He made a man out of what might have been a felon. I was a coward, and I should never have dared face the world if it had not been for his help. But he turned my snare into a safeguard. He made me work at true music under his very own teaching. And he never despised me, though he knew my sin. After that, Miss Sydney, don't you cumber your mind with the thought of owing me anything. The greatest trouble I have is that I've not a farthing to leave John Alwyn's child."

"Who will never want it, dear old Jacob. You give her a better heritage in her father's praise!"

It was after a triumphant dinner, cooked by Miss Ambler, reckless in the way of sauce or vegetable, served by Nancy in a stuff gown and white cuffs, that Jacob Cheene and his guest strolled through the streets of Stillcote, and he showed her the way to Guyswick, his old lodgings, which he had quitted to share small means and short commons with Miss Ambler; "Stuarts," owned now by a wine merchant; and the big church of St. Clement, where——"

But there he broke off to ask of those with whom Sydney lived, their age, their bearing to herself.

As far as she knew it she gave them the Hursts' history, and admitted that they were kind enough to make her sometimes wish she could drop the *incognita* her mother had imposed upon her. But, for a marvel, Jacob agreed with Mrs. Alwyn.

"If you are fairly happy, Miss Sydney, let well alone. If you want to leave them—you are not so far off now—come to me."

That Sydney promised, seeing that it pleased him to count himself her guardian; and, anyhow, another June she was to ask a whole week's holiday, and they were to pass it together. With which prospect the station was reached, and farewells said between these May and December friends, whom the day had drawn together by kindlier ties than ever.

Capel Moor was reached as the last gleams of sunlight kissed the crests of the golden woods, and Sydney hastened towards Wynstone, till at the angle where lane joined road, and the weather-beaten church stood on the hill-summit, a figure waited, leaning on the lichen-tinted wall.

"Ah!" said Mr. Hurst, as she drew near, "my sister prophesied you would enjoy your freedom till the last train. I was sure you would not disappoint us."

Sydney's sympathies had been too much on the alert the whole day through not to catch quickly now at the implied need. It brought back old times, when her father counted every moment of her absence. There was sweetness in being again wanted, yet, out of a full heart, she had no words to acknowledge it. Mr. Hurst marked her silence.

"Will you come through the churchyard? It is the nearest way. You are tired?"

"Not very."

Something in the still scene, the quiet tombs, the silent house of many generations' prayers, unsteadied her voice. Mr. Hurst turned to her suddenly:—

"Sorry to leave those whom you went to see? Sorry to be in this dull spot again?"

"No, no; indeed, no."

"For that, thank you," he said. "You are getting me into such ill habits, Miss Grey; it seems like losing my sight again not to have you at Wynstone."

From this strong vigorous man, the confession of dependence took Sydney's pity so unawares that she utterly forgot Miss Hurst's deep device for sparing his feelings. He was holding the gate open for her. Into his right hand she put her own, warm, soft, ungloved, and said very gently—

"Now, I shall not want to be away for months and months, and the more you let me do for you the better."

Miss Hurst wondered volubly the evening through why her brother preferred wandering outside in the moonlight, "which, though it's lovely, as I say, he can't enjoy," to coming in and enjoying her society and Sydney's. She had fancied he would be pleased when Miss Grey got back. But gentlemen were odd. She supposed he preferred the company of his own thoughts.

They were thoughts Gilbert Hurst longed, with all the throes of despair, to be rid of: thoughts of a tender throbbing touch that still seemed lying in his own broad grasp—a touch waking a joy and an anguish that must needs run side by side till death extinguished them.

END OF CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

THE DWELLINGS OF THE LONDON POOR.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE REV. S. A. BARNETT.

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

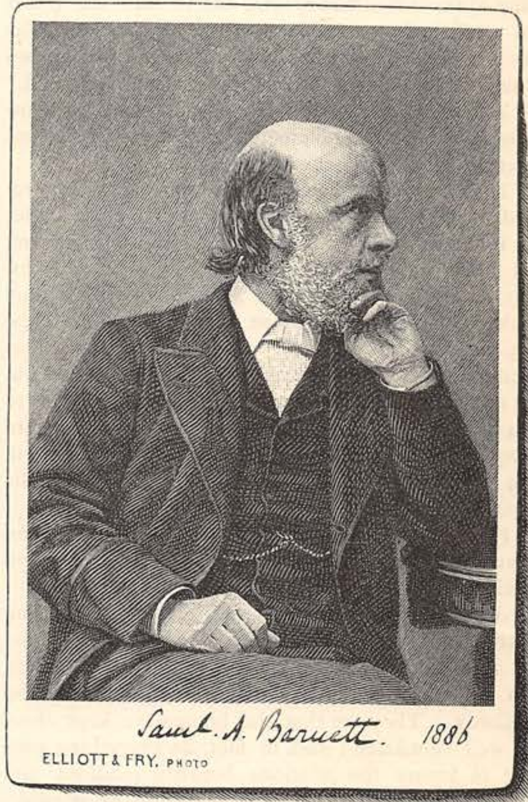
GREAT cities are full of contrasts; and in London, the greatest city of them all, these contrasts are oftentimes grotesque in their completeness. There are few things more wonderful, even in London, than the difference between the City, splendid in riches, gloomy of aspect, always animate with life at high pressure, and the East End, which immediately adjoins it. One walks up Cornhill and thinks of "The Monarch of Mincing Lane." Money-changers abound, and the very windows are full of bullion. Up the broad Bishopsgate one's thoughts are of princes, for there is still the Crosby Place of Crookback, and what remains of Sir Paul Pindar's house is suggestive of the merchant-princes whose gardens once made the air aromatic. One turns up Brushfield Street into Spitalfields, and

all such memories are forgotten. Commercial Street is by no means one of the poorest streets in Whitechapel; yet Spitalfields Church overlooks an amount of poverty and wretchedness which can only be fully appreciated by those who have made themselves familiar with the inner life of the East End. The change from the City is startling in its suddenness. But a street away there is life and glitter; every man wears broadcloth; the streets are thronged with carriages. Here in Spitalfields and Whitechapel a black coat is rarely seen, and the number of carriages which pass through the streets in a day might be counted on the fingers of one hand. Colour and variety are absent; all is one dull sordid level. The houses and shops are poor and mean; the pedestrians are thinly clad and often in rags. No flowers brighten Spitalfields Market, which is entirely given up to the stern utility of the most ordinary vegetables.

Happily, however, this dreary, impoverished, overcrowded town is not without its centres of spiritual and intellectual life. Toynbee Hall has been lately founded, and the work which Mr. Barnett, the Vicar of St. Jude's, Commercial Street, has been doing for years past is very well known. No man, probably, has a more extensive acquaintance with the wants and needs of the East End; and it is in no small degree owing to his benevolent exertions that the inhabitants of other parts of London have had brought home to them the necessity for the "Palace of Delight," which will soon take tangible shape. St. Jude's Vicarage is a centre of restless endeavour to brighten the unlovely lives of dwellers in this refuge of poverty and ignorance. The Vicarage, like so many other residences of the London clergy, is forbidding in outward aspect; but within it is busy and hospitable, and it is easy to forget the squalor of the East End in Mrs. Barnett's large roof-lighted drawing-room, with its alcove in musharabyeh work, cushioned with crimson. Mr. Barnett greeted me with hearty cordiality. He has the brisk manner of a busy man accustomed to crowding much work into a short time. He is somewhat below middle height, slightly grey, with an earnest face, and that easy flow of clear, expressive language which George Stephenson thought to be the most enviable of natural gifts.

Upon the housing of the London poor, Mr. Barnett is an authority. His views upon the subject are decided, and differ in some respects materially from those held by many people who have a less intimate acquaintance with it. He considers that the good management and administration of tenement houses are much more important and infinitely more likely to produce the wished-for results than new legislation; and that Sir Richard Cross's Act, properly worked, is amply sufficient to meet all needs. I asked him if he deemed it possible to procure the lowering of rents paid by the poor.

"I do not see any way to get lower rents" was his reply. "The result of reducing rents is that the cheap houses are at once filled by the higher class of artisans; and the very poor, with large families, are more crowded than before. I am therefore driven to believe that the only remedy for the present state of things lies in better administration, partly by the local authorities and partly by the owners of the houses. The sanitary inspectors should see that the laws are kept much more strictly. The drainage should be improved, and the water supply rendered more abundant. Pressure should be brought to bear upon landlords who would not do their duty by their property; and if they did not like it they would soon sell their houses. Then



the administration of the property should be left much less to agents than it is at present. The relations of landlords with their poor tenants ought to be much closer than they are, and there is no reason why the owners of London property should take less interest in their tenants than a country squire takes in his cottagers. Let them collect the rents personally or through friends, who will have pleasant relations with the tenants, and will learn what their grievances really are."

I remarked that with such a system, made general, there would be admirable opportunities for raising the tone of the tenants.

"Undoubtedly; and I have great faith in that. Improve the tone of the dwellers in these houses, and they will no longer be content with filthy rooms, but will endeavour to better their position."

Detailing the efforts that are being made in East

London to provide better homes for the poor, Mr. Barnett said the East London Dwellings Company had purchased land, relatively speaking, very cheaply; but that to pay 4 per cent. on their capital they could not afford to let rooms at less than half-a-crown a week. In the Peabody Buildings some rooms were let at as low as about two shillings a week, and there the result had been to attract a much more respectable class than had been intended. The company entrusted the management of its tenements to ladies, who were able, by their personal influence, to smooth over many of the difficulties of life, and to raise the tastes and awaken the aspirations of the tenants. In this way it had been found possible to keep in the houses a much lower class than could otherwise be retained.

I asked Mr. Barnett if the tenants had been induced in this way to take better care of the fabric, and to refrain from destruction.

"They knock the houses about much less," he replied. "People of that class are much more under the influence of their feelings than of their reason; and if they take a liking to the lady who calls for their rents, they will do for her things which they would not do simply because it was to their interest that they should do them." Some of the companies owning blocks of industrial dwellings, he added, object to letting single rooms; but that he deemed to be a mistake. When a man had been accustomed to living in one room it was necessary to meet his need, with the object of gradually getting him to see the advantages of occupying two rooms.

"Have any private individuals," I asked, "been induced to do the same thing as the East London Dwellings Company?"

"A good number are doing it. They are building central blocks intended purposely for the very poorest, and they likewise work them with the aid of ladies, who are regarded by the tenants as practically the landlords. They see that the houses are kept clean and well ventilated; and, in fact, do everything possible to insure the relations between landlord and tenant being as friendly and charming as possible. Mrs. Leonard Courtney collected rents in Whitechapel for several years, and was to all intents and purposes the landlady. Many people who had been in the habit of living anyhow, under her influence got into better ways, and some of them were, after a time, able to take two rooms. But progress in this direction is slow. It is necessarily a matter of years, and it is unfair to judge of results by a week or two. Owing to the success of the system in Whitechapel, Mrs. Leonard Courtney has built a block of houses at Chelsea, which she manages in the same way; but it is fair to say that the idea originated fifteen years ago with Miss Octavia Hill."

In answer to a question as to the extent to which the visiting system had grown, Mr. Barnett told me that it was applied to about two thousand persons in the parish of Whitechapel, and to many others in new blocks of buildings in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Barnett went on to say that the lady collectors were often able to render substantial material as well as moral service to their tenants. If a girl were at home doing nothing they could sometimes get her into service; or a place might be found for a boy; or even for the father of the family if he had the right stuff in him. When a family had been got into regular and self-respecting habits, it was found that the rent was paid much more punctually. "It is a great mistake," added Mr. Barnett, "to be too easy about the payment of rents. The tenants suffer in the end very much from the irregular collection of rents which is common. The ordinary collector gets what he can, loses a good deal, and then has to increase rents to others to cover the deficiency. The tenants consequently get into the way of thinking that they can sometimes be excused from paying. Many people think that the only thing worth giving to the poor is money; but they are wrong: teaching them regularity and a knowledge of better things is a far more precious gift."

"Then you do not think that farther legislation would be of any use?"

"I do not perceive how it could help at all. I like Cross's Act, and I think it would be sufficient if it were properly administered. We do not need any more legislation. You have seen that there has been no outcome from the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, and there is not likely to be any."

"You have no specific of your own, Mr. Barnett?"

"Vague ideas one, of course, has; but as such it is not worth while to formulate them. One thing I should tell you: we are hoping to try a kind of co-operative house. We propose to tell the tenants that we will share among them the whole of the profits above 4 per cent., and by this means we hope to induce them to keep down the bill for repairs, which sometimes amounts to 40 per cent. of the entire income from houses of this class. That is a form of profit-sharing which has not, I think, yet been tried in this connection."

"So that you would sum up the two essentials as improved local administration, and the development of the sense of duty on the part of the landlord?"

"Exactly. And I feel sure that it would be a disadvantage all round for rents to be artificially lowered. The difference would go ultimately into the pockets of employers, for wages would inevitably fall sooner or later; and, in addition, people would be attracted from the country, and would elbow out our weak Londoners."

I asked Mr. Barnett if he thought the farmers of tenement houses made the enormous profits of which so much is heard; and he answered that he was sure they did not. Many of them were small men, and they collected so badly, and the cost of repairs was so great, that it was impossible they should make very large profits. The system was, however, a very bad one, since it compelled the sober and steady to pay higher rents to make good the losses caused by the drunken and vicious.

Then we fell to talking of the effect which a great London municipality might produce upon this question

of the housing of the poor. Mr. Barnett expressed the belief that improved local government would not only simplify the task of keeping tenement houses in better condition, but would reduce the rates and make it easier to acquire open spaces. In reply to one of my questions, Mr. Barnett said he thought the bitter and socialistic feelings of the poor towards the rich, of which so much has been heard, have been greatly exaggerated. "But," he went on, "it seems to me inevitable that there should be some such antagonism so long as the rich and the poor quarters of London are so widely sundered. For the most part, however, the people are dumb on this point; and those who do talk, don't talk for the million. At the same time, I feel very strongly that the best cure for the discontent that does exist would be a more constant mingling of rich and poor. That is the idea upon which we work at Toynbee Hall, and my experience there has confirmed my opinions."

I asked how the movement for inducing people of education and position to live in Whitechapel, with the object of bringing classes into closer connection, was progressing. Mr. Barnett told me that quite half a dozen families—people of wealth and culture—had gone to live in his own parish; and that he looked to an exodus from the West to the East to do far more to improve the position of the poor than anything else could do. "East London," he remarked, in the tone of a man himself keenly influenced by surroundings, "is so terribly dull; there is so little to raise men's hearts or lead them to believe in the existence of a better condition of things. You go for a walk, and see no shop window that is interesting in itself. You meet thousands of people in dirty garments, and you never see a carriage, unless it be a doctor's brougham hurrying along. The streets are never brightened in any of the ways familiar at the West End. The Horse Guards are never sent through our streets, and a uniform is rarely seen." The experiment tried by the lady collectors of inviting a number of their poor tenants to their houses and giving them an entertainment, and of taking some of them down to their country houses for a day's holiday in the summer, had been very successful. It was better to make a break in these people's lives than to give them money, for—

"The gift without the giver is bare;
We only give in what we share."

"In short," exclaimed Mr. Barnett, "the development of the sense of responsibility on both sides is the only cure for existing evils. If the rich and well-to-do would become more sensible of their duty to their poor neighbours everything would be righted. Legislation, of whatever kind, would, in this particular case, always let through the people legislated for."

THE GARDEN IN JUNE.

THIS month, let us say we are entering upon a very critical and important period of our rose culture. Our already established standards are fast breaking into bloom in all directions, and we shall find it here and there advisable to sacrifice some buds, where several have made their appearance in too close proximity to each other, the side buds pressing all the shape and beauty out of an opening rose that is in the centre of a small knot of buds. But it is towards the end of the month more particularly that we find ourselves preparing for the interesting operation of budding upon our new stocks. At present, then, we must redouble the watchful care that we are bestowing upon the stocks themselves, by going over them every two or three days, and rubbing all the little buds off that are making their appearance along the stock, while anything in the shape of a sucker must also be grubbed up. Still more important is it to watch the stocks we budded last year, the shoots of which will now be making rapid growth, and into which it is most necessary that all the strength of the stock should be thrown by this persistent removal of all superfluous growth. It may, however, be more practical to give a few general hints as to the monthly routine management of our roses.

In January, then, see that the stakes are well secured in the ground, and that the standards are also well secured to the stakes; for in this month they are exposed to another peril besides that of gales of wind—we mean being overweighted by a heavy fall of snow. The damage caused by the snow-storm of January last to our old-established standards, and, indeed, generally, to trees of all sizes, was enormous. Many of us must have then noticed, in passing along our gardens, that the tops of many handsome shrubby trees were broken off short by the weight of the snow. Yet we noticed our careful old gardener, while he shook the worst of the snow from such shrubs as laurels, &c., allowed the snow to lie along the branches of standard roses that seemed well supported, for the purpose of protection from the keen frost that then set in. Stocks may in good open weather in the month of January be yet planted out, and secured to a rail if you have a row of them, in the way that we have often suggested. In February, any roses that you may be forcing—should you have the luxury of a forcing house—will want syringeing and fumigation; but outside, in the month of March, we prune all our standards, and from this time we must be regular in the removal from our stocks, whether new or established, of all the