

## *A Call from Spain.*

BY W. WESTALL LEAR.

SPAIN, although so dark in a spiritual sense, is a land which has hitherto been left practically untouched by the missionary and the missionary societies. Africa, India, China, and the islands of the sea have attracted the disciples of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by scores, and yet Spain, this country so near our own shores, is overshadowed by gross darkness and superstition, and needs the light as much as the vast continents which have been favoured for so many years with Gospel truth.

It was during the spring of 1889 that, leaving business late one evening, Mr. Henry S. Turrall made his way to Richmond, Surrey, to the Young Men's Christian Institute, of which he was a member, and where a lady missionary was giving an address on the needs of Spain. Although unable to see the speaker, the Master spoke the word of command through her lips, and he decided then and there to devote his life to missionary work in Spain. He indeed obeyed the Master's injunction given to His disciples, "Take nothing for your journey . . . nor scrip . . . neither money" (Luke ix. 3). In one of his early letters he says, "It is nearly a year since I came to Spain, trusting in the Lord to supply my every need, which He has abundantly done through His children. Answering the question 'Lacked ye anything?' I must reply 'Nothing, Lord, only I pray Thee give an abundant recompense to those who have ministered unto me.'"

After ten years his further testimony is that he has lacked nothing, but the supply has been so abundant that frequently the surplus has been forwarded to other labourers whose needs were known to him. He was free to choose his own sphere of labour, and the choice fell on Vigo. Arriving there, he immediately commenced the study of the language, also visiting Morgadanes, Marin, the Province of Leon, and other places; and he says, "I find my heart warmed as I mix among the 'little flock,' 'brethren beloved of God,' and gathered out of the great darkness, but I ought to be more stirred in spirit to see the whole country given over to idolatry and ignorant of the good news of the Gospel."

There are many difficulties placed in the way of these people becoming Christians, the opposition arising chiefly from the priests. If perchance some poor wandering

child of God accepts salvation, and he happens to be a man, the priest soon makes it his business to see the convert's employer and threatens him with excommunication unless he discharges the man. Then where can he find fresh employment? No other Roman Catholic will take him on. Again, it is most difficult for the missionaries to rent houses or halls for the preaching of the Word. In some cases, after landlords have consented to lease some premises and the agreement has been signed, the priest will step in and do all in his power to get it cancelled.

However, with all these obstacles, and many more, the work is going forward, and quite a number have come over to the Lord's side.

Every opportunity of making known the Gospel is embraced by the missionaries and colporteurs, who visit the fairs, processions, and festivals, and manage to sell a large number of gospels in the language of the people. These places are reached by bicycle, or by long journeys on foot, and much encouragement frequently follows at some distant period when some seeker after truth, having read the joyful news, visits the missionary to obtain more light, and then embraces the Christian faith.

Writing at the close of last summer from Marin, Mr. Turrall said: "We have the advantage here that when the meetings would naturally drop off through long days and late work, they are attended by those who come to the town for the sea bathing—chiefly poor people from the villages of the province and those adjoining. This season has been full of blessed opportunities. In

other years a good deal of intimidation has been exercised on those entering the meetings, but now that we have our own hall, standing in its own grounds, and though in the heart of the town slightly removed from the main street, the opposition could not be so effective, and the natural curiosity to see the inside brought many in; and they returned, and in spite of the priests' denunciations the bathers attended in such numbers that we held a month's consecutive meetings, and hundreds have heard the Gospel and returned to their homes with books and tracts.

"But an exceptional opportunity was also afforded us through the visit of the Royal Family to this bay (Marin). In their maritime excursion they were announced to reach here on a Saturday. The Queen Regent had shown her interest in certain matters affecting the fishermen of these bays, and they desired to give her a hearty welcome, and thus hundreds of fishing boats came from all the villages in this and the adjoining



MR. AND MRS. HENRY S. TURRALL.

ing bays. Very stormy weather delayed the arrival of the Royal party, and as Marin has no local attractions, these fishermen came in crowds to the hall, and we had an overflowing meeting. On the Lord's Day we began as usual at 8 a.m., and for four hours went on with short pointed addresses. The hall was crammed with *men*—a wonderful sight! As fast as seats were vacated, others occupied them, and many were standing. At last we had to clear the hall, and shut the doors, to be able to partake of the Lord's Supper. At two we began again, and had a two hours' meeting, crowded as before. We brought down every available form, and arranged so that the large new hall might seat the most possible. But at night there was no room again, and numbers filled the aisles and vestibule. And what attention! One felt God was present! How our hearts were at one and the same time filled to overflowing with joy, and yet solemnised with the responsibility. We continued for a long time, announcing a meeting for the Monday morning, which was also full. Then the men left for their fishing, but returned on the Wednesday, when the visitors arrived. We had (to disprove the current libels as to our motives) joined with the townspeople in their display of welcome, and had exhibited, in very large letters, the device, 'God keep the King.' This was very conspicuous, and was referred to by most of the correspondents from Madrid. Others, with manifest malice and Romish insinuation, referred to the building as being a fort only waiting for an occasion to plant cannon on it, and these telegrams served as a text for articles on 'Protestantism in Galicia,' in which English gold was described as the real cause of its progress. We know that when the Royal Family and the Prime Minister went, as is their custom, to the church, the Minister said to the local M.P., 'This is a very poor place,' and the answer was, 'The best church here is the Protestant one, and so we are building one.' These statements are, of course, exaggerated to stir up feeling against us—and, while the building is a large one for so small a place, it only comprises a hall, two schools, and a dwelling-house. . . . I would add that the colporteurs, during the Royal visits in the different parts, sold a thousand gospels. Miss Wreford, who has been labouring in Spain for twenty-four years, conducts a night school, and other ladies help in the little medical work carried on."

Alluding to another difficulty, Mr. Turrall writes: "The priests in their paper of the capital of the province 'denounced' to the governor that Mrs. Turrall was exercising the profession of a doctor without possessing the necessary qualifications, and was deceiving many simple people. The governor, after preliminary enquiries in the town, which justified her, sent the case to the local judge, and showed his (well known) bias by stating that it was easily seen to be a device of the Protestants to make proselytes. The priests' witnesses (sick people and neighbours) bore out the fact that it was simply a question of acts of kindness to sick and poor in the dressing of wounds, etc., and the judge, refusing to be coerced into manifest injustice, and seeing that the public prosecutor withdrew the charge, dismissed the case. But the priest has the satisfaction of causing us legal expenses and loss of time. Misses Smith and Plummer carry on this work, which, without doubt, contributes largely to break down prejudice. Mrs. White and Miss Dodd also do the same at S. Tomé."

Despite these signs of opposition there are, however, features of encouragement.

"We had," says Mr. Turrall, "a very exceptional opportunity of preaching to new people at a place fourteen miles distant. A sister died, and there being no 'dissident' cemetery, we were ordered to bring the body to the next parish—more than five miles. We first preached in the house, and then the body was carried to the cemetery, which was filled at once with the people who had followed and gathered round us. The two local mayors were present. There was great attention, some weeping, and nearly all expressing manifest approval. Some believers from Marin walked there and back. These opportunities are very valuable. There is no doubt that this Province is feeling the influence of the Gospel. In the Congress there have been two or three references to the spread of 'Protestantism' in Galicia. English gold and greed is the explanation they give."

Some time after Mr. Turrall's departure for Spain, his brother, Mr. Thornton Turrall, also decided to become a missionary to Spain, and for a considerable period has been most successful in declaring the Gospel in Toral de las Guzmanes, Province de Leon, and at Corunna. Mr. Sidney Turrall, since his marriage in 1892, has been greatly assisted in the work by his wife, whose maiden name was Miss Hillis, and who had for many years previously been labouring as a missionary in Spain.

---

## Prize Competition.

### PARAGRAPHS.

WE offer each month a book prize for the best missionary paragraph, original or selected, not exceeding 300 words. If the paragraphs are original it must be so stated, and if selected the source given. This month's competition closes on July 15th. All papers must be written on one side only, and addressed to the Editor, the envelopes being marked "Paragraph" on the top left-hand corner. The prize for June is awarded to Miss A. T. Sharman (Sidcup).

---

IN our next number will appear an article by Mr. C. H. S. Green (of the China Inland Mission), author of "In Deaths Oft." It will deal not only with the dangers through which he and his companions passed, but with the keeping power of God.

---

WE need do no more than refer in brief to the special insets which our readers will receive with this number. The response kindly given to the appeal for girls' garments is acknowledged in detail in the Secretary's News and Notes, and also on the sheet enclosed, which contains directions for boys' shirts. We are hoping for similar success with this effort. A paper pattern is again provided. Our "Needs" are this month so numerous and important as to far exceed the space usually assigned to them, and render necessary a separate appeal, to which we ask generous attention.