight passage, past the inquiry-room, to the door of the mission-room itself; and it was this room we set apart as a net, wherein to take the proceeds of our fishing at night. We chose a dark moonless night, the cutting wind blowing from the north-east in heavy freezing gusts, rendering some kind of shelter necessary to all who would not die with cold. First, we prepared a large cheerful fire; next, we lighted every gas in the place; and last, we made ready a plentiful supply of hot strong coffee, and thick bread and butter. Thus our mission net was baited with cheerful warmth and light, and wholesome food and drink, at midnight, on one of the last days in January of the present year. So much for the net; we had next to provide fishermen for the outside and within. Some *fisherwomen* offered their services for both departments; these were gladly welcomed for the interior of the net, and were found most useful; but they were resolutely declined for the streets of such a locality at such a time, it being felt that men-fishers could do all that needed doing, without any of the danger possible and probable to fisherwomen.

The men chosen were fitted for the work to be done. The object was to gather in the homeless;—the men and women who would not go to the casual wards of unions, or who had been unsuccessful in applying; those—and their number is great—who hoped to *get* the fourpence needed for shelter in our common lodging-houses by begging, selling cigar-lights, calling carriages at theatres, or offering flowers or play-bills for sale. There are, nightly, hundreds who thus secure a shelter for the morning during the last hour of the night; and the men we sent out as fishing-scouts had themselves belonged to this class, had been reached and rescued, and now most willingly gave their services to rescue others in their turn.

Before midnight it was useless to commence. But when the last theatre was closed, the last public-house in darkness, the streets given up to heavy-footed policemen, and fleeting, shivering shadows that knew not where to go, but felt that to crouch in a doorway was to die—then was our time for action; and we improved it as far as we possibly could.

While our scouts are proceeding *two and two* in their various directions, let us take a short turn and try our hand at fishing at night. Leaving the bright warmth of the net, the cold strikes with terrible intensity as we pass into it, and gaze into the night sky above, black and starless, here and there flecked with an edge of threatening

grey. Through the courts to Covent Garden Market, which is closely adjacent, and where we may expect to find some fish; for here are the colonnades, the pillars, the archways, and the large market-baskets which are nightly refuges for the homeless. Here the man with his coffee will come at two o'clock, when the fortunate who have one penny can expend that in hot coffee and one piece of thinly-buttered bread; while those who have no money can and do hover shiveringly around, waiting the coming of the drunken and dissolute, from whom they will beg the needed penny again and again until they are satisfied.

The coffee-man is not here yet; but here are three girls or women, two crouching together in one doorway, their garments wrapped tightly round and all over them, so that nothing but garments are visible; the third occupies a doorway close by, waiting and hoping for a fourth to come and give and take possible warmth by close contact. Here we imagine we have found our first fish! We speak to them, telling them we have, close at hand, warmth, light, food, and a hearty welcome, and we entreat them to rise and go with us. But our effort is an utter failure. They will in no wise believe our words; they believe, and express openly their belief, that we are simply endeavouring to make fools of them, and they entreat us derisively not to waste our time on them, but to go on our way and leave them alone!

Astonished and chagrined at their unbelief, we endeavoured by every means we could devise to overcome it, but all in vain; they were simply immovable, and we were compelled to leave them in hunger and cold—with light, warmth, and welcome within two minutes' easy walking. "I would not have believed unless I had tried," I thought, as I went on, "that such unbelievers could exist; although I am surrounded every day by exactly the same unbelief concerning spiritual things!"

We met a man in our journey round the market, so clearly a drunkard that it could not have been more clear had the word appeared in characters of fire on his breast or brow. Thick lips, bloated cheeks, fiery nose, watering eyes, slouching gait, and clothes in rags: clearly he was a fish that needed catching, and we tried to entice him into the net. He was willing to go anywhere with any one, to get anything to eat or drink or be warm, and he slouched heartily after us on the way. A woman was our next fish, and the net was just in sight: she was clothed decently, but had a flaring light scarf round her neck, and white ribbons plentifully covering her head. We thought she had attended some low-class wedding in the day, drunk far too much, and was now unable or unwilling to find her way home. She evidently mistrusted us, would have none of our counsel; and while we endeavoured to persuade her our

drunken friend suddenly and mysteriously disappeared, and we were unsuccessful and alone.

We returned into the mission-room net, to find that our scouts had been far more successful, and had succeeded in gathering a goodly number into the room.

Knowing by long experience that it is better to feed the hungry before attempting to teach them, we commenced their meal, finding here the use of our lady friends. As long as they would or could eat and drink, they were willingly and fully supplied; some seemed to be as hungry as wild beasts, and far more insatiable; others had not much appetite; while others needed kindly pressing before they presumed to accept a second supply. There were about equal numbers of men and women, of old and young. The young women evidently of the class of the woman that "was a sinner;" the elder ones drunken, dissolute, dishonest, homeless, hopeless, godless. The men were of the dangerous classes, drunken and dissolute also. And this was the result of our scouts' fishing—these were the fish caught in our early morning net.

Warmed and fed, and quite willing to remain in the cheerful room, we next endeavoured to "preach unto them Jesus." But it was a heavy trial for patience. One girl would glance at another, make a grimace, and provoke laughter from three or four more. They seemed utterly har-

dened ; appeals of many kinds were urged in vain, and the dear and honoured servant of the Lord who addressed them was completely disheartened and discouraged by "the hardness of their hearts." Alas for them ! and for him as regards them, they were at opposite poles : he spoke solemnly to them of God and Christ ; but to them these were only names which served to add point to profane oaths ; all *they* knew of the Holiest was as matter for ribaldry and deeper sin ! In almost despair I obeyed the look of my old friend, and quietly commenced the sketch of a life incident that follows :—

"Not very long since there came one evening a poor woman who was well known to me ; her face was wet with tears, and her whole frame trembled with sorrow. As I motioned her to a seat she said with choking voice, 'My heart is almost broken ! I have lost Mary, whom you know ; my daughter, my darling has gone *wrong* !' And then the poor mother wrung her hands, and sobbed in the bitterness of her grief. And I could not comfort her, could only look pityingly, and wait to hear what more she wished to say. 'Can't you help me ?' she entreated ; 'can't you find her for me ? I have sought in vain ; but you know her, and you know all these dreadful places ! only find her for me, only bring her to me again, and I will pray for you night and day.'

"'But suppose I could find her, and she refuses to return, what can I do then ?' I inquired.

“ ‘You can call a policeman and give her in charge till I come; she is not a woman yet, only nineteen! O my girl, my poor ruined child!’ and again her agony burst forth, rocking and bending her convulsed form like a reed in a tempest.

“ ‘I will do it, if I can find her,’ I assented; ‘now quiet yourself, and go home, and pray, and hope for the best.’

“ Then my search began, and continued unsuccessfully for several weeks. Into all the low dancing-houses, into haunts of vice and sin of every kind, the search extended; but I never saw Mary in any of them, until one evening late I went to a vile dancing-room near Smithfield, and there my search ended; the lost girl was certainly found.

“ I went to her, laid my finger lightly on her arm, pronouncing her name, ‘Mary!’ An exclamation of surprise and dismay escaped her lips, showing that she knew me; then the colour left her cheeks, and she staggered to a seat to prevent herself from falling to the floor.

“ ‘Your mother is waiting for you,’ I said, ‘and I have promised to see you home whenever I found you; I must keep my word, come now.’ ‘I can never go home more,’ she said, ‘never see my mother’s face again.’ ‘To your mother or the police-station,’ I replied; ‘I have promised her, and I will surely redeem my promise.’

“She was three miles from her mother’s house; and when, after much persuasion and threatening, she left the dance-room with me, she occupied every step of the way by the most agonising entreaty that I would not force her to return home; offering me money to allow her to go, offering to drown herself in my sight—anything rather than see her mother’s face once more.

“But at length we reached her home. It was far beyond midnight, but there was light in the passage and the parlour; while the street door, though closed, was not fastened. Holding her close by the arm I pushed open the door, walking through the passage into the room beyond. As we advanced I felt Mary shuddering in every limb; and when we reached the room, the poor mother was sitting with straining eyes and stretched-out arms, ready and willing to welcome her lost darling. Then Mary uttered a great cry, ‘Mother! mother!’ and, clasping her arms, sank at her mother’s feet, with her face hidden. The mother lifted lovingly the pale face, kissed, oh! so tenderly the upturned brow; and as I turned and left them, I saw the mother clasp her daughter’s neck with the yearning of unutterable love. No word of reproach! only the glad warm clasp of assured and certain welcome home! So, just so, will the loving, forgiving Lord Jesus welcome any poor wanderer from purity and peace who will return to Him here and now.”

Thus, until after three in the morning, we strove to do the work we had planned; and then we left them in good care, to have shelter and warmth until the break of day.

Did we do any good? We know not: the day must declare. If tear-stained cheeks indicate softened hearts, that evidence was not wanting. But we only know that they went forth in the morning; and we may not meet again, until the books are opened and the judgment set. "May we and they find mercy in that day!"

FELLOW-WORKERS.

"In their death they were not divided."

THE autumn was falling coldly into the arms of winter; on far-off uplands the snow was lying white and pure; in our busy streets it was speedily trodden into mud and slush—very trying to the bare little feet of the children of the unemployed, the drunken, and the poor, who congregated and clamoured round the door of our mission-house long before the hour announced for our semi-weekly children's dinner.

Through the open door, along the passage, down-stairs into the cellar (formerly filled with intoxicating drink, then used as a children's dining-room) went the bare little feet—each child provided with basin or plate, a spoon, and a large appetite; and they are very quickly seated at the deal tables in the warm and steaming cellar. As soon as a blessing is asked on the food, a hundred hungry mouths are in full operation.

Just look at them; how they eat! they are clean and dirty (we tried to have *all* clean, but found it would not do to keep a child hungry be-

cause its mother had no soap, or was out at work), ragged and whole-clothed, diseased and healthy. Some with that "old" look upon the young face which makes the heart ache so to behold, some innocent and pretty as petted children in far away country homes. Some are grown lads and girls early inured to hunger and want; others so little as to be unable to feed themselves now that a dinner is at their service, looking tearfully and imploringly round for some one to convey the savoury food to mouths all ready and willing to receive it.

Here's the man to accomplish this object! "John! will you kindly look after as many of the very little ones as possible;" and, receiving thus his commission, John proceeds to fill little mouths that he sees waiting, with the utmost tenderness and care.

A young man, ragged and hungry, prodigal son of a prodigal father, brought up in a drunken home, taught to love drink and ruined by it; nevertheless well-spoken and well-educated, silent and reserved, making no complaint, feeling deeply that he deserved to suffer, often almost fainting with hunger, unable to get work, unfit to do it through lack of food and clothing; resolved rather to die than to beg or ask relief, yet compelled by hunger to crawl down into the cellar in the hopes that when the children were done there might be some little left for him:—This was John.

It was also a specimen of what drink could do ; —not the most striking I have met with ; I think *that* experience occurred one cold winter day when I had *thirteen* well-educated men, all hungry and dinnerless, waiting with enforced patience for what remained in the copper, and the fragments of bread that were left after the children had dined and returned into the snow.

A thoughtful Christian friend had placed some tickets for free lodgings at my disposal, and these were blessed means of nightly shelter and warmth for John. In the summer nights and in early autumn he had found refuge in door-ways, and under arches, had been early in the market, earning a few pence for shelter for the next night ; always avoiding the horrifying associations of the casual ward—the only refuge in our (so-called) Christian land, for the unemployed and the destitute ; and thereby following the example of many more, known to me, who have preferred wandering the streets through the coldest night in winter to the polluted precincts of the parochial refuge.

Thus John came to be one of our helpers ; fed from day to day—He only who feeds the sparrows knew how—until a welcome bundle of cast-off clothing solved the great difficulty. When decently clothed, and with strength a little restored, employment was procured for him ; and John passed again into the ranks of self-supporting working-men.

This accomplished, he came to me, seeking for admission into the membership of the Church, and narrating a history of conversion that filled my heart with thankfulness, and my eyes with grateful tears. He spoke of his early home, converted by drink into a hell upon earth,—as so many thousands of others are; how he had been ill-treated and abused until he had left it in anger and disgust; how he had fallen into bad company, “spent all,” and “began to be in want;” how, as he wandered the streets at night, hungry and sick at heart, the lessons learned at Sabbath-school came to his memory, and caused him to compare them with his own painful experiences; how he had been directed to our mission, and learned how to pray, and where to go with his heavy burden of guilt and sin; how he had found friends on earth, and, infinitely better, a Friend on high; and now having obtained employment whereby he could live, he was anxious to become one of the Lord’s people, and do something for Him who had heard his petitions, and pardoned and blessed him.

It was soon discovered that John was possessed of a powerful voice and a good knowledge of music; and these talents were utilised to the utmost in the open-air services, and among the young. But his greatest delight was to go among the rough, lost men and women in the common lodging-houses, talk to them of the Friend of sin-

ners, and invite them to the house of God and to prayer. And in this work he had a companion after his own heart; one who, like himself, had gone down into the depths of sorrow and sin, who had been brought up thence, sought and found by the Good Shepherd. Early trained in his Scottish home in the knowledge of religion, Ninian had never felt its power until he was induced to attend a meeting in a country village school-room, where the Lord met him and claimed him for His own.

Into the vilest dens of profligacy and dishonesty where the worst herded together in dreadful companionship, into courts and alleys whence fever and death are never absent, went the two friends together—singing for Jesus, reading the Scriptures, praying, and beseeching the lost and perishing to turn to Him. Thus they occupied the week-evenings and a portion of the Lord's-day; and this pleasant work continued until one day, crossing one of our busy streets with a parcel on his shoulder, John was knocked down by a vehicle which passed over him. He soon recovered, as he and we thought; but from that time he was troubled with a racking cough, was soon weary, and his early manly beauty was changed for a worn and haggard look that, on his young face, was pitiful to see.

The fever was rife in the neighbourhood, and when John staggered into the mission-house with

flushed face and labouring breath, we all feared that he had taken the infection. Living in lodgings, without relatives in the great city, he had literally nowhere to go when he was thus struck down. Nor could we nurse and shelter him in our busy crowded mission-house, and he was as speedily as possible removed to a bed in the Fever Hospital. There it was discovered that it was not fever, but inflammation of a virulent kind, by which he was attacked; but he was too ill to be removed.

I have often remarked how the Lord fits us for our burdens in His service, and protects us therein: myself and my fellow-workers had gone constantly into the most dreadful cases of small-pox and infectious fevers of all kinds, but not one of our workers had been attacked. Through all the terrible cases of relapsing fever—born of want and filth and drunkenness—we had passed untouched; a thousand had fallen at our side, but it had not come nigh us; and we were relieved and pleased to find that John had not proved the exception to the rule.

The Lord's-day is "visiting day" at hospitals, and only two visitors were allowed to each patient. Of many who were waiting and eagerly courting the chance of contagion, Ninian and myself were adjudged to be entitled to precedence in the matter. Across the garden, through the hall, noticing the spotless cleanliness everywhere, we went

on our way until we arrived at the bedside of our sick brother and friend.

One at each side, we took our places and looked upon him. Withering, passing away,—was the instant thought of each, even before he opened his sunken eyes to look upon the friends he dearly loved. Labouring heavily for breath, the brightening eyes were sufficient evidence of his delight in seeing us.

“Are they kind to you here?” was an early inquiry.

“Very kind indeed; they could not be more so; I want for nothing.”

“Do you think you will recover?”

“Too weak, too far gone,” he said with difficulty.

“What do you think of yourself, and of Jesus?”

“All is well, living or dying; I know in whom I have believed!”

“Have you any fear to go to Him if so He wills it?”

“None! I have put myself in His hands, and feel and know I am safe!”

It was painfully evident that utterance caused great effort and exhaustion; and we sat by his side speaking softly, till Ninian could control himself no longer: he burst into a passion of tears and sobs that shook our dying brother on his bed as he lay.

John looked up at Ninian's tear-stained face,

stretched out his thin trembling hand, and said with broken voice, "Not for me! Not for me! for the hungry, the drunken, and the lost we have laboured among: weep and pray and strive for them!"

With choking throat and blinded eyes it was not easy to reason with Ninian. A few words of caution restored him to self-command, and we were speaking of Jesus and of heaven, and commending our departing brother to His loving care, until our time expired, and we were compelled to leave him.—The next day, one who loved him brought us news of the end. He had sunk quietly and gradually through the night, but early morning brought a short revival of strength. The night-nurse saw that he was trying to utter something, and bending over him, heard him singing plainly, "Rock of ages, cleft for me;" then his breath failed, and he went into the ocean of eternity with his feet upon the Rock he had learned to love, to trust, and to praise.

We laid him quietly to rest among the autumn flowers; the leaves were dropping from the trees, and the glow of the gorgeous sunset falling upon his grave as we turned and left him "till Jesus comes."

Returning to life and work,—to labour among the broken, the stricken, the diseased, and the poor,—John was passing into a memory—as others do, and we shall—when he was vividly

recalled to our thoughts by the application of Ninian for help from our medical mission.

"What had happened?" "Nothing! But at night he awoke covered with perspiration, yet shivering with cold, and getting so weak as to be unable to work." "How long had this been?" "Coming on gradually for many days, but it was only a cold!"

I went in with him to the physician, who tenderly and carefully examined him, then said, "You must go home and to bed at once; your life is in imminent danger."

I looked upon Ninian in utter consternation. The unexpected blow prostrated him; he sat helplessly in the chair; a cold sweat bedewed his brow, and every limb shook as with violent palsy. At length he said, "I have no home, no one to care for or tend me, I should lie and die unheeded."

"If that is the case," remarked the physician, "no time must be lost in getting him into some hospital, it is the only possible chance of saving him;" then he added in an undertone, "It is matter of wonder to me how he can have worked so long, he cannot live many days."

With very heavy hearts we conveyed him to the hospital, where he was at once admitted, and highly stimulating diet resorted to. He had long been an abstainer, but the physician ordered both wine and brandy. Ninian refused to drink; but the

nurses simply held him and poured the liquor down his throat, and he passed that first night in the hospital in a condition which he described as intoxication, but which they styled delirium.

We visited him frequently; he seemed as one burning slowly to death with internal fire; the fire being fed, as we thought, by the strong drink he was compelled to swallow day after day.

It was late in the evening when the message came that any of his friends might see him at any time. We well knew this hospital death-warrant when it reached us, and we hastened with a friend to take a last farewell. Remembering the effect of the physician's words upon him, we were speaking carefully, when he introduced the subject himself, saying—

“I did not think I should follow John so soon; but it is to be, and I am not afraid—I know I shall meet him on the other side.”

“Is Jesus near you now?” I asked.

“He has never been anything else since I first went to Him,” he replied.

Blessed words of quiet assurance, spoken with the utmost calmness and confidence, falling like dew on the listening ears around.

We sat watching for a time, and it was evident he was labouring to express something. He was endeavouring to sing, and the words and music were low but distinct.

“Hark ! hark ! my soul,
Angelic songs are swelling ;
O'er earth's green fields,
And ocean's wave-beat shore ! ”

as his favourite song, welling from his feeble
as he was passing away ;—then he said—
“ I shall see dear John soon ! have you any
age ? ”

Tell him we are coming !—to look for us till
come ! and look for us yourself also,” was
message given, as smiles of faith and hope
ered for each from every face *but one*, around
ed of our message-bearer to that bright world
ere they die no more ! ”

He long-drawn quivering breath—then quiet-
settled down upon the loved face ; and he was
home to our Father's holy house, with his
age ;—dying as John had died, with a song
on upon his lips.

And now they are together ; not lost, not gone
into darkness, but into light and life, into
presence and image of the Brother and King
loved and served ; where is no sorrow nor
grief, pain, or cold, or hunger ; where God has
wiped all tears from all faces ; and, through the
crucifixion, given them the victory.

BREAD TO THE HUNGRY.

"They need not depart, give ye them to eat."

At a meeting of the Open Air Mission in Islington, the Earl of Shaftesbury stated that not more than two per cent. of working men were accustomed to attend public worship. It is several years since that statement was uttered, but the most sanguine among us could scarcely assert that things are changed for the better since his lordship's declaration. There exists in the midst of the vast majority of our working men a passive indifference to religion, which, if disturbed, intensifies into very active opposition. An appallingly large class are becoming theoretical as well as practical atheists, and openly declare that they hold no belief whatever in religion or in God.

Knowing these facts, I have found myself very often lately wondering whether they had any connection with some political and social facts, that are every day assuming wider and uglier phases of development. I mean the facts of the industrial paralysis that now keeps so many thousands in enforced idleness, and the frightful strides of pauperism in our midst as a people and nation. That

within a few years our national drink bill has increased more than fifty per cent.; that the spirit of sturdy independence is dying out on one hand, and developing into systems of tyranny and terrorism on the other, are well-known facts.

There are also thousands upon thousands who will not work; they will lounge, cringe, beg, lie, steal, occupy refuges and casual wards, but they will not labour for their daily bread if they can in any way get it without that disagreeable process. They are successful far too often, and the burden of their maintenance is borne by the industrious portion of the community in one way or other.

If these thoughts are truths, if ungodliness is the cause, and laziness and enforced idleness are the effects, it is easy to see that the decrease and prevention of ungodliness are actually necessary to national stability and prosperity.

But how are we to prevent ungodliness? How are we to reach people who will not come to us? The answer is simple. We must adopt other methods; we must either entice them to come to us in large numbers, or we must go to them individually, and, at any expenditure of time and strength, reach and deal with them one by one.

Unbelievers may get their sneers ready while I write that a sure way has existed of reaching large numbers in every neighbourhood for several winters past, by simply offering them food and drink, if they will come and get it. "Of course they will

come if you pay them for doing so!" is the cry; and my rejoinder is, "Why should I not feed a hungry man if I can, simply because he is a man and is hungry; if, moreover, by so doing I can soften his heart by active sympathy and demonstrated care for his well-being, and in this softened and interested condition have a priceless opportunity to talk with him concerning his spiritual condition and welfare?"

Having been somewhat forced to walk in such paths for several winters, it may be well to try and show by actual experiment how this plan reaches and influences the lapsed masses of the people in various neighbourhoods of the metropolis.

I have the privilege of acquaintance with a member of the Society of Friends, who, with a well-known literary friend of working men, spent Sunday mornings in winter in organising breakfasts for the poor in various localities. They procured the use of the largest available buildings in various neighbourhoods (generally given free of cost), and there provided a most substantial breakfast, consisting of a flat loaf of bread, made with currants, which is cut through the centre and buttered, weighing about a pound and a half, and an unlimited supply of hot tea of good quality.

But the occasion of which I speak was not a breakfast, but a tea meeting, of exactly the same character, given under the same auspices at Wool-

wich, on Thursday evening, at seven o'clock. In consequence of the cessation of Government employment in that place, the distress had become exceedingly severe, and it was thought desirable to visit that locality, among others, and offer a cordial welcome to a hearty meal to as many as could be accommodated. The largest available hall in Woolwich was engaged (at a very high rental, from which nothing was deducted), tickets were printed, and distributed by the local missionaries and others some days beforehand, and all needful preparations made. The hall is close to the river, situated in a wide street, through which the sharp wind blew with biting strength, and here the crowd began to gather long before the hour appointed. So thickly did they cluster, that it was thought necessary to have police at the doors, and four were stationed there. When the door was opened an awful sight was seen—hundreds of famine-stricken faces, showing ghastly in the moonlight, turned towards the narrow entry to the great hall. The crush was fearful. The cries of the children, the screams of the women, and the men's hoarse shouting, were simply dreadful to hear; and when they were within the building, and, of course, released from the crowd, mothers hugged their children, gathered their torn garments round them, and rejoiced that they were in full prospect of food and warmth once more. Then upstairs into the hall they went, each re-

ceiving a loaf, as previously described, on their way. Very soon the large hall was packed to its utmost capacity, and still large numbers were without. A large empty ante-room was then opened, and hundreds were seated on the floor round the sides and ends of the room, and there served with food and drink. Once seated the order was admirable. The police gave notice that we had a full display of the "rough" element in the ante-room; but except a little preliminary shouting, their behaviour was as good as need be. When served, of course, they were quiet, simply because they could not eat and shout at the same time. When the meal ended those in the ante-room were placed in the great hall somehow, and with nearly a thousand people present the meeting commenced.

The two hard-working evangelists, before-mentioned, conducted the meeting. A hymn-book was *given* to each, and a hymn given out. Then the character of the meeting was displayed; large numbers unable to read, larger numbers ignorant of the tune, chosen as one of those most commonly known, and many more sheepishly ashamed of being seen by their companions singing hymns. Silent prayer followed the hymn, and the silence was most profound—so deep that a child's cough broke painfully on the ear. An address by the leader followed, in the course of which he narrated some touching personal experiences during the

.

Lancashire cotton famine, drawing a tearful tribute from the eyes of hundreds of men as well as women. An address from the writer followed, from the words, "Ask, and ye shall receive," during the course of which it was remarked that for two years and a half the writer had been searching diligently to find "one of the Lord's people wanting bread;" and though search had been made in all the poor districts of London, and in many country towns and villages, the search had never yet been successful. "We ask," said the speaker, "and we receive; you don't ask, and you don't receive—tell me which is the wiser plan?" An appeal followed to all those thousand starving people if they knew one of the Lord's people wanting bread, and the silence that followed was most eloquent witness to the faithfulness of God to His promise of old. Other brief addresses were given by two local ministers, two colonels, and a captain in the army, and the proceedings were brought to a close by singing and prayer. Throughout the greatest order and most touching interest were maintained. Many times the tears of the large audience flowed forth, and the most entire sympathy between speakers and hearers was plainly manifested.

Thus hundreds of the hungry and almost despairing were warmed, and comforted, and fed, and other hundreds fed also by carefully-saved portions of the loaves being carried to them after

the meeting, each loaf being given in a paper bag for that purpose. Only in "the day" that is coming swiftly shall the full result of our work be seen; but we have no reason to doubt that our labour was not in vain in the Lord.

There are many who are afraid that if the poor are fed before a religious service, they will not remain to the meeting afterward. A very long experience has proved that this fear is unfounded. The unspoken appeal to their honour and good faith implied in first giving the meal has always been successful.

THE WAY HOME.

"Go ye out into the highways."

"It does not look very promising," remarked one open-air preacher to another, as they stood in a street in East London on the morning of the Lord's-day.

Many kinds of merchandise were there bought and sold, of which living animals, such as birds, rabbits, dogs, and guinea-pigs formed a large portion. Here was a lad covered with canaries in cages hung all over him; there a man in a complete set of horse harness; there, another dragging a cart, and still another carrying fancy boxes—all kept in constant motion by the unremitting attention of the police, who refused to allow them to stand still for a minute.

"Not very promising," assented the other, "but we will do our best, praying for our Master's help and blessing." So saying he took his stand in a convenient spot, and commenced reading his Bible. Tall, handsome, and well dressed, he soon attracted a crowd; and when the chapter ended, asked God's help and blessing in earnest prayer, amid the almost unbroken silence of the audience.

When he had concluded he stepped aside, and his companion stood forward, and commenced speaking to the people, who by this time had increased to an exceedingly large gathering.

In the full front of the audience stood a young woman, short almost to dwarfishness, and from her bent form plainly afflicted with spinal curvature. With rough good nature the men made way for her, and prevented the crowd from pressing upon her, thus enabling her to stand and listen attentively. She had a pleasant face, full, clear, brown eyes, and bright intellectual features. As the gifted and earnest preacher went on, she fixed her attention upon him, and so remained until he had ended.

"Every one of you," said the preacher, "will live for ever—as long as God himself lives, so long shall each one of us live to be punished or rewarded by Him; the dangerous gift of Immortality is upon us; we cannot, if we would, put it from us, and from this point of view—each of you regarding himself as immortal before God—I ask you to consider with me the 'price' that the Son of God has paid once and for ever for human redemption."

And then in clear emphatic language, he set before them the life and death of Him of Galilee, showing that He was "the despised and rejected Messiah of the Jew, the crucified Nazarene," and yet "the desire of all nations," who in the "ful-

ness of time" had come to the world Himself had made; thereby enduring suffering such as no human thought can picture, to redeem the children of men from uttermost evil, and, by one offering perfect "for ever them who are sanctified."

Amongst those who lingered when the preacher ended his discourse, was the little woman with the clear brown eyes, and she drew near to the speaker as one after another thanked him, and inquired if he were coming there again; and so evident was her wish to speak, that the preacher smiled and held out his hand, which was taken with a glad thankful clasp, that of itself was right good payment for the labour he had just passed through.

A glad promise to come again the next Sunday at the same time and place sent the crowd away, many of them resolving to come again to meet the speakers, but the little woman lingered on as though loath to part with those who had awakened a new life within her.

At length the speaker asked "If she would come again the next Sunday?" "I may not be alive to come," she said thoughtfully, "and your words have made me feel that my life has been a mistake, and that I am not fit to die; where can I see you to-morrow?"

"I will come where you will this evening if you like," said the preacher, "and speak again with you as long as may be needful; and shall

rejoice to do so, hoping to be the means of leading you to Jesus, 'the friend of sinners.' "

"Will you indeed do this for me," she asked, "when I am quite unknown to you?"

"I would do it gladly for any immortal spirit on the earth that would accept the service," was the reply. "Let me know your address and a suitable time, and, if the Lord will, I will most certainly see you again."

That evening the two friends visited their hearer, inquiring first on what subject she needed information.

"How to get the peace and the love you spoke of for myself," was the clear and direct reply.

Thus encouraged and urged, once more the preacher opened his mouth and preached unto her "Jesus and the resurrection," showing her that the facts of our own immortality, and the existence of God, must be fully admitted by our minds before we can enter with any real effect upon the consideration of the scheme of redemption; and, having thus explained preliminary matters, he went on to speak earnestly of the loving Fatherhood of the Almighty, of man created holy and falling into sin, of the redemption of Christ, of the repentance and faith that are necessary to salvation, and of the blessedness of Christ's redeemed Brotherhood in Heaven.

Every word of the speaker was followed with the utmost attention and care. When he had

finished, the woman inquired—"And do you really think that any one who desires these glorious things may have them?"

"I am sure of it," was the cool, confident reply; "for God has so informed us in words that admit of no mistaking, and He 'is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent;' having said it, He will do it—having spoken, He will make it good. It is only our unbelief that ignores our close and magnificent relationship to the God of heaven and earth. He is our Father, we are His children, alike by birth and promise immortal; and are heirs of an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, and that cannot fade away—in a land where we shall be 'freed from sin' and sorrow for ever."

"Oh, how beautiful!" said the little woman, as she sat with clasped hands and tearful eyes; "but is it not far, far too good to be true?"

"Search and see," he very quietly replied. "Examine your Bible, read the life and death of the Son of God; regarding His life as our example, and His death as the price necessary and actually paid by Him, for the redemption of His own sinning brotherhood, who are unable, even if willing, to cast off their immortality."

"I will do so carefully before I sleep," replied the little woman, as they rose to go, after praying earnestly with her.

They left her with a promise to see her again during the week ; and she re-ascended to her room, took up her Bible, and for the first time in her life proceeded earnestly to "search the Scriptures."

"If a man die, shall he live again?" were the first words that attracted her attention ; and she answered as to a living voice—"It is just what I was thinking of, but it seems to me too much to be realised ; I will search on." She turned the leaves and read, "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Incline your ear and come unto me ; hear, and your soul shall live." "That is just what my friend said this morning," she thought on ; "and I suppose he took it from this place. But who is this talking?" She turned on and read in the New Testament, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "Drink and live," she commented. "I wish I had this 'living water,' I would drink eagerly, I am certain of that."

She continued reading, seeing with wonder, that He prayed for those who left Him in solitude to die. Her tears almost blinded her as she read on devouringly—how He that was thus left alone to die declares that He was the Son of a just and righteous God ; that though He Himself had done no wrong, He was willing, and even anxious, to die for the sin of the world. Her face flushed with excitement, and she sank upon her knees to

read with awe and wonder the narrative of the Redeemer's death. The eyes of her soul were opened, and she saw Him agonising in the garden, betrayed by one friend, denied by another, and forsaken by all. She saw the unjust judge on the seat of judgment, and the "Holy One and the Just" stand before him as a criminal, and so doomed to death. She looked upon mockery, scourging, shame, spitting, and menial blows; and she almost held her breath in amazement. She followed Him to Calvary, saw Him staggering with pain and weariness on His way to death; she heard His dying prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" and her throbbing heart re-echoed the Roman centurion's words of witnessing faith, "This was the Son of God."

She could read no more, for her clasped hands hid her face as the grand thought was given her that this was for *her* sin; that *she* might be accepted in the Beloved. And she prayed earnestly—with such earnest prayers as are never uttered in vain—that she might be forgiven for His sake; and He who has promised to hear and answer prayer, heard and answered by giving her peace.

"Whosoever will," Jesus says, "let him take the water of life freely."

DOWN EAST.

"Come and see!"

If you have an hour or two to spare this evening, after business, and will put on an old coat, and a hat that cannot be crushed over your eyes, I shall be happy to show you a few sights that are commonly to be seen in the East of London.

We will start from Shoreditch Church, and walk towards London Bridge, about seven in the evening. You observe that the wide main road is a blaze of light, flowing from the shop-windows, and from the lamps of the stalls that line the street as far as the eye can reach. Stop and look at this fish-stall, and the stout, almost gigantic proprietress. She is chaffering for her wares, which you see are really as fine in quality as at a West-end establishment. Why do you look disgusted, and turn away? At her unutterably filthy and blasphemous language. My dear friend, if you cannot bear it we had better return, for you will hear but little else throughout our journey. She, at least, uses no other, as you may judge from the cool, business-like tones in which she utters her awful words. Let us go! do you say? Just one moment; that woman is but a type of

thousands in our midst; she has never exchanged a word with one of Christ's ministers in all her life. Not even at her marriage? *That* ceremony has yet to be performed, although sons and daughters cluster thickly round her. But she might use better language! Why? it suits, and is common in the filthy court in which she dwells. The neighbours use it with her, and in their frequent quarrels they strive which can utter the foulest abuse and the most blasphemous scurrility. Where are the police at such times? At the street end of the court, listening and laughing, and letting them "fight it out!" "Come away!" Yes, of course; but that is just what we have been doing for a long time. We have ignored this woman and all her tribe, and naturally the tribe has gone from bad to worse, until they are what they are, the disgrace and deadly peril of our time, and the despair of earnest Christian men.

We will walk on. Here is a place of low-class entertainment, known as a penny gaff. Come in, pay your penny—nobody pays for his neighbour here—and we will take a glance at the entertainment and the company. Music and musicians first: a large old grand pianoforte, performed upon by a lady with an illuminated nose, and accompanied by a male companion who can play tunes, but cannot stand because he is too much intoxicated. He plays well, though! Of course; in other years he was a really talented musician,

sought for at theatres and private parties, but the lust of drink has brought him slowly down to this! Does he ever think of other days? Yes; when he is only half drunk and cannot hold a limb still, he will pour out weak and maudlin lamentations concerning himself, his family, and his wasted life. Tears will flow and hands be wrung; but he will get drunk again the next hour, if he can by any means procure the liquor to do so. Where is he going to—soul, body, and spirit? Who is accountable for him? Has anybody spoken to him? Well, I cannot say; I never did, thou never didst, he (the vicar) never did; and thus, I suppose, we might go through the whole of the pronouns, and never reach the individual who might, could, would, or should have done so.

Turn to the audience. Grown boys and girls almost wholly, with just a sprinkling of grown and aged men and women. Almost every boy with a short pipe in mouth or pocket, and a supply of coarse rank tobacco. Note carefully; this is an outcome of our Sunday schools! You would find on quiet inquiry that the majority here present had once sat on Sunday school benches, and know now, tunes and verses of Sunday school hymns! How have we lost them? Lack of efficient plans and care to retain them as they grew beyond the ordinary run of our classes. Whose fault is it? Nobody's! I am not to blame, thou art not to blame, &c., &c., just as before.

Glance at the performance. That is a brigand—that fellow with the mock liquor is a monk or priest, and they are carousing together, the liquor they are supposed to drink the produce of robbery. Soldiers come—priest helps thief—soldiers are killed—and carouse resumed as if robbery and murder, unblushing and triumphant, were the normal state of things in this region of the unreal. The *drarmer* is over, and singing follows. Coarse, unclean, and altogether vile and abominable—obscene without wit, and without any redeeming feature! A true criticism, my dear sir, but not at all received by our lapsed Sunday scholars, male and female. See! they are uproarious with delight, eyes and mouths wide open, and attention stretched to the utmost! Answer truly, did you ever succeed in interesting so large a gathering as these are interested now, even in the most successful address you ever delivered? Look at the comic singer: he has deftly shown the most approved way to pick a pocket, and the rapturous applause demonstrates the understanding and appreciation of the audience. This performance will be repeated several times during this evening; and many now present will attend more than once. Where do they get the money from? Some of it perhaps honestly, but I fear strict investigation would show a large amount of pilfering at least. There has been some self-denial. Many of these boys have saved the money given them for dinner

to be here. Many parents of boys and girls present are led to believe they are at work. Many of them have no parental control, or have successfully defied its exercise. Others, alas, are orphans, or worse; and from every one present the pathetic cry might rise to Christ and Heaven, "No man careth for my soul!" The plain fact is, that this place is a place of pollution, neither more nor less; there is not one redeeming feature about it; it is a shame and disgrace to any land not utterly heathen; and the seed now being sown before our eyes will assuredly bring forth a natural but awful harvest. Here is the seed sowing that must result in widespread ungodliness and crime.

Out into the street, busy with its wares in the shops and in the gutters, and in a few moments we reach a theatre; pay your pence again, and eschewing pit and boxes, let us ascend to the gallery. Here are the young men and women who have grown beyond "the gaff," and have arrived at this higher stage of development. All eyes are eagerly turned to the stage; turn yours there also, and observe: a man born to fortune, but taken away in childhood, and brought up dishonestly, excusing himself for robbing others by having been robbed himself. Sentiment vehemently applauded. Thieves in gaol seen drinking, singing, jesting, and apparently as happy as possible—scorning honest labour and its tardy gains, living upon the best; and when led out to

execution, making so light of it as to dance on their way to the gallows! This is "holding the mirror up to nature," as commonly done in East-end theatres. Here are gathered thousands of immortal beings, who have to live for ever, who are formed in the image of God, and not one thought of God, or religion, or eternal life, among them all. The fact is well known; every Christian man and woman in this great city is perfectly aware of it. But year after year it goes on unnoticed, and very little is done! Sometimes it crosses the mind, a slight misgiving ensues, a half-formed resolution is taken, which soon fades out, and the devil still has it all his own way.

If you could wait till the end of the performance at midnight, I would show you a deeper depth. Then oyster saloons and supper rooms open, and scenes are enacted there that must not be described. St Paul says: "It is a shame to speak" of them. Then, they were done in secret; here they are done almost openly. Here the performers congregate after their work is done, and here they are fed and fawned upon by young men who are clerks in merchants' offices, shopmen, and travellers, who are known to spend as much money in a month as they earn in a year! Where does it come from? Ask at Guildhall, the Mansion House, or the Old Bailey. Ask robbed and despoiled employers who appear there to prosecute unwillingly. Ask,

if you dare, for those who frequented this place last year. Poor, foolish, ruined, singed moths as they are! fluttering round this blaze of sin and infamy for a little while, and then sinking, maimed and ruined, into sorrow, shame, and penal servitude. If our merchants and shopkeepers simply knew where those in their employment spend their evenings and nights, this awful trade would sink at once. It is a very suggestive fact that in such places no one is called by his own name; he is the Earl of —, or the Duke of —, or Lord —, or the Hon. Mr — for the time being. To utter his own name would be an insult and an injury. Deeper than this I will not go now, but I repeat that many unaccountable losses would be prevented, many a bright young man saved, if by a little circumspection young men were prevented from frequenting these dens of infamy and shame. Here certainly godliness would be gain to both employer and employed. Now, if you will look around and endeavour to ascertain how the Churches of Christ are endeavouring to meet and grapple with these well-known and acknowledged gigantic evils—I am afraid you will be utterly disheartened and discouraged. Here and there, up the side streets, you may find a small formal meeting for prayer; a thinly attended young men's class. But any effort, commensurate in magnitude and earnestness to the well-

known need, has yet to be inaugurated. There are not places of worship sufficient to hold the people. The organisations for home visitation are utterly and hopelessly inadequate. No other means exist, and the Church of Christ is completely worsted in the conflict. We stand by and gaze in horror at first; too soon the sight becomes familiar, and we get accustomed to it or ignore it; and this very evening it is perfectly well known that these hundreds of thousands are going down into perdition, with scarcely a prayer or a care, and the Churches are doing very little or nothing to warn, to rescue, and to save. Here and there, perhaps, is one who strives and prays. But where is the compact, resolute, praying army of Christian workers the case requires? Has the world grown too large for Christ to be its master? Is this mountain of evil so large that we fear to attack it? "Before Zerubbabel it shall become a plain," is the promise; why do we not grasp it and go to work? There are widely-extended and successful missions to the heathen abroad, may He who commanded them spread them over the earth! But this ought we to have done, and not have left the other undone. It may fairly be questioned if anywhere on earth a more densely-packed, ignorant, depraved population can be found; or, in other words, if we can find anywhere a truer mission-field than we have at our own doors in the East of London.

THE MEDICAL MISSION.

“Heal the sick!”

COME and see and smell Drury Lane on Sunday morning! You remember the different scents of Cologne?—each worse than its precursor. You remember ancient Edinburgh on a warm day? Now let me have your opinion of these perfumes. Indescribable?—not quite. *That* scent is fried fish—*that*, red herring—*that*, decaying cabbage-leaves—*that*, stale beer—*that* is the gin being *mixed* in the publican’s cellar—that is soot from the sweep’s, this is from the donkey’s stable, and the remaining multitude are neither safe nor decent to mention. Unbearable! oh no! you see that thousands live and die among them (die rather fast, though, as when six hundred perished in one season of the cholera); and it is not proved to the satisfaction of the landlords in these courts that these smells are even injurious. But let us turn from smells to sights and sounds.

That young woman with her face bloated, and horribly beaten and discoloured, is drunk already, though it is not yet the hour of morning service.

Where did she get the liquor? Are not the public-houses closed? My dear friend, look and see—that man opposite is making signals to the publican, whose house we are passing now. The door is open, and he is in. And even if he were not, he could get gin, rum, and beer in scores of private houses, in small shops—notably the barbers', and even up some gateways which I could show you if I had time. You see, she and her—husband—let us say, keep a stall in the Lane. Last night they were both drunk, and they disagreed over their liquor; there was a fair stand-up fight. He is sleeping it off, and she is drunk again. If he were locked up, would she appear to-morrow morning against him? Not she! but she would lead the policemen who came to fetch her an awful life of it until they retired. I have seen her fight three, and beat them off, having so arranged her garments that they might fall off during the engagement. She did not care what followed, but the police did, and were consequently defeated.

Will you speak to her? Not now, perhaps; but she is but a unit of the countless mass of home heathenism, and, drunken and desperate and hopeless as she seems, she is human, and has to live for ever, and is not without good qualities. I have seen her give a blind child some of her best fruit. She will sit up any night with a neighbour down with the fever, and is well-spoken, civil, and respectable when she is "on the quiet." Just now

she is "on the spree," and very probably we may hear her roaring out general defiance while sitting on our church steps during our time of prayer.

This young man, with high cheek bones, thick lips, and furtive eyes, is—well—*not* honest. He says "he can't be, he can't get no vork novhere 'cos o' the p'lice. He did get vork, and they rounded on him to his guv'nor, and he vos sacked. He's been in pris'n a dollop o' times; an' vont you give a poor boy a shillin' to keep him 'onest for even vun day?" Canting, cunning, oily, incorrigibly idle and dangerous Joey, you will certainly not get a farthing from self or friend. You know you can get your tea at the Bible-class in Parker Street, but as far as we are concerned you must wait until that time. So, with a sardonic grin, very like the snarl of a wild beast, our respectable friend shambles off to find a dinner that somebody has worked for, that he may steal! Did Christ die for Joey, do you think? Did any one ever tell him so? Is the Gospel preached in prisons? If so, they are better off than in many so-called churches, for no one ever hears the Gospel there.

Yet Joey knows the name of Jesus, and will ask Him to "blind" him as coolly as you would ask for an article in a shop! As to any belief in a living, loving Saviour from sin—God's own dear Christ—no! Joey knows nothing of—cares nothing for Him! In the midst of so-called Christian effort of every kind, it is pitiful and

shameful that Joey should be even possible in a Christian land.

Here's young Nellie, selling moss-roses. Just look at her, with her large brown eyes, clear skin, strong health, and reckless passions. How old is she? Fourteen, and she has been upon the streets, in the worst signification of the term, for three years. She has been about the Lane all her life. We all know her, and have tried to do her good, but quite in vain. She does not steal—consequently does not get into prison. She can drink more than the drunkard we saw just now, and it only makes her hard and dangerous. She has no living soul to care for her, and she cares for no one. No tie, human or divine, holds her; she is as much a strong, handsome animal as the oilman's Newfoundland dog, and with as little or less sense of morality or shame. What are we to do for her? I wish I knew! The Gospel of Christ is her only remedy, but how to get it applied!

Here comes one of the officials of St ——'s Workhouse who could tell us much more of Nellie's history; he is an earnest Christian, and I love to have a word with him. "Not many Christians here," I remark; and he replies—"Nor anywhere else in these parts! I have been officially connected with the St ——'s Workhouse for thirty years. I have seen about six hundred there annually, but in all that time I have never known one converted man or woman die there." A speech

suggesting two very opposite thoughts—the first, God's glorious faithfulness to His ancient promise, and the second—"What becomes of the souls of *all* who die in St ——'s Workhouse?"

Let us turn to something respectable for a change. Here is a poor man, of middle age, weak from disease, but honest and willing to work if he were able. I saw the kind physician, at his dispensary for abdominal disease round the corner, kindly talking to this poor man, and after he had left, the physician said—"If I had a bed to put that poor fellow in, I could cure him in a fortnight, at an expense of not more than two pounds." Take another case of respectable suffering. This young man, aged 27, has a wife and two children, and is all but totally blind. He has been helpless for five years, but if he could be treated carefully and skilfully for three weeks, his sight could be restored so far as to enable him to find his own road, or even to work for his wife and children. To him such a blessing would be priceless; and, as he is a true Christian, what is done for him would be reckoned as done for the Master whom he loves and serves!

Such cases as these show our need of a Medical Mission here, such as those at Edinburgh and Liverpool, where the patients are treated for both body and soul. Such an institution would be a power for good in this neighbourhood, the extent of which would be incalculable. Nor would the

cost be very great. Christian physicians would gladly give a couple of hours each per week in which to prescribe for the poor, and thus three thousand patients could be benefited annually at cost not much exceeding £100. While the patients wait to see the doctor there is much precious time in which to speak to them of Jesus and the land where there is no more pain. A sum of £300 would suffice to commence such a movement, and prove whether a Medical Mission could be as useful and profitable in this great city as it is in others.

Just step down this street, and I will show you something worth looking at. We are just midway between Drury Lane and Seven Dials. Look at that large closed public-house opposite. It has been a place of awful character. It is now shut, and for sale! Would it not make a glorious place for a Medical Mission station?

[It is pleasant to be able to add that this appeal was successful. The house, formerly a den of thieves, is now the London Medical Mission, having 70 physicians, and a complete staff of attendants and workers.]

NEIGHBOURS.

"Gather the good into vessels, and cast the bad away."

SURROUNDING the Mission House in Drury Lane are many thousands of the poor, the vile, the out-cast, and the homeless, who have had no minister, or missionary, or Christian labourer of any kind, simply because they have no homes where Christian effort can reach them. They sleep at night in casual wards, refuges, arches, and doorways; or when disturbed in these last sad resting-places by the police, wander aimlessly until morning withdraws police *surveillance*, and they may rest and sleep if they can in the nipping cold. Through the day they wander to and fro, eating if they can get food; if not, fasting until night opens casual wards and refuges again.

Other thousands find nightly shelter in multitudes of low lodging-houses for men and women, often obtaining the fourpence requisite in very questionable ways. These dens of horror and filth and crime contain thieves, harlots, tramps, beggars, honest working men and their wives and children, lads and girls, in one disastrous and destructive mixture. It is quite common to find

all these classes at once in the wretched underground kitchen. One court, wholly occupied by such tenants, has but one kitchen, which is the common cooking, eating, and living room of more than a hundred men and women. These, far withdrawn from any public opinion or supervision, live and herd together in any way that seems to them meet. The consequences fall upon union infirmaries, and parish schools, and poor's-rates, with a weight that ought to cause ratepayers to devise and carry out measures to stamp out all such places, if only in simple self-defence.

From these sources we have been gathering audiences in the mission-rooms and school-rooms of our Church, only limited by our utmost capacity to pack them in. Our method of getting them has been as simple as efficient—we have given a piece of bread and a bason of soup to as many as we could crowd into our meetings. We held a mid-day prayer-meeting, to which very many came *two hours* before the appointed time, waiting in the bitter cold until we were able to admit them.

At the appointed hour praise, prayer, and short exhortation occupied the time; after which a meal, costing three-halfpence, was given to each; the time occupied in eating being also used to obtain some detailed information as to their manner of life. In six months we have thus fed between seven and eight thousand, and have thus reached

and spoken to many hundreds who never otherwise hear the good news of salvation.

Among our motley groups come awful numbers of male and female drunkards, from whom we are compelled to turn with heart-breaking hopelessness. There seems for them nothing but the casual ward while they can be driven from place to place, then the workhouse infirmary, a pauper's grave, and "judgment to come."

There are hundreds of others whose lives are simply dissolute idleness, who will not work honestly or fairly. To these crowds of able-bodied drones I would unflinchingly apply the Scripture rule: "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat."

Passing from these large classes, I turn to more hopeful cases which abound in their midst. Here is a nice-looking woman, able and willing to work, but disabled through an accident; discharged as cured from the hospital, but quite unable to work; living as long as she could by parting with her clothing. This one resource soon failing, she has to face the unspeakable horrors of the casual ward, the streets and starvation, or worse. Quietly she prefers starvation, until, passing by our mission, she finds the chance of a meal. Terribly hungry, she passes in with the crowd, and there we are able to reach her. Her story is examined, found to be true; our Mission House rescues her from nightly horrible association, gives her supper, and

lodging, and breakfast, until employment is found her, and she is floated off into respectable independence again.

A sad life-history comes next. A wet, draggled, miserable woman, who had once been "not far from the kingdom of God;" but she wrecked her life by marrying suffering and sorrow, in the shape of a worthless, drunken fellow, who lived upon her earnings, beat her when he thought fit, and deserted her to be confined in a union ward. He returned, was taken, and sent to prison, came out, committed a robbery, and is now imprisoned for a long term. Then the poor woman found he had a wife elsewhere, and, unable to bear the shame, fled from her country home to the great city, leaving the poor babe with her mother. Field Lane Refuge received her at our request, sheltered her, comforted her, clothed her, and sent her to work. The contrast of her bright face with her former forlornness was ample payment for the very little trouble she had caused us, to which the Master added the hope that she had found "peace in believing."

Father and mother and two boys come next. Father formerly on railroad, mother worked at sewing-machine, both members of a Christian Church. Drink conquered father, situation soon lost, character followed; and they have come to hide themselves in the great city. Poor wife, poor mother! lost, distracted, horrified, in the awful lodging-house den. She comes to us, her fair,

pleasant face swollen with tears, her soul faint with hunger, and only a few rags for covering. Fed and cheered and comforted, she owns her backsliding with many tears, and is pointed to Him who can heal backslidings. A general subscription follows from our almost emptied congregational wardrobes, one giving a bonnet, another a shawl, a third boots, a fourth a dress, and others under-garments, which so transform her as to take ten years from her apparent age, and so cheer her that she goes brightly and hopefully to seek employment, which she obtains in a good city house.

An honest Scotchwoman, lost in London, finds her way to us. She does not want relief, but work. Has been for years a communicant in a large Edinburgh church, whence her "lines" can be had for asking. She needs a few days' food, shelter, and a little clothing; these are obtained *somehow*; and she, too, obtains good work in a city house, coming with a radiant face to tell us she shall soon be able to repay in full all that has been advanced for her.

Now, let us go down to the lowest depths, as Jesus did. These young women are of the very lowest, freely owning themselves dishonest as well as impure. Beyond this the frightful story of their lives cannot be told. We go down to their den of thieves after them, and there hold quiet conversation with them, and they promise to attend our

meeting. They come at the hour, they eat quietly, they behave well, the hymns and tunes are known to them, and after-conversation informs us they have all been in Sunday-schools—one of them has been a teacher—and from *that* they have fallen to *this*! We visit their den again, reason with them, and persuade so many to leave their evil lives, that the proprietor of this den of thieves and harlots forbids our access to them any more, his horrible craft being in danger. We, in return, think it right to call public attention to this villainous manufactory, which is situate on the left-hand side of Charles Street, Drury Lane, and hope that the police or some other authority will put a speedy end to this modern vampirism of Sunday-scholars.

This man's life has been filled with crime and punishment; two-thirds of it has been passed under restraint. Now he is weary of prison and penal servitude, well-nigh worn out, and anxious to be free from the haunting policeman and prison. A few shillings laid out for him sets him upon his way, and we hope speedily to see him walking quietly on his way to a near death, in company with One who did not refuse the prayer of the dying thief, and who will not turn from a living one seeking Him by penitence and prayer.

Multitudes of the respectable unemployed come to us also; for these we establish a "labour agency" at the Mission House, to which employers may send for such help as they need. The results are

most cheering, and offer us the greatest encouragement to persevere.

The great lesson we learn is—that in the degradation and hopelessness of casual wards and refuges, and among the homeless, there are thousands whom a little money well laid out, a little clothing, and a few nights' decent lodging, would restore to independence, respectability; and in many cases to religion, and to work for Him who came "to seek and to save."

SOMEBODY'S DAUGHTER.

“Seek that which was lost.”

THE heavens are cloudless, black as ebony, lit up with the light of myriads of stars which seem nearer earth than usual in the clear atmosphere, as we wend our way towards the Café-Royale in Regent Street. Making ourselves known, and entering, we are shown up a gilded staircase, where some “unfortunates” are already assembled. They are scattered in small groups at the tables in the room, and some members of the Midnight Mission Committee are passing from group to group engaging in conversation. Among those conversing we recognise the Revs. Newman Hall, V. J. Charlesworth, and W. M. Statham, with Mr J. Stabb, the treasurer of the Mission; Mr Hornibrook, two or three city missionaries, and other assistants. There are also some of the matrons of the Mission-homes in attendance to serve at the tables. The large room is rapidly filling, and before midnight nearly two hundred are assembled. Very soon breakfast is announced, and the visitors descend to a lower hall, fitted with small tables with marble tops, at each of which four chairs are

placed. A blessing is sought; and breakfast, consisting of tea and coffee, bread and butter, and cake, is commenced. While they are thus engaged, we will wander round the hall and observe our visitors. The first thought that strikes us is that they are not hungry, nor do many of them seem to appreciate the clean and good fare set before them. It was somewhat startling to see these supposed outcasts refuse good food, and even throw it at each other, and to remember that there were thousands of reputable women at the East End who would most thankfully have accepted the provisions thus neglected and wasted. There were many French and German girls present, and the flaunting insolence of their manner and bearing was almost insufferable. They were gaudily tricked out in silks and satins, large flowing feathers, and white kid gloves. Bold, brazen faces, hardened in sin, and glorying in it, were the chief characteristics; with here and there the quiet modesty of some English servant girl who had fallen into evil ways, but still retained decency of conduct. Among the former was one Frenchwoman superbly dressed, her red hair dyed yellow, and a cold insolent sneer upon her plain features, which was exasperating and disgusting in the highest degree. She appeared to have attended simply to mock and sneer, and prevent any good being done; leading the loud and filthy conversation and

mocking laughter at all around. Near the table where she sat was an old woman of at least fifty, who was plainly dressed and eating heartily. At another table sat two young English servant girls, whose quiet demeanour was in striking contrast with the general tone. When breakfast was finished the meeting was commenced, Mr Hall vainly endeavouring to get order among them. After several unsuccessful attempts, he resigned in favour of another gentleman with stronger lungs, and the hymn was sung—

“Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me—
Can my God His wrath forbear,
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?”

It was a striking scene; the large saloon glittering with mirrors and gilding, the gorgeous dresses and the sweet singing, mingled with laughter, jests, low bitter oaths and curses, and abominably filthy language. After the hymn prayer was offered amid dead silence, which was disagreeably broken by a loud mocking “Amen” from the yellow-haired Frenchwoman.

The women were then addressed by Mr Statham, who with much earnestness endeavoured to prevail upon them to quit their lives of misery and sin, quoting the instance of a young woman formerly in a Sunday-school, who fell sick while living in sin, and in a single week was deserted and sent to an hospital to die. “How many of you have

been in Sunday-schools?" he asked; and at least a third of those present held up a hand in response. "What is the great misery of life?" he further inquired, and was answered, "Want of money!" which caused shouts of laughter, general disturbance, and complete interruption of the proceedings for several minutes. "Happiness," he resumed, "is not in silks and satins, theatres or champagne." He was again interrupted by low fierce hisses, which seemed to come from all parts of the hall. Here one girl pretended weeping, and commenced wiping her tearless eyes with a very dirty pocket-handkerchief. Some of the women retired; others came in asking loudly for breakfast, and the conclusion of the address was lost.

The next hymn was "Just as I am," followed by an address by Newman Hall, who commenced with a paraphrase of the Prodigal Son. He was stopped by a very large and tumultuous exodus of listeners; after which, he recommenced with a touching and pathetic appeal to the large number who still remained. "Oh," said he, "it may all be very well for a little while, but how will it end? And how soon? It has been ascertained that the average lives of such as you does not exceed five years. And what then? Surely when you are quietest you sometimes say: 'I think of my mother, my dear good mother, and I weep; I think of my father, and I am ashamed; of my old home,

and I fly to drink and to company to drive away thoughts that are unbearable.' But," he continued, "there is a way of escape for you; none are so black, so crimson-dyed in sin, as to be without a refuge or a hope." He illustrated this with a story of his American experience, which at once attracted the attention of all his hearers, concerning a poor outcast boy who died in the faith of Christ; or, as Mr Hall put it, "fell back on his bed of rags, and was gone to God." This story of real life seemed to act with wonderful power upon the listeners, many were in real tears, and sobbing and crying were largely prevalent. He proceeded to explain the method of deliverance, by putting them in temporary homes, and then procuring employment for them in laundry work and domestic service. These offers were received with marked disfavour; many laughed outright with unconcealed scorn, others hissed, others were grimacing to their companions. "But there—do you hear that?" said one English girl to another; "do you hear? I have had enough of this. I am heart sick of it; come with me, Lizzie, and let us leave it together!" Mr Hall concluded his address by comparing their lives to a river, and their sins to a lump of lead, ever bearing them down. If they clung to it, they must sink and perish; but "let go the lead," said he, "and you will rise to the surface, and be saved for this life and for that which is to come." An announcement by

Mr Stabb followed, offering breakfast to any late arrivals, and inviting any who wished to leave their evil course to remain; after which the hymn "Come to the Saviour!" was sung, and the meeting broke up into small groups for conversation. It was plain that more women had accepted the invitations than the Committee expected, and the large numbers rendered them unmanageable, but it was cheering to note how, after the addresses were ended, various groups were formed of men and women discussing earnestly the questions of future life and conduct. We had wondered throughout the meeting at the faith and patience of the workers in this unpromising field of labour, but here was the mystery solved. They had worked in patience and faith, and here, in these trembling and weeping Magdalens, was the reward of their labour, the souls for their hire, the seals for their hard but loving service. The two English girls were among the number of those who remained, and were, with several others, conveyed direct from the meeting to the Society's homes.

Glancing at the general results of the last year of labour and self-denial, it appears that sixteen midnight meetings have been held in various districts of the metropolis, attended by about eleven hundred unfortunates, of whom one hundred and fifty have been led to turn from the error of their way. From the meeting in Regent Street, de-

scribed above, the Society have received twelve as the fruit of their labour of love.

So the Lord's work goes on on every side, and day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth forth knowledge of the faithfulness, diligence, and self-denial of this regiment of our Lord's army—into whose souls the solemn charge has entered, "Occupy till I come!"

THE LORD'S DAY.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath."

WORKING MEN,—Will you kindly allow me to speak to you about Sunday, simply because that day is a matter of such great importance to your class? No other class of men need it so much as you do. We have it now; how long we shall be able to keep it appears to depend very much upon the value we set upon it, and the use we make of it. But there are those falsely pretending to be your friends who have banded themselves together, and who are striving in every possible way to take the Sabbath from the working men—by destroying that sanctity which is its only safeguard. To secularise the Sabbath is the sure way to lose it. Do you not know that many of your employers watch your conduct and speculate upon it? and if they see the sanctity of the Sabbath utterly disregarded by you, they will surely and reasonably say: "Those men might as well, or even better, be at work." The sanctity of the Sabbath is the only safeguard strong enough to withstand the combined attacks of ambition, competition, and selfishness. And don't imagine you

would get more money by your additional day's labour; you would not even gain a mess of pottage by the sale of your birthright—one day in each seven entirely free from labour. It needs no conjuror to tell us what would be the effect on the labour market by increasing the supply so largely, while at the same time decreasing the demand in the same proportion. Your common sense will show, you would be paid less for seven than you are now for six days' labour, and surely you would only be rightly served for your selfishness and folly. The Sabbath was made for man—for every man. God made it for us, and gave it to us to improve and enjoy. His Son when on earth confirmed the gift; and thus, made for every man alike, your own sense of justice will tell you that the man who deprives his brother of it, deserves to lose it himself.

Just think for a moment. You are, we will say, a carpenter, or some other trade that leaves you at liberty on Sunday—you have each returning Sabbath at your own disposal. By carefulness during the week you can save enough to take your wife and little ones for a short excursion on Sunday afternoon. But before setting your foot on the steamboat that is to convey you, just look at the stoker, with his black heated face, come up from the intense heat below to breathe for a moment the cool, free air. On God's holy day he must work for your pleasure. Now, don't you

think he would enjoy rest and change as much as you do?—that his wife and children would be as glad of his company as your own?—and that it would be very pleasant to him to be thoroughly washed, clean, comfortable, and away from that hot, fiery oven of his, one day in each week? Has he not a clear God-given right to it also?—and are you not committing a robbery on him, to which he is compelled to submit in order to earn his children's bread? You will perhaps say, "He need not do it unless he likes;" but does not his children's bread depend (as we should say), upon it? He yields for their sakes; and you would do the same if you were in his place. And don't demean yourself by urging the plea that he is one and you are many, and therefore you are justified in depriving him of his right. You do not admit that force of numbers justifies any other form of oppression or wrong; why should you, then, in this case? Surely, if you are resolved to break God's commandment yourself, you ought not to compel your brother to break it also.

But not only in his personal rights and liberty can you thus injure your brother, but also in his social and domestic privileges, as a most painful experience has taught me. Years ago, I had a little child who was weak and delicate, and needed the fresh, free air of the green fields. The Sabbath was his delight, as it was mine; for on that day we were together: then he would clasp his

thin, wasted arms round my neck, and we would haste from the hot, close streets into the cool, refreshing breeze of the early summer morning, returning home in time for breakfast and public worship. Through the week my sick child and myself were often parted by press of business, but the Sabbath we could always reckon upon—it was our own Heavenly Father's considerate, loving, priceless gift to myself and my suffering boy. Tell me, if you can, the value of the joy that filled his young heart, when the earnest love we bore each other found expression in close and continuous interchange of thoughts and words. He has gone home—he has begun the eternal Sabbath. Thank God, I have a good hope of being with him there for ever. But when you are tempted to deprive your fellow-man of his Sabbath, remember that there are hundreds of fathers like myself, hundreds of suffering children like mine, to whom the fresh, free air of the Sabbath comes wooingly as the breath of God's love, and their Sabbaths must go with your own in the common wreck. Refrain, then, from destroying the Sabbath, for their sakes if not for your own.

And is there no more? Is this world all? Is there nothing beyond our present life of toil and trouble, nothing higher and holier to which we can aspire and reach? Yes, undoubtedly; and surely, for the benefit of our immortal part, we have urgent need of the Sabbath, that we may then

gather the spiritual food so indispensable to our well-being. We need abstraction from the cares of the world; we need opportunity to fix our thoughts upon the world to come, and to fit ourselves for its enjoyment; and we have other needs also. Who is to teach our little ones of Him who loved young children, if we do not? Who is to teach them the simple but sublime majesty of prayer? A father teaching his little child to pray is as true an act of homage and worship as an archangel's anthem before God; for it is a manifestation of the Divine life and image in us: for God is love. But what do we know now of the gentleness and love that are the characteristics of heaven, and when or where are we to learn them? Take away the Sabbath, and answer these questions fairly if you can. Are you to learn of spiritual things in the workshop, amid carelessness and infidelity, and the freely uttered oaths, the toil and sweat, care and anxiety, hurry and bustle, that make up your daily life? Is such a place fit to prepare a man for purity and eternal glory, fit to prepare him to dwell in sinless blessedness with God? Doubtless the power of God keeps His children safely even in such scenes; but thousands have learned to look for the Sabbath as a day of blessed deliverance from all this toil and misery; as a time when they can drink freely and uninterruptedly from that well of living water

which is ever flowing in the pages of God our Father's holy Word.

Let me entreat you, then, rightly to employ this gift of God's love for yourself and your family, and never to compel your brother to toil for your personal and fleeting gratification. Let him have the Sabbath that God has provided for him, as for all, in order that he may be trained and fitted for his magnificent destiny, for there is One to whom the appeal of the desolate and the oppressed is never made in vain; One who is above us, infinitely great and good, who loves us all, who is able and willing to teach us, give us more and more knowledge; help us to conquer every difficulty, and fulfil in us the good pleasure of His goodness, in fitting us for that land where the inhabitant shall not say "I am sick," and where they shall die no more.

My brothers, we are all God's children, made in His likeness and image, cared for by Him, protected by Him, and entreated by Him to share in the glory which He hath prepared. He knows we have sinned, and has sent His Son to die to save us. He knows also that we are unfitted for His presence, while in our present fallen and sinful condition, and in loving-kindness and tender mercy, He has given us one day in each seven, that we may learn to be made meet for the inheritance of His children, the saints in light; and


with them and the glorified Redeemer, our elder Brother, and with our Heavenly Father, the Lord God Almighty, spend an eternal Sabbath of glory and blessedness in heaven.

SUNDAY.

"As sheep without a shepherd."

AN article in a recent daily paper had drawn attention to Somer's Town on the Lord's day. Having part of Sunday to dispose of, the writer visited the locality, to witness for himself the proceedings that took place.

Very much of Somer's Town has been blotted out by the Midland Railway. Small houses are succeeded by massive arches and a terminus, for which whole streets have been removed. Beneath the massive arches that span the St Pancras Road, some very suggestive sights may be seen from eleven till one on each Lord's day. Many hundreds of workmen, of all grades, congregate together, seeking for excitement and pastime. They will not attend public worship: churches and chapels have no attraction for them. They prefer to lounge about, even in cold and rain; they are not wanted at home, where children are being cleaned and dinners cooked; the public-houses are closed, but there is generally something under the arches to interest or amuse, and so pass away the morning hours of the Lord's day.



Here, for instance, is an Immanuelite, who believes in present human perfection, and boldly states that since his conversion he "has never committed any sin." He has three little boys listening to him, and one grown man, who very coolly states his conviction to the preacher that he is a candidate for Colney Hatch to talk like that. The general opinion is, that "he is out of his mind, but quite harmless." Very near him is a workman who goes in for political oratory; loudly and vehemently he informs his auditory that "the aristocracy are chargeable with all the misfortunes of our ruined and degraded country; that the working classes are trampled on, degraded, and compelled to bow down in abject slavery." As he speaks, the policeman on duty passes by, regards him with a placid smile and goes his way. He has about twenty or thirty hearers, who are waiting for the commencement of the infidel lecture. Hark! there is singing, let us cross the road, and listen:

"Sinners, Jesus will receive—
Say this word of grace to all
Who the heavenly pathway leave :
All who wander—all who fall—
This can bring them back again—
Christ receiveth sinful men."

The singers have brought out a movable pulpit of wood, whence, after the singing, an evangelist preaches to the people. He speedily obtains an audience of about two hundred working men, not

a woman or a child among them. With powerful voice and passionate earnestness, he preaches a full, clear gospel sermon to those who listen. Well done, young brother! may God give you souls for your hire and seals for your ministry! Let us cross again. Here is a man who reads from books only; he makes no pretension to preach or speak, but he reads loudly and well, and gets a great number to listen. This morning he is reading of some Scottish worthy whose name does not reach us, who "astonished all the professors in Edinburgh by his profound learning when only nineteen years of age." At the opposite corner the infidel lecturer has now erected his stand and commenced. He is little more than a boy, and flippancy and self-conceit are the characteristics of every sentence. He is plainly "not guilty" of any original thought, or even the most elementary knowledge of theology. The objections he urges have been manufactured by others, and answered many times. He deals with the subjects good men hold dear in a manner that provokes mingled feelings of disgust and sadness. But, alas! for them, he is surrounded by as many hearers as the preacher; and he amuses them with shocking obscenity concerning the Lord of Glory. No one interrupts or opposes him, and he is excited to more gross blasphemy by tumultuous applause and roars of laughter. This shameful exhibition of obscenity and blasphemy proceeds unchecked in

the metropolis of so-called Christian England in the nineteenth century. Where are the moral and religious police?

Scattered here and there are many small groups discussing religion, theology, politics, temperance, lack of employment, price of meat, singing-birds, and herb-pills. Costermongers, vending apples and walnuts, shout continually. Each speaker endeavours to drown the voices of all the others by his own loud speech; while, by choosing a place in the centre of the arches, all the voices can be heard in mingled chorus—and there are at least a dozen speaking at the same time. In the whole there are nearly a thousand men present, broken up into the various groups indicated. There is scarcely a single woman to be seen. The preacher has finished at the stand, and is succeeded by a diminutive gentleman, who announces that next Sunday he will review the infidel address from that spot, and proceeds in the same way to preach *himself* instead of his Master. Not an uncommon fault! After the little man comes a tall man of middle age, who is evidently well known, and a favourite, judging from the thinning of other groups to listen to him. His commencement is a biting jest at the expense of the young infidel opposite, who is exhorted to attend to one Bible precept, and every one will be satisfied—if he will but tarry at Jericho till his beard be grown. Here is a sample of the speaker's teaching:—"Come,

ow, you'll soon have to lie down and die, whether you like it or not! So just suppose yourself on your death-bed, lifting up your poor trembling hands and gasping out, 'O Lord, I've been all my life a *bricklayer*, now make me a *tailor*.'" This caused a roar of laughter; but he coolly went on, "Laugh if you like, but tell me the difference, — 'O Lord, I've been all my life a *sinner*, now make me a *saint*.'" He stopped amid profound silence, while a deep, grave look on every face gave evidence that the bold, quaint illustration had struck home.

After one o'clock the groups rapidly dissolved, and the arches were left to the usual passers-by. Here then were collected together many hundreds of men ready and willing to listen to any one who thought fit to speak to them. Let us now look at the evangelistic provision and character of the places of worship around. An invitation was given to a service at the Agricultural Hall at half-past three, and this was the only invitation to any afternoon service announced on the ground.

The Agricultural Hall is occupied by the Rev. J. L. Davidson, of Islington, for afternoon services for the working classes. As soon as the doors were opened, a vast crowd poured into the building, occupying every available sitting before the service commenced. The service was twice delayed for a little space, in order to stretch the accommodation to the utmost; and when the large hall

was densely crowded, numbers applied for admission in vain.

The preacher of the day chose for his text, Job vii. 16, "Let me alone!" characterising this as man's demand, and giving "God's answers" as follows:—How shall I give thee up?" "Joined to idols, let him alone." "Thou hast destroyed thyself!" "Depart, ye cursed!" "These," said the speaker, "are four of God's answers to man's insolent and disastrous demand, and this last final and fatal answer will be addressed to every one in this vast assembly who is not cleansed in the precious blood of Christ!" The greatest attention was manifested throughout, and the whole service was an unmistakable and most gratifying success. Dr Davidson has done a work of true and large evangelisation in opening this hall on Sunday afternoons. There were nearly two thousand persons present, and the character of the audience may be inferred from the following brief dialogue, overheard and reported by a lady-member of Dr Davidson's congregation:—"I say, Bill," said one workman to another, in the morning, "look here! afternoon service at the Agricultural Hall! I propose we go home and clean ourselves and go." "Agreed," said Bill, as they went on their way.

We then tested the evangelistic provision for the evening of the Lord's day, as far as we could do so, by personal inspection, during the time of evening service.

The whole round of rapid visiting produced the impression that wherever the working men might be, they were not under the railway arches, nor in any of the evangelistic places of worship around. Where, then, were they? The public-houses, silent, closed, and empty in the morning, were noisy, and crowded in the evening. Were they there? The infidel lecture hall, holding nearly a thousand persons, is always open; everyone pays twopence for admission, and many pay more, yet the place is crowded every Sunday evening. Were they there? The judge-and-jury boxes held in public-houses in low neighbourhoods on Sunday evenings are specially attractive; many young men and women are there drawn into sin and shame. Were they there? These are questions full of suggestive and solemn thought for all Christian Churches.

AMONG THE INFIDELS.

“Why will ye die?”

SOME WORDS TO WORKING MEN OF LEEDS.—I have most probably never seen any of you, excepting one dear friend who is residing among you, and from him I have just received a letter, a passage in which has formed in my mind an earnest desire to offer a few words of friendly caution and advice for your serious consideration. The passage in the letter referred to runs as follows:—“The town (Leeds) was posted all over with bills a short time since announcing a lecture under the title, ‘*What must I do to be damned?*’ ”

Of course no one but an infidel would have announced such a subject, and even he must have formed a very low opinion of your taste and judgment before he could venture such an experiment upon your credulity and patience. But since the subject has been broached, I do most earnestly request your attention whilst I try, with the blessing of God, to set our side of the question plainly before you. I am a workman like yourselves, have served an apprenticeship to the business at which to-day, as for nearly a quarter of a century

past, I have earned my bread. I neither expect nor shall receive anything for writing this appeal to you ; but having given the best powers I have for many years past to an intelligent personal study of the principles and practice of the Christian religion, I am so convinced of its importance and truth that I greatly desire to see it spread amongst my fellow-workmen. In reply to your lecturer's question, "What must I do to be damned?" I simply answer—Nothing more than he has already done, be he who he may. Jesus Christ would tell him, if he would listen, that he is "condemned already," and that it is simply owing to the loving-kindness of God that he is now out of hell. Sharp sickness, accident, or sudden death may end his wicked and ridiculous bravado for ever, and then where would he be? Let him reply if he can or will, but he must remember that his want of belief has not the slightest bearing on the actual fact of the existence of damnation. There will be salvation or damnation hereafter, quite independent of what he may choose to believe.

It may be that some of you have listened to this or similar lectures, and, having never given earnest attention to the rock-founded truths of our Christian faith, may have been led into a region of doubt and sorrow. I therefore venture to offer a suggestion or two that may, at least, show that there cannot possibly be any certainty on the infidel

side of the question. I ask then, Are these lecturers sure, quite sure, sure beyond even the remotest possibility of mistake, that they are right—that there is in simple truth no place where God eternally punishes sinners—no such thing as the damnation of hell, of which Christ spoke? And if they are sure, will they inform us whence they get their knowledge, and their authority for such a belief? They may say, and do say, they do not believe in the existence of such a place, but belief is a mere personal matter, having not the slightest connection with the truth or falsehood of the thing believed. Who has been through the wide universe of God from end to end, searched its immensity through and through, and has returned to this one little speck in it to tell them such astounding tidings? And what credentials did he who made the revelation exhibit in order that he might be believed? Indeed, for all that Secularists can positively affirm, any other planet, or even our own, may be the actual place where lost spirits are congregated, waiting the sure coming of judgment and fiery indignation. Can these lecturers offer any reasonable *proof* that it is not so? And if they cannot, we must turn from them with something like contemptuous pity for such outrageous assumption, unsupported by even the slightest proof.

The world is made; therefore, it had a **Maker**. It is full to overflowing of proofs of design, show-

ng clearly an intelligent Designer. From the star in the heavens to the insect on the grass-blade, all is beautiful and good, and just as we can judge of each other by our work, so we can humbly judge our Father by His, and it proves Him to be what He revealed Himself—Love. He who has written His name in characters of light and beauty through the fair green earth and the spreading heavens, I believe to be my Father and my God.

Wise and intelligent in design, wonderful and powerful in working, God has allowed all the *present* powers of His child and creature, man, to be utterly overwhelmed and confounded by the introduction of sin into this world of ours, and very disastrous the consequences *appear* to have been. Pain and sorrow, the inevitable results of rebellion against perfect wisdom, are distressingly apparent all around and within us. Foolish men, like the lecturers of whom I have spoken, have puzzled themselves in vain to account for this proceeding on the part of the Almighty. They ask,—Why has God allowed sin and consequent pain and sorrow, to have an abiding place with us? He could have prevented these things troubling us. Why, then, does He allow them? But they ask in vain—God has made belief that they will not render, worship they will not perform, absolute pre-requisites to the acquirement of the knowledge they vainly demand; and because they will not be taught by God in His own way, they

are and must remain ignorant, and that, too, by their own fault. There is absolute and imperative need that we should believe some things that we cannot now comprehend, and this is one of them. Nor is this requirement of belief arbitrary or oppressive on the part of our Maker. Without believing each other, our common natural life and business could not possibly go on; nevertheless, unwise men refuse to accord the same belief to a truthful God which they do not scruple to bestow upon each other.

But whether men believe it or not, God our Father has spoken to all His sorrowing and struggling earthly children; He has told us that He loves us, that our life here on earth, full of pain and sorrow though it may be, is only a short and fleeting preparation for an eternal life of glory and blessedness with Him in heaven. Whether men believe it or not, God has sent His Son Jesus Christ, our Brother according to the flesh, to assume our nature for a twofold purpose: that He might by His death make atonement for sin, and live just as we do, that He might leave us an example how we ought to live. "He hath left us an example that we should follow in His steps."

This example was absolutely necessary, for so low had man sunk in sin and misery before the coming of our Lord Jesus, that not only the practice, but the knowledge, of moral excellence was lost from amongst us. But Jesus came to lift us

out of the mire of folly, ignorance, and superstition into which we had fallen, to show us that these things need not and ought not to be; that man could do something far better and higher than rob or defraud his brother man; and that he might, through the favouring mercy of God, be fitted for the glorious inheritance of the saints in light.

This, then, is briefly the substance of the religion of the Bible. There is a God infinitely wise and good, who created this and all other worlds; that He has created us, and invested us with immortality, and has informed us that we shall live for ever; that we have sinned, and fallen far short of what we ought to be; that while we are helpless in our sin, God has pitied His sinning children, and has sent Jesus from heaven to save us, *if we will be saved by Him*; that there is no other way of escape, but through Jesus, from the awful condemnation pronounced against every sinning soul and body; but that we may, if we choose, be made happy here on earth in the known and felt love of God, and the constant companionship of Jesus, and when we die, God will take us to be with Him in His eternal home.

Is not this good news—glad tidings of great joy to all people? But, alas! for us, the mischief and misery is, that though the news is so good and so great, we will not believe it. The condemnation is, that light is come into the world, and men will not see it; they love darkness

rather than light, because their deeds are evil. God has sent us good and gracious words of promise and of hope, and we have treated Him as a liar in return. We refuse also to believe in Jesus Christ, and thereby crucify Him afresh, and put Him to an open shame, in return for His unutterable loving-kindness ; and when God offers His Spirit to teach us what we ought to be and to do, we turn coldly and neglectfully away.

In the deepest bitterness of sorrow without hope—in the fiercest gnawing of remediless and eternal despair, shall that man dwell for ever, who dies believing that God could or would lie! We can, if we will, now, think God a liar, when He invites us to Himself and promises mercy. We can, if we will, neglect and despise the love of Jesus, but if we do these things, the consequences will surely come upon us. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” We shall reap banishment from His presence for ever, if we neglect His offered mercy now; for, despising the proffered salvation by Christ, we must meet the unutterable agony which will fall upon us in the great day of the wrath of Him who shall sit upon the Great White Throne. But our loving and merciful Father offers to save us, swears by His own life that He hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner. Christ has died for us; what could He do *more* to prove His willingness to save unto

the uttermost. The Spirit of God is ready and waiting to teach the things that pertain to our everlasting peace. Angels and the spirits of the pure in heart, who have gone before and have seen God, are waiting to rejoice over us also, repentant and forgiven; and only the unbelief of our own hearts stands between us and the grandeur and dignity of full and free fellowship with God. Think of it, brothers, fellowship with God!

In conclusion, I ask you seriously to consider what has infidelity or secularism to offer you, in comparison with what I have so feebly portrayed; and let me beg of you, in repentance and faith, to draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. God loves you; why will you not love Him? Christ has died for you; why will you not live to Him? The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; why, oh, why will you not accept the beneficent and gracious invitation? Do not ask—What must I do to be damned? God in infinite mercy forbid that any of us should find that most awful doom; but make that *profitable* inquiry which sense, and reason, and faith alike recommend—What must I do to be saved? and, having found the answer, go straightway and do it. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, my brother, and thou shalt be saved, and through His mercy I hope to meet you at home in heaven.

G I N.

"No man cared for my soul."

PERHAPS you would not object to a little safe visitation, in company with our missionary and myself, in the centre of Christian London, and then pay a visit to the new Mission-room near Drury Lane. We will take the theatre as a starting-point, and visit in some of the courts on both sides of the lane. I don't think we'll go down that court opposite, unless you are, like Dickens's American hero, "fever-proof and likewise agur," inasmuch as every house is a fever-nest, every staircase a fever-shaft. From one house recently eleven persons were taken out, from another thirteen. I was visiting in the second-floor room at the corner, when two children were dead at one time; the parents could only raise money enough to bury one, and were thus forced to retain the other until more money could be procured. Thus the little corpse remained day after day poisoning the air in which father and mother and four other children lived, and ate, and slept. Misfortune? Oh no! drink, as usual. The father could earn three pounds per week, of which if the family

received fifteen shillings it was considered very well indeed.

This is a court where you may find crime of any low type, and near the end we ascend a flight of stairs—breathing poison at every step—and find ourselves again in a second floor. Here dwell—in one room and a cupboard—father, mother, six children, and aunt and her baby. We find at home mother, aunt, baby, and a well-grown boy, whose garments are such a mass of looped and windowed raggedness that it is difficult to believe he can ever get into or out of them. Mother says father earns eighteen shillings per week, they pay three and ninepence for the room and cupboard, and she could do better with a little more than the remainder if she had it. She will get the boy some clothing next week, and then he can go to the Ragged School. We could give the boy some clothing perhaps, but feel compelled to refrain, because on the rickety old table is a publican's quart can, and two drinking glasses have beer in them; accounting, as we think, for at least some of the rags in which the lad is dight.

Here's another court, where the children are little old men and women, the women with all womanliness stamped out of them, and the men human tigers. It is scarcely safe to enter, but we have tracts, and will risk it. Look at that bloated, gin-smitten thing—it ought to be a

woman, but what it is, is beyond description. She looks at us and the tracts, and is stricken suspiciously pious; while men appear from literal dens and caves, and eye us warily. Our tracts protect us; people who have them have little else, therefore we are untouched. Look in this London home. In each corner of the one room rags and straw, in the midst an old table; two or three battered old chairs about; two or three yellow basins in the cupboard, with the gin-bottle and the publican's cans, and one old iron saucepan accompanying the worn-out tea-kettle. Here children are born and pine and die, or live and grow up as their parents are. In the room we are now in reside grandfather—grandmother worn-out and dead—father, mother, and children—three generations in one room, and having no other. What must it be towards morning, after eight persons have poisoned each other through the close airless night?

As I don't wish to sicken you, but only to point out these homes in our Christian metropolis, I will leave this court, and proceed to that in which our Mission-room is to be found.

Here it is, street for a little way up, and court for the remainder; it is called White Hart Street, and our full direction there is, "opposite the sweep's and the half-penny barber's, over the fried potato shop, next room to the costermonger." Come up-stairs, feel your way; there was a candle-

end lighted and placed in that recess, but somebody has stolen it. What is that awful noise outside? Only a fight, caused, as usual, by the drink. Two men drunk—and why shouldn't they be? It was their own money; they worked hard for it, and have a clear right to spend it how they like; and they like to drink it away, and thus be good patriots, and support the Christian Government of our Christian country—where these man, woman, and child-traps are erected at every street corner, and are under the especial patronage of a Government that is not ashamed to use money provided in a way so disastrous and wicked.

Never mind those drunken men, keep never minding; they *can* only perish, body and soul, here and hereafter; and there's plenty of them going that road. Dismiss them from your thoughts as usual, and look at our Mission-room, into which we hope to get them and try to win them to better and brighter things. This room, as you see, is large, lofty, light, and comfortable. It was a club-room when the fried-potato shop was a public-house bar. We have cleaned it thoroughly, and enlivened it a little with illuminated and plain texts and coloured Scripture prints. Who did it? The people themselves! One gave flour for paste, one whitewashed, another papered, the women scrubbed, I procured texts and prints and pasted them up; and here it is, clean and sweet, finished and furnished, and ready for the denizens of the

courts and alleys around. It is open every week evening and throughout the Lord's day. We have Sunday and evening schools, evangelistic service, band of hope, sewing classes, weekly lecture, mothers' meeting, savings-bank, and united prayer-meeting, to finish the week on Saturday evening, at eight.

Look at these boys in the evening school. Dirty, ragged, and ignorant, but keen and knowing far beyond their years, they will learn with a quickness and retain with a pertinacity that would raise many a poor wearied schoolmaster in strength and spirits if he could see them displayed by his scholars. Let us take one boy hap-hazard, and allow him to tell us some passages of his life history in his own way. He has an old garment in rags for a coat, another for trousers ; but neither waistcoat, cap, shirt, stockings, or boots. He has a quick, roving look and restless eyes, so restless as to seem scarcely for a moment in the same direction. Ask him to sit down, and if he has had anything to eat to-day ? And hear his reply :—" On'y a lump o' dry toke (bread) from the 'Casual.' " Question him concerning his antecedents, and here is his reply :—" I could do nothin' but prig, so o' course I prigged, until another boy put me up to goin' to the casual, and saying they vos all dead but me. I've had twice seven days, vun month, an' three months ; an' vot is it ? Better grub, good clo'es, good bed,

no lickings, plenty o' waiters, an' on'y a little school; if they'd on'y let me out, two or three nights a week, I'd be there all'us, and glad o' the chance."

He is a fair, unvarnished specimen of hundreds in and around our Mission-room. Held by no ties, human or divine, every man's hand against him, his hand against every man; the scandal and the shame of the Church, and a danger and a nuisance to the State which allows him to exist and remain a well-known and acknowledged thief; he will grow up to manhood with little thought of God, or Christ, or eternal life—a manhood powerless for good, but most powerful for evil. Young children may be born to him, to follow blindly in the same hopeless path of ignorance and darkness he is leading now. This is our opinion of him and his destiny; but it may show some things in another light if we take note of theology, and our practice of it, from his point of view. Make the common remark, "But God sees you, and will punish you," and hear the reply, "Vill He, though! I've never seen no yeard Him do it yet to them as is vus nor me. The men in our lodgin' ses 'There ain't no God, on'y the parsons ses there is, to frighten old women and kids, and gets lots o' money without vurking for it.' I dun no myself; but I should think if the religious believed in a God there wouldn't be so many young prigs, an' vus gals, and gin-shops and dolly-shops as there is." I should

like to hear your answer that would be comprehended by, and satisfactory to, him.

In our mothers' meetings for women, and sewing classes for the girls, the difficulty is to find materials for working upon. They have none to bring with them, and no money wherewith to purchase new materials to work up into garments while they pay for them. We are, therefore, compelled to ask our friends for old materials, such as men's, women's, and children's clothing, and bedding, which can be remade-up, and sold to them at a price proportionate to its value. We do not give away anything, as we believe far too much has been given already by those labouring here before us, with the view of inducing them to attend religious worship, and the consequence is, that they believe they do a favour to those that ask them if they consent, after repeated solicitation, to attend the house of the Lord. Also, "light come, light go," is as true with them as others; and they will value the garment they have made and paid for far more than one made, and paid for, and given to them.

Thus, in the vilest and most dangerous part of London we are striving to reach and influence these "lost" ones of the Church and the State. If we reach them at all, it must be by the preaching and practice of the gospel only. It is commonly said, "The gospel has lost its hold on the masses;" but the fact is, it never had any hold upon them, they have never known it, never seen

its power, never heard its tidings. When and how in their midst is it preached? Tracts are left with people who will not read; visits—few and far between—are paid by missionaries and Bible-women; services are held in unfit places, which none of us would think of attending; and this comprises the sum of our attempts for these home heathen. For the heathen abroad we give ungrudgingly the trained physician, theologian, and scholar combined. For the heathen at home we give a man who has never been trained at all, and then wonder the work is not done.

Let us face the plain truth. To reach these home heathen, strong, healthy, trained, and able men are needed, who should have no care for money, no care for churches, but be able to devote all their time and energy simply to winning souls. And so low have our home heathen sunk through simple neglect, that it will tax all the faith, and prayer, and power of the ablest men attainable, to raise them from the condition into which they have been allowed to descend. And it is clear that so long as the Church evades or neglects the masses, so long will they—*not* continue as they are—but descend from bad to worse. It is clear, also, that if we do not reach them they will reach us, to our sorrow and shame. We know who has said—“I am the bread of life.” “They need not depart; give ye them to eat.”

THE MACEDONIAN CRY.

"Come over . . . and help us."

NEARLY two thousand years since, a man of middle age was standing on the Asian shore of the *Ægean* Sea, gazing over its blue expanse toward the hills on the opposite coast, lying in all the splendour of the rays of the setting sun. There stood Paul the Apostle, looking upon the boundary hills of Europe, then sunk in darkest heathenism ; and to him, in a vision, came one of the frontier-men of that vast region, exclaiming, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." In answer to the heart-stirring appeal, preparations were immediately made, and a short space of time saw him upon his voyage to Europe.

Ever since that most blessed inauguration of mission enterprise among us, the gospel he brought has been winning its way, numbering its adherents by millions—leading to the eternal morning-land multitudes of those who dwelt in darkness and the shadow of death. The Macedonian cry, thus answered, has passed into a proverb, and when men have needed assistance in a good cause from others without, they have adopted the words, "Come over . . . and help us."

The greatest modern hindrance to the true progress of the people—and specially the progress of Paul's gospel of his Master in our midst—has certainly been strong drink. Seeing this clearly, believing that all other causes put together do not equal the potency of this one form of opposition, there have arisen multitudes of men and women who abstain from its use themselves, and do their utmost to induce others to abstain also.

The general appeal of the abstainer may be divided into two parts—Concerning the people generally, and the Christian Church.

Concerning the people generally they appeal. We are convinced that strong drink is not needed as an article of diet by persons in health; that it is worse than useless in many forms of disease in which it is used; that it is the greatest cause of sin and poverty, crime and suffering, existing among us; that it causes heart-rending and widely-spread misery, without any counterbalancing benefit; and therefore it should be banished from our tables and our homes.

Our annual national expenditure on strong drink far exceeds one hundred millions of pounds sterling. Having by thought and labour amassed this vast amount of wealth, the nation applies it to the worst possible purpose. No man in his senses (comparing the small amount of asserted good produced with the known and undisputed amount of evil) could deny that it would be better to take

this vast produce of labour and *cast it into the depths of the sea*, than to waste it, as is now done, in the purchase of strong drink.


One single year's waste would purchase all the land required, erect all the needed buildings, supply all requisite furniture and teachers for schools sufficient for the education of all the untaught children in the nation. The saving of one year's monstrous waste in lost time, pawn-shop interest, workhouses and prisons, would be sufficient to defray the expense of bringing into cultivation hundreds of thousands of acres of land now waste, thus affording greater abundance of food ; and by providing more employment, furnish better remuneration for labour. No branch of labour returns so little to the actual worker, or employs so few, as the production of strong drink ; it follows that the money would be better employed for the benefit of the nation in any other branch of manufacture, even supposing that no evil results followed from its use.

But the evils that are immediately and remotely caused by strong drink are incalculable ; they abound in every rank of life, among all classes of the people. To strong drink the strength and health of men, the modesty and virtue of women, the well-being of children, are constantly sacrificed. Extravagant expenditure upon it causes unhealthy and most miserable homes, where health, decency, comfort are unknown ; where little children, fresh

from God, are born into physical and moral pollution, amid which pure growth and holy training are impossible ; where the crowded condition of filthy rooms engenders fever and sickness and death, and disseminates disease and danger far and wide. The use of strong drink is also undermining the physical and moral health of vast numbers who use it moderately, and hardening their hearts against many forms of truth and progress.

Thus, while the asserted good done by strong drink is doubtful and greatly disputed, the evil results are of such appalling magnitude, so plain and undeniable, as to afford the strongest conceivable force to the appeal of the abstainer to the nation at large—"Come over . . . and help us !"

What answer does the nation return to the abstainer's appeal ? "Strong drink has mingled itself with all our habits and customs ; in our weal and woe, our joy and sorrow alike, it has a large place. Our births, our marriages, our funerals, afford occasion for its use ; it is an article of diet, of commerce, of friendship, and of luxury combined, and we are not disposed to abstain from its use. We know it fills our workhouses, lunatic asylums, prisons, and premature graves, but we use it notwithstanding. We know it is destroying the health and morals, and lowering the physical and intellectual status of vast masses of our people, nevertheless we welcome it. We know the price we are paying, and we are willing to pay it ;



upon us, after us, the deluge—only let us drink and be drunken, and die in peace !”

Turning to the Christian Church, the abstainer presents also his appeal :—“ Strong drink is the most powerful competitor with your influence in many ways. Were it not for the publican and his coadjutor, the tobacconist, you would have the field to yourselves on the Lord’s day. Their houses of business are almost your only opponents ; but they work you more mischief than would all the others combined if they were open the whole day through.

“ See the work of strong drink in injuring your Sabbath-schools ; go to the homes of your scholars ; ascertain why they are absent from their places ; discover how many are away because the money that should have given them decent clothing has been spent in drink. Go after your senior scholars and know why they are scholars no more ; go into our refuges for fallen girls—hear *them* sing the holy hymns *you* taught them ; ask them whose they are, whence they came, and they will horrify you by declaring they are your own scholars thus hideously transformed through strong drink. Go from the refuge to the prison ; see there your young men of greatest promise ‘ revolted and gone ’ through strong drink. Inquire for your absent Sunday-school teachers ; learn how many of their places are vacant through strong drink, and the replies you will receive will en-

lighten you greatly concerning your duty respecting this destroying and devouring evil.

“Examine next your communion-roll; and note with anxious wonder how many thousands upon thousands have fallen away through strong drink. Think of those known personally who have sunk down into these awful depths of temporal and eternal ruin. Let one representative speak:— ‘There’s my earnings—the food, clothing, and fire of my wife and children, take them for drink! There’s the rent of my house, my children’s school-money, and provisions for the future, take them for drink! There’s health of body and peace of mind; character as a man and profession as a Christian; take them for drink! I give up all! my heavenly inheritance, the eternal friendship of the redeemed, the hope of salvation, my Saviour, and my God, only give me drink! I give up all that is great, good, and glorious that I may drink and be drunken, and die!’

“This is one solitary case from among millions! how many such were once walking with you? where are they now?

“Pass from your communion-rolls to those who make and keep them—the elders of the churches. Are there none missing? Has it never happened that one such has fallen? Rather, is it not matter of deepest regret that so many have fallen, and in their fall involved others? The conduct of one of these was watched by a young man who was

seeking salvation. He was seen at the Lord's table on Sabbath, and intoxicated the following day. The effect on the young man's mind was horrible. He turned from God and religion, went a voyage to sea, and was lost in a tempest in Monte Videan waters. To him the dark night brought the howling tempest and the wild chaos of danger, and fear, and death; but through the dark came no figure of the Holy One to help him over the raging waste to the peace and light beyond! His young widow and his little child mourn over the lost human life; but who is responsible for the lost immortal soul?

"Are none of your ministers missing from this cause? Can each of the churches examine, with satisfaction, the records of her 'angels,' and declare that none have 'fallen from their high estate' through strong drink? Nay! It was one of the Church's highly gifted ones who declared that 'if there was strong drink at one end of a table and perdition between, he must stretch out his hand to grasp it, he loved it so!' In the haunts of the vilest to-day, men hide who once held high stations in the churches, but who now herd with the lowest, from this dreadful cause. If the numbers thus fallen were obtained, would any other fact be needed to strengthen the appeal we now make to you to abstain, to 'Come over and help us?'

"But we can greatly strengthen our appeal.

Numbers have wandered away from your churches, or have been expelled thence, and have been lost and forgotten. These have come to us, as to refuges for the else utterly destitute soul and body; they have been attracted, reclaimed, and most gladly returned to you, restored and in their right mind. Their name is legion, and therein we greatly rejoice for and with you. Thousands of others who were simply lost and ruined through drink, who were never members of Christian churches, have also been reclaimed by us, and joyfully given to you. Other thousands have been kept from sinking into the mire. And thus we urge our fourfold plea—by those utterly lost—by those we have found and restored to you—by those we have given you—and by those we have kept and are keeping for you—‘Come over and help us!’ If we have done so much great and good work without your aid, what shall we accomplish with it? If without your labour and prayers God has been pleased to accomplish so much by us, how much of the ‘dew of His blessing’ may we expect in answer to the prayer of His children and friends? The heaviest blow that could be struck at strong drink from the human side would be the declaration of the churches against it. Strike! strike now! We appeal to you for your people’s, your ministers’, your Master’s sakes, ‘Come over and help us.’

“Your missions have languished at home and

abroad; heart-stirring appeals from both have fallen unheeded; the gospel—making known salvation by faith in Jesus—has not been carried where it might have been, because the money to send it forth has been spent on strong drink! Many a beginning that might have been nursed into health and vigour, has been abandoned and has broken down, the opportunity of winning priceless souls has been lost, in order that a dangerous, seductive, and ensnaring article of diet may be upon the tables of rich and poor Christians alike; tempting young and old to temporal and eternal ruin.”

To this appeal, what has the Christian Church replied?

Though men on earth and men in perdition in hundreds of thousands cry out against it, their cry is utterly in vain. The Church is deaf and dumb, her leaders make no sign, and the earnest, heartfelt appeal results only in a dreary echo as if we shouted into a chasm.

Misunderstood in motive and aim, often misrepresented, thousands of abstainers have turned from the Church and religion in the silence of despair; but there are other thousands who strive and pray still—turning from man and despair to God and hope.

How long? O Lord! how long?

PETER.

“ Saved, so as by fire ! ”

“ WHO’s got a copper for poor Peter ? I’ll stand on my head ! or give you a dance ! or sing you a comic song for a ha’penny or a penny, or a drop o’ beer. Now, who’s going to throw the first copper into the old hat towards getting a dinner for poor Peter ? ”


So spoke a man of middle height and middle age, having the liquid red lips that denote spirit-drinking, and a full, bloated face,—among a company of working men who were taking their mid-day meal in a public-house in the northern district of London. He stood, cringing and smirking, in the centre of the room—an awful picture, or rather reality, of what strong drink can do to debase and degrade man, formed in the image of God. Very far superior to most of those around him in education and natural gifts, he had sunk far below the lowest through indulging the lust of strong drink. When sober, which was very seldom, none could work better or quicker than he ; no one more skilled in grace and finish of workmanship : but he would not work ; perhaps he could not.

He had lost all desire to excel; all true manly ambition had departed from him. The drink had burned these things out of him, and, with them, love of home, and care for his wife and children. So sunken was he, so deeply degraded, that the man appeared to a thoughtful mind as one truly and visibly possessed by the demon of drunkenness; which must be exorcised before he could be once more in his right mind, and walk erect as his Creator had formed him in the image of his Maker. "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? . . who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at" that which, at the last, "biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

Hungering and despised, weary and sick at heart—yet "no man gave unto him." Some looked upon him with a half smile of pitying forbearance, regarding him as scarcely a responsible being; others, especially the younger men, made no attempt to hide their anger and disgust at his presence, but openly bade him go and leave them to eat in peace the dinner *they had earned*. Amid all, he stood, bearing with a sickly attempt at laughter the hard words and coarse hints directed against him. With the same sickly smile upon his face, he passed out upon his wretched way—one of that horribly large army of young and old, sick and healthy, beggars, cadgers, and thieves, who exist by going from public-house to public-house during the day, and filling our

refuges and casual wards at night. To these no man ministers: for them no man cares. And yet among them, it is well known, are those who might have been our brightest and our best, had they not bowed down soul and body under the awful tyranny of drunkenness. From house to house poor Peter went upon his miserable, profitless way; meeting everywhere with the same contemptuous treatment, the same scornful rejection; doing the same really laborious work, for grudging and scanty pay, and for the same seductive poison which made him willing to accept it. As the day closed, and evening drew on, and night came, his gains both in liquor and money were slightly increased; until the last song was sung, the last house was closing, and there was only the choice between the damp, chilly streets and his miserable home.

Thither he made his way, threading a filthy lane, and turning into a narrow court at the end. He entered the open door of one of the houses—always left open night and day, for the sufficient reason that the whole house contained nothing worth stealing. He ascended a narrow staircase, and passed into a close, dimly-lighted room, which filth and squalor made rife with fever and death. There were dirty bundles of mingled straw and rags, intended for beds, in three of the four corners of the room; an old broken table, two chairs without seats, one old saucepan, and a little crockery:—and *this* was home!



If such men and such homes were not so shamefully common in our midst, if such scandalous facts were not too patent to be for a moment doubted or denied, it might be thought a mere wanton effort of grotesque imagination to set forth such a picture. But the type is so ordinary, the case one of such constant occurrence, that habit has brought us to regard such homes and such men as things of course, calling for no special effort, for no hearty self-denying work, for no earnest prayer for the redemption of the man and the improvement of the home. We see and know; we sigh; we pass on, and we forget! "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Peter was in his ordinary condition of dull intoxication as he entered his home; his step was steady, his strength firm; but there was brooding within him a fierce caged devil—greatly feared by his wife and children, because easily aroused by a word or a look,—a devil that had oftentimes broken out upon them, and driven them forth amid oaths and curses, blows and tears. Without a word of greeting he sat down, ignorant and careless whether his wife and children had been fed during his absence; and he began to prepare for rest. His toil-worn wife glanced keenly at him from under her bent brow, and then timidly said—"There's a bad message concerning Nellie, Peter; she must have caught the fever when she came here last week. I went

down to see her this afternoon; but a boy came late this evening to say she was very bad and wanted you to go and see her." As the poor wife spoke, she looked up fearfully, as if uncertain in what manner such unwelcome intelligence would be received.

He made no reply, but replaced his worn shoes upon his weary feet, and went forth into the sharp night. Shivering with cold as the bleak wind met him, he steadily, and for a time silently, held upon his way. At length he began muttering, "Nellie! Nellie! down with the fever! I'd sooner it had been all the others together! Poor Peter's one lamb, the despised drunkard's last hold and hope in life! Nellie down! pleasant-faced, bright-eyed Nellie! I wish I knew there was a God! I'd pray to Him and ask Him to spare Nelly to me: but I haven't believed in any God for years: if I had, I shouldn't be as I am now! But Nellie always loved me; when all the rest ran away afraid, Nellie never did; she came the closer, and looked up,—wondering what mad devil had got into father, but certain it would not hurt *her*. And I never did beat little Nellie, drunk or sober! Haven't I gone hungry myself many a time with little Nellie's halfpenny loaf safe in my pocket? And I know I drank harder, because I missed her so, when she went away from me to service. Why didn't I, why couldn't I, keep sober, and have little Nellie with me at home?"

Struggling on as fast as he was able, and muttering fitfully to himself as heavy gusts of rain fell on him, he went through the darkness and cold until he reached the house where his daughter had found much kindness and a good home as a domestic servant. The master of the house answered his wavering knock at the door, and looked very sternly and doubtfully at the wet draggled figure seeking admission to his clean home: but the emergency was allowed to overcome all scruples; and, after a caution to wipe his shoes carefully, he informed Peter that he would find his daughter and a nurse at the top of the house. The nurse laid her finger on her lip as he entered, and motioned him to a chair close to the bedside. Laying his shoes aside and removing his wet coat, he sat down and looked attentively at his sick daughter. Nellie was lying as if exhausted, her face colourless, her lips black and swollen, and her breathing hard and difficult. As he looked upon her, a dull, faint heart-sinking within him told him that hope was over—that his darling was passing away. A low, wild cry that he could not repress broke from him; and then his face was covered by his hands, as he sank upon his knees by the bedside.

The sound roused the dying girl; she looked wildly and unconsciously around until her eyes met the shrinking figure by the bedside. Then thought and the old love returned to her; she

gently raised the bowed head until it rested upon her hot labouring bosom ; and his arms were flung around her with an intensity that said he knew not how to let her go.

"Leave me alone with father a little while, nurse, dear," said Nellie ; "I have something I must say to him before I go." The woman left the room silently ; and they were alone.

"Father ! darling father !" she said, her arms clinging lovingly round his neck, "I am dying, and I want you to pray to our Father in heaven for me !"

A low groan, that seemed wrung from the depths of a breaking heart, was the only reply he was able to give ; but it caused the fever-glittering eyes to fix more intently upon him, and the hot arms to tighten around him as she spoke again. "I want you to think of our old home, father, where you used to twine my hair round your fingers as I climbed upon your knee, and so remember how you always loved Nellie ! I wish such times may come again, though I shall not be with you : and so I ask you to pray for me and for yourself too."

"I cannot, I dare not, Nellie," he said ; "I would if I could—if only because you ask me : but I cannot ; and it would be useless ; I have sinned beyond forgiveness ; He would not hear me."

"No, no, father !" she replied ; "Jesus 'is able to save to the uttermost,' and He came to do it ; and He can and will save you. If you have

been a great sinner, the greater honour to Him in saving you. Pray, father; pray for yourself and for me! I shall soon be in heaven, but I want you to come there too."

Closer and more clingingly yet, as though in her entreaty she would grow to him as in the old happy time, Nellie twined her arms around him. She was fast passing away; but it seemed as if she could not go until her striving spirit was gladdened by words of prayer from her father's lips; and she renewed her effort, entreating, "Father! darling father! Nellie is dying! but before I go, I want to hear you pray! only a few words, father! Don't refuse such a thing to your darling Nellie! It is the last thing she will ever ask on earth of you!"

With an outburst of sobs and tears, that shook the dying girl as a leaf in the autumn wind, her father for the first time in a long life uttered words of earnest prayer to God. He gasped forth—"God in heaven, have mercy upon my darling and upon me!" The barriers once broken down, the pent-up deluge burst forth. With his daughter's arms round him, her hot breath upon his tear-stained cheek, there the poor drunkard pleaded earnestly for mercy; and though the words were laboured and interrupted, they were earnest and heartfelt—and they *were heard*.

"Amen!" responded Nellie, and then continued, "I am going to be with Jesus,—one of His servants,

doing His will, and seeing Him always; and I want your promise to love and serve Him too, and so come to me again when you die!"

"I will, Nellie," he said; "indeed I will! if He will have a poor broken-down wretch like me!"

"Let *me* pray now, father," she said, and with her last strength she poured forth humble, earnest entreaties into the listening ear of Eternal Love for her father, and her mother, and the other children. Then still clinging closely round his neck, she faltered, "Father, one more promise: don't ever drink any more!"

"I won't, Nellie!" he gasped; "I never will, God helping me: I will die and come to you, if He will let me; but I will never touch strong drink again." A glad, peaceful smile lit up her face as the promise fell upon her ear; and then she faintly murmured, "I am going: father, pray!"

He complied, and the words fell solemnly upon the air. Then the loving arms unclasped, the head fell back, and Nellie "was not; for God had taken" her to the land of which it is written, "There shall be no night there!"

A few days, and what had been Nellie was laid in a green spot until the great awakening. Her master readily provided means of decent burial, upon her father's promise of repayment. Then all was over; and poor Peter had to return to daily tempting torture, without his darling Nellie. Oftentimes every limb seemed to quiver

for the accustomed stimulants, and his life appeared one long continuance of awful craving—a terrible yearning that seemed as if it must have its way. Yet his strong resolve never once wavered—he would die, or even go mad, if so it must be ; but he would be able to look into Nellie's spirit-eyes and declare that he had faithfully kept the last promise he had given. It was hard striving for some time, and he often found it necessary to seek aid whence alone it could be obtained.

It was well for him then that he had to strive hard for honest means of living. He therefore went to an old employer, saying, "My daughter Nellie is dead ! Before she died she made me promise never to drink any more ; and if I die for it, I will keep my word. Now, if you will kindly employ me, and lend me money to redeem my tools, I will work steadily for you till all is repaid."

"Lift up your head and let me have a fair look at your face," replied the employer.

Peter quietly obeyed the request ; and the master fixed a keen scrutinising glance upon him,—replying at length, "All right, Peter, I'll trust you willingly."

So Peter fought the hard strife,—and conquered ; clinging to his work, to Nellie's Bible, and to prayer. Among the vilest he goes upon his way, speaking of Jesus, of Nellie, and of hope ; himself a living gospel to the drunkard, a breathing proof of the infinite willingness of the Son of God to rescue and to save."

THE CLOWN.

“A vision of the night.”

THE performances at a theatre in East London were at their height at Christmas-tide. The house was flashing with lights and decorations, and filled from floor to floor with laughing faces. It was the season of pantomiming; and clown and pantaloons and their companions were in full activity. Between two and three thousand of the young and the old, the rich and the poor, were congregated in different parts of the house. Among them all, how many were truly converted? how many ready to die? how many would wish to die in such a place at such a time? Among them all—every one immortal—there was not one thought of God, of Christ, of immortality; all was frivolous and foolish—most unfitting occupation for men and women who had to prepare for eternity and the immediate presence of God. If Christ comes speedily, will He find any of His in such scenes?

For many nights, stretching into months, the same scene was repeated. But as the winter passed away, the pantomime of the season passed with it, and clown and pantaloons had to seek other

means of earning bread for themselves and families.

It is only with the former that I have to do. His occupation at the theatre closed with the pantomime; but he had other means of living. He was accustomed to preside at concerts and harmonic meetings, and there sing in character, as it is termed, combining a mixture of singing and speaking which is very popular with the uneducated and the ungodly in East London, and in hundreds of other places beside. He had, however, noted with uneasiness that his popularity was waning, his greatest efforts coldly received, and the proprietor of the music-hall paying his salary grudgingly—before he had left for the pantomime season; and whether he would be engaged again he did not know. He therefore resolved to obtain, if possible, some new highly-spiced entertainment for the multitude, that should make him a greater favourite than ever. Of course he could not pray over the matter, nor ask the guidance and direction of the Father in heaven: indeed he had no belief in Him, never thought of Him or of Jesus: he was willing to labour—in his profitless way—for the bread that perisheth; he knew not of, nor cared for, everlasting living bread.

The recent revival of religion at the east of London was then at its zenith; to the poor and the ignorant the pure gospel was preached with amazing power, directness, and success. Places

of worship were open every evening in the week ; and many earnest and gifted servants of God were found to lift up Christ, holding Him before the sinner as the only but all-sufficient refuge. Many were brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and the meetings were much spoken of in the locality. This gave the clown the idea he was seeking ; he resolved to attend some of the meetings, in order to produce a burlesque of them at the music-hall. He neither thought nor cared for the awful wickedness of his purpose ; nor of its probable consequences upon the souls of those who would hear him, and would thus be hardened against and inclined to mock at the extraordinary outpouring of the gospel at that time. He was truly "past feeling," "dead in trespasses and sins."

The place he had chosen to visit was a large hall, roughly fitted up for preaching the gospel among the very poor. There was a great gathering ; and he stood unknown and unnoticed. The service commenced with some singing, which he thought could be distorted to serve his purpose, and which he carefully noted. The hymn was followed by reading from the Bible ; which he felt, instinctively, he had better let alone, partly from doubt as to how such a burlesque would take, partly from a lingering dread of subjecting "his mother's book" to such treatment. It was well it was so ; for no man ever yet mocked or laughed at that

book without regretting it "in this world or that which is to come." No man ever despised the Spirit's teaching and was wise "unto salvation." The reading was followed by prayer, which was also barren of results for his purpose. The second hymn promised better; and then the first address was given.


The speaker was a short-sighted, dark little man, with a slight impediment of speech and hesitancy of manner, which seemed to promise just what the scoffer had come to seek. But as the preaching went on, the preacher grew earnest; his subject filled his mind, his voice cleared and strengthened, and he held the vast audience with great power. Nor was the clown insensible to the influence there present. The text chosen was "Prepare to meet thy God!" and the theme of discourse the absolute need of fitting preparation on the part of all men before their inevitable and compulsory meeting with God. The address concluded with a stirring appeal to hearts and consciences concerning their personal condition and fitness if called suddenly to appear before God.

The discourse rendered the listener so uncomfortable, that he lost the opportunity of gaining ideas from the hymns between the two addresses, as he felt it necessary to leave the building in order to drown the uneasy feeling within by intoxicating drink. But he returned in time for the second address, to find it quite as unavailable as

its predecessor. The second theme was the eternal righteousness of God in His dealings with sinners, founded on the text "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." During this address, the clown was made to feel keenly, that if the speaker was uttering truth, his own personal condition was perilous beyond thought or conception. An after-meeting was announced for those who wished for private direction or special prayer; but the inclination to gather material for mockery had left him, and he quitted the meeting in deep concern of soul. He felt that he could not then return to any of his haunts of dissipation, and he consequently returned home early, to the unspeakable astonishment of his wife and children.

He shared their evening meal with them for the first time for several years, and then retired to rest without one thought of petition or of thankfulness, and was soon in troubled sleep, and dreaming.

His "vision of the night" commenced with a confused mingling of the scenes of his nightly life, rapidly changing without order or design, but gradually deepening and settling into order and plan, and so forming an abiding impression on his memory. He saw houses, theatres, and music-halls, within and without, at the same time. But the usual foundations had no place in his dream: in their stead, theatre and music-hall seemed to stand upon a sea of clear coruscating wine; and as he gazed in wonder on this new foundation, he



saw that the crimson wine was a fierce fire of unutterable brightness, a deep-red wine of fire, on which was standing every theatre, and music-hall, and supper-room he had ever entered. He saw further the faces of his former companions who had been dead for years, just as they were when living: and, as they stood singing and acting as of old, they seemed to sink slowly but certainly into the wine of fire beneath. As they sank, he saw the faces change from laughter and mockery into an expression of hopeless and awful suffering, and the departing eyes gleamed with terrible consciousness as they sank slowly and were lost to view in the unfathomable deeps of the wine of fire.

The vision continued; and he saw *himself* appear upon the mimic scene, and heard the roar of laughter that always greeted his appearance on the stage: but he knew, also, that even while performing his part, he was uneasily conscious of the fire-wine upon which he was standing, and while frantically gibbering for the amusement of the audience, he was in awful fear of the fiery unfathomable gulf beneath. He dreamed he began to shrink into it, while the laughter of the unconscience was still ringing. As he sank, he attempted to sustain his part, though his ~~limbs~~ were almost cleaving to the roof of his ~~head~~ and every limb trembling and quivering ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~face~~ of fear. Then a horrible dread came

upon him; his mocking song changed to a wild shriek of agonising pain; the first touch of the fierce fire was upon him, and the anguish was unbearable. A hopeless awful sense of utter abandonment took entire possession of all his being; and as he sank deeper and deeper into the everlasting burning, he knew that he was lost—soul and body;—that the fire-wine into which he was sinking was “the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God!”

The awful mental suffering induced by his “vision” awoke him from his slumber, and he lay trembling so violently that the bed shook beneath him. Through the window the gray dawn was faintly visible; and with every limb quivering he arose to fall upon his knees by the bedside,—his first sensation one of overpowering thankfulness that he was not yet cast irrevocably into the red wine of fire. The deep breathing of his still slumbering wife and children sounded like the sweetest music in his ears, seeming to assure him of present safety, and of opportunity for repentance and escape. He had no doubt of the truth of the vision; no question of the awful reality it represented crossed his mind. He saw how awfully and repeatedly he had sinned; and if he were cast into the wine of fire, he had no defence to make, no plea to urge, nothing to complain of; he knew that he was guilty, as he knelt, self-condemned, before the holy Almighty God.

He wandered hither and thither, through the day; miserable beyond words to express, but unknowing where relief and help were to be found. But at nightfall he was again at the place of meeting; where, after singing and prayer as before—no attempt at mockery now—an address was commenced from the words, "This man receiveth sinners." The speaker began with a graphic portraiture of the modern types of those whom our Lord received in the old time; and then proceeded to show how, by a life of spotless holiness on earth, joined to such personally unmerited suffering as the world never witnessed before or since, the Redeemer acquired the right to redeem and "save, even unto the uttermost, all that come unto God by Him;" that He had exercised the right thus acquired through all the intervening years and centuries; that His arm was not shortened that it could not save, nor His ear heavy that it could not hear. If they who were present were willing to repent of their sins and believe on Him, their iniquities need no longer separate between them and their God, nor their sins turn away His face from them; because it was as true now as ever it was, that "this man receiveth sinners."

The actor saw it all—for the Lord opened the eyes of his inner man. He saw that the portraiture of the life of a guilty sinner was an exact reproduction of his own life; and, as the preacher proceeded, he saw also with inexpressible astonish-

ment and delight that "Christ died *for the ungodly*," and that he, therefore, was included among those the Redeemer came to save. When the preacher asked who among them was willing to receive freely offered pardon and peace, he felt that he was willing—"made willing" in the day of His power; and tears streamed freely down his face, as he sank upon his knees in unfeigned penitence and earnest, believing prayer.

So he found peace in believing; and from his own lips I received the story of his being brought up from "among the dead" by his awful "vision of the night."

M I L L Y.

“Her sins which are many are forgiven ; for she loved much.”

I do not think there can be any difference of opinion as to the chief instrument of Satan in producing sin and misery in our great cities. I suppose every one, without exception, would name “strong drink” as the most deadly and subtle temptation to which all classes are exposed. In the sketch I have now to write it will be my task to record, in the simplest words, a narrative of temptation, and striving against it and triumphing over it through the help of the grace of God.

Some years since, the building now occupied by the London Medical Mission was a public-house of notoriously bad character, where the vilest of both sexes congregated, and from which two of the landlords were transported for crime. Until the Medical Mission could be established, and during its earliest days, the public-house was given over to my charge as a Mission-house. Thus the den of thieves became a house of prayer ; for it was our custom to meet there, for one hour daily at mid-day, for prayer and praise ; never missing a week-day, never lacking people to pray, or friends

lead in prayer. Out of this daily prayer-meeting, in the former den of thieves, grew many quietly useful works. Day by day cases of sin and sorrow—sin-stained and ruined lives—were unfolded before us; and as far as we could, we fed, lodged, and clothed, and taught all that came to us in need. To do this we established some temporary homes for men and for women who were homeless, giving them plainest food and roughest shelter, until they were enabled to better their condition by their own industry.

It happened on one occasion that several of these temporary homes were empty, and I said, laughingly, to one of my helpers (himself a reformed drunkard, who had often been intoxicated at the public-house referred to, but who was now an earnest Christian worker), "This won't do, you know—all the homes empty! you must go out and 'compel them to come in.'" "More easily said than done," he replied, "but if you must have me, I will go and try." Accordingly he went forth; and presently returned in company with a young woman who was far advanced in intoxication.

"What do you mean by this?" was my somewhat indignant query, looking sternly upon the inviting subject before me.

"You said you must have them," he rejoined; and therefore you must take them as you can get them, drunk or sober."

He laughed, as if he thought he had beaten his minister and friend for once, and then coolly went off to his usual avocations, leaving the intoxicated young woman with me.

She was a deplorable figure—hair uncombed, face and hands unclean, dress draggled with mire and dirt, rolling her eyes and her body from side to side as she sat, uttering defiance of everybody and everything under the sun.

A great sorrow filled my heart as I looked upon her, mingled with something of defiance of my departed helper ; and I resolved that I *would* take her just as she was, and, with the Master's gracious help, would try what Christian kindness and care would effect.

"How long have you been drinking this time?" I asked, quietly.

"Three weeks," was her reply. "I worked hard for months, got plenty of money, and saved it from 'him,' bought lots of clothes, then finished up the work, and broke loose ; had a great row with him, and left him ; then didn't care for anybody or anything ; spent all my money, pawned nearly all my clothes ; drink, drink, drink, until they turned me out from home, and I went where your man found me. Where is he, and what has he brought me here for?"

"He has gone back to work," I replied. "But I am thinking what a pity it is a young woman like you should waste life as you are doing. First,

l me your name ; then go upstairs, and see the housekeeper ; have a good wash and a strong cup of tea, and then come and talk to me again."

"All right, gov'nor," she replied, with a saucy smile ; and I handed her over to the housekeeper, and left her for the time.

In the evening I saw her again, clean, sobered, and suffering terribly from the effects of the drink, but so greatly altered as scarcely to be recognised. She now appeared a strong, healthy, young woman, perfectly able, if not willing, to earn her own living. She came and sat down by my side ; and with all her former independence, but without a particle of ill-feeling, inquired, "Well, now, what are you going to do with me ?"

"I want you to talk to me like a lady," I replied. "You are just the sort of girl any one might be proud of for a daughter ; and you make my heart ache when you go on in this terrible way."

"Make your heart ache !" she replied, "why, what do you care for me ? what does it matter to you what I do, or what becomes of me ?"

"It *does* matter, Milly," I rejoined ; "what would your own father think of you if he saw you as I did to-day ?"

"Wouldn't care a bit," she replied : "he turned me out of doors one day when I had a quarrel with my mother-in-law ; and that's years ago."

"Does not any one love you ?" I asked. "Is

there no one to put their arms round you, and care for you? Don't you love anybody the wide world over?"

She shook her head in silent reply; but I was pleased to see her brown eyes soften and fill with tears.

"Jesus loves *you*, Milly," I continued, "or He would not have guided my friend to you, or led you to me. He must love you. See what He has done for you to-day. Many have drowned themselves after such a maddening excess as you have just had."

"I know it," she replied, her look hardening and changing: "I meant to do it myself when all my clothes were gone."

"And what afterwards?" I quietly inquired.

"Who knows or cares?" she recklessly replied.

"I know," I said. "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven."

"Plenty are going to the other place, then," she replied, "for there's many a thousand of them live and die round about here."

"And yet every one of them might have 'glory, and honour, and immortality,' if they would only believe in Jesus, the sinner's Friend," I continued. "But never mind them just now, Milly; I want you to give yourself to Jesus, and let Him take care of you."

"What do you mean?" she replied; "what have such as me to do with Him?"

"He will answer that question Himself if you will ask Him, Milly; and I wish with my whole heart you would ask Him now—that is, that you would speak to Him in prayer."

"Never knew anything about Him — never wanted to know," she objected; "and I don't suppose He wants anything to do with me."

"Will you try, if only to please me?" I urged.

"Look here!" she burst forth. "My father beat me; my brother knocked me about; *he* first made me drunk, then lived on what I earned, and beat me too. You are the first man that ever spoke kindly and decently to me; and I like it. I will do what you tell me, go where you bid me, work wherever you put me. So look out; for I mean what I say, and I will do it too."

"Then I ask you, first, to kneel and pray to God three times a day," I requested.

"I will do it," was her quiet answer.

The next day she went to work as a needle-woman in our Mission-house; and from thence to service in a private family, where, happily for her, the Lord Jesus was Master of the house. Seeing her often, I soon found she was praying and striving in a blind way; but found, also, that there was a self-satisfied spirit in her that presaged mischief in the future. I warned her, but she passed the warning lightly by, evidently thinking her own strength sufficient for the day. I was not surprised, therefore, when she came to me on one

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occasion with head hanging down, face pale, and lips quivering, to own that she had been tempted to drink, and had far exceeded the bounds of sobriety. Her mistress, to whom she was a really valuable servant, had kindly sent her to bed, and overlooked the fault as a first one. But Milly could not rest until she had spoken to me; and though I told her I was not a Roman Catholic priest, and she must confess her sin to that Saviour God who alone could forgive, she said she knew that, and had done so, but could not bear the idea of any one but herself acquainting me with her terrible falling into sin.

For some weeks I lost sight of her, content with a general knowledge of her well-doing, and knowing from her mistress that her service was truly faithful and rightly valued. It was therefore with unspeakable sorrow that I heard, on one of my daily visits to the Mission-house, that Milly was there, utterly broken down.

It was Monday afternoon; and the story was sad as sad could be. She had come in at mid-day, without a bonnet, an old shawl over her shoulders, her eyes swollen with tears, trembling in every limb, and much bruised on her arms and sides. She had gone up to the housekeeper, and begged for shelter and quiet, and that her coming should be kept secret from me. The two first requests were complied with; the last was simply ignored. But as she was in a dreadful state of

physical prostration and suffering, she was sent to bed, and there allowed to remain. Through all the long and weary winter night her couch was wet with bitter tears, mingled with groans and desperate entreaties and expostulations. "I did not want to fall," she said; "I tried, oh, I tried so hard, and yet here I am! What can I do? Why did God let me fall so low again?" Thus hour after hour was passed in bitter remorse; but, through it all, only fierce self-accusation mingled with oblique reproaches of the Supreme, in all which there was no true godly sorrow, no understanding of her own weakness, nor applying where alone help and conquest can be found.

All this was related to me by our sympathising housekeeper, who had taken the warmest interest in the sinning and suffering girl, even giving up her own bed that she might rest in peace. Then I asked her to send Milly to me; and in a few minutes I saw her again.

How it made my heart ache and yearn with sympathy to see her enter the room, sink into a seat, and hang down her head in silence without uttering a word! How easy it was to go to her, and shake hands with her, and sitting down by her side, try to comfort her!

But she had never known Christian forgiveness of offences; and she could not understand it, as her first words showed. "I suppose you have done with me now! you will never want to see

me any more!" Then the flood-gates of her heavy sorrow were re-opened; and she shook with very agony of distress as she bent her head upon her hands, and bowed herself almost prostrate, repeating her former words, "I tried, oh, I tried so hard! why did He let me fall so low, so that I must suffer like this?"

"Hush, Milly!" I said; "surely you had forgotten to pray to Him before it came again to this."

"I had no time to pray," she said; "but I tried, oh, I tried so hard!"

"Tell me all about it," I asked, "and then I shall know better what to say to you."

"I was not well," she replied, "all last week: towards the end I could not work at all, I felt so miserably weak and sinking. My mistress wanted me to stay there till I was better; but I knew she could not attend to me, and I resolved to come here for a few days. It was very wet on Saturday, and I was shivering with cold when I came near here; but I had a sovereign in my pocket, and knew I could pay for what I wanted. As I passed the public-house at the corner I met two women I knew; they caught hold of me, dragged me in, and called for some whisky. I tried to get away from them, but they laughed at me, held me tight, and made me *smell* the drink. Then I drank some of theirs, paid for some more, and then it was all over. They made me senseless drunk; stole my money, my bonnet and shawl,

and then left me. I was thrown out of the public-house into the gutter, and there a policeman found me: *this* is what he did—to make me walk, I suppose” (she stripped up her sleeves as she spoke, and showed her arms terribly discoloured with bruises); “but I could not walk; so he took me to the workhouse, and there I lay insensible until mid-day on Sunday. Oh, what a Sunday for me! The old nurse was good to me, gave me some tea, and tried to comfort me. But the next morning the policeman came for me, and I had to go before the magistrate. He seemed to understand my case, talked kindly to me, and only fined me three shillings, or three days’ imprisonment. Then they locked me up. But I was so ill, the jailer went to the magistrate, begged me off the fine, and let me go. I went outside, and leaned against the railings. If I turned to the right, there was the river; if to the left, there was the Mission-house; and I was mid-way between the two. It did not seem to me that I could ever come back, or that you would look at me if I did; it seemed as if I had thrown away everything, and all that was left was to throw myself after the rest. There was something in me telling me the river was best, and I had better go at once and end my suffering. But this was not all: something also said, ‘Let that come *last*; go to the Mission, and if they turn away from you, it will be time for the river.’ I thought I would do this;

and so I came here. If you and the housekeeper had not been kind to me, if she had not taken me in, I should have been under the water before now."

This was said as the simplest truth, in a way that removed it as far as possible from a menace; and the manner convinced me that, humanly speaking, we had at least saved the body; and I prayed earnestly we might the soul also.

"If I send you away, will you go to the river?" I inquired.

"Not now," she replied; "I am quieter now. I don't expect you to forgive me: but I will go away from you all, and try to do better. Don't be angry with me long: indeed, I did not want to bring all this disgrace and trouble upon you and my good friends here."

I saw that the horrible temptation had passed; that there was now no fear of her attempting suicide; that I could speak to her without fear. And I said—

"I will go back with you to your mistress. It may be she will take you without questioning. If not, you shall tell her the simple truth, and leave the matter with her: if she will keep you, all is well; if not, I will bring you back here with me, and doubt not that some other way of living can be found for you."

"Is that what you say to me?" she asked in amazement; "I expected what I deserved—to be bitterly reproached, and turned into the street!"

"You have heard all the hard words I have to speak," I replied. "My Master was always kind, and gentle, and forgiving to the penitent: how could I be His servant if I did not follow His example? But I do wish to point out to you how you fell: it was simply by trusting in yourself instead of trusting in Jesus. You thought you could do without Him. Be wise in future, Milly, and lean hard upon Him,—hardest when you are tempted most; for in leaning on Him, and only in so doing, can true strength and power to endure be found."

"I *will* try," she said; "I have surely had a terrible lesson."

I returned with her to her mistress, but no intercession was needed. She was received gladly, and afterward endeavoured to walk humbly and prayerfully with Jesus. May the great Father, and He who knows what temptation is and does, keep her safely unto the end!

It was far better to have forgiven her than to have driven her out to the river. And I have learned, I hope, the valuable lesson, that none are too vile for Jesus to cleanse, and that there is no case so hardened and hopeless that it may not be reached and influenced by forgiveness and love.

The worse for those who, refusing Infinite forgiveness and Divine love to the last, turn the very goodness of God to be their enemy, and to fight against them "for ever."

"ON THE VERY EDGE."

"The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

IN the midst of Drury Lane we reach a Mission-house as the clock strikes one. A motley assemblage is gathered. Men and women, young and old, chiefly from the casual wards and refuges all around—they are the waifs and strays of our giant city. Drunken, dissolute, filthy, ragged, and incorrigibly idle, they come from day to day to pass away the time, to sit down without fear of the police, to get a little change, and, rarely, a chance of something to eat.

Why keep open such a place? Simply because there come among them girls and lads who can be, and who are, rescued from this shocking and dangerous condition. Scores of both sexes have been rescued, and are now doing well for this world and, we hope and believe, for that which is to come.

But the time for our meeting has come; we enter, walk up the room, and commence our service. Tattered hymn-books are given out, a well-known hymn selected, and we sing. Can such a gathering sing? Of course, they have *all* been taught, and mostly in Sunday schools: therefore

our singing proceeds smoothly, but never noisily, until the end. God's precious Word read and briefly commented on, prayer follows; and these introductory services ended, the meeting is thrown entirely open to any one, man or woman, who has any word to speak to man or to God. To-day we have a lady with us who is personally unknown to me, but is evidently a member of the Society of Friends. Of middle age, hair rapidly silvering, but a pleasant colour of health on the cheek, she rises when the time comes, and in a quiet voice begins to address her motley audience.

"Some few years since," she says, "I was labouring in the far east of London, when the dreadful cholera burst upon us with a suddenness and severity that caused us to stagger and be at our wits' end. It carried off whole families before any preparation could be made; in many houses they died as they sank down, before help could reach them; children—motherless, fatherless, or both—were all around; and homes, from which all the children were swept as by a poison-breath, were not uncommon.

"As speedily as possible special wards were prepared in the hospital; but the nurses became panic-stricken, and we were upon the verge of a state of things I have never dared to contemplate. Then I felt it my duty to offer my services; and I was at once accepted, and installed in authority over a large number of beds.

“Truly the angel of death hovered there; scores and scores were brought in daily, of both sexes and all ages—some almost gone, others dying, all suffering dreadfully, except those who were beyond the reach of pain and help alike. We received all that were sent to us, did our best for them by effort and prayer: but they died terribly fast; one-half of all that came perished speedily—no time for thought, no time for prayer or repentance, or seeking peace with God.

“Oh!” she continued impressively, “if you had been with me there, had seen the weeping, the striving, the sinking into death, you would need no argument to prove that the worst possible place on earth to seek repentance is a death-bed, especially when writhing with the most excruciating pain. Therefore I beg of you to seek salvation now. I implore you, by these dreadful memories, to come to the Saviour while time and opportunity are afforded you; lest, in leaving it to the future, you may leave it to that which God has nowhere promised shall be under your own control.

“There I saw the little child clasp its hands and wither away; I saw the young man hurled to death in the pride of his strength! The song of the maiden was exchanged for screams of agony; the dying yell of the infidel and the blasphemer still rings in my ear: while, do what we would, we were powerless to help and save. They came,

they suffered, they died, in that awful saturnalia of pestilence and death.

"There came to us, among others, one of the fairest girls I ever saw. I have seen female beauty in many lands, but none fairer than this blue-eyed daughter of one of the sunny homes of England. She was dreadfully ill when she was given to us; and from the first we feared for her, soul and body, when we found that the daughter of beauty was also the daughter of sin and shame.

"I went to her, and kneeling by her bedside warned her of her dangerous bodily condition, and inquired how it stood with her immortal soul.

"Never, never shall I forget the look of mingled astonishment, fear, and pain that passed over her face as she replied, 'Why do you ask? You do not think it possible that I am going to die, do you? I know I am very ill, but I have never thought of dying yet! I cannot die yet! I am not ready! I want time to think and pray, and I can do neither while in this awful pain!'

"Alas for her! her unreadiness could not, would not save her, or even add one minute to her life, any more than it will to *yours*! and as I knelt, I implored her to seek mercy and salvation while time was given.

"'Do you know what I have been?' she said, hoarsely. 'Do you know whence they brought me to lie on this very bed? If I cannot have time to repent, I am lost! lost! lost!'

"Her voice ascended in tone with her words; until the last one rang out in a shrill scream that caused a shudder in every frame, and a paleness on every cheek within hearing.

"Then there came to her side one of England's ladies, who has made her name a household word in the houses of her roughest countrymen, as well as in the mansions of the great and good. She was my colleague in that season and place of pestilence; and she said, re-assuringly—'If you are lost you are ready for Jesus, for He came to save such; and it is good part of the work done when the soul feels its lost condition, and its need of a Saviour from sin and its doom!'

" 'I don't mean that,' said the girl, 'I want to get well and go back. I don't want to repent, or to die, or to have anything to do with religion: it's *too late* for that! Stoop down, and I'll tell you. I was my mother's only one, her pet, her darling; and when I *would* come to London to get more money and have more liberty, she warned me and begged me to stay in vain. When she heard what had happened to me, it broke her heart; she withered and died. Her death and my shame broke down my poor gray-headed father, he has never been the same since. Often in the night, when I'm sober, I see them both—he suffering and dying: she, where I shall never be! O mother! mother!'

"'Have you ever sought his forgiveness?' questioned my colleague.

"'No, no,' she said, 'I've never been sober when I could help it! As sure as I became so, I saw my heart-broken, murdered mother!'

"'Let us send to your father,' said I, 'he ought to know where and how you are. Tell me his address, and I will telegraph at once.'

"'Do you think he will forgive me?' she quietly asked.

"'I hope and believe so,' I replied; 'but this I am sure of—if *he* will not, the dear Saviour will, if you will only ask Him.'

"'I will wait and hear from my father first,' she wearily decided; 'then if he forgives me, I shall have courage to go to Jesus.'

"'Go to Him first,' implored my colleague, 'you may wait too long.'

"Busily, with constant accessions and changes of the living and dying, passed the day away with us. In the afternoon we received a reply, informing us, 'It was all but impossible for her father to leave his sick-bed, but they would cautiously deliver the message and leave it to himself to decide.' We sent again, that unless he could come *at once*, he would surely be too late; and then I leaned over her, as she was lying all but unconscious on her bed of death, telling her our reply.

"'Raise me up,' she said, 'he *may come*! I begin to hope that he will, and that I shall die for-

given.' We raised her on the bed, and she sat with a look of the keenest watchfulness upon her face, never taking away her glance from the entrance-door of the ward.

" ' Shall we pray that he may come and that you may see him ? ' asked my colleague, as the night closed in.

" ' Do you think God will hear for me if you do ? ' she questioned in reply.

" ' I am sure He will hear,' was the answer; ' and if we can ask in faith He will give us a favourable reply.'

" O dear friends, that prayer, beginning with the request that the heavenly Father would send the earthly one, ready to forgive and bless; and then entreating, agonising, that the dying girl might be helped to see the loving, blessed Saviour waiting to be gracious, ready to forgive, mighty to save whosoever would come unto Him. Oh, those soft, low tones of earnest pleading, the wrestling faith, that strove for the erring, sinning sister in the darkness of unbelief! She lay and listened—wearily at first, soon interested, then tearful, then with clasped hands, and streaming eyes joining softly in the low, earnest cry for mercy, that could scarcely be heard at the next bed.

" ' Read to me of Jesus,' she said; ' how He pitied and forgave the one that was like me; there may be hope there for me.'

" We complied with her desire; and then read to

her, softly and slowly, how He suffered and died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, and then we urged her lovingly to trust herself wholly in His hands, and to believe and trust in His will and power to forgive and cleanse.

"Through the night she watched, and waited, and prayed, until the pearl-gray of the morning appeared, and the sweet smell of the hay, as it was conveyed to the early market, ascended through the open windows of the ward. The light increased, and the bustle of the morning became plainer without; still she watched, and waited, and prayed; until softly calling me to her, she said, 'That she felt she was forgiven, and that her father would come and forgive her before she died.'

"Hour after hour passed away, the great clock in front of the building marking their passage; and still she watched, and waited, and prayed. But her strength was well-nigh gone, her bright eyes were dimming, and her tones fainter and lower as the hours passed away; and we knew that unless his coming was very speedy her wish could not be fulfilled. So we prayed earnestly together, my colleague and I, and the dying girl, that strength might be given to watch and wait until he came.

"And it was so. While I was holding her, I saw the dying eyes brighten, I felt strength reanimate the frame as an old man tottered and staggered into the ward, supported by two friends who had travelled to London with him.

“He came to the bedside and sank upon it for a moment, then raised himself, and received his dying child in his arms. She looked into the tear-stained, convulsed face with unutterable entreaty, and murmured, ‘At last, at last! Father, father! forgive and bless me before I die!’

“He had no words wherewith to comply; but he bent down over her and kissed her—oh! so lovingly and forgivingly—again and again. One last long look of love, one long-drawn sigh of supreme contentment and rest, one quivering prayerful spasm of the lips, was the last of earth, and, we humbly hoped, the prelude and the first of heaven.”

There was not a dry eye among us; corners of ragged shawls, sleeves of torn coats, and backs of unclean hands were all busy together, as our quiet friend ended her narrative with an earnest appeal to turn to that loving, mighty Saviour at once, who was so able and willing to save.

"BETTER SO!"

"Taken away from the evil to come!"

Ill to my lot last summer to attempt an open-service in a small district of our giant city is not very generally known. Lying closely the rear of one of the widest thoroughfares, bounded on all sides by first-class houses of and the homes of the well-to-do, the district a compact nest of filth and squalor, of vice and , of dishonesty and drunkenness. It would profitable in many respects if the earth, as of would open her mouth and swallow up both es and inhabitants; but there could but little remain concerning the eternal condition of carcely-human souls therein.

this place, among these people, with my to a hoarding enclosing some waste ground, emptied to preach unto them "Jesus and esurrection of the dead." It was soon made ent that we were very unwelcome. The time the afternoon of the Lord's day; and our ng, reading, and speaking disturbed the sleep e drunken, and broke rudely upon the dreamy y of pipes, and beer, and spirits. Windows

were flung angrily up, and occupied by the fierce faces and forms of *not* honest men and women. Doorways were filled by drunken soldiers and their companions, blaspheming horribly. Ugly old Irish women came down from their garrets, and yelled at and cursed us; uglier young English girls came and screamed at and mocked us; while our faces, forms, and attire afforded a choice opportunity for free criticism to lads and girls who came to stand with us on the level of the street. Some of the lads and girls climbed over the hoarding, and from that place of hiding and vantage saluted us with an incessant and dangerous shower of brick and stone. Thus, amid screaming, yelling, cursing, swearing, blaspheming, and stoning, we attempted to preach the word of God, and endeavoured to win some for the Master, even in this nursery of the Evil One, in the metropolis of Christian England scarcely a year ago.

This sample of the manners and customs of the inhabitants afforded a truthful clue to the condition of the interior of their dwellings, in which whole families occupy one room only. A miserable filthy apology for a bed reserved for the parents and the baby; the children sleeping upon masses of rags anywhere on the floor. Dirt and discomfort, breeding fever, pestilence, and a horrible devouring appetite—a terrible craving—for the strong drink that produces this state of things and that maintains it when produced. Dirt and drink acting and reacting

on each other, until the deadly pair become the daily life of all around. In one of the worst of such rooms the subject of the present true and recent sketch was born and lived, and was brought to it when her brief life was ended.

In a few months from the time when we were stoned, some of the aspects of affairs had changed very much for the better. Winter had followed summer, out-door work had slackened or ceased, there was nothing to buy or sell in the streets, and the children began to be hungry. Then we tempted them into our Mission-room with some hot nourishing food, and as soon as they began to press upon us, we made it a condition that they should come with clean hands and faces, or we would not give them food. It was a happy thought also to cleanse one of the little ones, dress it in pretty serviceable clothing, and send it home. The effect was most gratifying; our meeting for mothers and sewing-class for girls (where goods are sold at cost-price for weekly *pre-payments*) have ever since felt the beneficial effects of that great stroke of policy; and careful following up has produced a noticeable effect on the children of the whole locality.

Our Mission-room among them was obtained, after some trouble, by renting the gigantic dust-hole of the net-work of alleys, cleaning and roofing it, and supplying windows, a door, stove, gas, and seats. True, the walls were damp and discoloured; but a few prints, and light, and warmth,

made it the brightest, cheeriest place all around; and it was speedily filled to overflowing with children, who began to know and love us. More sparingly their mothers came, and still more sparingly the fathers.

Among the rest came little Mattie, a wee thing of not much more than two summers, with bright eyes and fair soft hair, but terribly dirty, having only one garment to serve for all, head and feet uncovered, and very small stomach empty. Two or three larger sisters came with the little maid, and helped her when the dinner was served. It was easy to make friends with the mite of a baby. To look at her and laugh, and lift a spoonful to her dimpled mouth—with dirt in the dimples—was to win her heart; and through this introduction a way was opened to visit her parents, and we were soon welcome at Mattie's abode.

The only home she ever knew—one room on the ground-floor of an old house in a close alley; where mother washed and ironed, and father came sometimes when Mattie was awake to see and hear him; where father and mother and neighbours met, and drank and quarrelled, and cursed and swore, and fought like wild beasts; whence Mattie and the other children were often compelled to flee into the court, or to crouch beneath the hoarding that stretched high above them, a well-known, familiar, peaceable friend. Experiences such as these formed the beginning and the ending of

little Mattie's life, surely comprising all that it should not have been, and omitting all that should have made it joyous and pleasant to be a child. That court was almost her world; she had seen flowers, but never the green grass or the waving tree; there came no fresh breath of the spring upon her fair but filthy cheek. Drunkenness and poverty, want, hunger and neglect, were the facts of her young life; and they were her all, she knew no more.

A recent early summer evening;—the flush and freshness of the pleasant time penetrating even to the centre of our great city. In fields and meadows and woods far away, the glory of the crimson sunset converted the fresh green into living gold. Even in our dusty roads and streets men lingered, gazing lovingly skyward, where the rose-tints of the setting sun struck upon fleecy clouds beneath the clear blue arch, and painted them with a loveliness of form and colour that cannot be described. From this scene of glory and peace, half a score steps placed us—as by the very magic of evil—in the midst of darkness and drunkenness and death.

We were wanted in Mattie's home, and speedily we were there. In the court were her sisters, who greeted us in most unusual silence; in the room they entered with us, the mother and a neighbour; on a broken deal table, a little blue coffin with white nails; in the coffin, little Mattie.

Clean in face and limb, and robed in a clean white garment; upon the sweet childish features an expression of serenest peace; while the bright blue eyes were closed until they open at the voice of Him who was once a little child. The fair young brow was smooth and calm; but upon the left temple of the dead babe was a fearful gash, an injury so deadly as to have released little Mattie, at a stroke, from drunkards' land, and sent her where drunkards and drunkenness come not for ever.

"How was this done?" I inquired of the mother.

She bent and swayed herself over the coffin, simulating a form of violent grief; but there were no tears in her eyes, no sorrow in her heart. She had long since burned up the fountains of feeling with strong drink; and was even then and there under the influence of liquor, the offensive fumes of which were the most prominent and disagreeable of all the unpleasant things in the room.

"It was last Sunday evening," replied the mother; "there was a cab-horse fell down in the road; the child went with the others to see it; an omnibus was passing by; when the cab-horse sprang up, the people fell back and pushed the child under the feet of the horse in the omnibus; she was kicked out of the way by the blow on her head, which killed her instantly; she was not out of the house five minutes before she was dead."

This was her explanation ; but it contained only a very partial view of the truth. Piece by piece the whole sorrowful, sinful narrative was supplied to me until it was completed. All through the day of rest and worship the parents had been drinking until night came on ; the children as usual being left in the court and the room, while the mother was away in the public-house. When the child was struck by the horse, it lay motionless in the road, so ragged and filthy that people passed it unheeded in the darkness, supposing it to be a dead dog ! When the inquiries of its companions revealed the dreadful truth, the mother was sought for ; public-house after public-house was searched in vain, until she reached home in such a condition of intoxication as to render it impossible to make her comprehend that her child had met with a violent death during her absence. Not the first of her children that had passed through that awful gate into the regions beyond : one had been burned to death, another had been strangled, and now the third was laid dead in the great public road.


After the inquest had exonerated all parties from intentionally causing the death of the child, subscriptions were sought from all the surrounding neighbourhood, and a meeting was convened to assist in defraying the expenses of the funeral. Many who knew the parents declined to give, but from others money was freely given. One lady

undertook to defray the funeral expenses, leaving all the money gathered to purchase mourning and to help the parents.

All that came was spent in drink almost as fast as it was brought in; there was a saturnalia of drunkenness over the unburied body of the slain child. It brought money to the parents by its death that its life never produced; and means for the wildest excesses were provided and expended, until charity ceased to flow. Then they were almost as poor as before. Not quite; there was one little mouth the less to feed, one place vacant at the shattered deal table.

Broken glimpses of this completed story were in my mind as I stood by the blue coffin looking upon the pearl-white sleeping face. Around me were the girls who grow to womanhood in these dreadful haunts—preternaturally wicked, degraded, horrible; the inevitable produce of such surroundings and education, of such training in childhood and youth. "Without God, having no hope," conscience seared and dead; having only the knowledge and practice of evil; dissolute, drunken, worn with iniquity and sin before they had attained the age of womanhood. They were all around me: and the question came forcibly upon me, as I looked upon the dead child,—"*Is it not better so?*"

Better to lie calm and dead in earliest childhood, than to be born, and taught and trained in only evil and that continually; taught by systematic



example to lie, and cheat, and steal, and drink, from their cradle to their grave? Is it not good and merciful when they die, “ taken away from the evil to come; ” when the snare is broken, and they are delivered? Surely death in infancy is better than such a life for them !

I am writing of children in Christian England ; of little ones in her great metropolis, where the wealth is countless, where the government of the giant empire has its constant seat, where ministers, teachers, missionaries crowd upon and overlap each other. And yet I lay my hand tenderly on dead little Mattie’s breast, and feel solemnly and deliberately, “ It is better so ! ”

O brothers ! who follow the Son of God ! O sisters ! who love Him dearly that died for you ! Ought this so to be ? Should a minister of the Saviour think and feel thus over the dead body of one of the lambs of the flock ? Ought I to have to bend over this one of the countless victims of strong drink, and feel that it is your countenance and support that maintains the hideous traffic, the strongest slavery that ever debased, degraded, and destroyed the image of God !

One of myriads slain by strong drink ! O earth, earth, earth, cover thou not their blood !

VERDICT—NATURAL DEATH!

"He that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death."

WALKING home on a gloriously fine afternoon in May, I thought it just possible I might have half a day's holiday. There was nothing pressingly requiring attention, and I had been hard at work, and thought myself fairly entitled to half a day in the fresh air. But on reaching home a commandment was handed to me, nominally from Her Majesty, really from our parish beadle, to attend a coroner's inquest on the body of a prisoner then lying dead in the County Prison.

"I know nothing about inquests," I grumbled. "It's hard they can't let me have even half a day in peace; suppose I clap a blind eye to the signal, as Nelson did; but there's a plain threat of forty pounds penalty for disobedience. Then I have never been on a jury, and should like such a new experience; there may (*D.V.*) occur another opportunity for a run in the sweet fresh air; consequently I will obey the behest of our parochial official, and attend the inquest as required."

Accordingly, at the exact time mentioned, I presented myself at the prison, and was immedi-

ately admitted. Thus punctual, I was much too early, and was civilly requested to await the arrival of the coroner. There were about a dozen friends and neighbours assembled and assembling, who constituted the other jurymen.

Nothing to do but look round, nothing much in view except great wooden gates, iron lattice gates within these, and busy officials passing to and fro, we turn to inspect the armoury at the entrance. All kinds of stabbing and cutting weapons and fire-arms ranged round the walls ready for immediate use; also bells communicating with the different wards, so that upon the slightest alarm the officials can seize these weapons, and, if need be, use them upon the unarmed prisoners. Very small chance of successful outbreak here.

Now a carriage-load of fresh prisoners arrives. These are carefully handed out, and ranged in a row for entry, classification, and inspection. First comes a cabman, who does not like the process, and rebels as far as he dares by turning his profile instead of full front, as he evidently knows he ought to do—for he has been here before, and shows he knows the rules by taking off his hat. Next, a well-dressed young man, with colourless face and quivering lips, turning himself with shame from the view of the assembled jury. Next, a butcher in blue frock, big and burly, sent here in consequence of a battle with two policemen, in which the butcher did not gain the

victory. Next, an old man, horribly unclean and quivering with palsy, sent here for persistent begging. These are all sent here through drink, and if we ask we shall be informed that seventeen prisoners out of twenty who enter this place come through the same devouring cause. Next comes a boy about nine years of age, ragged and ignorant, but with bright eyes and an acute look, such as young savages who are *not* English may be supposed to wear. These and their companions are classified, entered on the prison books, and marched away in a very few minutes; but the incident has occupied our time until the arrival of the coroner, who is heralded by our beadle and accompanied by the surgeon of the prison. Then we, the jury, are summoned, duly empannelled, and invited to proceed to the dead-house to view the body.

In a moderate-sized square building, in a quiet part of the prison, the stark-naked body of a young man was laid on a white deal table. Disease had so preyed upon him as to reduce him almost to a skeleton, while a thick black moustache stood out prominently from the bronzed, sunken face, and formed a sharp contrast to the lividly white neck beneath. It was a most painful sight to eyes accustomed only to loving and reverent care of the dead, and we turned rapidly and gladly away, leaving him to quiet slumber until that voice resounds which shall call him to life again. We then returned to our more pleasant room at the

prison entrance, and proceeded to hear the evidence concerning the cause of his death.

The first person examined was the widow of the dead. There were no tears in her eyes, no tremor in her voice, while she gave her evidence. She said he was a very wild young man, drunken and profligate. That he was out with a young woman, when another acquaintance met him and asked after his wife. The inquiry aroused his companion's suspicions; explanations ensued between the young women, and bitter reproaches followed. These made him angry, and he commenced hard drinking; a quarrel ensued, and he terribly beat his companion of the day. The police came; and her husband, maddened with liquor, attacked them furiously, but was overpowered and locked up. Taken before the magistrate next day, he was severely reprimanded, and sent to prison for six months, with hard labour.

"Did you see him in prison?" a juryman inquired.

"Not until they sent me word he was dying," she replied; "then I came as soon as I could. He was in the infirmary, very near death, but quite sensible."

"Did he make any complaint?"

"Not of anything since he had been in the infirmary, but that before he was ill enough to be there he was almost always hungry, but that he had deserved all he met with. I spoke to

the doctor about it, and he said it was part of the disease that was killing him ! ”

Finding no further questions were asked, she turned away with dry eyes and complete indifference of manner. Her husband's profligacy had hardened her heart against him, and she carelessly left the prison in which he was yet unburied.

The next witness was the dead man's brother, who stated “they were poor lads in London together, sent to work when they should have been at school. That his brother had worked in various ways, his lack of education telling terribly against him, and keeping him to a boy's wages with a man's wants and wishes. He had become discouraged, entered the navy, had deserted thence, and enlisted in the army.”

He thus narrated the hopeless, aimless life of the dead ; and in so doing pictured the lives of thousands upon thousands of young men, who, born and reared in our great cities, without education or knowledge, are preparing an awful experience of ungodliness and recklessness when they take our places after we have passed away. What do these thousands care for ? Public-houses, low-class music-halls, cheap dancing-halls, and judge-and-jury clubs. These constitute their world of enjoyment, and are the sources of the impure pleasures they know. Cannot the Church of Christ do something for them—something commensurate

with their present value as immortal beings, and the importance of their position in years to come?

“ Did you see your brother while he was in prison ? ” was inquired.

“ I did see him,” he answered, “ and he was always hungry ; he never had enough to eat ! He was slowly starved to death ! ”

He spoke with a mingling of grief and indignation that greatly impressed the jury, and the dietary scale was immediately sent for. It was found, to their great astonishment, that more food was allowed than any juryman believed himself accustomed to eat. The surgeon being called, explained that owing to the depressing influences of prison life, much more food was required to maintain the prisoners in health than was requisite for men at liberty in full employment ; thus adding another evidence of the truth of Scripture, “ The way of transgressors is hard.” After hearing the surgeon’s evidence as to the cause of death, and conferring together, the jury expressed a wish to see some one who was with him when he died ; and the nurse of the infirmary was sent for. *He* was a short man, dressed in prison costume, with a low forehead and widely-parted eyes. He entered with a cringing gait, and bowed very low to the jury and also to the coroner, looking as if he had seen him before.

“ The jury want to know all that you can tell

them about the soldier who has just died," said the coroner.

"Well, genelman," said the nurse, "he was in the infirmery five or six weeks afore he died. When he fust come in, his breath sounded holler as a horn; but arter he had been in a little time he got better, and I thought he would soon be all right ag'in; but he said something had given way in his in'ards, and he went weaker an' weaker every day. I thought at fust as he was 'shamming;' but ven he kept it up night an' day, then I know'd it was real, an' that he vos surely 'booked through.'"

"Can't you cut it short?" suggested the coroner.


"Better let him go his own way," suggested a juryman, "for we are far from satisfied;" and thus, to his intense gratification, the prisoner-nurse was allowed to ramble on at his pleasure.

"Well, genelman," he resumed, "the sojer used to lay quiet thinking to hisself like, but never talking about nothing partickler, till one day ven I says to him, 'John, my boy, what do you lay thinking on all day?' He strikes me all of a heap by saying, 'I lays and thinks vere I shall be this day three months! for I says to myself, You'll be dead and buried as sure as fish has bones!' But jest to try him like, I ses out loud, 'Why, your time will be out, and you'll go to your reg'ment.' But he says, 'I shan't never leave this place no more, I feel sure o' that; and so I'd like to know

where I shall be, and what I shall have to do !' Now, I know'd he'd been an awful 'rip,' though he vos so young, an' I allus yeard it vos bad work for 'rips' arter they vos dead ; therefore I sed nothin' more to him then, but went to attend on another sick prisoner.

"Next day it vos just the same. 'Vere shall I be?' ses he ; but I vos ready for him, and I ses, 'Vy not arks the chaplain?' That fires him up, and he vonts to know if I think him a fool to arks anybody as was paid to tell of it. So my gun missed fire, and I had to let him lay talking to hisself. But I wouldn't give in, and I went all round the ward arksing each one quietly if they could 'let on' what a man was doing three months arter he was dead ; and I wish I may be sugared, genelman, if they didn't think I was gone off my head. Some of them bla'guarded me awful ; one old man in pertickler swore 'he'd report me for trying to give him the horrors.' This yer made me so mad that I thought to leave him to puzzle it out hisself ; but when I seen his thin lips a-moving I thought I'd have another shy, and try to come at it some other way.

"So I goes to a gray-bearded old 'un at the end o' the ward, wot owed me many a good turn, and I ses, 'Old Snowball, what does a man do arter he's dead?' 'Read your New Testament, you rascal, and see,' ses he, turning his old face away. Back I goes to sojer and tells him the New Testament



will tell us all about it. 'Can you read it if I get one?' ses I. 'No,' says sojer with a groan, and I was gravelled again for a little while; but I soon plucks up and says, 'Did yer never go to Sunday-school?' 'Yes,' he ses, 'an' I been tryin' to remember what they said about it, an' I can't.' 'I remembers a little,' ses I; 'let's see what we can make of it if we puts 'em together.'

"We tried and tried for a long while, but couldn't make no sense out on it, though we remembered it spoke of Jesus an' His disciples; but neither on us could think o' what it said about men arter they were dead, as he was drivin' at; and I was just giving it up for a bad job. Then a bright thought come. I'd often seen the night-warder reading a little book, and I thought I'd arks him and chance it. I knew he was a good sort, and never got any o' us into trouble if he could help it. So the next time I sees him, I ups and tells the sojer's trouble; an' I'm blowed if he didn't bring a New Testament and read it to the sojer as pleasantly and patiently as if he was well paid for the job.

"For a whole week night arter night he reads to sojer, and sojer sucks it in like mother's milk. As he got weaker and weaker, he got happier and happier, until the end come; an' ve laid him vere you seed him to-day."

"Did he make any complaint before he died?" was inquired.

"Not he, indeed!" replied the nurse. "He said he wished he had something to give me, and especially the warder, for our trouble; but I didn't want nothing, and I'm sure the warder didn't. He said he was very glad he had found out all about it; that he know'd now an' was thankful, that, arter all our trouble, we had come upon it all right at last. Then the darkness seemed to come down upon him by degrees; an' he put out his thin, bony hand, which I held fast in mine, until he went off, quiet."

With these words the prisoner-nurse drew the back of his rough hand across his eyes, and wiped away something that glittered as it fell, and was certainly no disgrace to his blighted, wasting manhood.

"Would you like to call any one else, gentlemen?" asked the coroner.

"I should like to hear that warder's account," remarked a jurymen, "if he is now in the prison."

He was sent for and came, and immediately I recognised him as a much-respected member of a neighbouring church, and accustomed to lead in prayer-meetings and Bible-classes.

He gave a short account of the soldier's illness and death, strictly confining himself to the facts necessary to be known to the jury, but never even hinting at his own ministry of love.

Then the jury were satisfied, and returned a verdict of "Natural death."

Back into the sunshine and the bustle of the teeming streets—thinking of life and death, and duty to the living and dying; with a pleasant thought of what I could not but believe was the soldier's present condition, and with a breathed prayer that many thousands may find and follow the bright road which he had at last found, and which had led him to a happy end.

HEART-BREAKING WORK.

"The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink."

IN my last sketch I showed what strong drink was doing amongst the lower classes; I now proceed to narrate a perfectly truthful instance of its deadly work in the midst of the cultivated ministry of the Church of Christ.

I was sitting in the Inquiry Office of our Mission-House, when there came to me a miserable, broken-down man, unclean and ragged, with his limbs palsied by long-continued excesses in strong drink, yet bearing upon him the unmistakable marks of education and good society. As I looked at him with wonder and sorrow, his face changed and hardened, from a first slight expression of shame, into one of effrontery and bravado.

"I am not one of your common herd, sir," he said; "a gentleman born and bred, a minister and a classical scholar, sir,—I have held good positions in the Church, and have been classical master in great public schools, sir; and yet here I am, hungry and ragged and homeless, for you to do as you please with!"

"What has brought you to this?" I inquired.

"Cursed drink," was his reply.

Evidently accustomed to beg, there was no shame in him,—not the least vestige of that manly independence which will starve rather than ask relief; he was a simple beggar for a morsel of bread, endeavouring to hide his degradation with an affectation of ease and gentility that was sickening to look upon.


To have given him money would have been to send him furnished to the nearest public-house (I hear, on the day I am writing, of a hungry and penniless unemployed servant who borrowed sixpence of her fellow, and immediately spent five out of six pence in spirits, "*for a treat for once*"). I therefore called one of my helpers, and requested him to take the wretched object to a coffee-house, and pay for what he chose to eat and drink. I heard afterward that he was quite unable to eat; he drank only, and went upon his miserable way.

He came again and again—always filthy and in need, and I was able to speak quietly to him, and to beg that for his own sake, and for the sake of all that men hold dear, he would abstain from that which was destroying him body and soul. He always promised repentance; but his promises were veritable broken reeds. I began to weary of his coming,—his case appeared so utterly hopeless, it seemed as if nothing of good could come of or to him. But on one occasion I spoke very seriously to him, asking him if he ever considered the awful

wickedness of the abandoned life he was leading, and the fearful retributive justice he was provoking to destroy him. I told him further that we should make it a matter of special prayer that God would be pleased, by any means, to stop his career of mischief and folly. He listened earnestly to my words, made no reply, but slouched away, and I lost sight of him.

Feeling great interest in him, I made inquiries concerning him; so discovering that he had visited other agencies in the locality, and had been fed and helped by them also: but they also had missed him; he had disappeared entirely from the neighbourhood. Many weeks passed, but brought no tidings of my fallen brother; and he had almost passed out of my memory, when one day I was informed by a new attendant that a gentleman wished to see me, and he was shown once more into my little room. So changed that I did not know him, he was now clean, well-dressed, and apparently restored to his true position. I gave him a hearty welcome; and we fell into conversation, during which he told me the life history I will now endeavour in substance to retrace.

“I am a public school man, the son of a gentleman, who gave me a good early education, and sent me to college when I was of the proper age. There I studied hard and with great success, carrying off many honours and prizes during my university career. There also I made many friends,



who have stood nobly by me through all the degradation and misery I have brought upon myself. But at the university I learned to drink also, and so laid broad and deep the foundations of ruin and shame. As soon as my college course was completed I applied for admission to the holy ministry, and was speedily appointed to a charge in a retired country place. Then I studied more closely than before; I had great natural ability, intense love of learning for its own sake, and a young man's desire to make a figure in the world; and I persevered in all I had commenced at college. But I persevered in drinking also; and at times found myself, almost unconsciously, stupefied with liquor. Then followed bitter self-accusation and vows of amendment; for I had complete belief in my own power to control the insidious appetite that was fastening firmly upon me. Lower and lower I sank; more and more frequent became my excesses, until I, the minister, who should have been an example to all around, was really a common scandal to religion and morality, and was called upon to resign my charge, or be dismissed in disgrace. Of course, I chose resignation; and left the neighbourhood, deeply chagrined at my failure, and bitterly dissatisfied with myself and every one else.

"I speedily obtained a second appointment; and for a time my bitter experiences enabled me to restrain my passion for drink. But the battle

was unequal; every desire of my life was fast passing over to the side of the destroyer. Then the strife deepened and became terrible. I saw clearly, I knew, what was coming; that I was hastening to an inevitable repetition of former degradation and disgrace. But I was descending into complete enthrallment, sinking into the slave of appetites that I could not deny. What need to say more than that my second appointment terminated exactly as the first had done, in resignation, to prevent dismissal.

“ ‘ Did not this suffice to cure?’ you ask: and I reply by continuing my narration. I obtained a third appointment, with some difficulty, by my testimonials; and thus another opportunity was given me for repentance and amendment. This opportunity was strengthened in a very pleasant way. Hitherto I had lived alone: but now I became acquainted with a young lady. A deep attachment ensued; I was far away from all previous scenes of temptation, and for a time the new and pure love strove successfully with the old and the impure, and, as I hoped, gained the victory. We were married, and seemed perfectly happy; her friends were mine; I held an excellent and permanent appointment, with good prospects of advancement and usefulness in the Church; and life has never been more pleasant or prosperous to me than it was then. But gradually my old appetite resumed its force and sway; and before

I was fully aware, I was again entrapped within its power. One night I reached home, I know not how; awaking in the morning with swimming head and horrible devouring thirst, to find my young wife fully dressed, seated over the grey ashes of the fire, wearied with watching and weeping, and waiting for my return to consciousness. I was but partially undressed; and as I arose from my bed, I saw her shrink from me with irrepressible loathing and disgust. One glance at the mirror before me revealed the sufficient reason. My hair was ruffled and matted, skin unclean, eyes swollen and bloodshot, and lips blackened and parched with the 'drink fever.' Not a word passed between us; I restored my usual appearance and mental faculties by copious ablution; then sat down and buried my hot throbbing head in my hands.

"Then she crept softly to my side; stole her arm round my neck, laid soft forgiving kisses on my forehead, mingled with a burning rain of tears; but she said no word, and I was dumb with a very agony of remorse and shame.

"Again, and yet again, excess, and entreaty, and promises, and forgiveness, followed swiftly upon each other, until my *failing* became notorious; and my third appointment ended as the others had done:—with these additions: I was, as before, without the means of living, but had now a wife and an unconquerable appetite to

maintain. Love died out between us for lack of alimēt; it could not live on broken protestations and promises, and variable broken humours; and she was fast sinking into a broken-spirited, drunkard's wife, when, happily for her, her father interfered, removed her from my side, and so prevented her being degraded and ruined by her own husband.

“I was fiercely angry when this happened; what right had he to interfere? what need had she to leave me? I had done my best, and if now and again I had exceeded, I had never ill-used her! but they had dealt very hardly with me! So, a drugged and deadened conscience, reasoning blindly and falsely, put upon those who loved me the blame that was all my own.

“The poisonous stimulants of anger and pride negatived for a time the dominion of physical stimulants over me; and I determined to show them that I was not wholly lost. I left the ministry, and obtained employment as master in a large public school. The change was exciting and pleasant; my fellow-masters were exceedingly kind to me, and the boys really loved me. But, at home, the desolation came strongly upon me; if *she* had but stayed with me, all might have been well. I might have striven and succeeded; but she was dead to me, though still among the living; and I oftentimes found myself in weak tears mourning over a wasted and broken life.

How I suffered ! let no man believe that the foolish and the wicked go unpunished ! Verily there 'is a God that judgeth in the earth.'

"In this lonely life the old habit returned with resistless force, and soon cost me my position in the school. They were very kind to me, really pitied me, but could do nothing to help me. I was self-doomed to go down 'into the depths;' and into them I plunged recklessly. I had forfeited all that makes life dear and pleasant, and evil became my good. I consorted with the vilest and the worst; have often slept in common lodging-houses with the lowest class of thieves; have wandered shiveringly under the wild night sky, lacking means to obtain the commonest shelter; and have passed more than one night curled up in a large basket in the public market, though I was educated as a divine, a scholar, and a gentleman."

"And notwithstanding all this you drank still?" I inquired.

"I drank still," was the echoing reply; "for drink was my all in all: it was religion, home, wife, station; all it had cost me, and more, it was to me when I could obtain it. So perfect was its mastery over me that I would have taken it at any risk whatever; not even the fear of immediate perdition would have prevented the indulgence of the devouring lust. So I sank into the lowest depths, homeless, ragged, and friendless; cold, and hunger, and drink did their work upon

me, until I was seized with a fit in the street, sinking into insensibility on a door-step on a cold wet evening, and carried in that condition to the infirmary of the Union.

"There, for many days, I lay between life and death, among many others, like myself, whom strong drink had smitten down and ruined. For a long time I could not even think; all my powers, physical and mental, sank into torpidity. I lay without thought or care, too weak to think or reason on any subject whatever. If I had died, I must have been lost; for I had no mind or strength to repent, or even to cast myself upon the Redeemer's boundless mercy. But He was merciful to me without my asking."

"Not without our asking earnestly for you!" interjected.

"Thank you and Him also," he replied, "and our remark explains to me why when life and strength returned to me I was even as a weaned child; my past life seemed like a weary dream of sorrow and sin, for which with all my heart I sought and, as I trust, found forgiveness from my Father in heaven. I saw that the sin and blame were mine only: that my darling and her father had acted wisely and justly, and that the fault of every downward step consisted in trusting to myself instead of leaning on a higher Power. I have drunk no strong drink since my illness; humbly and sincerely do I pray that I may never be

tempted to touch it again, and I beg most earnestly your constant and heartfelt prayers for me."

"And how will you live?" I inquired.

"I cannot tell," he replied; "for beyond the clothes I now wear,—given me by a friend to appear decently,—I have nothing in the world! even now I am hungry and without a penny to purchase a morsel of bread."

We took counsel together; and judging that his repentance was sincere, resolved that he should once more seek an appointment in the ministry of the Gospel. He had not long to seek, employment was almost immediately procured, and he went forth from us to fulfil its duties (as I thought), chastened, humbled, forgiven, and cleansed.

Will *she* return to him? Shall the black hair, fast turning gray, again feel the quiet smoothing of her wifely hand? It is said that "God and women always forgive!" May God the Almighty guard and help him and enable him to persevere until we meet again in the light that will never shine upon temptation, and sin, and sorrow!


If this were a solitary instance, it might be wrong to record it thus: *but where is the church or congregation that does not mourn over communicants lost through drink?* "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak!"

LOST AND FOUND.

“Which shall prosper, this or that?”

“It is hard work to labour among the ignorant and the depraved!—to meet, time after time, looks of utter vacancy or stolid indifference, an expression of the face which renders you hopeless of any impression for good having been produced; or, if a little impression is made, to see at the next meeting that it is gone, and all labour apparently lost.”

Thus I was very disconsolately and unprofitably thinking, when a knock came to my door at the Mission-room, and in answer to my call to “Come in,” a woman entered. At a glance, a drunkard—one who had given up all to the lust of drink; held captive under its sway, but having no more offerings to make; all that she had sent on that dreary road, and herself only left with the raging within, and unable to satiate it. Strong, able to work; but drink-stamped, draggled, ragged, and lost. I had seen her often in the Mission-room, but had always turned hopelessly away from her—as I had from hundreds and hundreds of others. Alas for these multitudes of the hopeless and the



lost! Thousands and thousands of them, festering in our great cities, and staining with sin and shame summer fields and lanes near villages and hamlets; the darkest problem of the Church—pariahs of Christian enterprise, uncared for by others, more than careless of themselves, they go from place to place, drinking, lying, stealing, and worse, until from some workhouse infirmary they pass to death and the judgment beyond.

It takes long to write all this, but it all flashed through my mind while she timidly crossed the room, and took a seat in answer to my invitation. Then she began:—

“I’ve seen you give a chance to many of ’em as is good for nothing, and I knowed you’d be done by ’em; and I thought it ’ud come to my turn, and I’ve waited, but you always passed me by; so I made up my mind to speak for myself; and here I am, sure enough!”

“Now you are here, tell me who you are and what you want?”

“I want everything! and I’ve got nothing!” she replied; “although I’m no beggar. I *can* work, and I’m willing to, if you’ll only give *me* a chance.”

“You can drink too, I should judge,” I remarked, “under exactly the same conditions; and I imagine it is *that* which has brought you to your present misery.”

“I’ll sign the pledge,” she hastily rejoined, so

Admitting my implied reproach was well founded, if you'll only give me a chance. I want another chance, and I want you to promise to give it me."

"That's just what you will be begging and praying for in vain some of these days," I continued, "if you go on in your present way; and you will find yourself where there are no more chances given for ever and ever."

She looked scared, as the possibility flashed through her mind, and yet continued, "I want another chance! give me one more chance!"

"Tell me what you have done with former chances, that I may judge if I ought," I inquired.

"I never had no learning. I can't read nor write—can't read a letter, and never could; but I can work. I can cook and clean, and wash and iron; and I'm strong and willing. When I was at home my mother made me work, and gave me beer and spirits when I pleased her. She never sent me to school, week-days or Sundays; and I grew up to be a young woman, not bad-looking then, knowing only how to work; nothing more—yes, one thing more—I knew how to drink. My mother taught me *that*; more's the pity for me."

"Did any one ever tell you about religion, or God, or Jesus?" I asked.

"I heard people swear about them sometimes," she replied; "but they did not seem to mean anything: there was nothing in it to me!"

Oh, how low my heart sank as she spoke, knowing as I did there were hundreds of thousands like her in our so-called Christian land; and what an aimless, impotent desire to meet the need accompanied the dreadful heart-sinking! May God enlighten and help us in this awful and pressing darkness and danger!

"What happened next?" I asked.

"My mother died, and I went to service. I could work, and I did; and I thought I would be as other young women; so I saved my money, and I bought nice things; and my mistress was good to me, and I was clean and well-dressed and happy. Then I knew a young man, and he talked with me and tried to teach me. He *was* clever, he was; clever and good-looking too, and I often wondered how he could care for me, who only knew how to work: but he did. He bought a nice home for me, and I left service and was married. In one year he was took ill and died, and I was left with a little girl-baby, with dark eyes like his own. Then I had to go to work again. All that time I never drank, never cared for it. But when I was alone, tired to death, in the dark lonely nights, then I began to take a little to cheer and comfort me. But I loved my little one dearly, and I worked hard for her and kept her well. Though I had to leave her all day, she slept in my bosom at night; and she soon began to know me and get pretty little ways, and

loved her—I loved her. And she, too, took ill and died, and I was left alone.”

Wringing her hands, bent almost double, and wildly wailing, so the untaught woman told how he had lost her little child.

“Where is your darling now?” I inquired.

“I buried her at Ilford,” she replied, “in a pretty blue coffin, with a bunch of flowers on her breast.”

“But don’t you think she is still living?”

“Do you think we buried my darling alive? I only wish I had her again. She would take the old out of my heart, and the drink out of my mouth!”

“But she still lives with God, and you may go to her if you will.”

An unbelieving stare was her only reply, and a return to the old refrain—

“Will you give me a chance?”

I thought I would try her, and I placed her at poor, rough work in an abstaining family. There he did well. Then clothing was procured for her, and she was sent to service. She remained just one week, and then broke out into furious drinking, and returned to us in disgrace. A second situation was procured for her, where she stayed for a month; she procured a third for herself, lost both through drink, and, after the third failure, withdrew herself from our knowledge altogether. Lost, as *every* other one has been

lost!—failing, as *every* other has failed, through inability to resist the lust of strong drink!

“There is a girl here in the deepest mental distress,” reported one of my helpers, some weeks after Ellen’s final disappearance; “and she says she has a message for you.”

It was at our daily prayer-meeting on Monday that I saw the girl for the first time. She was weeping bitterly, exclaiming against her own wickedness in very agony of soul. Quieting her as speedily as possible, I asked her, as usual, “What I could do to help her?”

“I have come from the borders of perdition! I have been almost in! I deserve *to be in!*” she sobbed; “and I should have been there if I had not been stopped, against my will, too!”

“I do not understand such wild talk,” I rejoined; “and I do not like it either; speak soberly, if you have anything to say to me.”

“I tried to drown myself last night,” she said; “I meant to do it, and should have done it if I had not been dragged away from the river.”

“What made you behave so madly?” I asked.

“I’ll tell you all, as I was told to do; and I’ll tell you the truth also,” she rejoined. “My father was a German artist; and before the late war my father and mother, my two brothers and myself, all lived together in London. My two brothers were taken by the German consul and sent back

to the war; and we never heard of them afterward. My mother took it so to heart, that she fell sick and died. So my father and I were alone; but we were not unhappy: he worked at his business, and I kept his house. So it went on until he went to France on some business; and when he came back he brought a Frenchwoman with him, and told me to call her 'mother.'"

"I thought the French and Germans hated one another too much for that sort of thing," I remarked.

"I don't know about that," she replied, "I only know it was so, and that she 'pecked' at me until I went to service to get out of her way, and that I have never seen them since. But I was not fit for service. I loved theatres, and dancing, and singing, and I spent my money on these things as fast as I earned it. I made several friends; but I could not keep my places, because I wanted to be out more than they would let me. When I left my last place I had very little money: so I went to a cheap lodging where other girls were. They earned money in a terribly bad way, and they wanted me to do so too; but I would not. When all my money was gone, my friends went too. Then I sold my clothes, bit by bit, until at last I had none left but these; and last Saturday they turned me into the street. All that night I wandered about, hungry and cold, sitting down in doorways until I was moved on; and at last the daylight came again,

and the streets were lively and warm, but quiet, because it was Sunday. All day I wandered about here and there, thinking what I should do, and feeling that I must do as the others did, yet not liking it because of my dead mother. Then it came into my head that it was better to drown myself and go to her than to do that; and I resolved to wait for night and then throw myself into the river. When the Sunday night came I made my way to London Bridge. But for a long time there were too many people about. But when the bridge was clear, I jumped on a seat and put one foot on the top. Then I heard a shout; and a woman sprang to me, threw her arms round me, and dragged me down. I struggled with her, and begged her to let me go; but she was strong and would not; she forced me down upon the seat, never loosing her arms, and held me there.

“‘I will not let you do it,’ she said; ‘you must be quiet, or I will call the policeman, and he will lock you up! Do you know where you will be in five minutes if I let you do it?’”

“Then a great horror came over me, the lights swam round me, and I thought I was dying. But I soon recovered; and when I did, she had laid my head on her bosom, and was fanning me with her old shawl. Still she would not let me go, lest I should break away and do it. So she held me fast, saying, ‘When I was quiet she would talk to me.’”

“ ‘ What else can I do ? ’ I said : ‘ I am hungry and cold, and have no friends ; you had better let me do it.’

“ ‘ Not yet,’ she said. ‘ You can always drown yourself, if you wish. But there are better times and days for you yet. You are young, just what my dead girl would have been ; and, for her sake, I will try and save you. Come to the lamp and I will show you something that you *can be*, that my dead daughter *is* !’

“ So we went to the lamp, and she gave me this tract ”—it was *Beautiful Snow* !—“ and she made me read it to her all through slowly. Then I saw how wicked I had been ; and I began to weep for my sins, and have not ceased hardly since. Then she drew me away from the bridge ; and we walked up and down, resting where we could, until the morning came again, and it was Monday, that is, to-day. She brought me very near this place ; and before she went away, she said, ‘ You tell the minister there that Ellen—who lost her husband, and her little child, and her chance also—saved you from what you were going to do, and brought you to him. I had my chance, and lost it, and I suppose I shall never have another ; but you go to him and ask him for a chance, and take better care of it than I have of mine !’ Then she kissed me and left me, wiping her eyes with her old shawl ; and I do not know where she is now.”

“When did you have anything to eat?” I inquired.

“Not since Saturday,” she said; “but I am not hungry; I only want to be forgiven! Do you think there is any mercy for me?”

Jesus and forgiveness, Jesus and cleansing, Jesus and hope, Jesus and a new life, were pleasant topics to dilate upon until she was handed over to our Bible-woman, and sent to our Mission Home; and from thence, within a week, to service in a Christian family.

And Ellen? In some casual ward, or work-house infirmary, peradventure in prison, perhaps in a pauper’s grave!

If she would only return to me, most gladly would I give her another chance and a hearty welcome, if only in return for the life she saved when it was so nearly gone.

May He who can do it have her in His holy care and keeping, and bring her back to us in penitence and peace!

BLIND—BODY AND SOUL!

"Nigh unto cursing, whose end is!"

ONE clear, bright, frosty evening, two men of middle age were proceeding to their "labour of love" on the Lord's-day. They were renting a large hall for Sunday evenings, and using it to attract the attention of those who attended an infidel meeting in the neighbourhood. Their plan was to open the hall and allow free discussion and opposition, being strong in the belief that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and could, consequently, be successfully defended and taught. They allowed an infidel to occupy the chair, and allotted time to object to and defend Scripture statements and doctrines. One half the platform was allotted to Christians, the other to unbelievers; and the subject on the evening in question was, "Has man an immortal soul?"

Among the infidels was a tall, finely-formed old man, with hair and beard of almost snowy whiteness, the latter descending in rich profusion upon his ample chest. He was totally blind; but his affliction did not prevent him from keenly attending to the debate, and manifesting intense delight

or disgust as the opinions expressed coincided or disagreed with his own. When his time arrived to speak, it was a painful and miserable sight to witness the tall form writhing with malignity, as he stood uttering the most awful blasphemy against the God of heaven. His denunciation of everything held dear by Christians was so vehement, that several of the female portion of his hearers hastily left the hall, lest he should be a Samson in another sense, and bring down the building in judgment upon all within it. It was a sensible relief when his allotted time was expired: the storm of hisses subsided; and the blind man felt his way back to his seat, and wiped the hot dew from his brows.

For two hours the debate was continued. At its close a prayer-meeting was announced, and the character of the audience clearly shown by an almost complete exodus, a few women and some of the Christians on the platform alone remaining.

"I should like to see that blind man at home," said one of the men who rented the hall, "if I could obtain his address." And having procured it, he left the hall, and during the ensuing week carried out his intention.

He found the blind man to be an ornamental basket-maker, and was enabled to witness how God compensates for deprivation of sight by added intensity to other powers. He saw that his blind companion could work as swiftly and, apparently,

as certainly as though able to see ; and he was pleased in one sense, and saddened in another, by noticing the perfect cheerfulness of the blind man as he assiduously continued his labour.

“ I have come to see you,” said the tall man. “ Do you remember my voice, so as to know who I am ? ”

“ Of course I do,” replied the blind man, as if surprised at the question. “ You are my metaphysical friend of last Sunday ; and I know what you have come for, too, as well as you do yourself. You have come to try and convert me, my boy ; but it won’t do. I am tougher than you think ; even twenty free tea-meetings wouldn’t do it.”

“ Nevertheless, I have known even one free tea-meeting do good work in that way,” replied the tall man ; “ but I do not wish to discuss such questions just now. I would rather speak of something more to the purpose. I should like to know your opinion of what death does to a man when it comes to him.”

“ Then I will very soon tell you,” replied the blind man ; “ I think it puts an end to him altogether.”

“ What, then, becomes of the life that was in him ? ” questioned the other. “ Or do you mean to assert that something can become nothing, though you deny that nothing can become something.”

“ I don’t trouble my head with such intricate

rubbish," was the reply. "I don't believe any of your tales about a life hereafter and immortality; got up tales that are only fit to frighten fools into supplying a set of priests with plenty of money to support them in idleness. And as to all your nonsense about death-bed repentance, if you will only sit down (for I can hear you have been standing all this time) I will tell you a little truth about that matter that will do you good to hear. But first shut the door, that my pet little daughter may not hear us; for I don't care to speak of it before her; she is fit for nothing all day afterwards. But as for death-bed repentance, I will tell you now. I had a son years ago. He was my eldest, and I took great delight in him; he was a real good boy—none of your religious nonsense about him, but a steady, good, moral lad as ever wore shoe-leather. I taught him carefully, when he began to grow up, that the Bible was got up by priests for a trade, and that they had invented the idea of God for the same purpose; and it was his delight to go with me on Sunday evening to our hall, and get some real truth and knowledge there. And I tell you, sir, he was as clear an infidel as ever breathed; but a good son to me and his mother, and honest and kind to all about him. But he became consumptive, and got worse and worse until the time came that he had to die like all the rest of us. Now, you just listen carefully, for I am speaking the truth. One day the doctor came to see him as

sual ; and there was that about him which made the doctor shake his head, and tell us that if he wanted to say anything to his friends, it might be as well to say it as soon as possible. My boy knew what he meant ; and the next time I went into his room, he called me to him, and put his thin, wasted, hot arms round my neck, and he said, ‘Father, I am going away from you. The doctor says I am dying, and I think it’s true ; but I have not the least fear, father—I firmly believe there is no God and no hereafter. I shall soon be nothing at all, and have to suffer no more ; and even if there were any God I have nothing to fear then, for I can safely say I have never done anybody any harm.’ And so, sir, my poor boy went on talking calmly and quietly, while he had his senses. And it was only a little while before he went, that he began to wander and to talk wildly about his Sunday-school and his teacher here ; but I don’t take any account of that ; for it mostly happens so : and, therefore, I tell you that my boy died as he had lived, a thorough unbeliever in either God or devil ; and yet he went off as quietly as a lamb. So don’t tell me of your horrible infidel death-beds ; for there is my personal experience that such tales are all set-up rubbish, invented by the priests.”

“And where do you really think he is at this moment ?” inquired the visitor.

"Nowhere," replied the blind man. "How can he be anywhere, when we laid all that was him in the burial ground?"

"Not all," was the objection, "unless you laid him living in his grave. I want to know what you think has become of the life, thought, intellect—call it what you will. That, after all, was all you knew of him. Where is that?"

"Gone, vanished, dissipated," was the reply.

"Then you really mean to say, that the something that was your son has now become nothing?" asked the tall man.

"There was nothing but what we laid in his grave," was the answer.

"You must feel that is simple untruth and evasion. You have spoken tenderly of his love for you and of his good moral qualities—what has become of these things?" rejoined the visitor.

"I don't know," was the reply, evidently uttered without intention to speak at all.

"Then you know nothing of what you ought to have understood perfectly before you chanced your son's perdition upon what may after all be an error. And yet you call yourself a good father, while exulting in the certainty that if there be a hell you have done what in you lay to cast your eldest born deliberately into it; that you have coolly cut him off from any opportunity of seeking to be reconciled to an offended Deity by repentance and faith, the only things possible to a sinning man.

You have stood between God and your own son's redemption, for possible evil and impossible good to ensue; and you have calmly insured, as far as you were able, the eternal condemnation of your own loving child. Man, blind in soul, as well as body, may God forgive you! But how could you—how could you, with a father's love in your heart for your son, coolly and deliberately set yourself to accomplish a deed so disastrous and infernal!"

The reply of the blind man consisted of a furious reiteration of the blasphemies that had shocked so many on the previous Sunday evening, mingled with the most daring defiance of the Almighty, uttered in phrases far too dreadful to record; and more than once the Great Creator was invoked and defied to do His best and His worst.

Shocked and saddened beyond measure at the total failure of a visit from which he had fondly hoped for better things, the visitor withdrew; followed in his retreat by the virulent and insolent blasphemy, in which the blind man seemed to take a delight that was absolutely fiendish.

On the following Sabbath the discussion was continued, and the blind man's opposition became more and more blasphemous and virulent, until it formed a question for consideration whether he should be allowed to speak again in the meeting. Of decent, fair opposition the committee had nothing to fear; but such shocking and purposeless blasphemy was unbearable. The question


was settled, to their great relief, by his suddenly ceasing to attend.

The weeks and the work proceeded, until the winter began to brighten into spring; but the blind man came no more to the meetings. At length some inquiries were made concerning him; and the committee was informed that he had been taken ill, and was now not expected to live. Hoping that illness might have softened his heart, the former visitor readily volunteered to call upon him and ascertain his condition. Accordingly, one evening after work was done, he returned to the well-remembered house, and was at once admitted into the room where the blind man lay.

He was but little changed. The broad cheek was still full, the grand form not much diminished in bulk or strength, and the clear hearing was as keen as ever—a fact that was evidenced by the rough greeting bestowed on the visitor! “Well, metaphysician, come to try again, eh?”

“We are not to be weary in well-doing; but your hearing and memory must be very keen and strong to recognise a man by his footstep when you have heard it only very seldom. But we had really become anxious about you, and I volunteered to call on you; and here I am.”

“What for?” queried the blind man. “Have you come to administer spiritual consolation, and have you duly brought the eighteenpence that



makes the weekly consolation bearable to poor sick devils, eh? I tell you I don't need your eighteen-ence, and I won't have the physic thrust down my throat without that sugar-plum afterwards; so you had better take heed."

This was bitter ribaldry, but not blasphemy; and the visitor was encouraged to persevere in attempting to reach the conscience of the blind man, and he consequently gently offered to read and pray.

"If you do try that," was the reply, "I'll blaspheme you out of the house pretty quickly. I have told you already that I would not have it; and I meant what I said. Sit down like a man and talk politics, or something sensible (I know you can do it if you like), and I will listen to you and thank you; or, better still, read me a slashing leader out of last Sunday's paper—that will be something like."

"I cannot do these things now," said the visitor. "I shall be most happy to read God's Word to you, and to pray for and with you, if you will allow me; but I will have no part in helping you pleasantly to pass along the awful road on which you are certainly going, and the end of which may be very near."

"Then go about your business," was the angry reply, "and make room for some better fellow, that will help a blind man in his own way, and don't come here any more till you are sent for."

When I want you, I shall certainly send for you."

"Do so," rejoined the visitor; "and when you send I will come gladly:" and so they parted for a short time.

Passing out, he was detained by a touch on his arm, and beckoned into the parlour; then motioned into a seat by a middle-aged woman, who covered her face and burst into a passion of bitter, heart-broken tears.

"Oh, what shall I do for him?—how shall I help him?" she said, at length. "Oh, sir, you are used to deal with such as him. Can't you say or do anything for him? He has always been kind and good to me and the children, much better (as he said himself) than some that make a great profession; but, oh, sir, I believe, though he does not; and I fear he is going to hell!"

"Did you hear what he said when I offered to pray with him?" asked the visitor.

"Oh yes," replied the woman; "but he changes so. Sometimes he is quite free from pain, as he has been to-day; but at other times he suffers such agony that he does nothing but groan and scream for mercy. Then you may read or pray, or do what you like; but as soon as the pain leaves him, he will blaspheme as bad as ever. And that just reminds me what he used to do years ago. He would go, sir, into a prayer-meeting, and be asked to pray; and he would

kneel down and pray beautifully, just like some experienced Christian; and he would leave such meetings and go to a street discussion place near here, and then he would do his utmost to make the young men who would listen to him thorough unbelievers in the Bible."

A wild scream of agony from above interrupted her, and she ran upstairs, followed by the visitor. The strong form was struggling and writhing, and every feature distorted and wrung with the intensity of bodily suffering. Heavy perspiration poured from his face, and his hands were clasped and working convulsively on the coverlet of the bed. "O God! O God!" he groaned out between his pangs. "I have deserved it, I know I have; but be merciful! be merciful! I knew all the time that I did not believe what I said to others, and I was wrought up to blaspheme as I did. Oh, mercy! mercy! Is there no one near that will pray for me?"

Trembling and horror-stricken the visitor drew near and knelt by the side of the bed, intending to pour out his heart in prayer; while the suffering man endeavoured to stifle his groaning and crying, that he might hear and join in the supplication. But as the visitor knelt, and his face sank upon his hands, there came upon him a cold and awful feeling that it was useless to pray; it seemed to him verily as if God had closed up heaven and would not hear. Many times for

many years had that visitor knelt in prayer in various circumstances, but never till then had he experienced such an awful inward feeling that prayer would be in vain. He struggled hard with the feeling, but it was unconquerable; and he arose from his knees with a sickening hopelessness he could not overcome.

The pangs speedily returned upon the blind man with dreadful intensity; and his cries and groans became so heartrending that the visitor was fain to stop his ears.

At length the cries and struggling ceased. But the end had come.

"I am in awful pain," groaned the blind man, "but that is nothing to the agony of my mind. There all is darkness—no light! no hope! no God!" And thus he died.

"God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

N E M E S I S.

"Filled with their own way."

GEORGE HOLDEN was a tailor, working for the poorer classes of mechanics and others in the round-floor rooms of an old wooden house in one of the "back slum" streets of the Great Metropolis. He was a little man, with a large bald place on the top of his head, which he kept constantly in a high condition of polish by means of an old red cotton pocket-handkerchief, which he retained specially for that purpose. Beneath the bald place was a round, red face, denoting a full habit of body and considerable peril of apoplexy; which peril was increased when any of his numerous customers came to wile away an hour with 'Cranky Old George,' by entering into discussion with him. For George was a man (though a little one) of most decided and violent opinions, which he never scrupled to express in the very plainest terms. He delighted to describe himself as a staunch republican of the "reds," and was once made redder than ever before, by a customer inquiring as to whether the latter peculiarly referred to the most prominent of his own

features. He was also a decided atheist and a violent opposer of every form of cunning and priestcraft, as he always described all kinds of religious belief and practice. It may also be whispered that George occasionally indulged in strong liquors, and on such occasions his "reds" external and internal were more prominent than usual—they may be described as culminating in a flaming scarlet in both respects.

Between these two "reds," George was almost always poor, often in debt, and, in consequence, discontented and unhappy. At such times it was bad for the tax-gatherers to apply for their rates, for George was ready for them, not with the money, but with every form of abuse which a very retentive memory could supply him with. The "water-rate" was a Christian, and accustomed to throw the paper on to George's board and retire as speedily as possible; but the "poor-rate" rather enjoyed such peppery remarks, and took pleasure in observing how far George's eyes could protrude and how much scarlet his face could display, without his falling from the board in a fit of apoplexy. At such times George's tongue would wag fiercely, while his right hand mopped furiously at the bald place with his red handkerchief, the dirty shirt-sleeve on his left arm would be passed rapidly over his face, and he would talk away as fast as possible until the "poor-rate" thought proper to beat a retreat. The pith and sting of the contro-

versy being as to whether the magistrates had a legal right to charge a shilling for the summons, without which formula George's poor-rate was never paid.

There was, however, a soft, warm, human corner in George's heart, where he kept his love for his two daughters, Mary and Annie; and oftentimes when the expletives grew more furious than decent, the younger, Annie, would jump up from her work and put her round, white hand over her father's mouth, and the foaming torrent was stayed. Both daughters had grown to womanhood, and having been motherless for many years, as a natural consequence there was something of the relation of parent and child mixed with their warm feelings of sisterhood. Mary was of a more staid and quiet disposition than Annie, though there was only two or three years difference in their ages; Mary being about three-and-twenty, and Annie about twenty, and both "exceedingly fair to look upon."


Following upon this latter peculiarity of the sisters, were two young men, who had each ulterior views concerning the maidens, which will be exemplified in the course of this narrative.

George was alone at the time we write of, his daughters having left home to return some new work they had been doing, as they were both in the habit of earning money by needlework; and in consequence George had to wait for his tea—a

meal of which he was as fond as "any old washer-woman, made up of equal parts of gin, snuff, and religion," as he himself would have phrased it; and to beguile the time, he was repeating aloud as much as he could recollect of the lecture at the Hall of Science on the preceding Sunday evening, with running comments of his own; thus employing his mind while his hands worked busily on, until the return of his daughters.

As they stepped down from the street into the room—for there was no passage, every one passed through George's front room—they sat down in silence, looking very dispirited, and at first made no reply to their father's one word of inquiry, "Well?" "The old Jew woman won't pay us till Friday for what we have done," said the younger daughter; "and she says also, it was not done well enough. I'm sure for the money that is paid, we sha'n't earn salt if we do it any better."

"There's your religion, there's your religion," began George, catching up the old red handkerchief, and beginning to mop himself violently. "That's what I always say; it's always the case in a poor priest-ridden, ignorant country like this. Tell me about religion and Christian countries indeed, when here's you two poor wretches been working like horses for less than a shilling a day, and when you have done the work, can't get the money."



"Come, I say, father," remonstrated the youngest, "just think who you are talking to. 'Poor wretches,' indeed!"

"I beg pardon," apologised George, somewhat staggered in his intended burst of eloquence, "I didn't mean it individually; I spoke of you as representatives of a class."

"I don't care what you meant," replied his pet, "I am not a 'poor wretch,' and never intend to be; so don't call me so any more, either by myself or in company with anybody else."

"Well, I won't," said George, trying again; "but what I meant to say was, here are you two ignorant, priest-ridden white slaves"——

He was stopped by his youngest daughter bursting into a violent flood of tears, and exclaiming, "It wasn't our fault, even if you have got to go without your tea. Don't blame us, it was bad enough to have to bear her insolence without coming home to have our father abusing us like two pickpockets."

"Is there no tea in the house?" inquired the father, recalled to lower considerations by the depressing domestic circumstances thus abruptly presented to his consideration.

"We have neither tea, nor sugar, nor bread, nor butter," replied the elder sister.

"And I have no money," rejoined George with a groan, turning silently to work again.

The tears of vexation were soon stayed, and the

sisters retired to the inner room, which was specially reserved for them, George's bed being in the room they all worked in, a fact made evident to every one who entered, by the bedstead turned up in the corner with a quilt thrown over it.

Re-entering the common room, Mary exhibited some of her father's red propensities on observing that he was not alone, but talking earnestly with a tall, good-looking, young man, who was acting as the missionary of the district just then, but who was capable of, and aspiring to, higher things. He was of good address and very respectable family, was studying in a dissenting college for the ministry, and devoting all the time he could possibly give to the evangelisation of the district in which George Holden lived. He had deliberately resolved to devote all he had to following his Master's footsteps, and preaching the gospel among the poor. As part of this scheme he had resolved at the proper time to ask Mary to help him as his wife, and this fact was known to, and cordially approved by, that young lady; who was of strong, resolute character, accustomed to the rough side of life, and to make the most of very small means. She was also intellectual and of a loving disposition; and he who had resolved to share life's path with her, felt quietly certain that he had chosen wisely and well. But this matter, though perfectly well understood

by themselves, was as yet made known to no one else, not even to Annie; and being in ignorance of the honour intended for him, it was the delight of the little tailor to badger the missionary to the utmost bounds of human endurance, raking up the most atrocious and exceptional cases from the highly-spiced Sunday newspaper, and presenting them as the common practice of Christians to the disgusted missionary.

In pursuance of this amiable plan, he commenced:—"Well, what do you think of the new development of your white-chokered fellow-robber, at the other end of the town. He goes into a respectable cook-shop, where an honest man is striving to earn a living for himself and his children, and he helps himself to one of the spoons. Just like you! Don't tell me! I'm not in the least surprised. I'm only thankful that he was caught, and is doing his duty for once on the treadmill."

"May I ask whom you are thankful to?" somewhat maliciously inquired the missionary. "I am curious on that point."

George found the red handkerchief necessary before he replied, "I am not going to be drawn from your brother-robber in that cunning way, but it's just like you, always trying to crawl out of a plain answer to a plain question. Just tell me whether they let him wear his white choker on the treadmill, and how he looks in it."

"I will tell you," replied William, "that the statement has been investigated, found to be utterly false, and the editor has been called upon to retract it, and amply apologise, failing which he is likely to know what a jury think of such an attempt to injure an individual whom he has never even seen, but whose character he has not scrupled to do his best to blacken and ruin."

"Escaped this time, has he? worse luck," rejoined the tailor. "It is well said, 'the devil takes care of his own.'"

"I thought you didn't believe in a devil," remarked the missionary.

"I believe this," said the tailor, avoiding the question, "that you Christians will always turn away from any subject you don't like, pretending to do good, and living all the while upon the money that was left for the poor. Here, look at me, working and slaving from morning till night, having at this moment nothing to eat and scarcely a decent coat to wear, because we can't get our own money after working hard for it, while you that have nothing to do but walk to and fro at your ease, have a good suit of clothes, plenty of victuals, and lots of money in your pocket."

"Is that really true that you have nothing to eat?" asked the missionary.

"Yes, it is," replied the tailor, hotly. "My daughter has just told me we have neither bread nor butter, tea nor sugar, and no money to get any.

ut what do you care? Give me a tract, do, as usual, and get out of my sight."

The missionary calmly handed him a tract, and stalked out of the house without another word, not even looking at Mary, whose face was absolutely scorching with bitter mortification and shame.

"That's the way to drive 'em out," exulted the sailor, "don't tell me; now if he had had any good in him he would have offered to lend me half-a-crown. Of course, I should not have taken it, but it would have showed he had some feeling for him. But it's just them. He has run off as fast as possible, for fear I should ask him, though I had known it he would have had no fear. I'd sooner pawn my goose than be beholden to him."

Brave, strong words! but not much comfort to the craving stomach, as the sailor felt when he turned lugubriously to his work again.

He was interrupted by a whistling boy, carrying a basket, from which he took bread and butter, tea and sugar, and laid them on the board, simply saying, "Goods for Mr Holden—paid for!" then took up the empty basket and vanished. The sailor sat with protruding eyes, looking steadfastly on the "goods," while the face of his eldest daughter assumed a still deeper tinge. At length the tailor burst out: "I won't have 'em. He has done it to get the better o' me. Take 'em away, Annie, take 'em away, and throw 'em into the street!"

"Very likely," responded the favourite, "he means it as a gift, I suppose, which, if you don't like to accept, you can insist upon his taking the money for as soon as you get it; and tell him he sha'n't come in any more if he don't; but as for throwing them into the street, that's nonsense. I shall make the kettle boil and have our tea."

Afraid to insist, and most unwilling to accept, the tailor sat in silence till the tea was ready, and having by that time overcome his scruples, seemed to enjoy his meal rather more heartily than usual.

In the evening there came a letter for Annie, in a well-known handwriting, saying that James had succeeded in procuring an appointment for her to take care of a set of chambers during the illness of the regular attendant, and he would come the next morning and escort her to her temporary home.

Accordingly, Annie's "things" were prepared, and in high health and spirits she left the shelter of her father's roof to go forth into the world. She was passionately attached to James, had full confidence in his honour, and believed that he intended shortly to make her his wife. Though in a higher position than Annie, James had been greatly pleased with her, and he had planned this departure from home in order to be with her more frequently than he could otherwise be. It was a pleasant but most dangerous time. He was well-educated, and had not only imbibed the atheistic

notions that found favour with the tailor, but he also lectured occasionally, and at such times he delighted to have Annie near him on the platform. Annie would listen with complacency to the attacks on and misrepresentations of the Scriptures, that form the never-ending theme of the trash vended at such places, but never seriously thought of the consequences to which such misrepresentations might lead. She was utterly indifferent to any form, either of belief or unbelief, but she was deeply attached to James, and gladly accompanied him wherever he chose to go.

Annie found her new home very lonely when all the tenants had left in the evening, and she was heartily glad of the company of James, who would sit with her and read to her of the men and countries of other centuries, endeavouring at the same time to indoctrinate her mind with the atheistic ideas that disgraced his own sense and manhood. Very speedily the reading became neglected, fierce passion was aroused, temptation triumphed, and Annie was ruined.

Then, when it was too late, their eyes were opened and they saw the dreadful gulf into which they had blindly plunged. James especially was deeply enraged and grieved. He had been attracted by the beauty of Annie; had wished to see more of her; had been happy in her company, but had no serious thoughts of marriage or life-long companionship; indeed, he was in no position to

marry, having hardly enough to keep himself in the position to which he was accustomed. He was thoroughly heartless and selfish, and finding that he was involved in a very disagreeable business in connection with Annie, began to look upon her with dislike as the cause of it. But he could not help seeing that he was far from blameless in the transaction, and he bitterly cursed his own folly and Annie as the cause of it.

He had sufficient manliness to hide this revulsion of feeling from his victim, and Annie believed she was more loved than ever, until as the days wore on she found a coolness growing between James and herself for which she could not account, and very often of an evening she was left alone. He was becoming more and more dissatisfied with her and himself, and anxious if possible to avoid an exposure that he knew would result in disaster, if not ruin, to himself.

He was worried almost out of his senses, and for relief he flew to the common refuge of weak minds—strong drink. He had resolved that Annie must leave her situation; that he would not have her with him; that he had no means to marry—nor did he hide from himself that he had no inclination—and he determined to see George Holden, and consult with him without the knowledge of Annie. He also felt that he could not bear to see Mary, and he timed his visit so as to see George when he knew Mary would be from home.

Unconscious of the terrible revelation awaiting him, the tailor was as usual hard at work, and pondering with delight on an attack on the custom of marriage that had been made on the previous Sunday at "the Hall." The lecturer had shown—to demonstration, as George thought—that this institution belonged exclusively to religion—which portion of the argument was doubtless true—that being religious it must be bad, and therefore the sooner it was abolished the better. On general principles George could see no objection; but he was now to see how it would work when applied to particular cases, and that case his own pet daughter.

James had brutalised himself with liquor, as a necessary precaution before seeing the father of Annie, and he entered somewhat unsteady in consequence—a fact which did not escape the keen eye of the tailor, who boded no good therefrom to his daughter's future. He made no remark, however, but allowed the half-drunken young man to seat himself in silence.

James was pondering how to begin, and at length a bright thought came, and he said, "I want to know, Mr Holden, your opinion of our lecture about marriage last Sunday evening."

"Oh," replied George, "I go entirely with the lecturer; if it's altogether religious, as he said, and as it seems to be, then it must be altogether bad, and the sooner it is done away with the better."


"I am glad you think so," rejoined James, "because it is the very thing I wanted to talk to you about." And then to the unspeakable horror of the tailor he proceeded to make known to him his pet's degradation and shame.

With wildly-staring eyes, and face ablaze with colour, the tailor sat motionless as the half-drunken man proceeded, until the full sense of his speech was impressed on his mind, and then he sprang from his board, and dashing at James, caught him by the throat, and endeavoured to strangle him, exclaiming as he did so, "You cool, atrocious scoundrel! do you dare to come here and tell me to my face you have made my darling daughter *that*?"

Muddled with the drink, and astounded with the unexpected ferocity of the tailor, James sat at first helpless; but as the tailor's grip tightened, the instinct of self-preservation prompted him to struggle for his life, and with a strong effort he shook off the tailor, and with one blow struck him to the ground, where he lay motionless and senseless. Then thinking in his half-senseless condition that the whole thing was disagreeable, he left the place with the intention of getting some more drink for himself and the unhappy tailor. He procured the liquor, but not liking to face the tailor again, consumed it himself, and there continued drinking until he was in a terrible condition of intoxication. He remained senseless and help-

less until the time of closing the house, when he was coolly placed outside in a drenching rain, in which he remained until the cold and exposure had sufficiently sobered him to return to his home.

Meanwhile, a wound on the tailor's bald head, occasioned by his fall, had done him most essential service by relieving the pressure on his brain, and he slowly returned to consciousness and struggled to a seat, where he sat until he had regained full possession of his senses. For a time he was oppressed only by a dim sense of some appalling calamity that had happened to him, but as thought and memory returned, the full knowledge of his position returned also, and the unhappy father sat helplessly shedding bitter, burning tears over his loved one's shame. Verily, he had trusted a reed which had broken and pierced him, and changed his cheerfulness into bitter tears. Unwilling to alarm his elder daughter, he wearily proceeded to bathe his wound, and to clear away all traces of the encounter; and when this was accomplished he resigned himself to pondering on his favourite's position, and on what was best to be done. The tears flowed unconsciously down his cheek; heavy sorrow seemed to be crushing his heart, and that one hour of calamity appeared to have taken ten years from his life. He resolved to conceal her sister's shame from Mary for the present, so as to leave himself time to think quietly over it, and to account for his own con-



dition by saying that he had met with an accident—had fallen and wounded his head.

The days passed heavily with the tailor, with James, and with Annie. To the last, especially, their length seemed unbearable. She had not seen or heard from James for several days, and the person she was serving for had recovered, and her help was no longer required. Without consultation with James she dared not return to her father and sister, and she resolved to seek him at the lodgings where he usually resided. She went to the place and applied to the landlady for permission. "Oh, bother him," replied the woman; "I wish I'd never seen him. He was well enough once, but lately he has taken to getting drunk and coming home anyhow. Three days ago he came home a regular figure, drenched to the skin; that brought on a fever, and he is now upstairs raving, and a pretty handful it makes for me."

"Let me come and nurse him?" asked Annie; "I will most gladly do so."

"May I ask if you are his sister?" inquired the woman.

"No," replied Annie, "but I shall be his wife as soon as he gets better."

"Oh, that's it, is it," rejoined the woman; "I was not aware of it, but if you like to take the nursing of him, I am sure I shall be thankful to get that trouble off my hands."

Thus permitted, Annie went upstairs to the room to which she was directed, where she found James lying, with his head shorn of all its black hair, cloths with ice in them on his head, blood slowly oozing from his swollen discoloured lips, and raving in all the horrors of delirium.

Shocked at the sight, and careless of herself, she went to him and lifted the heavy head tenderly, and laid it on her bosom, lavishing on him every term of endearment dictated by her earnest love; while he, unconscious of it all, only rolled his head ceaselessly from side to side, and muttered "O mother! mother!" When he was utterly exhausted she laid him gently down, wrote a note to Mary to account for her absence, and saying she would return in a few days; then she sought for his mother's address, which she found to be far away in the country, and wrote to her also, and then, for the first time, she was at full liberty to reflect on her own dreadful position. What if he should die? She would be a thing of shame! a common proverb! a living disgrace to her father and her sister! This should never be. A terrible temptation was presented to her mind, and her eyes brightened as she received it greedily. If James recovered and they were married—well; but if not—then. The doctor came to him time after time, and after the first visit in Annie's presence—when he seemed to understand at once the relation existing between patient and nurse—his

tones became more serious and gentle, and his look more pitying, day by day; until at length the day came when he whispered, "If he has any friends that would like to see him you had better send for them without delay." Brighter, and more tearless also, grew the eyes of Annie as the days went by, and as all hope faded slowly and silently away, a quiet, settled despair had taken possession of her, and she was only waiting for the end to carry her first desperate resolve into execution.

The end came. He had been in the deep sleep of utter exhaustion for many hours, and the bright, tearless eyes had watched, and the willing hands had tended him unceasingly; but at length he awoke to life and consciousness, of which the first evidences were the feeble words, "Where am I. O mother! mother!"

"You are at your own home, with me, darling," whispered Annie, as she drew the weary head to her throbbing heart, "you are here, with me."

He thought for a moment and then he understood it all—all their sin and their sorrow, and tears coursed slowly down his hot, fever-smitten cheek.

"Is it you, Annie? Oh, I am sorry, sorry for you! I know now that I have done you awful wrong, which I shall not live to repair. Can you say you forgive me before I go?"

She bent over him, and with yearning love she pressed her full, healthy lips to the wasted face, murmuring words of fondness unutterable.

Then the change came over him that we all know, as if by instinct, when we see it even for the first time. "I am going into the dark," he muttered slowly. "Lay me on the bed, but clasp me tightly as I go."

"I will soon be with you again, darling," she said, with desperate earnestness, "in life or death we shall not long be parted."

So the night waned, and in the early morning she knew that farther watching was useless. With steady hand she wrote words of loving farewell to her father and sister, then arranged herself for walking, and passed forth from the hot, close room into the cool freshness of the early morning.

Through street after street, mile after mile, she held on her way, with swift, unfaltering feet. Early workmen turned to look at her—drowsy policemen half waked as she flitted by, but she continued on until at length her feet were on the cool, dewy grass, and the broad, deep waters of the river directly in her way.

Then, for the last time in this world, she abandoned herself to the torture of thought. There was no refuge for her, no escape from present and future misery. For her there was but degradation and shame, or—death; and with the purpose of accepting the awful alternative she was now on the brink of the river. She untied her bonnet-strings, and laid it with her shawl on the bank; then, with a wild cry, she cast herself into the

swift, deep waters, and after a brief struggle they closed and flowed peacefully over the body of poor Annie. But the living, conscious, immortal spirit was—*where?*

The little tailor was sitting at his work, his fingers moving busily as usual, but his health seriously injured by the shock of his wound, and the ceaseless anxiety of his mind. He wished, yet dreaded to see once more his degraded darling, and to utter words of forgiveness, and assurance that, forsake her who might, her father would love her and do his best for her still. His elder daughter was expecting, with beating heart, a visit from William, who had resolved to make known his wishes to her father, and at the appointed time the well-known footstep sounded in her ear, and their hands were clasped in mute but earnest love.

Mary and William were conversing earnestly in low tones, when the imperative knock of the postman resounded through the house, and Mary flew to answer, returning with a letter in her hand, and saying "It is from Annie." She tore it open and read the contents. "O father, William, save her, save her," she screamed, "this is too horrible to be true," and then she sank fainting upon the floor, with the letter quivering in her hand.

"Give me that letter," hoarsely murmured the poor father, "I am sure there is something wrong with my darling child."

William released the letter and handed it to her father, and then busied himself in endeavouring to restore animation to Mary. The tailor vainly endeavoured to hold the letter still; his hands trembled, his face turned scarlet, the veins on his brow stood out like knotted cords, and his whole frame swayed helplessly to and fro.

So he sat uneasily with a dreadful oppression on his brain, until Mary was somewhat recovered; then he turned to William and said, "I cannot read a word, fire is flashing from my eyes; but it is about my darling, I know it is; have mercy on me and read it to me."

Thus urged, William took up the letter and read it through aloud, stricken with horror, but yet turning to mark its effect on the unhappy father. As the awful words fell upon his ears, he groaned once only, then he sat wordless and motionless, and when they looked upon him to help him they saw that he was dead.

"Slain with his own sword;" "filled with his own way."

LEFT IN THE MIRE.

“Destruction and misery are in their ways.”

A LOVELY afternoon in autumn on the sea-shore; miles upon miles of light ripples only, golden with the sun-rays, broken by the softest of breezes. Resting on the iron seats provided for the weary on the beautiful esplanade at Lytham, and watching my wife distributing tracts, and talking pleasantly to every one she met on her way.

A young man is met, a little earnest conversation with him and the ladies who accompany him, and they all sit down by my side. “Of course, I will accept the tract,” he remarked to me, “but I may as well frankly tell you that religion has lost its hold upon me; I think you will find that Tyndall and Huxley have struck a blow from which it will not soon recover.”

“May I ask what trade or profession you are?” I inquired.

“In a Manchester warehouse,” he answered with some wonder.

“Will you be good enough to tell me what is wrong with my watch just now?” I rejoined.

“I am really not competent to do so,” he laughed.

"I should think a Manchester warehouseman quite as competent to decide on watchmaking as philosophers to decide on theology. Surely if special study is needed in the lesser case, it must be in the greater?"

"There's something in that, certainly," he acknowledged, "but still I am far from convinced they are wrong and you are right."

"Very possibly," I replied; "I see you prefer to pin your faith on men's changeable and changing opinions, rather than on the perfect and unchangeable Word of God. But suppose these gentlemen see reasons hereafter to change their ideas, and you die in their present phase of unbelief, how will it be with you?"

"Not very likely to happen," he remarked.

"Don't be too sure of that," I replied, "as I am much older than you, and my experience has been altogether the other way. I have known something of infidelity in London for the last twenty years. Unbelievers there just now have one hall and three lecturers. Before the present lecturers occupied the platform there were four others, who are all still living, so far as I know. Do you know what has become of these men?"

"I do not," he acknowledged.

"Then let me inform you," I rejoined. "They are *all* preaching the gospel they formerly rejected and opposed."

"I have never heard of that in Manchester," he replied; "surely that cannot be true."

"Not only is it true of these four," I continued, "but it is also true of four others, who were companions and helpers of the three that now exist. Out of twelve lecturers personally known to me, three remain, one has gone to the other extreme of Spiritualism, eight have renounced infidelity, and are now earnest labourers in the Christian field. I do not choose to tell their names, but I will indicate them by numbers.

"No. 1 was the most able, talented, upright unbeliever that ever did terrible mischief to the cause of Christ among earnest working men in London. His lectures were political, poetical, and infidel; he was deeply read, had a highly cultivated mind, had rare powers; and there can be no doubt that all his powers were used to destroy belief in Christianity. But calmer days and wider investigation were allotted to him, and he saw reason to abandon his unbelief and sit at the feet of the Son of God. This he at once avowed, and has for many years now laboured assiduously against unbelief; yet I am witness that there is no man at present among the infidels of whom they speak with the esteem and respect they use toward this one, who has left them and is doing their cause all the injury in his power!

"When was he right—in faith or unbelief? If formerly, what becomes of your development

theory? If now, what has become of the men who died trusting in his infidel teachings?

“No. 2 must next be considered; and his case furnishes proof of the ‘liberty’ principles of modern infidels. This man sank from preaching the gospel into the depths of unbelief, until all was gone that was worth holding. At this point he was the petted, caressed orator; but when he stood up and manfully avowed your ‘development’ theory in its highest sense, did they not hiss him off the platform? Have they not for years persistently endeavoured to prevent him from speaking at all wherever they had the power? And why? Because he has seen reason to change his views to those he held at first, and had the courage to avow at once his change of opinion.

“Now, in all the years that this man laboured against the faith, it cannot but be thought that he turned many from believing;—if his present views are right, what has become of the dead who thought his former views true and permanent?

“No. 3 was a provincial lecturer and paid orator of the unbelievers of the Midland Counties; and very blasphemous were many of his utterances, as the title of one of his lectures, ‘What must I do to be damned?’ will show. But this young man had a praying, pious mother, who persuaded him on one Lord’s-day to accompany her to the house of God. There the Lord met him; and he was speedily stripped of his blasphemy and his folly,

and as speedily publicly acknowledged his former errors, and has been labouring for years as a Dissenting minister in your own immediate neighbourhood, in the place, and among the people, whom he formerly taught to deny and despise religion. Again I ask, if he is now leading people to glory and honour and immortality, what would have become of you if you had been one of his early disciples and had died in unbelief? Would not your condition have been dreadful beyond description, if you could know that you were lost but he had sought and found mercy?


“No. 4 was the last, and perhaps the most polished, educated, and gentlemanly of the lecturers preceding the present. He for some time worked hard to benefit unbelief. But he was admitted into the arcana of faithlessness, and what he saw and heard disgusted him. His really fine nature revolted from the practices all around him; and he could not but doubt the soundness of the principles which produced such Dead-Sea fruit. I could give particulars, but prefer to stop at this slight general description. Suffice it to say, that, disgusted with unbelief, he turned to examine with more care the creed he had rashly abandoned, came to his right mind, and, like his three fellow-labourers on the unbelievers’ platform, became a zealous minister of the gospel of Christ. He had been editor of an infidel paper, and had worked for them with all his might. I know he has

worked far longer and as earnestly on the right side, and hope and believe he has been used to save many; but yet again, what has become of those who died trusting in his unbelief? They had just as good reason to trust him as can be adduced for following the present occupants of the platform. But if his more mature and lasting convictions are truths, his former followers must be in awful case to-day!

“So much for past public advocates of infidelity who have changed to religion; now for the present generation. I am thinking of the eight I have more recently personally known, of whom five have left their ranks and turned against them. Now if majorities are to govern, it is clear that you unbelievers ought to abandon your labours in London, which are so palpably unable to do the least good, and so fearfully effective in inducing evil. It is five to three, you see; and if the majority is right, then unbelief must be a disastrous mistake.

“I will say nothing of the advocate who has turned to Spiritualism, except that he has certainly abandoned atheism and materialism.

“No. 5, therefore, must take the next place. He was one of the most eloquent and able contributors to the infidel print which is still in existence, and for years his articles therein were triumphantly quoted. But he sought out the truth and found it, and abandoned all whereby he lived. He went down into the very depths of suffering and



poverty in the most uncomplaining silence. There were many of us who would have gladly helped him; but we never knew until he needed help no more that he had purposely kept silence in order that his former friends should not be able to say, 'He had turned to religion for what he could get by it.' Surely this noble self-denial and self-devotion proved the strength, if not the truth, of the convictions he has ever since asserted and maintained.

"No. 6 was one of the most active and untiring of all the present generation. He was a member of the committee, a branch-secretary, and superintendent of the Sunday-school which was established with the diabolical purpose of ensnaring the helpless little children into the meshes of Atheism. He was always at work in opposition. But one day he was speaking loosely of Butler's *Analogy* on very slender knowledge of that work, and was sharply admonished to go home and read it before he talked about it. He took the advice, and became convinced of his former errors; honestly and openly avowed his change of opinions, left the platform, the secretariat, and the Sunday-school, which speedily collapsed. Poor, and weak in body, he strove on for several years; and only very recently he died, in the full faith and comfort of a sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life. But if anything *can* bring a shade of darkness and regret upon a spirit that has gone beyond the veil,

it must surely be the thought of those who had been withered by the blasts of former abandoned unbelief.

“No. 7 was largely occupied in endeavouring to ensnare and confound the technically untaught preachers in the open air. He was the spider of unbelief, endeavouring to entrap unwary flies into seemingly innocent discussions, and then leading them cunningly into untenable positions, that so they might be degraded in the minds of the listeners around. At a special religious service he was convinced ‘of sin, of righteousness, and judgment to come;’ and I often see his name in the winter season advertised to preach at special religious services, like that one which was the means of bringing him to himself. But what of the victims who are gone beyond?

“No. 8, and last, was specially trained in all the libertinism of thought of the infidel school in London. He was then engaged as a paid lecturer in the provinces, and there for years he was a violent opposer of every form of religious belief. But he, like all the others, has left the unprofitable and dangerous theories of negation, to dwell in the light and warmth of revealed religion. But what, again, of those misled ones who have followed his abandoned teaching, and been led by it into the awful gulf?

“I know only *one* more open advocate of infidelity in my own immediate neighbourhood; and

when, to my delight, I saw him at a special service very recently, I at once accosted him, and lovingly urged upon him to cast in his lot with us and become a follower of Jesus. To this he answered, 'I *am* coming round; it will not be long before I am with you altogether.'

"Thank God—earnestly, humbly, constantly—for every one brought out, by His sovereign grace, from the awful, destructive mire of unbelief. But what, oh! what of those who have died in it? What of those who are living in it, trusting in lies that have been seen and abandoned by so many within the personal knowledge of one man scarcely yet of middle age? Surely *you* will not longer be left in the mire?"

The young man and his friends thanked me heartily, and went upon their way. Once more I saw his pleasant face before I left the sea. May God meet him speedily and take him out of the mire, lest he be left in it for ever!

GOD IN HISTORY.

“God is !”

My purpose is to set before you proofs of the existence of God, and of His interference in human history, as shown in the records of past ages, and by so doing to refute Professor Huxley's assertion at St Martin's Hall, concerning the “unknown and unknowable God.” It is well to note that assertions such as these prove only the intense and over-powering self-conceit of those who utter them, for they must necessarily imagine that the sum of all knowledge, past, present, and future, is known to and centred in them; for if only one branch of knowledge is unknown to them, it is certain that God may be exhibited in that one, and the assertion is thus at once seen to be groundless. I now pass to endeavour to set forth God in history, by glancing at the chain of prophecy as it appears in the Scriptures, and by so doing prove that God has interfered in the affairs of our race; for if I can demonstrate a chain of genuine prophecies, I show a chain of miracles, the highest kind of evidence that can be given of the communion of God with

man. Of this evidence every man of common sense is competent to judge for himself, for he who reads a distinct, genuine prophecy, and perceives the corresponding event, becomes a witness of the miraculous interposition of God in history. It is scarcely within the range of my subject to show God in the prehistoric eras of our earth, but I may remark that all geologists are agreed as to the glorious progression of our earth, and its being gradually fitted for and tenanted by higher and higher races of animals until man was created upon it. The great broad unity of this plan testifies of Almighty wisdom; its development bears witness of Almighty power; while its continuance through the countless ages of the past shows clearly the superintending eternal God. Seeing thus God in His works in the prehistoric ages, the inquiry naturally follows, Has God left the world with man upon it to blind chance or necessity? or has He maintained His superintending care, and in any way communicated with, or revealed Himself to, His creature man? If He has thus revealed Himself, the means of His doing so must necessarily partake of a supernatural character, and we thus see that prophecy is peculiarly fitted for a means of revelation. I now endeavour to show that God has largely used prophecy as a means of communicating His will to men. But the subject

is so vast, of such extended range as to time and place, that it is only possible to indicate its general character and give a very few of the most striking instances. A careful study of the Bible brings out clearly the fact that through all time down to the close of the Scripture canon, God was constantly communicating His will to man by means of prophecy. The numerous predictions are disposed in such a mode and succession as to form a regular system, all the parts of which harmonise in one amazing and consistent plan, which runs parallel with the history of mankind, past, present, and future, and furnishing a perfect moral demonstration of the interference of God in human history. There are many prophecies of the development and downfall of nations, as those concerning Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Tyre; and others concerning the minutest points of individual history, as the predicted fate of the noble on whose arm the king leaned (2 Kings vii. 19, 20), and the apparent contradiction between the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, which the Rabbins assert led Zedekiah into unbelief and consequent ruin. Jeremiah predicted that Zedekiah should see the king of Babylon; but Ezekiel said he should not see Babylon. Jeremiah asserted that he should die in peace, and be buried after the manner of his ancestry; but Ezekiel said he should die at Babylon. The after history proves that these apparent contradic-

tions were minute prophecies, for Zedekiah saw the king of Babylon; was blinded before he was brought to Babylon; he died there in peace; and was buried with the usual solemnities. The national prophecies concerning Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Tyre, appear to me to demonstrate the utter untenableness of any other theory than that of supernatural revelation previous to the events. Consider for a moment Ezekiel's prophecies concerning Egypt—"It shall be the basest of kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more among the nations." "I will make her rivers dry;" "I will make the land waste by the hand of strangers." Now mark the events. Egypt is the basest of kingdoms; it does not exalt itself among the nations; the numerous canals formerly existing are now dry beds; her rivers are dry. Glance at the Assyrian capital Nineveh. "While the people were folded together as thorns, they were to be devoured as stubble full dry." The Medes, under Arbaces, assaulted the camp by night, and inflicted a severe defeat on the drunken Assyrians. "The gates of the river shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." This, Diodorus says, was literally fulfilled. And the utter destruction foretold by Nahum and Zephaniah has so completely overtaken it, that for many centuries it was doubtful where the proud capital of that former mighty empire had had its place. Passing

on to Babylon, we find "it was to be shut up by the Medes and Elamites, the Euphrates was to be dried up, the city to be taken by surprise during a feast, and the whole country, being filled with pools of water, was to be a possession for the bittern." Cyrus turned the Euphrates from its course, and thus at once dried up the river, enabled the city to be taken by surprise, and caused the country around to be overflowed, boggy, and marshy, and these pools were seen by our own countryman, Captain Keppel, to be occupied by immense flocks of bitterns. Now let us glance at Tyre: "Many nations shall come up against thee, and they shall destroy thy walls and break down thy towers." "I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock." "It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea." "Though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again." Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the old city, and Alexander employed the ruins to make a causeway in the sea; thus the prophecy was literally fulfilled. When the Prince of Wales visited the spot, one of the suite pointed out to another, fishermen drying their nets on the rock where Tyre had formerly stood, and then, to his friend's utter amazement, pointed out the prophecy in the Bible and its fulfilment before their eyes. I have mentioned these widely different phases of prophecy in order to point out the utter improbability of their fulfil-

ment resulting from mere chance or skilful calculation. If any one of these numerous and minute predictions had been transposed,—if, for instance, it had been said that the dust of Babylon should be scraped instead of Tyre, or Tyre be taken by surprise instead of Babylon, or Assyria become the basest of kingdoms instead of Egypt, the whole scheme of prophecy must have fallen to the ground as demonstrably false. Nor would any astute calculator venture upon such minuteness of description. Who would venture, now, to predict the condition of England two centuries hence? But the prophets of old calmly published far more difficult utterances, and spake out prophecies which have been so completely fulfilled that it requires far more credulity to believe they were the result of chance or calculation, than to believe they were received by direct revelation, that they were proofs of the interference of God in history. Furthermore, it is almost impossible for any one to study attentively the multiplied and varied prophecies concerning the Jews, and to trace out their exact fulfilment in ancient and modern history, and not be convinced that they, indeed, were and are witnesses of God. “They were to fall into idolatry,” and they bowed before the images of many lands. “They were to be carried captives into the lands of the nations whose gods they served,” and one of the most pathetic bursts of poetry in existence tells us how “By the waters of Babylon they sat

down and wept when they remembered Zion." "They were to be released and to serve idols no more for ever." They have been released, but for nearly twenty-five centuries idolatry has been the abhorrence of the once idolatrous Jew. They were to undergo unheard-of miseries on account of their sins, and no earthly record contains a catalogue of sorrows and sufferings so terrible as those which fell upon the Jews in Jerusalem; "they were to be scattered among the nations," and to-day, in their own sad words, they are "the children of the dispersion;" but they were also to remain a people, and in our time, though they inhabit every clime and are of every colour, they are everywhere Jews. To come to the most glorious demonstration of God in history, we find it, as we might naturally expect, in relation to our Lord Jesus Christ; and so overwhelming is the character and extent of the evidence, that it is hard to conceive it possible for an infidel to examine and fairly weigh it, and still remain an unbeliever. It can be clearly shown that the Old Testament was completed and wholly translated into Greek at the very latest more than a hundred years before Christ was born, so rendering any after alteration or accommodation impossible. From this book, thus existing in two distinct languages, we can trace out a prophetic life of Christ so clear, so minute in detail, as to require far more faith to believe it resulted from accident or calculation,

than to believe it to be a direct revelation from God. Let us glance rapidly at the life of Jesus, as it was prophesied hundreds of years before He came into the world. It was publicly predicted when He should come, where He should be born—of a virgin, and that virgin to be betrothed but not a married woman; a prophet should go before Him; He himself should be a prophet; He should first preach in Galilee; should work miracles; enter Jerusalem in triumph; be poor, despised, betrayed by a friend for thirty pieces of silver; the potters' field to be bought with the money; should suffer death for the sins of the world; be cruelly mocked and derided; be offered vinegar and gall on the cross; His garments be divided and lots cast for His vesture; not a bone be broken, but His side be pierced; should die with malefactors, but be buried honourably; should arise from the dead and ascend into heaven. Now let us remember that all this astonishingly minute prefiguring of a coming life is taken from the Old Testament, and that very much of it was published and known nearly a thousand years before Christ came, and we shall surely own that the New Testament read fairly shows the glorious and complete fulfilment of these long-continued prophecies, and unanswerably demonstrates the fact of the interference of God in history. The chain of prophetic proof of our theory, thus briefly glanced at, is convincing and complete; and it

is also a grand broad outline of the mind of God towards His earth-born children. We have thus seen, through all past time, God in history loving and caring for and holding communion with men. Oh, well for us if we so profit by our Father's kind revelations during the past, as to be armed against all the sorrows and temptations of the present, and thus be fitted for an "eternal mansion" in the "house not made with hands," in the bright unending future, in company with all who have gathered and shall yet gather in our Father's home. There may we all enter upon a triumphant and eternal phase of personal history where "we shall know even as we are known," in that "continuing city whose builder and maker is God."


GOD IN SCIENCE.

"He left not Himself without witness."

THE subject to which our attention is now to be directed is as instructive as it is important, and we should enter upon it calmly and fearlessly. Some persons of weak faith are always fearing the advance of modern science may develop something destructive of Divine Revelation—but if the Scriptures are of God, further and deeper investigation of His works can only end in proving His Word to be true. We will therefore proceed to our investigation in the full persuasion that we shall find the works and Word of God in perfect harmony.

I have often challenged unbelievers to take one text of Scripture and place in opposition to it one fact in science that proved the text untrue, but the challenge has never been taken up. I therefore propose to-night to take a few scriptures and show the glorious commentary that is furnished by the facts of modern science.

Take first the questions in Job xxxvii. 14, 15, and 16, "Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God dis-



posed them, and caused the light of His cloud to shine? Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?" "In whom," adds Paul, "*we* live, and move, and have our being." If these words were true when they were spoken, if the outreach of the untaught human intellect could extend even then as far as the Supreme, how much more must such words be true at the present time! The knowledge of a modern school-boy far transcends that of the philosophers to whom Paul's words were addressed; and it is to be our pleasant task this evening to wander freely through the fields of science, seeking for "Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being." If He exist we may surely expect to find Him. He will not have left "Himself without witness." We have intellect and patience, and power of search, and if we will only accompany these wonderful gifts with a humble and teachable spirit, we may reasonably expect to be successful in our search after God.

And first, among modern sciences, Astronomy proffers her aid in this search after God, "if haply we may feel after Him and find Him." Let us first lift our eyes and thoughts heavenward, seeking our Father in the starry fields of space. Come forth into the star-crowned night. Here, even in London, keen eyes may see how the worlds of space tower above each other upward

and onward. Man's powers of vision fail ere he can reach even the portals of the magnificent and, to him, boundless fields of observation spread on every hand. "We have here the solemn harmonies of the spheres for music. Poetry, in characters of light, is written as with a pen of fire on night's sable garments. Architecture, displayed in colossal structures of sun and system, of cluster and of universe; and eloquence—though there is neither voice nor language, nor is the speech heard—yet its mighty spell enthalls us in the resistless sweep of onward-rushing worlds. In this vast domain there is no rest; all is power, and vigour, and motion. Nor is there any confusion; each rushing world moves regularly in its defined and settled path; every one of the countless millions goes upon its appointed way, and each bears witness of being part of a mighty plan, that must of necessity have been formed before any one of them existed, and each bears witness also of power now existing to carry that plan into successful operation." The bewildering vastness of the plan need not confuse us, nor the extent of the power necessary to execute it confound us—it is evidently plan, and there must have been a planner—it is unquestionably power, and that power to us at least is infinite. In the light of this faint and feeble description, read God's word, Isaiah xl. 26: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by

number. He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of His might; for that He is strong in power, not one faileth."

We may go further in our wonderful investigation. There is no atom of matter in any one of these countless millions of worlds that is not there in accordance with the plan. Every individual grain of dust has a part to perform in reference to every other grain, and each has a known and settled influence on the gigantic whole. Thus, though divided into a number of atoms, which the mind of man cannot even imagine, the mighty universe is shown to be a complete unity. There is no isolated matter in all the broad domain; every particle of matter attracts and is itself attracted, and we thus see the whole creation to be a vast, incomprehensible, but a demonstrable unity. If you would know the thickness of the earth's crust question the moon, and the answer will be given; if you would know the sun's distance from the earth, the moon can answer; if you would even know whether the length of day and night has changed even by a single second in a thousand years, the moon has a clear, satisfactory reply; if all the stars of heaven were blotted out, and every planet and satellite swept away for ever, only the sun, moon, and earth remaining for the study of man, and as evidences of the being and wisdom of God—in the exquisite adjustment of this system, in the reciprocal influence of its three

bodies, in their vast cycles of configuration, in their relative masses, magnitudes, distances, motions, and perturbations, there would remain themes sufficient for the exercise of the most exalted genius, and proof of the being of God so clear and positive that no sane mind could comprehend it and not believe in Him. But with the full power of the grand telescopes now in use the scenes presented in the starry heavens stretch out into such splendour as to confound the imagination and overwhelm the reason. Worlds, and systems, and schemes, and clusters, and universes rise in sublime perspective, and fade away into the unfathomable regions of space, until our utmost thought fails to cross the mighty gulf of separation between us and them. We can reach the clustering of ten millions of stars. Look to the right, there is no beginning; to the left, there is no end. Above, below, sun rises upon sun, system upon system, in endless and measureless perspective. If on a clear winter night we reckon the stars which strew the heavens, and count their number, for every single orb they seem, the telescope reveals a universe far sunk in the depths of space, and scattered over the surface of the heavens with a profusion that can only be divine. Looking upon all this magnificence, every sane mind must acknowledge God. How wonderful is the thought that when all this immensity and splendour shall have passed away, *we* shall still be in existence—


still know and feel, and be as strong to live and love, as when first we were spoken into being by our Father in heaven. Oh, well for us beyond imagining if we are then clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus, our human brother, "by whom, also, He made the worlds!" Science thus shows us immensity as an attribute of the Lord our God.

Now, turn again to the Scriptures. Psalm viii. 3, 4, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars that Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" Psalm cxlv. 3, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable." Psalm cxi. 2, "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." Psalm cxlvii. 5, "His understanding is infinite."

Satisfied with and thankfully accepting the testimony of astronomy to Scripture, let us now ask counsel of the known facts of geology, and thus proceed next to consider what science has to say on the question of duration. For this purpose we will take the earth in which we live. If, says Sir C. Lyell, it is wished to determine the age of the earth, we had better adopt the sounding line of space, and transfer it to the measurement of time. From our earth to the nearest fixed star the distance is computed to be nineteen

millions of millions of miles. If we change miles to years, we shall have something resembling a short measuring-rod with which to set forth the duration of the ages that have passed away since our earth began to be. A vague condition of gases—possibly thrown off from the sun—appears to philosophers to have been the earliest traceable condition of our globe, succeeded by a wild commingling of redhot land and boiling sea—of tremendous and continuous throes of the volcano and the earthquake, in which it was impossible for any organism known to us to live. During this lifeless period, long ages ere any evidences of life have been found as existing on earth, the temperature of the earth's crust seems to have been so high that the strata, in a semi-fluid state, and apparently deposited in water, became strangely contorted and waved, and assumed a highly crystalline character, this being evidently the case with all the deposits of gneiss. In the mica-schist overlying the gneiss there is still much evidence of contortion and disturbance, though this strata has been formed by the mingling of clay riven with the materials of the granite and the gneiss, while the clay slate which overlies all the others gives evidence in its more mechanical texture, and the regularity of its strata that a general refrigeration of the mass really took place, and the close of the lifeless period was comparatively quiet and cool. How many ages must have passed away during

these varied and long-continued processes! Through all this countless time we may, in thought, see our Father patiently working and waiting, serene in the majesty of His Infinitude, and confident in the knowledge of His own eternity. There is true grandeur here, even for us, in watching intelligently and reverently, the majestic patience of our God, in the working out of His own infinitely wise and good designs. It is certain, as far as human knowledge goes, that at one period in the past duration there was no life existing on the earth, and it appears just as certain that unless God had miraculously caused life on the earth, that it never could have existed; only intelligent and conscious life can be the cause of intelligence and consciousness, such as we know we now possess. So we come to the question which runs back through the countless ages, and we ask, How long has life existed on this earth of ours? That it appeared first in the ocean is the concurring testimony of both Scripture and science; but of the date there is no record available to us. Again, apparently for long ages, the ocean was the only repository of life, until Almighty Wisdom judged the fitting time had come for higher organisations to appear, "and it was so." We will transcribe a glance at these middle ages of creation, as they existed in what is called the Oolitic era. "Day after day, through long-drawn ages, the sun passed on his course, night after night the spark-



ling garniture of the sky looked down on the green earth. Immense lizards pursued their prey upon the waves, upon the shore, and even in the air; huge turtles crept along the muddy coast, still more huge crocodiles traversed the plain, and the air was filled with multitudes of insects. But there were no flocks on the mountains, nor herds in the valleys, no tiger or elephant in the jungle, no dog or horse, or bullock or sheep, would have been seen. There were no men, though the earth was apparently fitted for their reception, and continued thus for millenniums of ages. The stream flowed and glittered in the sunlight, but no human heart was gladdened by its ripple; the earth was spread out in joy and beauty, as yet free alike from the glory and the gloom which our human impulses were afterward to bring upon it." And here science reveals the forethought of perfect wisdom, for although the earth of the oolitic era might have been fitted for man, the changes it has since undergone would have swept him from the surface as chaff before the wind. From the oolite until man, how long? Again, from the creation of man on earth until now, how long? Back from the oolite to the granite, how long? From the granite to the gas, if so it was, how long? We know not: our quest is vain; the deep saith, It is not in me, and the earth saith, It is not with me! Nor is it written that we can read in the trackless fields of air or space. We know

not; we stand, as it were, helpless on the shore of the eternity of the past, vainly seeking the knowledge that comes not, for its record is unwritten, or has passed away. But we do behold, plainly written, the word duration; immeasurable, inconceivable duration, is the testimony of science concerning the earth's age; we know that God must have existed before He made the world, and we see thus that science teaches that immeasurable duration must belong to God. What saith the Scripture? (Gen. i. 1), "In *the beginning* God created the heaven and the earth." (Ps. xc. 2), "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." (Isa. lvii. 15), "The high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity."

Astronomy has shown us immensity; geology has borne witness to duration as attributes of the Lord our God. I might have shown the testimony of science concerning duration, even more strikingly from astronomy than geology, by stating the fact that light on its journey earthward has travelled a million years from its distant source, and must journey a second million ere it reaches us, but my purpose is to let each science teach one lesson, and I therefore pass on to question science concerning the goodness of God. Let natural philosophy speak:—What have the seas and rivers to say concerning the goodness of God? Water is kept pure by motion, the quiet pond stagnates, and injures the health of those who live near it. The

river does not putrify, for its current agitates, and its constant rolling clears its waters. The lake is agitated by winds, and its waters are unceasingly changed for a new supply. The ocean is salt and never entirely still, and thus its purity is preserved. But when the river meets the ocean, they mutually still each other; the extended promontory or the crooked shore often shelters the river's mouth from the winds, so that the water there is not only devoid of agitation from the river's current, which is impeded by the ocean waters, but it is almost devoid of salt just where the gale is kept off by the hills from shaking its quiet surface. Then, shall the sluggish waters putrify, diseases in proportion spread, and render the shores of our ocean scarcely habitable? No! the tides dash the waters of the river, till they meet its current, and roll them back again often enough to prevent the threatened stagnation. Further, take one of the simplest things in nature, the manner in which the earth receives water. Sulphur receives water slowly, water combines with it at once, the earth receives it in a manner midway between the two. If earth received water as sulphur does, showers would reach down the hills and swell the streams, but they would never reach the roots of the corn, and the crops would perish. If the earth combined with water as sulphur does, we could not step from the hills, we could not plough a field, each vivifying shower would be an incurable calamity. It is thus



evident that our life and even our comfort depends upon wise forethought external to ourselves, and we thus see that science demonstrates the goodness of God. Again, in Egypt it does not rain, yet Egypt has been called the granary of the world, because Egypt is flat enough to be overflowed; a river runs through the centre, far off mountains gather rains with sufficient profusion to swell the river high enough to overflow the land—these rains fall at the proper season in sufficient abundance and at the right time to reach Egypt when they are required. Greenland is without forests, and the inhabitants require wood for houses, spears, javelins, domestic and hunting utensils. Thousands of miles from Greenland the trees fall into the rivers, the rivers carry them to the sea, and the sea floats them to Greenland, where they lodge between the islands. No trees are thus borne past France or England; they are not needed; but Divine goodness, joined with forethought, provides thus extra-naturally for the comfort of the Greenlander. I should like to multiply these extra-natural instances of the testimony of science to the goodness of God, but I have no more time.

Compare this scientific testimony with Scripture (Psalm xxxi. 19), "Oh, how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men." (Luke


vi. 35), "The Highest, He is kind to the unthankful and the evil."

I pass to mention only one more science, that of physiology, and we will briefly take its testimony concerning God and the Divine love. Let us first glance at the fact that all known animal life seems to be thoroughly enjoyable. Science gives a most emphatic negative to the question—Is anything created specially to be miserable and unhappy? and as emphatically denies that any organ or part of any animal has yet been discovered that is unnecessary or injurious to the animal possessing it. Organism and life demonstrate far more than the forethought necessary for their existence; they show plainly that a loving heart and hand were occupied in the kindly and good work. This may, perhaps, be best shown by the presumed negatives, hunger, pain, disease, and death. Is it, then, good to be hungry? the sceptic may ask with a sneer, and the reply in the affirmative may be unhesitatingly given. It is a good thing to be hungry. First of all, hunger is needed for the proper enjoyment of food; next, it is needed to cause a man to exercise his faculties and limbs to satiate it; next it is needed to warn man that his organs require fresh supplies of aliment; if it were not for hunger a man might go without eating until he had seriously injured his frame. Hunger warns him of the want, and sharply urges him to supply it at the right time.

So also of pain, which warns us of danger to life or limb. Were it not for pain, there is nothing to hinder a little child from thrusting its hands into the fire, and laughing while it was maimed for life. Nor is this the case with the child only. We all know how day by day slight injuries, causing pain, are thus prevented from becoming dangerous to limb or life by calling on us for caution. Nor is disease an exception, for it is being increasingly believed by men of science that disease is simply the effort of nature to counteract certain tendencies to destroy life. Take a very common form of disease. The soreness round the mouth and lips resulting from cold, results from an effort of nature to expel the inflammation from the citadel of life to the extremities where it can harmlessly pass away. Nothing is more common among medical men than to produce disease in their patients as absolutely necessary to a renewal of health. They deliberately injure a healthy part of the frame, so as to weaken it, in order that the inward complaint may be drawn into a position where it can be dealt with and removed. Notice next that our frame is built in two distinct halves, thus giving us a double opportunity to preserve life, and even live comfortably under dreadful injuries. I have seen and known a man live happily and cheerfully with one half of himself paralysed and dead, and I have heard the living half laugh heartily, while dragging the dead half

about his room. Do you think he would have been better dead? He did not. There were sharp knives about his room in common use, but the idea of suicide never seemed even to enter his mind. One arm, one leg, one side of the brain, one lung, may be terribly injured, or even removed, but the other in each case may enable the man to live an enjoyable life. And even death itself cannot be shown to be an evil to any but those who despise the love of God. Testimonies abound that it is an easy and pleasant thing to die naturally, though our coward fears would lead us to a reverse conclusion; and a sharp personal experience has taught me that those who die violently do not suffer as we would imagine. I was once caught in a steam-engine at full speed, and the first blow took away all after sensation of pain, until the restorative process commenced. Severe injuries commonly produce insensibility, and the injured one passes quietly and calmly into the unseen world. In striking harmony is the Scripture declaration (Lam. iii. 32, 33), "Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies; for He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."

These are a few of the facts of science. If we pass from these facts to those who have discovered them; if we pass from the first class of witnesses, what is the opinion of the second?



What say the men of science concerning the Scriptures? Bacon, the discoverer of the inductive method—Locke, whose deep researches in mental philosophy—Newton, who discovered the plan by which the universe is governed—Herschel, who added countless worlds to the knowledge of man—Linnæus, who unravelled the secret processes of vegetable life—Oersted, who pointed out the relation of natural objects to each other—Humboldt, whose work on the universe proves his mastery in many sciences—Lord Brougham, to whose deep political sagacity we owe so much—Owen, whose researches in anatomy are enlightening the world—Huxley, so often unjustly claimed on the other side; and, not to weary your patience, the man infidels are delighting to honour—Jules Favre, the French academician; all testify in the most striking language their admiration of and profound homage to the Scriptures. Nor can a single name of first-rate eminence in any science be quoted in opposition.

But I must conclude by gathering up these collateral testimonies from astronomy, as showing immensity; from geology, duration; from natural philosophy, goodness; and from physiology, love on the part of God to all things He has created. Surely science testifies loudly and emphatically to God. But more emphatically still does His word reveal our Father, as the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression,

and sin. Oh ! to have all our sins forgiven—to have no cloud or shadow between us and the God of science and of Scripture—to stand before His throne in the majestic consciousness of a possessed immortality, waiting for and watching intelligently all the workings of our Father's goodness, in the land where the increase of wisdom shall not be the increase of sorrow ; where God Himself shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

A THEISM.

"They are without excuse!"

WE have to spend our evening in bringing forward evidence to prove the being of a God, and to listen to the objection to that evidence when it has been stated. No one has yet asserted a negative, much less ventured any arguments in favour of such an assertion. The two gentlemen who have made all the objection they could, have ended last week's discussion with this admission—There may be a God; we do not say there is not; but we do say that the evidence brought forward here in proof is insufficient to convince us of the truth of the assertion. So that at present the discussion stands thus. There is really no attempt to argue in an atheistic sense; that appears to be considered untenable. Scepticism has taken its place. There is, at least, doubt on the subject in the minds of our strongest opponents. It now remains to be seen, therefore, in a very brief review, what proof has really been offered for their acceptance, and which they have characterised as insufficient and inconclusive. The principal evidence that has been brought forward has been the

argument from design, as though the common sense of all our friends had arrived at the same conclusion, namely, that if something is made some one must have made it; nor should it be any difficulty to a clear mind to think on the vastness of creation, simply because our inability to understand or comprehend God does not prove He does not exist; it simply proves the limited nature of our present powers of thought.

The "design" argument has been fully developed in many of its aspects and bearings. We have seen that astronomical science bears magnificent witness to the presence of power so vast as to be utterly incomprehensible to us, and of magnificence of conception and execution of design before which men bow in adoration and awful wonder. From star to star, the voiceless witness of flaming light bears testimony of an Almighty Maker. And when imagination, weary with journeying through the trackless fields of a space which to us is infinite, returns with flagging wings, we can but own the glorious beauty of the starry heavens, which are the footstool of our Father's throne.

The earlier history of our own world has also been called as witness to the design argument. There we were shown in the different epochs of the history of our earth, from the earliest Plutonic epoch until it was ended, and what was really another creation produced—the volcanic—that again giving place to the metamorphic, and the

metamorphic followed by the aqueous, shown, as we argue, not only that God has really created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, but when it was without form and void, His Spirit brooding over it brought it to the beauty and perfection needed to make it a fit dwelling for humanity; for it must not be forgotten that matter, being of itself dead, inert, motionless, according to all our experience on the subject,—except in as far as it is conjoined with life, which is a widely different thing,—we must of necessity expect no development, and therefore, when we come to many entirely different developments in one mass of strata, we are warranted in concluding that some power external to the matter itself has worked upon it, for wise and good ends.

We have, then, by exhibiting the revelations of the heavens above, and those of the very bowels of the earth, offered as proof worthy of acceptance, the testimony they bear to a great Creator. Nor have we stopped here, for we have also shown that the world on which we live was fitted up for man's wants thousands or millions of years before man came to dwell on it, and we cannot, and do not, believe that dead, inert, motionless matter could have arranged itself in such exact consonance with circumstances which were not then in existence. To believe such a thing is to invest dead matter with the attributes of a living, personal God,—is, in fact, to erect matter into a God, and offer

idolatrous worship to the unsympathising image we have set up. And here, before proceeding further, I may notice two objections,—the first, supposing our world as only a few seconds old in comparison with the eternity that is past, and then inquire if our God had been idle during all the remainder of that time? To answer this question we must turn to astronomy, which tells us that, instead of doing nothing, God has created worlds on worlds by millions; and, for all we know to the contrary, He may have peopled them with intelligences far wiser than we, or He may be carrying out some scheme of development inferior to our own. He may have kept them free from sin, or He may have allowed them to fall into error as black and more hopeless than that of our friends, who *will not* see Him in His works. All this, of course, is mere conjecture and speculation; but even the speculation is a sufficient answer to the baseless assumption that God has made no other worlds than our own. It is to my mind highly probable that not the least part of our enjoyment in the eternity of glory we hope for and expect, will be to pass with the speed of light or thought “from star to star; in radiant glory our bright courses winging, and ever in our flight the same songs singing, as angels are;” to pass when freed from sin from planet to planet, from world to world, each new development adding to our knowledge of God, and our love to Him in that happy

time, when wisdom shall be sorrow no more for ever. How different this bright anticipation from the dull, cold idea of death, and nothing beyond ; and how different its effect must be on the thoughts and lives of men. The next thought that I notice is the groundless assumption that the idea of the world's duration is due to geology, and that Christian speakers and writers have framed their notions to suit the new science. Now, if geology has had authority for much more than a century, I am ignorant of the fact. But many biblical commentators, who lived, and wrote, and died long before the birth of geology, knew and advocated the theory that the earth was created countless ages since.

This much we have seen from two or three of the physical sciences ; and surely in the superior domain of the moral and intellectual, we may find true witnesses of the existence of God. The idea of Bory de St Vincent, that thought is consequent upon certain dispositions of matter, and of necessity follows those dispositions, is simply saying that by these dispositions thought has been produced, leaving the mode of production quite unaccounted for. Our friends have asserted that matter contains within itself the power of its own development, but they have not attempted an atom of proof of such a theory ; and even if they had attempted and succeeded in such an effort, they would only have been at the very commencement

of their difficulties, for it must be remembered we have such things as *adaptation*, and also as increase or *growth*, and to these may be added *assimilation*. And to bring all these ideas expressed in words under one problem, I would say, given the weight of the brain of an infant, living and healthy, and the weight of the brain of a full-grown man, and let our friends on the materialist theory account, if they can, why thought, which is certainly not matter, should be able to re-act upon the brain from which it springs, so as to cause its enlargement. Or if there be really nothing in existence but matter, how is it that matter sometimes assimilates, and sometimes does not, as in the case of the growth of a living and a dead child; why should the fact of life make any difference, if the matter that contains that life has inherent power? Indeed, it appears to me that if matter had inherent power, death and change would be impossible.

I find another difficulty in the way of materialism from the science of chemistry. I suppose our friends accept, as we do, the atomic theory of Dalton, as the true exposition of the constitution of matter,—that is to say, all matter of which we have any knowledge is composed of and reducible to *atoms*. Assuming this to be the case, I would ask them how, on their material theory, they can account for different degrees of affinity, for if there be a power of development in matter, it can only

be in one peculiar direction ; it cannot be enlarging and contracting, small and great, right and left, backward and forward, at the same time, and yet it must of necessity be so, in order to account for the different phenomena of chemical affinity. It is stated that all things sprang from gases. Admitting, for the argument, that such be the fact, there can be but one inherent law to one gas, and this will not account for the *variety* of production from the same materials,—indeed, gases must not only have inherent, but *various* and *contradictory* powers of development and affinity, in order to produce from *the same materials* water, wood, sugar, and lead ; for chemistry teaches us the fact that all these different things are produced by different arrangement of the same materials. Now, if we admit a presiding and directing mind, the whole problem is solved at once ; but on the material theory we are at once involved in inextricable confusion. I do not suppose our friends will contradict the well-known facts of chemical affinity—and if they do not they are driven to the conclusion that matter must have a directing power in itself, which is independent of itself and external to it,—which is simply a contradiction and an absurdity.

There remain but these two—an all-powerful, all-wise Creator, or darkness and palpable absurdity.
“ Choose ye !”

SALLY.

"I will make darkness light before them."

THE life of a minister of the gospel in a large city is full of sudden and startling contrasts :—one day, guest in a house fronted by a lawn studded with rare and precious flowers, dining in a room decked with choice paintings ; polished silver, bright glass covering the table ; riches, refinement, high culture, and Christian converse combining with the exquisite cleanliness and delicate fare :—the next day in a common lodging-house, rife with filth and fever, vermin and death ; seeking after Sally ; very possibly with yesterday's hostess in company.

But have you ever seen a common lodging-house ? If not, it may be as well to explore a little, and ascertain how and where thousands upon thousands pass their lives. Perhaps the Lord may ask some of us Christians by and by what we *did* (not said—not gave) about the poor ; and in case He should, it would be well to have an answer ready. I could take you into some lodging-houses I know where you would hear little or nothing to shock you ; but in others you would soon wish for a very liberal allowance of wool in your ears. In these

last they will utter the most frightful oaths, blasphemies, and imprecations, in the same calm and indifferent tones as ordinary people use in common conversation; and (as usual when they do go to the bad) the women are by far the worst offenders.

A large kitchen underground, where a coke fire burns continually day and night; rough cooking utensils, commonest plates, dishes, and basons, knives and forks borrowed from the lodging-house keeper; all kinds of coarse rough food cooking at once; men, women, and children herding together;—bed-rooms above empty, except as tenanted by those working by night; men stripped to the waist; shirts washed by their owners hanging on strings in front of fire; women's garments in company; no privacy, no decency, no purity, no worship, no Bible, no Christ, no God. The name of such lodgings is legion, for they are many.

Here the "liberty, equality, and fraternity" idea may be seen in practice. One is drunk and furious, another drunk and blasphemous, another drunk and sleeping, many more getting drunk. Drunk, very drunk, always drunk, never sober while drunkenness is possible. Look at this old man, grey, nay, white-haired where he is not bald; look at his white hands, clean face, clean linen, and all his clothes clean and well-kept. He is *never* sober, has not been so for years. He is a county-court lawyers' jackal now; he was once a solicitor in good practice, has friends in the country,


whom he visits occasionally—especially his brother, a wealthy clergyman of the Church of England, who will liberally supply all his needs. See this man come into the common lodging-house, and confront me, whom he knows to be a minister of the gospel. He is coolly, maliciously drunk now; every deadly passion, every corrupt spring, stirred to the depths by drink, by ardent spirit. Stop your ears! his language is so coolly vile, so cynically blasphemous, so desperately wicked, as to shock any other than a fiend of the pit. Even the rough men round him shudder, and fetch the superintendent, who indignantly orders him out of the place, declaring he shall not enter again until *I* give permission for him to do so. Many days of banishment follow; till one evening I see him at the court's corner, where he humbly begs leave to re-enter the doors of the only place he knows and loves as home.

A few weeks pass away, and he is more drunk, if possible, than ever; he cannot eat at all now, he lives entirely upon spirituous liquors, and the end is not far off. A fresh supply of money from the brother in the country, unlimited quantities of spirits, no rest or cessation day or night, very little bed, nothing to eat, until the money is gone, and that type of perdition—*delirium tremens*—is upon him. Cursing, shrieking, yelling, whimpering, shuddering, the other lodgers subscribe for a cab, wherein the superintendent conveys him to the

workhouse infirmary; there he shrieks and yells himself to death and judgment, and is buried in a pauper's grave. Meanwhile his brother the country clergyman has died also; and when his will is read, it is revealed that the tenant of a pauper's grave was undisputed heir to ten thousand pounds, at the very time they laid him in the unpaid-for ground. I suppose it's nobody's fault, and nobody is answerable anywhere. Of the tenants of these lodging-houses, we may safely affirm that there is not an abstainer from strong drink among them. Drunk or sober, so long as hands are not raised to strike, no one takes any notice. "It was their own money(?), and they had a right to do as they liked with it;" their fourpence for the night is paid, and there's an end.

There are better classes of lodgers even among these. It is one of the saddest sights imaginable to see a decent countryman with his wife and family seeking work, travelling through London, and coming for the first time into such a den; it is also shocking to see how soon they get accustomed to it. But rooms can be engaged for those willing to pay one shilling per night for a most filthy wretched room, with a tumble-down verminous bed therein, and very little else; and it is to such a room as this we must go if we would seek and find Sally.

Sally is sick—that is, down with the fever; and her eyes are glassy and her cheeks flushed, her lips



black and dry, her hair wildly tumbled; and she is cursing fearfully, and singing hymns and quoting Scripture, and upheaving filthy depths, all in a horrible jumble that vividly tells of early decent training, and later corruption thickly overlaid.

Sally is in very evil case. On the table, in the cupboard, in the pocket, nothing; for the last drunken bout, whether or not it had to do with the fever, certainly emptied her pocket, and destroyed her credit for the time. Therefore Sally is hard up—hard down would be more correct—and something must be done by charity or the parish. Sally must not die if we can help it. Certainly she is not fit for death. Alas! what an awful number *do* die under exactly similar circumstances!

So Sally's *goodman*—alas! not husband—comes to our Mission with a long face, tells his pitiful story, and gets a promise of a visit, with well understood though unmentioned help to follow the visitation.

You are not afraid of typhus fever, are you? For six years myself, wife, Bible-woman, missionaries, and helpers, have visited every case brought before us, and the gracious Lord has kept us all untouched hitherto. A short time since there was a terrible outbreak, sixty cases in one street and courts leading thence; but we passed through it unhurt.

Therefore we will go with Jemmy, in company



with yourself and our Bible-woman, and see Sally. Both the man and woman are of middle age—have been long living—only He who has not let them starve knows how, working sometimes, begging sometimes, poor-law help sometimes, drinking always; going steadily down, down, until they are all but at the bottom—not far from the workhouse infirmary and the pauper's grave.

I stop here to think before writing more. I have seen and had to bear all this; I have seen much, inconceivably worse, that I dare not write, but which exists; and I *will* speak with my pen, whether men will hear or forbear, in the hope and prayer that when it is known and prayed over, some good may be done.

But what good, and how? That is my purpose to show, in selecting this subject to write on now.

For the present, Sally and her goodman must be handed over to the Bible-woman and the medical missionary. (If any man on earth is doing Christlike work in Christlike fashion it is he.) There must be medicine, and sufficiently strengthening food, and clothing (Sally has none to change), and nursing, and disinfectants. All these come somehow: one gives one thing, one another; for the Bible-woman is everywhere; everybody knows and trusts and loves her, which is great help; and speedily Sally's present needs are supplied.

Jemmy is in almost as evil case as Sally; weak in body, and so deficient in sight as to be all but

blind—consequently unable to work in any of the usual methods, and untaught in those special crafts whereby the blind are enabled to become self-supporting. But he is invincibly good-tempered, has an excellent understanding, and very much knowledge of Holy Scripture and hymns. When did he get these? In his youth of course. Do you not know that these dens of infamy are oftentimes the places where God punishes religious backsliders?

Did you ever see the Lord punish an evildoer without a blow or a word? What do you think of this? In our Mission on the Lord's-day homeless women gather for a service and for tea; week by week they enter as they come till the room is full and the door shut; they are lovingly waited upon during the meal by those who have themselves been rescued from the same life. On a recent Sunday one of these came to me; her heart had been touched during the afternoon, and when we were closing she stood before me, having by the hand a bright girl about twelve years of age. "Look here!" she said, "this one is the last of seven: husband dead, children dead, all gone but her and me. I have been thinking this afternoon, and I want her saved from this life. I want to have her stopped from going to 'casuals,' and 'refuges,' from hearing what she hears, and seeing what she sees. Will you help me, by taking her away from it?"

"Will you give her up to me?" I inquire in return.

"Do you mean altogether, so that I can never see her again?"

"Yes."

Then the bloated face of the lost drunken *mother* became drenched in tears, and she said,—

"I can't! I can't! how can I do it?" She fell upon her knees, looked into the bright tearless eyes before her, and her whole frame shook like leaves in the autumn wind.

"Take her away, then," I said; "I *must* either have her altogether or not at all! how can I do anything with her unless it is so?"

"I see it, I see it," she said; "but, oh! it's hard! it's hard!"

Plainly it *was* hard, but speedily she braced herself to bear it, and came with the girl to me.

"Take her," she said, "you can do better for her than I can; I *will* give her up to you."

Quietly I put my arms round the girl's neck; as quietly she looked up in my face; much more than content to stay with me. The mother saw this, and was punished; there was not one spark of love, not a trace of regret in the child's face at leaving her. She had slain her own child's esteem and love; and as she turned away in unbearable anguish I saw how, without a word or a blow, it lies in the Lord's power to inflict punishment deep and sore.

Slowly, in exhaustion and weariness, Sally came back day by day to safety of life, but never again to health and strength. Incurable disease settled upon her, and for her the hard work of the world was done. But good seed was sown in that time of weakness; and one of the first journeys she made was to the church to be married; very soon thereafter, having obtained the veriest shadow of furniture, an old bedstead, a ricketty table, two imbecile chairs, a pot, and a little crockery, they moved into another place, and the lodging-house knew them no more.

How do the poorest live? How many know or care? Oftentimes these two had food, oftentimes none; earning about eighteenpence a day, and both living on it; saving out thence the inexorable fourpence for rent that must be met at the week's end. When it was very bad—neither fire, food, nor hope—a little gift from the Mission smoothed the way; and thus they lived, or existed, from day to day.

Meanwhile a Divine Visitor had come to their humble home; they had both sought and found communion with the Son of God; they had come in repentance and faith to Him, and He had spoken pardon and peace to them. They applied for a place at the table of the Lord; and many times since I have seen the lame leading the blind to the house of the Lord—to the type of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Giving themselves to Him, He cared for them. A friend supplied a beautiful musical instrument; and the blind man goes from street to street, house to house, singing the songs of Zion, and receiving enough day by day to procure shelter, and clothing, and food. Surely the strangest missionary—doing the strangest mission work under the sun: going forth day by day, not knowing whither; previously reading God's Word and seeking His blessing; then forth into the streets to sing and play, until nightfall and far beyond, at the doors of public-houses, on the footways, before the railings of houses, in tap-rooms, at the doors of coffee-shops,—anywhere, everywhere,—the songs of the better land; and many supply ready help for the man of song who cannot see to earn his living. Always cheerful, always hopeful, always clothed, sheltered, and fed. And day by day nearer to the blessed land of light where none are blind, to walk upon the river bank—side by side with Sally.

A W A I F.

“Lift up thy hands toward Him for the life of thy young children.”

IN a long narrow back street leading out of Shoreditch, stands a two-storied building, in which some years ago I had my first introduction to Ragged School work. A friend had invited me to spend a Sunday evening with him in this place, and not having seen anything of the work at that time, I very cheerfully accepted his invitation. On reaching the place, I saw a man who was lame walking up and down, keeping guard over the front of the house, with a stick that might well be called a bludgeon in his hand. On every side of him was gathered a number of ragged boys, who were occupied in endeavouring to pull his coat and knock off his hat, and in evading the blows of the bludgeon that were aimed at them in return. Both parties were cool and cheerful, as though employed in ordinary avocations of a commendable character, although it appeared to me that if some of the blows had taken effect, they would have made cases for the hospital. I made known my wish for admittance to the lame man, who knocked

at the panel over the door three times in rapid succession with the bludgeon. Bell or knocker there was none, and knocks on the door were unnoticed. The door was opened by my friend himself, who gave me a hearty welcome, and introduced me to the teachers already assembled. I looked for a place for my hat and umbrella, and was directed to some pegs that I could only reach by standing on a form, the pegs being placed near the ceiling, a precaution that had been found necessary to insure the safety of such articles.

While engaged in securing my movables, I was startled by a sound like an explosion of gas, but "It's only a boy throwing a brick at the door," was coolly remarked by my friend, and seeing he was not alarmed, I supposed there was no reason why I should be.

"Will you go and let the girls in?" the superintendent requested of one of the teachers, who immediately obeyed. The house was divided into three floors, the lower for the infants, the centre for the boys, the upper for the girls. These last came trooping in; a disorderly multitude, some clean, some dirty, some fully clothed, many with only an outer garment; shoes and stockings were the exception, and there were no bonnets at all. Many of them struggled up with a baby in their arms, a burden to which they were so accustomed, that they would certainly have felt less at ease without than with their living incumbrances.

When the last girl had disappeared up the stairs, the superintendent called down, "Now for the boys, please;" and the confusion that instantly arose informed us that he was obeyed.

Whooping and whistling, shrieking and yelling, scrambling and fighting, up they came; a disorderly mob, pushing and crowding, until they reached the turn in the stairs, where they became fixed; presenting only to my bewildered gaze a struggling mass of uncombed and exceedingly dirty heads. The superintendent, however, was equal to the occasion. He seized one of the boys by the hair of his head, and by main force dragged him out of the mass, and thus the pressure was relieved. They were divided into classes as fast as they entered, and as soon as they were all arranged a hymn was given out to be sung.

Such singing! Some were in a high and others in a low key of those who endeavoured to follow the lead of the teachers. Many of them sang the first tune and words that came to mind, forming a mixture of the most grotesque description. Thus some were singing "Hallelujah," others "Nix my Dolly," others "God save the Queen," and still others the words of the hymn, all at one time. This performance concluded, one of the teachers proceeded to pray earnestly, amid the jeers, laughter, loud groans and "Amens" of the scholars generally.

The next process was to appoint teachers to the

vacant classes, and I was requested by the superintendent to take one. I pleaded ignorance of the method, but was assured I should do very well if I would try, and was immediately introduced to fifteen boys, who were fast leaving boyhood, among whom was the subject of this sketch, whose name was John Watson, or Nibbling Jack, as his companions called him, from his propensity to appropriate the property of other people without asking their consent.

"Can any of you read?" I inquired, by way of commencing conversation. Not one among the fifteen could do so. "Can't read a letter," replied one; "I've been at work ever since I could stand to it; afore that mother used to make me nurse the babies; she said goin' to school was all humbug."

"If you can't read," I replied, "I will read to you, and you must listen," and I proceeded to look for a fitting lesson. Meanwhile a fight commenced between two of them, and blows were fiercely exchanged.

Thinking it might suit them, I turned to the narrative of feeding the five thousand; but it was received with openly expressed incredulity.

"Vy, old son," remarked one, "yer must think we're fools 'cause we're dirty, but yer can't come that over us: five thousan' on two small fishes and five loaves; tell us vere it come from, out o' the ground, or down from the sky?"

"Do you know how corn grows?" I replied.

"I do," said another, "yer puts seed in the ground, then it comes up like grass, an' grows bigger and bigger until it gets ripe, then there's a stalk with twenty or thirty corns in it."

"Do you think it's harder to make twenty or thirty corns out of one, than to multiply loaves of bread and fishes?" I continued.

"But God makes the corn grow," objected the lad.

"And Jesus was God," I rejoined, "for He was the Son of God, and equal to His and 'our Father' in heaven."

"I vonder how He did it," said another. "I'd a liked to ha' been there to seen it. Hows'ever He must ha' been a good sort to feed all them hungry chaps; perhaps He know'd vot it vas to be hungry Hissself."

"He was so poor, though He was the Son of God," I rejoined, "that He had no place where to lay His head!"

"Vy, that's vus than us," remarked another, "for when we're hardest up, we're allus good for a lump of dry toke and a lodging in the 'Casual' vard, but I suppose He got rich at last, didn't He?"

"I believe that some of the very people He was so kind to murdered Him at last," I said.

"Vot a duffin' lot," contemptuously rejoined the lad.

The whole thing was so new to me at the time

that I could not tell whether I was right or wrong in subjecting such narratives to their free criticism, but after-thought has convinced me that if the thousands of these ignorant ones are to be reached at all, they must first be met in their own way. They cannot hurt the Scriptures, and if a spirit of sincere though grotesque inquiry is awakened, it must result in benefit to them.

"Tell us vot comed on Him at the last, old son," asked one.

"He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour," I replied.

"Vy, you said jes' now as He vas murdered," remarked the former objector, "how then can He be a Prince?"

"I told you also," I replied, "that He was the Son of God, and He was raised from the dead the third day."

"Gammon," said the lad, and he turned away in evident unbelief.

"I'd like to hear more on it, though," remarked another, "go on and tell it us, old son."

Thus encouraged, I went on cheerfully; and, as earnestly as I could, I "preached unto them Jesus," until the time came for closing school, which I honestly believe was as much to their regret as my own.

When all was over, and we were departing, the lad I have called Nibbling Jack came up to me, asking, "Vich vay are yer goin' home, old son?"

I indicated that I was going towards Islington, and asked why he was anxious to know.

"I vant to see yer agin," he said; "I'd like to see if yer can do anything for me."

"What do you want done?" I inquired.

"That 'ere's just vot I don't know," he replied; "but I's been on the nibblin' lay a long time, an' I'd like to change it if I could."

"If you will come and see me to-morrow night at my house, I'll see what I can do for you," I replied, giving him minute directions where to find me.

"I'm there like a shot," replied the lad, and so we parted for that time.

During the following day I made various inquiries, with a view to be ready for my expected visitor in the evening; but when the appointed time passed and I saw nothing of him, I began to think I should lose my labour, when it came into my mind that he might be waiting without. I went to see, and he was squatted in the street opposite the house.

"Why didn't you come and ask for me," I inquired.

"Don't know," he replied; "I vos afraid, I think, an' didn't like the looks on it, an' I'm sure the 'copper' didn't like the looks o' me hangin' about here."

I asked him into my sitting-room, and there in the bright light of the fire and the lamp, we stood for a little time earnestly regarding each other.

What he saw I cannot tell, what I saw was,—a boy of about twelve years of age, with his face and head newly washed, clothed in a decent button-up jacket and trousers, but without cap, shirt, stockings, and shoes; a bright intelligent face, and keen dark eyes, which turned quickly and constantly from side to side, with a furtive glance that convinced me his name of Jack the Nibbler was not bestowed in vain.

“Now, John,” I said, “sit down, there’s a low seat; sit there, and tell me first if you are hungry.”

“Not wery, guvnor,” he said, “but perhaps yer’ll call me Jack. I don’t like John, ’cos I’ve never yeard it ven it vas any good to me.”

“What do you mean?” I inquired.

“The only times as ever I’m called John,” he rejoined, “is ven the coppers nabs me, an’ I has to go afore ‘the beak’ the next mornin’; so ‘John’ allus seems to me to mean a month in quod, and, perhaps, a vippin’ arter; so call me Jack, guvnor.”

I thought it best to humour him, and therefore repeated, “What have you had to eat to-day, Jack?”

“A lump o’ dry toke from the ‘Casual’ this mornin’, guvnor, ain’t had nothin’ since,” he replied.

“How’s that, Jack?” I rejoined; “haven’t you been able to nibble anything to-day?”

“Haven’t tried,” he coolly replied; “vanted to come yer to-night, an’ wouldn’t chance not bein’ able through bein’ nabbed.”

Bread and meat and coffee were brought in, and

I cordially invited Jack to make a hearty meal. But with rare self-command, though almost famished, he ate sparingly at first, and it required frequent pressing to induce him to make a hearty meal. When he was fully satisfied, I told him I wanted to know everything about him, and therefore he was to sit in front of the fire and talk away as long as he pleased.

He turned his keen eyes upon me with a look of confidence, that I supposed to be born of my "bread and salt," as he inquired, "What do yer want to know for, guvnor?"

"How can I tell how I can help you, unless I know all about you?" I replied.

"All serene, guvnor," he rejoined; "I'll begin at the fust, and, as fur as I can, I'll tell you all on it."

"Vunce, a long time ago, I 'members I had a father, a mother, an' a home; my ole man vos a porter, he earned sixteen shillin' a-veek, and he had four other kids asides me. He couldn't make a do on it no-how. Vun day he prigged summat and vos sent to quod; ven he comes out, nobody wouldn't have him at no price; so o' course he had to prig agin to live—got cotched agin, an' had to cross the herrin'-pond. The vurkus helped mother, and she tried to feed us by vashin'; out from mornin' till night, day arter day, an' ve five locked up in our kitchen underground. Vun day ve'd hid some matches to play at fireworks vith, ven vun o' my little sisters ketches all a'blaze; ve screams out like mad, some vun busts the door

open, but she vus burnt to a cinder, an' the rest on us vere cryin' in a corner. Arter that, mother tries it on at home, but it vorn't no go, an' ve starves. Then, findin' it vouldn't do, she got me vurk at a paper-stainer's, vere they used to lick me 'orrid, vith a thick stick sometimes, sometimes with a thick vire. I've gone home to my mother, guvnor, black an' blue, from my neck to my legs, 'cos my master used to git drunk at vurk an' forgit how much he vopped me, an' my old 'ooman used to cry like a vater-cart ven she seen me. I stood it as long as I could, guvnor, 'cos I know'd if I didn't I shouldn't have no money to go to the gaff with; my old 'ooman 'ud give me a penny, sometimes tuppence, to git my dinner vith, an' some bread; but, Lor' bless yer, I never had not no dinner; I used to save the money and go to the gaff o' nights. Mother didn't like it, but she couldn't fetch me home from vurk, so I did as I liked."

"What made you like going to see such rubbish, Jack?" I inquired.

"Vy, ve all goès, guvnor," he rejoined; "a cove ain't thought nothin' on as don't go."

"Just tell me what you saw, as near as you can," I continued.

"At the door," he said, "there's a old 'ooman, as fat as a balloon, to collar the 'tin,' vile her old man, as is a reg'lar livin' skilinton vot's bin trainin' fer years to go up thin gaspipes, he keeps order; then the comp'ny sings an' dances the choruses, an' plays in the arter-piece. The arter-

piece vos rippin'—they talks in dum' motions. But yer sees a 'ouse on vun side, a pris'n on t'other, an' the young 'ooman as lives in the 'ouse comes out an' pretends to talk to her fancy-man; then her brother comes out with a long dagger vich he puts into the fancy-man, then he digs a hole and vollups him in. Then he makes the young 'ooman svare she von't tell nobody vot he's bin an' gone an' done. Then they takes up the young 'ooman fer the murder, vich she didn't, an' jist as they're goin' to chop her head off, blue fire lights up, an' the ghost of her young man comes up an' stabs the man as murders him. Then the ghost an' the young 'ooman dances a double hornpipe. Arter that they all dances together, and it's all over."

"And you and your companions liked it, did you, Jack?" I inquired.

"I should think ve did," he rejoined; "I've bin in three times in vun night, an' they often plays as many as six or seven times a-night, every night in the veek, an' it's allus full."

"But when you left paper-staining, what did you do next?" I asked.

"Nibbled anything I could git hold on," was the cool reply.

If this were a solitary instance—if I had selected this boy as a rare thing—then it might scarcely be worth time and space to enter into such minute details, but their "name is legion," they are in every low neighbourhood, and multitudes of them are utterly homeless, wandering on the streets

of the giant city. They come and go ; they are born ; they live ; they thief ; they die ; and who knows or cares ? Economically they are far more costly to the community in their present condition of neglect than they would be if taken charge of by the State, fed, clothed decently, made to work, and educated to be supports instead of burdens to the commonwealth. It is well known to those who are behind the scenes of dishonest lives, that the habits of thieves are most expensive, that they rarely save anything, and that they have to part with their spoil very far below its real value. Simply to think out these things is to be assured that even great expense, if it resulted in reclamation, would be a large gain on the whole. But this is only the lowest view. If Christ were to come again in the flesh, is it wrong to think that His place and His work would be much among these, where His ministers never go ; among these neglected ones, who were *once* visited by a gospel minister who has published the fact as a deed of extraordinary courage and daring ? Alas for them ! and alas for us also ! if we neglect these lost ones for whom He died !

Thoughts like these passed through my mind, as I sat looking down on my visitor, who was basking in the unusual warmth and comfort, quite content with the position he was occupying for the time.

“ Well, now, Jack,” I resumed at length, “ what are you going to do next ? and what did you wish to speak to me about ? ”

"Vy, look yer, guvnor," he replied, "often I'm cold, often I'm hungry, often I've no vere to go on vindy nights, 'cept to snooze in a empty cart; often I gets the strap or a kick from the peeler. I'm never hardly vithout a bruise some-vere, vere I bin licked for nibblin', an' vust of all, my old 'ooman vont let me come near her since I bin a prig. Now, I wants to alter all this 'ere, an' to see my mother look pleasant at me. I ain't asking much, guvnor, as you see, but I feels as if I should like her hand on my head, as it use to vas."

"And why do you come to me in your trouble any more than to any one else?" I inquired.

"'Cos I know you'll help a cove if you can," he rejoined.

"How do you know that?" I further inquired.

"Seen it in your eyes," he instantly replied, "ven you vas talking to us yesterday about Him as fed the five thousand; then I thinks this chap really means it as he's tellin' on us, an' I made up my mind to ask you to help me."

"But what do you wish to do?" I questioned.

"I wants to go to vurk, get money, get clo'es, an' ven I'm all right go back to my mother, an' live with her agin," he replied.

"And what will you do to get these things?" I asked.

"Anythin', only gi' me a chance," he answered.

"I will try you," I replied; "kneel down here at once with me, and ask Jesus to help you to 'cease to do evil,' and 'learn to do well.'"

We knelt together, and in earnest simple words I commended the poor wanderer to the Great Shepherd of the sheep, praying that his past might be forgiven, and that his future might be bright with faith and love.

I had obtained a promise of employment for him during the day, and a few subscriptions to help him to begin the world anew; and the next morning all needed garments were given him, and he was installed as an errand boy, at six shillings per week.

Through that week I was not able to see him again, but on the Saturday evening he came to me, offering to repay as much as he could of the money that he supposed I had advanced for him.

"Have you seen your mother, yet, Jack?" I inquired.

"Not yet, guvnor," he replied; "vouldn't go home vithout summat to take, an' I havn't had nothin' till now."

"We will go now," I rejoined; "I am sure your mother will be glad to see you."

From Islington to a court near the Ragged School we journeyed pleasantly, Jack narrating the experiences of the week as we went. Among other items he said, "I vos out on a errand yesterday, guvnor, ven who should I meet but vet-headed Dick, an' he ses, 'My eye, Jack, ain't you altered, I shouldn't ha' known yer; vot are yer doin'?' So I tells him, an' he larfs an' ses, 'My eye, vot a .stunnin' chance; yer can nail a lot o' things,

and we'll go snacks.' So I ses, 'I don't see it; I'm goin' home to my mother, an' if yer don't stop it, I'll tell this yer bobby vot yer been sayin'.' He looks up, sees the copper, and bolts like vinkin'."

"Well done, Jack," I replied, "keep to that, and you'll do well; but don't forget that you want Jesus to take care of you."

We reached the court where the mother lived, mounted to the top of the house, and found Jack's mother busily engaged in ironing some linen. Jack kept behind me at first, and I proceeded to ask her concerning her lost son. "I don't know where he is," she said, "and my heart often aches for him; he went bad, and I had to tell him not to come here, for the neighbours knew he was bad and wouldn't have trusted me with their things, and we should have been starved. I can do pretty well now; but it would be a great comfort to me if I could only hear some good of my poor lost boy."

She sank into a chair crying bitterly, and covering her face with her thin fingers, through which the rain of tears soon forced its way. Then Jack stepped before her quietly, sank upon his knees, and reverently laid her hands upon his head, saying only, "Mother! Mother!"

Clean, bright, well dressed, and somewhat grown, she did not know him at first: perhaps her eyes were dim with the tears, for she said, "Is it really my lost John?" But he kept her hands upon his head with his cry of "Mother! Mother!" Then a smile of unutterable love lighted up the

pale worn face, and the trembling hands sank with a convulsive clasp round the boy's neck; and I knew and felt that I was repaid a thousand-fold for the little trouble I had taken to help and direct the almost ruined boy.

In one of the narrow busy streets of the city of London stands a large building formerly used as a place of amusement. It is not long since a new lecturer was announced to speak for the first time in that place. When the time for commencing had come there came upon the platform a young man, a young woman, and an elder one, followed by some of the Committee. In a low tone, but with striking elegance of diction, the lecture was commenced, and speedily the hearty plaudits of the audience testified their delight. As the lecture progressed, the enthusiasm was delightful to witness, but those who seemed most delighted were the young woman and the old one, who hung upon each sentence with a pleasant fondness I have no words to describe. Many crowded round the lecturer when he had concluded, and he had a pleasant word for each; but I was watching as keenly as I could, and I saw, though the applause was pleasant, yet his great reward would be found in the praises of the two women, for they were the young wife and aged mother of the lecturer, Jack the Nibbler, formerly "a waif" on the great ocean of life in London.

"Some have entertained angels unawares."

AN INTERRUPTED SERMON.

“That rebellious house.”

I HAD agreed, as usual, to meet a fellow-labourer in one of the vilest localities in London, in order to hold an open-air service on the evening of the Lord's-day. But the streets shone brightly with continuous rain, the clouds were low, thick, and grey, with silver streaks. The few wayfarers hurried along as speedily as possible, and it was clear to my friend and myself that street-preaching was impracticable.

We met, notwithstanding, and the question arose as to the disposal of our time; and it was agreed that, instead of holding our projected service in the street, we should repair to a well-known lodging-house in the locality, and there make an attempt to speak to whoever might be sheltering from the ceaseless rain.

Over the choking gutters, through the plashing streets, we went upon our cheerless way. The windows were untenanted, the usually crowded doorways solitary, and the tenants of the varied apartments gathered closely round the fires because of the rain and the cold. Through an open


door, with a nod to the deputy in his little room; passing a half door, down a long broad flight of kitchen stairs, and we had arrived at our destination.

In other years this old house (now the resort of some of the worst of the dangerous classes) was a gentleman's mansion. Even now the balustrade of the staircase, the stairs, and the panelling, are of strong oak; but alternate coats of black dirt and whitewash have covered up all beauty of wood and work in undistinguishing filth, which offends more than one sense, as we descend to the basement. Passing a back-kitchen door, we push open the front door, and enter unbidden, and clearly unwelcome. It is the evening of the Lord's-day, and the time for commencing His worship and service. In thousands of churches and chapels, God's servants are gladly assembling for praise and thanksgiving. In thousands of Christian homes, families are gathered in sweet communion, with Jesus "in the midst." How is it here? A comprehensive glance around affords a terrible answer to the question. Here are men and women—old and young, lads and girls, washing, cooking, eating, drinking, cursing, swearing, and blaspheming, without the least restraint. Across one end of the room the huge fire of coke sends forth heat almost unbearable. The room is divided by rough partitions into boxes all round the sides; a large unclean table, with forms

encircling it, is in the centre. For a moment as we enter, there is quietude. But brief time suffices to comprehend our character and errand; then the noise of conversation becomes louder than ever, appearing to become more clamorous, as if by that means to shew us we are undesired and unwelcome.

Cooling courage advises us to make a retreat, suggests that we really have no right there against the wish of those who pay; and hints that very unpleasant personal consequences may possibly result. Conscience asks, "Who will care for them if we turn away? How do we know what good we may do? that there is not some poor backslider to be reclaimed, or sinner brought to Jesus?" and quietly urges us to put an end to the uncertainty by commencing proceedings.

We therefore distributed hymn papers, which were either declined, laughed at, or destroyed contemptuously as soon as given. We commenced singing; accompanied by oaths so hideous and appalling as to render the two a conjunction of paradise and perdition. Both parties persevered, but at the close of the hymn we had one or two of the elders hushed to silence, and two or three of the younger joining with us. Becoming earnest in our work, and not unused to it, we determined to persevere; but the revolting laughter and mockery which met an invitation to prayer, decided us to omit that portion of our contemplated service,



while it led us to silent uplifting of heart for the victory over all. Our reading in the Scriptures followed, concerning the Vineyard, the Husbandman and His Son. It was clear from the high tones coming from the adjoining kitchen that drinking was, as usual, leading to dissension; and the constant interruption was hard to bear! But there was nothing for it but to persevere, or own ourselves defeated, and be laughed out of the place. This we determined should not happen, and therefore my friend raised his voice to drown the interruption from without. It fell to my lot to speak to them when the reading was finished, and I commenced by narrating how two men were working at cutting armour-plates for vessels of war. The plate, several inches thick, was in its place, the steam saw urged to its utmost velocity, when it broke in half with a loud report. One portion remained attached to the axis, the other flew toward the men, passed the nearest without touching him, but struck the second so fatally that in a moment he was in two pieces on the ground. There was only time for a look of astonishment to pass over his face before he was dead, instantly cleft in twain. One moment he was alive and well, the next he was—*where?* Profound silence attended the narration, rendering only more audible the awful oaths and cursing in the adjoining kitchen, as I proceeded to urge the uncertainty of life, and the need of preparation for that unending

life so swiftly coming. But louder and louder grew the oaths, while the screams of women mingled so fearfully that it was impossible to continue speaking; and several of us passed into the adjoining kitchen, hoping to quiet the tumult and resume the service.

The scene we beheld was simply horrible—the men and women were cursing and swearing with all their might, encouraging one young woman to continue brutal ill-usage to an elder woman who had refused to pay for more drink. The room was sickeningly heated, and the smell of raw spirits overpowering. As we entered, the elder woman was standing at bay, her dishevelled hair streaming over her face, and a strong, rough knife in her hand. Her antagonist was hurriedly binding her own hair, that she might see to renew the attack. With a yell of execration, the younger woman sprang forward, defying in her madness and drunkenness the uplifted weapon in the hand of her enemy. There was a rush and a struggle, the knife gleamed in the gas glare, descending with fearful force into the breast, rushing to meet it; and then the younger woman relaxed her hold, and sank quivering and bleeding terribly upon the floor.

A dead, awful silence followed, rendering painfully audible the ticking of the large, old-fashioned clock over the fireplace, and the fall of the knife from the nerveless hand that had clutched it so

fiercely a moment before. Quivering and gasping lay the heap upon the ground, as we stooped down and turned it tenderly to the light. To kneel down, to try and force our dry lips to speak, to note the paling, stiffening face, the eyes setting in death, and the limbs shuddering with the last agony; these followed swiftly one upon the other, as in a dreadful dream. Then came spasmodic struggles, a vain attempt at utterance, and silence and death.

Stunned and motionless, making no attempt either to assist her victim or to escape, sat the elder woman who had taken her companion's life. Stepping over the dead woman, an elderly man left the room, intending to fetch a surgeon. His departure seemed to break the spell of stupified silence and inaction, and several of the younger women pressed forward to endeavour to help the prostrate form upon the floor. They cleared the centre table, and gently lifted the bleeding mass upon it, then formed in wordless silence a complete circle around what had so recently been their companion in folly and sin.

It was strange how the majesty of the presence of God's messenger of death had stilled and refined that assembly of the outcast and the vile. Low words, quietly spoken, and gentle, pitying tones, replaced the oath and the curse; womanly kindness was substituted for jeers and blows, only occasionally a low word breaking upon the still-

ness. We remained until the self-elected messenger returned with a surgeon and two policemen. The surgeon laid his hand upon the heart, listened for a moment to the mouth, glanced at the glazing eye, and exclaimed, "Dead! Stabbed! Who has done this?"

Looking round the room as he spoke, the general glance indicated the unhappy woman, though no accusing voice was heard; then she lifted up her wild, pale face, and said, "I did it, whatever is done; she struck, and beat, and ill-used me, till I could bear it no longer, because I refused to give up my money for spirits for all to drink. They all know what she did to me—that she was much younger and stronger than me, and that I only took up the knife when her blows made me desperate."

"You must come with us and answer for it at any rate," said one of the policemen in a quiet tone; while the other produced manacles from his pocket, and placed them upon the wrists of the person addressed.

The woman made no resistance, but muttered to herself, "I have brought it upon my own head, and I deserve it for being here. If I had minded the lessons of times long gone—if I had continued praying as I used to pray—this never could have happened. I deserve it all, though it seems hard to have to enter prison doors again for a moment's doing. But it is of no use talking; I neglected

God and His service, and it has come to this." She rose to go with the policemen, but the reaction from terrible excitement was upon her, and she would have fallen had they not caught her ere she sank down, and led her unresistingly away.

Leaving two of the younger women to watch by the dead, we returned to the front kitchen, and there, without any attempt to renew our service in a formal way, we spoke quietly and seriously with those around concerning the awful suddenness of the event that had occurred, and the need of instant preparation for the tremendous eternity that must shortly come upon every one of us. It was impossible to help noticing the difference between the manner of those we were visiting before and after the death of their companion, or to avoid calling attention to the fact that she had lost her life in endeavouring, most unjustly, to procure more of that terrible drink of which she had already partaken too freely. General assent and quiet attention were accorded to our remarks, and drinking, oaths, and curses were banished for the night as by general and willing consent.

The coroner's inquest was held in a few days, a verdict of "manslaughter" was returned against the unhappy prisoner, who was soon afterwards tried for her crime, and sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

So, within the sound of the gospel, but neglecting it herself, and preventing others from listening

to its healing truths, that most unhappy young woman passed from time into eternity. With drink maddening her brain, rebellion and iniquity in her heart, and curses on her lips, she passed suddenly and most unexpectedly into the awful presence of the Judge of all the earth. Without a word of warning or a thought of death, she was compelled to face the unknown, unending realities of the eternal world; hurled forth into the unchanging and unalterable state without a moment for preparation or prayer.


So it may be at any time with any of Adam's race; so it may be with some who read this simply true sketch, or with him by whose hand it is penned. May He whose blood "cleanseth from all sin" so work in us, by the power of His own Holy Spirit, that we may be ready for whatever He may decree concerning us; and if that decree be a sudden summons into His august presence, may it be to see His face with joy, and to awake satisfied in His likeness for ever.

THE WAY OF HOLINESS.

“I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you, face to face.”

Two friends—evangelists in London—long and earnestly engaged in the Lord’s work, conversing together on a sudden and most blessed “lifting into the light” which had happened very recently to one of the twain,—

“You want to know what has occurred to me,” said one, “do you? You have watched for some time, and had much sorrow and pain in so watching, but lately you have been quite perplexed! You have noted, as it were, the removal of a great burden, and have seen another and better friend appear suddenly in the old familiar form. You have seen light for darkness, joy for sorrow, peace for conflict, and rest for bitter and profitless striving. Well! I will try and tell you, in plain and brief words, what has produced the change. Converted many years since, convinced ‘of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come,’ it was my lot to wander for months under the terrors of law and righteous condemnation. No one, near me at least, then preached instant salvation and



acceptance; *immediate* peace in believing was not then constantly proclaimed as it is now; and I was in the dark for weary, weary months before I sank, worn-out and broken-hearted, at the feet of our blessed Master, and there found forgiveness and salvation.

“Forgiven I was quite sure I was, nor have I ever doubted that since, through all the intervening years of strife and conflict; but this solitary fact was almost all I knew of the Christian life. I found even this so sweet and precious that I was willing and anxious to tell as many as possible of the Lord’s goodness to me. Knowing practically the gospel of repentance and forgiveness, I set myself to proclaim these to all, old and young, rich and poor, whom I could reach and prevail upon to listen.

“Thus, teaching in ragged-schools and Sunday-schools, preaching in the open-air and in small places of worship, I worked on gratuitously and energetically for nearly twenty years. Now and again I won a sinner to Jesus, and I was elated, thankful, and encouraged to seek and work on. Sometimes I fell through temptation, and offended deeply against God; I had times of coldness and depression; of almost utter discouragement and disgust; times of sickness and sorrow, and of enjoyment and repose. But these twenty years of Christian life and work had through them all little or no progress for me. I have never been a prey to

doubts and fears, which, I presume, is accounted for by the fact that I have always been too busy to attend to such things. It seems to me that doubts and fears as to personal salvation are the whips of small cords the Lord uses now to drive idle Christians to work for Him. Having been always willing to work so far as I was able, this whip has never been needed or applied to me. But I made no progress when I began my work in the gospel. I knew I was saved, but I knew little more at the end ; nor did I think there was much more that could be known on this side eternity. I heard of extravagances of statement and belief ; I heard of lives of perfection and perfect holiness ; but I quietly reckoned all such statements as the outcome of ignorance or designing falsehood. I supposed, very calmly, that no one had attained to much more than I had ; and, indeed, as I have said, that there was not much more to attain to.

“About two years since there was a strange condition of dissatisfaction, of awakening, and of desire for better things and times, spread far and wide among the ministers and evangelists of London. We began to be disturbed, to feel that our power had departed, to realise that the world had left religion, and was simply laughing at it and at us. Conversions were very rare ; conformity to the world very general ; Christians endeavouring, as far as sleeping consciences would

allow, to conform to the world, and by a show of spurious and Christless liberalism, to prove that the world need not part with much to come to the feet of Jesus. The results were dreadful; many ministers and evangelists fell into this subtle snare, and were crippled, weakened, almost slain by the contact with this subtle poison. My own work was terribly injured by it; spiritual life almost died out from among us, and I was as careless, and cold, and hopeless as any one else. Then it was that the Lord sent trouble, bitter, heavy, long-continued trouble, upon me. I had an acquaintance, one who was a teacher and preacher of the gospel, whom I had often laboured with and believed to be a Christian. Disgrace and sorrow came upon him, and earnest appeals were made to me from various mutual friends to help him in his trouble. This I agreed to do, and at once entered upon the task. Day by day, as I searched into the case, I found that the charges of falsehood, dishonesty, and misappropriation were true, and that he whom I thought to be a Christian had been walking in paths of deceit and sin for many years. The secular work I had thus rashly undertaken grew little by little upon me; I was compelled to mix with men of the world; to hear their comments on the case; to see and know the terrible mischief it was doing wherever it was known; and to find, at length, that my own name was being mixed up in the wrong-doing,

and that my friends were looking coolly upon me, and in many instances falling away from me.

“Roused to bitter anger, stung by this voiceless injustice, I shrank from all that wavered or appeared cold, and went upon my cheerless way in solitude, anger, and sorrow. It was a terrible time. I seemed shut up to myself, wounded to the quick where I was most sensitive. I imagined every one I met turned from me, or had a sneering smile to greet me with; until it was unpleasant to walk even in the public streets.

“No mortal knows, or ever will know, how much I suffered at that time; how bitterly I felt and resented the causeless stain that rested on me. I had tried, before God and men, to act honestly and to do right to every one; but my false friend, to save himself, insinuated and openly made the most damaging charges against me, and the consequences I have thus indicated fell heavily upon me: truly I was in the wilderness.

“Wounded within and without, forsaken and solitary, I came to think that *my* work in the Lord’s vineyard was done, and that I had better withdraw and leave my little sphere for another. This I most certainly should have done in simple despair, but that the Lord, pityingly, gave me to know that He was still using *my* work to bring sinners to Himself. Thus encouraged in a small degree, I laboured on with very little heart or hope, very little success, or even care whether

I was successful or not ; and this was my condition, more or less, for nearly two years.

“At the end of these weary, profitless months, I received an invitation to meet two brothers from America, who were convening gatherings of ministers and evangelists to set forth ‘the higher Christian life and power for service.’ I was pleased with the invitation, and determined to accept it, still retaining quite sufficient of my old ideas on these subjects to resolve to watch narrowly, and carefully examine every statement that should be made.

“I had an idea they would advocate sinlessness in the flesh, or complete perfection here below ; and such teaching, if offered, I resolved to reject and publicly protest against. I had no occasion to put my resolution into practice, for in introducing their subject, the first speaker said: ‘We do not preach perfection here ; we know and believe what John says—“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” We do *not* say we are without sin, or perfect while still in the flesh ; and therefore let no one think thus of us, or charge us with holding a doctrine we do not receive.’

“Having thus removed *my* difficulty out of the way, the speaker had certainly prepared *me* to listen to him in a better mood. He proceeded to picture ordinary Christian life as a series of fightings, fears, doubts and conflicts, fallings and re-

pentings, and renewed efforts, all occurring again and again ; which I felt to be very strikingly true in my own experience ; and this he declared to be the ordinary life now lived by most Christians. Then he asked, Is this right ? That which ought to be ? Will such witnessing as this bring the world to Jesus ? Is this incomplete, joyless, colourless life that which is set forth in the Scriptures ? Is this what Jesus died to win for us ? These questions were most sweetly and solemnly pressed upon us ; and then the speaker dwelt upon personal and entire consecration to Jesus as the way of holiness and the secret of efficient successful service.

“ ‘Between your present condition, my brethren,’ he said, ‘and any possible approach to perfection, does not there appear to be very much land to be possessed ? The normal condition of a Christian, even here, should be love, joy, peace, through our abiding in Christ and His abiding in us ! Has this been your condition hitherto ? and if not—why not ? To the word and to the testimony ! What are the Master’s thoughts and words to us on this matter ? “ Abide in me, and I in you.” What does abiding mean ? Sometimes in and sometimes out ! sometimes present, at others absent ! Is this *abiding* ? Is it not rather the constant unvarying presence of Jesus in us, leading us to the knowledge and realising of our constant abiding in Him.

“ ‘We talk of Christian life, but what ideas do

these words convey? Is God's triumphant risen Christ always doubting and fearing? or is it that our life (so called) is not real life at all (is not "Christ our life," is not "Christ in us?") but only a faint memory of His former or present work in us; a battling unsuccessfully with the heart from which sin has not been cast out by the indwelling of Jesus there?

"What, then, is this higher Christian life of which we speak, for which we are pleading with you? It is simply the carrying on of the work—begun in conversion—by the indwelling of Christ "in our bodies and our spirits, which are His." It is simply allowing Jesus to enter and *dwell* where He has been knocking so long? It is simply to understand, accept, and profit by, the plan of salvation from the *dominion* of sin, as well as from its *guilt* and *consequences*.

"But it may be objected, "This simple passive reception is not manful; cannot lead to power of character, work, and service." To this we reply:—Can you work better without Jesus than with Him? If He is in you; dwelling, willing, working in you, you must thus be better prepared for work than in any other condition! And experience proves this to be true. Dear Moody of Chicago has said that before he was thus fully consecrated, he was privileged to win units for Christ; but since then, his usefulness had increased tenfold.*

* This statement was publicly made, just before Mr Moody commenced his recent work in Edinburgh.

“ ‘ But there is yet a most important matter to speak of. How can this consecration, this indwelling in and of Christ be attained unto? Is there one here that needs it, wishes for it, is willing to enter into it? If there be, I declare and affirm they may do so, *here*, and *now*! Any one, so willing, can, in this room, at this present time, enter into this holiness, rest, and peace, *simply by believing* !

“ ‘ Brothers ! you received *salvation* by faith ; receive *holiness* in the same way ! There is—there can be—no other way ; but “ all things ” —consecration, holiness, power, and success in service, “ are possible to him that believeth.” ’

“ And, my dear friend, I felt that he was speaking truth which I ought to have known long since, but had somehow missed—which I could and would believe ; and as we knelt in silent prayer I know that I, for one, entered into a new and most precious compact with Jesus, and thus into the higher Christian life.

“ So, through the darkness and trouble, there came to me that which I had lacked so long—love and joy, peace and rest in believing. I have an ever-present indwelling life and power, that, I am sure, is not of self or sin. My burden is gone, is replaced by a fresh, holy, hearty, sympathetic newness of life, accompanied by happiness that causes me to know, at last, something of what it is to “ be joyful *in the Lord*.”

“So, I have told you, honestly, as before the Lord, what I have found ‘only through believing.’ Well I know there are heights and depths of love as yet unsounded, a joy of service as yet unfelt; but in the meanwhile—believe me—I would go through all the sorrow again, if needed, to bring me to one-tenth of the gladness I now experience in the higher Christian life!

“To any who may be as I was, I have only to say—Jesus will *give* you this higher life if you will simply accept it as a gift from Him.”

THE END.





