

Greville, or raise her eyes to greet him. They had not met since the night of the ball, and he stood a moment and looked at her ere she became conscious of his presence. Her whole figure seemed listless and drooping, unlike her usual self, and as she at last raised her eyes to his there was something in their softened expression that touched him strangely.

"I am going home," he said, without other preface, "my father is ill, perhaps dying, and I return at once. But it seemed as if I could not leave, in spite of all that is past, without saying good-by to you. Are you not going home yourself some of these days?"

"I don't know that I have any home," she said, a little bitterly. "My father has married again; he and I used to be alone together, and I do not like his wife."

He drew a chair near her, and leaned forward with suppressed eagerness. "Mary, once more, will you make a home for me? Don't speak hastily," raising his hand as if to ward off a blow. "I have come to you three times. I shall *never* come again if you send me from you now," and looking in his face she knew that he spoke the truth. "We were very happy together in Florence," he went on, "and I believe we can be as happy together for a lifetime."

"Will you have patience with me?" A wistful, yearning look in her large gray eyes. "Ah, my darling, if we love each other, can we not learn to bear and forbear?"

"Will you go with me, shall I come back for you, or will you come home first?" he said an hour after, as they sat side by side talking.

"I think I'll keep my freedom a little while longer," she replied, with something of her old sauciness.

"Well, there is no time now to arrange it all. We will write often. Good-by, good-by. God bless you, my dearest!" and folding her in his arms, he released her, and was gone.

"Nora, dear old Nora," Mary said, between smiles and tears. "We have to give up being wandering Arabs and settle down to civilized life. I have promised his Highness."

"I thought that would be the end of it," answered Nora, with her unselfish smile. But down in her heart there was a little sigh of loneliness and lost comradeship.

LEIGH NORTH.

A Night Refuge in Paris.

HAVING seen something of what is being done for the poor of Paris by English workers, I was anxious to learn how French charities are conducted by the French themselves. I mentioned this wish to my friend M. Fouret, and to my surprise found him to be a member of the Philanthropic Society founded more than one hundred years ago, so that I could not have applied to a better person. He at once invited me and my husband to meet him some Friday evening in the Rue St. Jacques, at a night refuge for women and children, of which he is president, promising that we should see and hear all about it.

We found the Rue St. Jacques without difficulty, but the "Asile" is quite at the farther end, and we had to climb a steep hill some two miles long, between old houses which have remained unchanged through all the terrible vicissitudes of the siege and the reign of the Commune. We felt as if we had gone back a century, and as we groped our way along in the cold and darkness, trying to make out the numbers on the houses, we could not help thinking how often the same difficulty must have assailed some poor creature seeking the

place to lay her head. Even then, probably, weary feet were climbing the hill behind us, weary hearts were hoping for shelter, yet fearing a rough repulse. At last we found the right door, and knocked at it boldly, far more boldly I imagine than any other comers that night, except perhaps M. Fouret himself. It was quickly opened by the "directrice" of the Asile, a tidy, cheerful-looking and thoroughly French little lady, who evidently expected us, and conducted us at once to a little ticket office, at the window of which sat her husband, a man of military bearing, who was already giving out tickets through the window looking on to the hall to the poor women who had come to beg shelter for the night. There was something indescribably weird in the whole scene, the timid shrinking faces gazing up in eager inquiry at the official, as the low trembling voices answered his questions, and the eyes dim with weeping watched the entry of the case in the big book. I could have looked on for a long time with unflinching interest, but the directrice presently whispered to me that she would take me to see those parts of the establishment not to be shown to monsieur, and leaving my husband with the "directeur," I followed my guide, who chattered volubly as she went along, explaining to me that with very few exceptions—"when they come drunk, for instance"—admission is always freely given. "The drunken ones we pack off double quick," she added, "and we know them fast enough; no fear of our mistaking starvation for anything but what it is. Ah, madame, what things I could tell you! Only the other day I found a poor young girl, her baby scarcely a week old, fainting in the street from want. She could not get here alone, I brought her in; she is here now; but come, madame, before monsieur arrives, to see the next stage after the giving by my husband of the tickets."

Passing through the big kitchen, where a merry-faced black woman was presiding over huge cauldrons of soup, I was led through what seemed to me endless passages to a long, low room, where a scene was being enacted even more touching than that I had witnessed downstairs. An old woman, a young girl beside her holding up a candle, was examining the clothes of the applicants for shelter, as the directrice explained "in the interests of all." Some ten young women, most of them scarcely out of girlhood, and all either newly-made mothers or soon to become so, were grouped together facing the inquisitor. As I came in with the directrice, the girl about to be examined shrank back, and I felt almost ashamed of my presence; but my guide told her not to mind madame, and the examination proceeded. As each one came up a few questions were asked, such as "How old are you?" or, "When are you to become a mother?" Once a little difficulty arose. A young girl answered to this last question, "Ah, madame, j'attends toujours."

"But then," said madame, "you ought not to come here, and indeed you must not stay here now."

The girl's eyes filled with tears. Poor thing, she had probably come a long way in the hope of a rest before her trouble, and now she must move on again?

"But there, there," said the kind-hearted directrice, patting her on the shoulder, "never mind; its only ten minutes' walk to the Maison de Maternité, and you shall come to us presently."

The girl looked comforted, and stood back for others to pass, and I had no opportunity to inquire further into her case. The examination over, the directrice took me into a cozy room where lay several mothers with their newly-born babies. "We let them come here when the little ones are ten days old," she said, "they are allowed to stay nine days. They have wine and meat and every comfort. A generous lady settled the money for this on the Asile for always. She

died suddenly the day she signed the papers, God bless her. But now you must come down, for monsieur will be here, and the rest he can show you himself. Ah, he is good, monsieur, and they all love him; he turns none away, and he cares for them afterward; we get them situations, madame, only the *mère de famille* with a drunken husband, or one who has deserted his family and perhaps six children, that is the difficulty, to place them. Ah, but it is very difficult."

Back again in the ticket office we found the situation scarcely changed, the passage outside was still crowded with women and children, and in one corner lay a pile, a touchingly small pile, of all the worldly goods of those who had already passed in. M. Fouret, however, had arrived, and with him we passed once more through the kitchen on the way to the dormitories. As we appeared at the door this time the black cook and two or three other servants rushed forward, crying, "Ah, c'est Monsieur!" And as "Monsieur" held out his hand the cook seized it in both of hers, looking up in his face with a most touching expression of loving gratitude.

"She seems very fond of you," I said, and my guide answered, "Well, she is. You see, she came here quite friendless and alone, and we took her in for three nights; our rule is that none stay more than three nights without a fresh order. But at the end of the three nights she wouldn't go, she begged to be allowed to stay and work, and she was a good soul alone in a strange land, so I let her stay, and she worked well indeed; and now she has wages she is quite part of the establishment. It's the same with this girl," he went on, pointing to another servant; "she wouldn't go either, and here she is still. They none of them like to go."

Feeling how much these little incidents told of the humanity with which the establishment is conducted, I followed M. Fouret and the directrice to the dormitories, climbing one flight after another of stairs, and on every story finding the same thing. Huge airy rooms, with row upon row of beds, some with little cots beside them, others with larger cots ranged in rows down the middle of the room, and on each bed and cot a set of clean bed-clothes neatly folded ready for the night.

The inspection of the dormitories over, we returned to the kitchen, and the most touching part of the evening's proceedings began. We were led to a glass door opening out of the kitchen into a large room, in which the sixty women and children who had obtained admission for the night were waiting. One by one the directrice led them to the door to have a few words with M. Fouret. It seemed to me like a realistic picture of the Last Judgment, as the trembling women stood before "Monsieur," who was to decide whether they were or were not to be allowed to remain in the Asile. Very, very sad was each story, but not one case was by this tender-hearted judge considered too bad for mercy. First a young German girl explained in broken French that she had lost her situation, for a reason only too apparent. She had *heimweh* (home-sickness); she wanted to get back to her own land. How her face brightened up when I spoke to her in her native language! But time was precious, and she was soon dismissed, with permission to remain three nights in the Asile. She was followed by a respectable-looking woman with three children, whose husband had deserted her; she had had a bad illness, sold all her furniture, was looking out for work. "Let her stay on till she finds it," said M. Fouret, and she passed back with her children to give place to a young Flemish girl with a lovely baby in her arms. Not married, alas! her master the father of her child. Home-sick, too, longing to go home; then, as I almost involuntarily bent down to look at the sleeping baby, she exclaimed, "Ah, madame, is he not beautiful?" He was, and as she turned away with permission to stay a little while,

whilst M. Fouret saw what could be done, my heart ached for both mother and son.

At last the examination was over, and we joined the waiting party in the large room opening out of the kitchen. Then the directrice read the rules, listened to with apathy; and M. Fouret, standing bare-headed amongst the poor people for whom he was doing so much, read a short address, winding up with the following simple but wonderfully appropriate exhortation:

"Believe in the brotherly love of your fellow-creatures, whose hands are as you see outstretched to help you; but above all have faith in God, who never deserts one of His deserving creatures. The soldier on the morning of battle, the sailor in the storm, hope still in Him. Follow their example, hope in Him, and may He answer your prayers by giving you a happier future."

As M. Fouret proceeded with this address, one after another of his hearers broke down, hiding their faces in their hands and sobbing aloud, the babies meanwhile smiling up into their faces in happy unconsciousness, or crying sleepily. The little service over we returned to the kitchen and watched the distribution of soup, which closed the evening's proceedings. I noticed that to each mother were given two "soups," or if she had more than one child she received a "soup" for each little one. When this meal had been discussed I noticed that many of the women seemed to pluck up a little heart, even showing their babies to each other with something like pride; but soon all the weary wanderers filed off to bed, and when they were gone the tension, so to speak, relaxed. The habitués of the place gathered about M. Fouret, eager to tell him of this or that incident which had occurred since his last visit, and the black cook came forward to do the honors of her special domain to me. She was sure madame would like to taste the soup, "to see how good a stuff it is;" and madame can honestly endorse this verdict, for the soup was excellent.

As we walked home through the brilliantly-lighted streets of Paris, we learnt a few further details about the Asile, including the fact that the house is the property of the Government department for the distribution of relief, and is let to the Société Philanthropique for the nominal sum of £2 a year. I was surprised to hear also of the existence within the Asile of a small room set apart for ladies. "This room," says the report for 1882, which I have since read, "we only speak of in whispers, to avoid rousing jealousy amongst the other inmates."

There is now, it appears, a scheme on foot amongst the members of the Société Philanthropique for founding permanent homes for the aged and incurables, for neither of whom is there anything like adequate provision. For these two classes of the community the English certainly make more provision than the French; but I could not help wishing that we had something of the same kind as the "Asile" I had seen, where women and children can be sure under almost any circumstances of at least one night's shelter in clean and respectable quarters, with nothing penitentiary in the arrangements. The servant seeking a situation, the newly-made mother whose husband is out of work, need feel no sense of degradation at accepting the hospitality of the Asile; whilst the poor girls whose sufferings are the result of their own sin have a chance through the kindly aid and sympathy they are sure to find in the Rue St. Jacques of getting back into the right path before it is too late. Many and many a soul as well as body might be rescued if the degradation of the work-house with its shameful associations and compulsory labor could be avoided; and had I a fortune, I would open in the most crowded quarters a home on the model of No. 253 Rue St. Jacques, Paris.

N. D'ANVERS.