

The Prince heard her, tried to console her with pious words, and parted from her with an affectionate embrace, while her maidens shed tears of sympathy. When he returned to Bordeaux from the campaign, she went forth from the city to meet him, along with his little boy Edward and a long procession of knights, priests, and ladies; and then—

“Right sweetly did they embrace

When they met together;

The Prince, who had a gentle heart,

Kissed his wife and his son,

And until on foot they reached their lodging,
He'd each other by the hand.”

This is so grand and lifelike that one almost feels inclined to cry out—Hurrah for the Black Prince!

But what of the glory of war! Vanity of vanities! The warrior returned from Spain with his health shattered beyond all remedy; the elder of his two boys was taken away from earth a little later, and immediately after that sad stroke the Prince and Princess hastened to England with their one surviving child. Four other years of suffering, mostly spent in seclusion at Berkhamstead, where the first months of their happy married life had flown by so merrily; and he who had never lost a battle was at last laid low by the greatest of all conquerors.

On the 8th of June, 1376, the Fair Countess again became a weeping widow. Not only the Princess, but the whole nation were sunk in sorrow, and seldom, if ever, has a people been so struck with sympathy, except, perhaps, at the death of the Princess Charlotte, or when the remains of the immortal Nelson were laid in St. Paul's Cathedral. The Black Prince was buried in the Cathedral of Canterbury.

The Princess survived him for ten years, and grew so corpulent that she could only move about with difficulty. Her own genial nature, and the deep reverence of the people for her as the widow of the Black Prince, accomplished not a little for the country's peace. More than once she calmed the passion of the citizens of London, and rescued John of Gaunt, the brother of the Black Prince; and her wonderful “art of pleasing” saved her from the fury of Wat Tyler and his rebels.

But those last years, when her youngest boy, Richard, was seated on the throne, were full of trouble to her and to the country, and the misconduct of one of her sons by Sir Thomas Holland broke her tender heart. And, strange to tell, her dying request was, not that she should be laid in the great Cathedral beside the hero of Crecy and Poitiers, but far away in Yorkshire, in the little church of Stamford, beside the remains of her first and humbler husband.

HYDE HOUSE.

By ANNE BEALE.

HERE is, truly, a goodly gathering of friends, assembled for a gracious purpose. On this 11th of March, 1884, No. 27, Somerset-street, Portman-square, London, becomes a home for working girls. It is henceforth to be styled Hyde House, and is the ninth home organised in this great metropolis since 1878, by the committee and secretary of “The Homes for Working Girls in London.”

“The house is yours. Investigate it from top to bottom as you please,” says Mr. Shrimpton, the kind secretary aforesaid, to the gentlemen and ladies who gradually fill the basement.

The orders are obeyed, and while tea and coffee are in preparation, the guests swarm

from room to room. We conscientiously visit every apartment from “top to bottom,” and are astonished and delighted. First of all we find a refectory, large kitchen, and commodious offices below stairs, all spick and span as fresh paint and whitewash can make them. In the former, on a large table, a batch of appetising plum cakes repose, awaiting a gathering of girls in the evening, who will doubtless do honour to them; but it is now afternoon, and we must not anticipate.

Remounting to the ground floor and thence to the first floor, we survey two charming sitting-rooms, large, commodious, airy; the walls papered with soft, bright paper, and adorned with many pictures and illuminations. Over the drawing-room mantelpiece is a portrait of our beloved Queen, which will, we hope, prove an incentive to all her youthful subjects to follow the example of the original in living virtuous and womanly lives. At the back of the sitting-rooms are the small apartments, or divisions, familiarly known as “cubbies,” of which there are a dozen or more on each of the two first floors. These are, naturally, private. Ascending from storey to storey, we enter room after room, furnished with a greater or less number of beds according to their size, but all equally airy and cheerful. Maple furniture, light grey coverlets, handsome looking-glasses (not to be despised!) and everywhere framed and illuminated texts. All is new and harmonious. There are fifty-eight beds, and, if one thing strikes the eye more than another in these peaceful-looking apartments, it is that over each bed is a small maple book stand, and on each stand the Holy Bible. Fifty-eight Bibles! If each young girl that slumbers beneath that sacred volume read her portion daily, what a happy and blessed company may not Hyde House contain! And of how great a blessing may not each individual prove to others, if only she bear with her to workroom or factory the words she has herself imbibed, and become a living example of purity and gentleness.

The walls of the passages and staircases are quite aesthetic. Good taste prevails. On every landing is a convenient and commodious hanging-press, which will supplement the chest of drawers, and space has been economised and utilised everywhere for the benefit of the fifty-eight girls, who will, it is hoped, soon fill the house.

The odour of tea and coffee attracts us once more downstairs, and we find the double room, so soon to be occupied at all spare hours by our working-girls, crowded by those friends who have aided in raising for them this or similar abodes, in the hope of shielding them from the temptations of lodging-house, music-hall, and street. While sipping our coffee we address the young girl who waits on us, and who is a foreigner. She and two or three others, belonging, we imagine, to our “clan,” preside at the tea-table, together with the future matron. Our German is all smiles, and thinks it is indeed “a beautiful home,” while the matron's kind speech, face, and manner augur well for the care, temporal and spiritual, of the young people to be committed to her charge.

Having inspected the house with due feminine curiosity, we proceed to the sitting-room on the first floor. This is arranged for the dedication service, and is soon overflowing with ladies, who greatly outnumber the gentlemen. But the good friend of our girls, the Earl of Aberdeen, arrives, accompanied by Mr. Kinnaid and others, also interested in their well-doing, and we all spend together a solemn and happy hour. We are furnished with new hymnbooks, on the fly-leaf of which is inscribed “Hyde House, 27, Somerset-street,” and which tend to prove, as do the Bibles, that the desire is to make this “a house holy unto the Lord.” All join heartily

in singing a hymn accompanied by a harmonium provided for the future use of the inmates, after which a clergyman offers prayer for God's blessing on the work; then Lord Aberdeen requests Mr. Shrimpton to give a few details. These are as interesting as remarkable. He is always on the look-out for suitable houses in the various parts of this tremendous city, and was led to observe that the one in which we are now assembled was vacant. He made inquiries and found that £1,250 would be needed for the lease alone.

Subsequently he met a lady to whom he mentioned the subject of these homes generally. She knew little or nothing about them, but was interested, as all Christian people are, in the welfare of the thousands of young girls who have to earn a livelihood in London; often alone and friendless. Then Mr. Shrimpton mentioned incidentally his desire to secure this house, but his inability to procure funds. The lady said he should look over it, at least. He did so, and acquainted her with the result of his inspection. It was altogether suitable. She expressed a wish to see it, and they perambulated it as we have done, only they found it empty.

The result of this apparently chance meeting and conversation with the lady was that she gave the £1,250 to purchase the lease of the house! The only proviso she made was that her name should not be mentioned. But He knows it who said, “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth;” and doubtless many a grateful young heart will utter a prayer for this, their benefactress, from the home she has given them.

And this is the ninth Home already founded, to which there is a prospect of adding three more during the next eighteen months. We hope that one of these may be “The Girl's Own Home,” raised, brick by brick, by the readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER. It is well to foster a spirit of independence, and each donor will be glad to feel that when the house is prepared its inmates will in no wise be dependent on charity, but will pay for their maintenance, and help to support the establishment of which they are members. To be cared for and have companionship is a happy combination, to be obtained shortly in Hyde House by such toilers in these great marts of London as care to take advantage of it.

We learn that women have, however, far outnumbered men in subscribing to this work for the good of their young sisters. This is as it should be, for woman best knows the temptations and difficulties of her sex.

Addresses are better listened to than reported, so we will content ourselves with recording that the very few made on this occasion are to the purpose, and show the interest taken in the young people who labour in our midst. It remains for them to prove that they are not unworthy of it.

We unite in praying to Almighty God for a blessing on them, and on the home to which they are invited, as well as on her who is appointed to superintend them; and we praise Him for His mercy in putting into the heart of one of His children the desire to supply the means for so much good. Never has the “Old Hundredth” sounded more appropriately than at the close of the short dedication service, and we all join, heart and voice, in its “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

