

She bit her lips and half turned away. "I have no heart. I have told you so before. Why can't you believe it?"

"Because I know it isn't true. You think your love is buried in Jack's grave, but I believe you are altogether wrong, and you are only letting yourself be a tool of fancy. If you would only try to master it, and let the dead past bury its dead."

"Do you mean forget?" she asked in a sudden hard tone.

"No, certainly not, but be more reasonable in your grief."

"You don't understand what you are talking about," she replied loftily. "I am going in," and she tried to draw her hand from his.

But instead of letting go, he tightened his hold and drew her close to him, folding her in his arms.

"I think you'll change your mind, and find out which of us is right some day," he said, a little huskily. "And meanwhile, I must be content to serve you."

His voice broke, but he quickly

mastered it. "I feel sure you will love me some day, Madge. If I didn't I think I should go mad, or something."

He kissed her two or three times on the lips, and because she was abashed by the light in his eyes, her face softened.

"But I'm not going to bother you," he continued. "Don't be anxious. You shall go your way and I will go mine, since you wish it."

Then he loosened his hold and she disappeared quickly, into the house.

(To be continued.)

GENTLEWOMEN WHO DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO THE POOR.

INTRODUCTION.

"If each man in his measure
Would do a brother's part,
To cast a ray of comfort
Into a brother's heart;
How changed would be our country!
How changed would be our poor!
And then might merrie England
Deserve her name once more."

Favourite lines of the late Duchess of Teck.

JUST as none of us know fully the infinite needs of the populations of our great cities, so neither do we know the vast and varied character of work undertaken in order to satisfy these needs, or at least to diminish them and make them bearable.

Whether the people be poor, or overworked and weary, lonely, or sick, or blind, or in prison, they are known to, and sympathised with, and helped by noble-hearted women, who devote themselves to the class they best understand and can best minister to.

Like ministering angels they visit the helpless little ones and the very old people, making their attics and cellars warm and bright with their presence; or they raise Homes of Rest for the weary in mind and body; or they are eyes to the blind. Others again visit the sick and care for their children while they are in hospital; some take the drunkard by the hand and help her to give up the vice; or they visit the criminal in prison and give her something to hope for. They also provide remunerative work for those who have lost their place in the world; others leave their own beautiful homes to live entirely among the people they want to help, that they may teach girls to live honourable lives, and train them to be good wives and mothers. And last not least there are women of high position who devote life and fortune to those children whose sorrows and diseases render them loathsome even to the mothers who bare them.

We may well thank God, Who has put it into the hearts of women of means and position to be brave, kind, wise and gentle in the cause of women less favoured than they, and whose sorrows and miseries would be intolerable but for the loving hands held out to them by the army of women workers.

If these articles should be the means of increasing the number of workers, even by a few, the writer would be thankful, and so would our Editor, whose sympathy with every class of need is well known.

PART I.

LADY LOUISA ASHBURTON.

"Christ is the Head of this house;
The unseen guest at every meal;
The silent listener to every conversation."*

* These words are printed and placed in every room in Lady Ashburton's block.

It is very difficult to see at a glance all that is being done by good, noble-hearted women for the poor and the sorrowful in this London of ours, not only because of its amount and variety, but also because of the quiet way in which most of it is performed. Of one thing, however, we may be quite certain, viz., that each worker is using her special gifts in trying to make the world better, happier and brighter, and succeeds, even though she herself may not see the result with her own eyes.

Now and then, when we are allowed to look personally upon what these women-workers are doing, we stand amazed at the giant proportions and far-reaching influence of their work.

This thought is uppermost in my mind when thinking of Louisa Lady Ashburton. She looks so delicate and fragile, that you fear a rough wind may blow her away, and yet the power and influence she wields for good over those for whom and among whom she works is simply wonderful.

I am always very interested in the origin of work, and I like to know the impetus which set it going.

One can understand Lady Ashburton's good and beneficent work on her own estate at Addiscombe, near Croydon, but it was difficult to give a reason for her vast work in the Victoria, Albert and Central Docks, where she had no estate. It is of this special work I want to speak first.

Lady Ashburton was led to this part of East London by what looked very like an accident, only that we know nothing occurs by accident.

Some eleven or twelve years ago she was present at a drawing-room meeting held on behalf of the London City Mission, at which one of the speakers alluded to a good work going on at Tilbury Docks. She wished to see it, and it was on her way there that she passed the Custom-house station of the Victoria Docks. All who know this neighbourhood are aware of the many public houses which face the men with open doors as they pour out of the docks for their meals.

As she was driving past she was appalled at the number who made their way direct to one or other of these houses. She stopped the carriage, and without any hesitation attacked the men with the question, "Why do you go to the public-houses for your meals?"

"Because we have nowhere else to go," they replied.

"Would you go anywhere else if a place were open to you?" was her next question.

"Just you try us," was the answer.

I need hardly say that she did not continue her drive to Tilbury, for she felt that here lay her work; here was the platform on which to exercise the talents with which God had entrusted her.

She was very much in earnest, and by March in the Jubilee year she had built a mission-room and a coffee tavern, both of which the late Duchess of Teck opened.

During the Jubilee week she also erected a tent on an empty space behind the new buildings, in which four thousand teas were given and spiritual refreshment as well. The tent stood and continued to do good service until rough winds blew it down and left Lady Ashburton with a mission-room holding only two hundred people, a number far short of those who sought admission.

She then bought land and pulled down the houses on it, and in their place erected the present block of buildings known as the "Ashburton Block." It consists of a coffee tavern, sleeping accommodation for fifty men, a library, a house of rest, a small suite of rooms furnished quite simply for Lady Ashburton, who occasionally stays here to be in the midst of her work, a class-room and the beautiful mission-hall, which will accommodate eight hundred people. It is built on what is known as Plaistow Marshes, and therefore cost a great deal to build.

In digging for a foundation they found at the top nothing but mud, but below they came upon primeval forest; thirty feet down they came to trees, and the foundation was sunk thirty-three feet until clay was reached.

Piles were driven in and the spaces between filled with concrete, and the building stands as firm as a rock, although houses in the neighbourhood shake every time a train passes.

The hall is paved with blocks of wood and built of pine-wood. The carving round the windows alone cost £200. I believe it is no secret that Lady Ashburton sold a very valuable picture for £7000 to defray part of the expense of building this hall.

Services are held here every night, the address being given by some earnest, eloquent Christian preacher, while the choir, instrumental and vocal, is of a very high order.

We were present at one of these services, the congregation of men and women was large and exceedingly earnest. At the close many of the people came round Lady Ashburton as round a mother, not in any way familiar but with reverence.

It was pretty to hear them all address her as My Lady, just as though she were the only lady in the world to them, and when I made this remark to her she said quite simply, "Well, I suppose I am."

Our next visit was to the coffee tavern. The two large dining-rooms looked so clean, pleasant and comfortable with their green, brown and white dado, sanded floor, polished urns, marble tables and good, steaming-hot, wholesome food.

They accommodate comfortably two hundred and fifty, but at each of the mid-day meals there are frequently four hundred. We

were there at twelve o'clock. The food was brought in as I have said very hot, and the men came pouring in as orderly and quiet as possible. Each walked up to the bar asking for what he desired, laid the money down and took his portion to one of the tables where he sat down and ate it; the rapid, neat way in which each person was served was admirable; there was no hurry, no pushing, no loud talking, no grumbling. Each man knew exactly what he wanted and which part of the bar to go for it, and with the correct sum in his hands to pay for it.

You remember the men's answer to Lady Ashburton when she asked if they would get their meals elsewhere than at public houses if they had the opportunity. It was "Just you try us."

Well she has tried them and for ten years daily this has been their answer.

But all this time you do not know of what the meal consists nor the price paid for it.

A pint of good soup, 1d., made of fresh bones, scraps off the fresh carcasses, the rinds of hams and plenty of fresh vegetables. A thick round of bread, ½d., familiarly known as a "doorstep"; steak puddings, beautifully made, 4d.; a saucerful of potatoes, 1d.; six ounces of roast meat, 4d.; a plate of cold ham, 2d.; a small plate of pickles, ½d.; a plate of good hot tapioca, 1d.; a plate of jam pudding, 1d.; a large mug of cocoa, 1d.; a cup of tea or coffee with milk and sugar, ½d. A luxury known as the 2d. tray consists of a teapot holding three half pints of tea, a tiny milk jug and sugar basin, 2d.; a good plate of fish, 1d.

By a quarter to one the meal is over and the rooms made clean and fresh for the men who leave work at one. All the food brought in now is fresh and hot, and as the clock strikes the mid-day scene is repeated. The men who take advantage of these meals are, as a rule, dock labourers, stevedores, sailors waiting for ships, and men whose occupation has been or is on the water.

Practically food is being served here all day and I might say night as well, for no man coming in for food is refused lest he should drink instead. Experience shows that if a man is well fed he does not crave for stimulants. Breakfasts are served from six o'clock in the morning, and often as much as £2 is taken just for halfpenny-worths of cake at that early hour.

Our next visit was to the bed-rooms, varying according to size from 4s. to 6s. a week or so much a night—all of course for men. Each room contains a bed, washstand, table, Bible and ink-bottle.

The new cubicles have pinewood panels, which is a great improvement on paper walls. There is a good bath-room at the men's disposal. There is also a library which is not appreciated greatly by the men, the books being of a character they do not understand, but they love Chambers' Journal, Dickens and kindred works. All the rooms were clean and comfortable, though I should have liked all the pieces of carpet up.

The smoking-room is very good, with a bagatelle board and a lavatory attached.

Ten servants do the whole work of this big place—the women's rooms being at one end and the men's at the other. Before speaking of the management of this work I should like you to see a branch of it which is carried on two miles further east, opposite the central station in the Albert Docks south side. It is known as the dockers' dining and coffee rooms. It is a large iron building capable of seating four hundred men; here on an average two thousand are supplied every day; they consume about one hundred and fifty gallons of tea, coffee and cocoa, for which they pay a halfpenny for a half-pint.

For the sum of twopence they get a plate

of cold ham or cold meat; one hundred and fifty such are sold at the tea hour alone. So good is the attendance that they serve four hundred people in thirteen minutes.

During the winter months the favourite food here is pea soup, of which fifty or sixty gallons a day are consumed at the cost of a penny a pint.

This building is also used as a shelter for men while waiting for a call to work; they sometimes have to stand about for hours, and a shelter is a great comfort to them.

Neither are the men's spiritual needs forgotten, Gospel services having been held here twice a week during the last three years, and thousands of men have been reached in this way.

Nor does Lady Ashburton's work stop here; there is yet another centre at Manor Way, North Woolwich, close to the Dock Gates; this is on similar lines to the work at the Custom House, there being eighteen beds for seamen, a large coffee and dining room and a mission hall for the workers in the docks.

Barrows are also laden with provisions and sent round to the dockers while at their work.

One thing I must say—nothing is wasted. Pieces left are given to the very poor outside, and nothing that has been handled ever goes into the stock pot.

Just think of the magnitude of the work Lady Ashburton has been carrying on during the last ten years without in any way pauperising those she has helped; and yet she often gets depressed and wonders if she is in the right place doing the right work. One would like to remind her at such moments of the improved health, habits and social condition which regular wholesome food has brought about, and the power it has given to the men to resist drink; one would like to call to her mind the number of seamen who have been saved by her watchful helpers from falling into bad hands the moment they put foot on shore, and to bid her think of the Gospel message which during the last ten years has, through her means, been carried to many thousands who in their turn have conveyed it to the far-off parts of the world.

From what I have seen I should say that the reverence these seamen and dock labourers have for the delicate, fragile woman who has thrown herself heart and soul into their lives is rich in influence for good.

Certainly she must not feel depressed, but rather let the remainder of her life be one long hymn of thankfulness to the good God and Father of all, Who has permitted her to be the good angel to a large portion of His people who just needed what she has been able to give.

Just as it was no accident that she should find her work in this district, neither is it by accident that she has found such honourable, capable, Christian lieutenants. Needless to say that the success of her work is in a great measure owing to their untiring, unceasing service, spending and being spent in what they firmly believe to be God's service and their lady's.

Mr. Hill, who has the entire charge of all the dock district coffee taverns and dining rooms belonging to Lady Ashburton, is a keen business man, and knows to a fraction how much an article should cost and the best market from which to obtain it; the amount of his work physical and mental is startling, yet he never loses his head, nor gets into a muddle, nor finds himself short of material. I need hardly say that he in his turn has good faithful workers; there is for example, Mr. Reid, who with a large staff is engaged in the Albert Dock centre, and there is Mrs. Hill, his wife, at the North Woolwich centre.

I have never seen a manager so altogether

honourable and capable, but to my mind he is overworked.

Then there are Mr. Bradshaw and Mr. Skuse, both of whom are Lady Ashburton's lieutenants in the mission halls.

I think the question which every one would like answered is—Are the coffee taverns and shelters self-supporting? Yes they are. Take last year as an example. After every expense was paid Lady Ashburton had £400 profits towards the expense of her mission work.

You would think that the work I have described would be enough for one woman and one lifetime, but there is more to come, and although laid in a very different scene it is carried on in connection with the dock district.

On her own estate at Addiscombe, in the midst of rose gardens and beautiful country, she has built three homes each perfect in its way; the first, built in 1883, is known as the Nest, occupied by children between the ages of six and fourteen; boys one fortnight, girls the other; thirteen can be received at one time. A second, built in 1884, called the "Rest," is for men and women; one fortnight occupied by men and the next by women.

Within this is what is known as the Prophet's Chamber, set aside for a weary clergyman or lay helper greatly in need of rest but too poor to pay for it. It is a combination of sitting and bedroom with every comfort required by such a worker; and lastly we come to the "Dove Cot," built in 1886, for mothers and babies between six and fifteen months old. The sleeping room in this home looked very sweet with its ten white cots and pink and white curtains for the "little angels without wings," while on the wall hung the appropriate text, "Under the shadow of Thy wings."

Each home is two storeys high and complete in itself and built with due regard to sanitary arrangements. Everything in them and about them is most attractive. There is a competent staff of workers, a matron, gardener, boy and four servants.

Mr. Bradshaw is the lieutenant here, everything being in his charge. Lady Ashburton allows £700 a year for these homes, and this takes in all expenses; Mr. Bradshaw considers that the average cost of each guest per week is 4s. 6d. The only expense to the visitor for a fortnight's change and rest is a railway return ticket reduced to 10d. by the railway company.

These homes are filled mainly by people from the dock district among whom Lady Ashburton works, at least they have the first choice. They are for the tired, weary, over-weighted men and women and their delicate children—people who with all their work can barely make two ends meet, and certainly have no means of paying for a holiday.

It is easy to imagine how they value this lady's thoughtful care which provides them such a rest. All are known personally to Lady Ashburton or her lieutenants as honest, hard-working people to whom a rest like this is almost essential. The rules are very few and simple and by no means irksome. I was amused to see that no hair oil was permitted.

About seven acres are attached to the homes; a private road is made from one end to the other from the three homes to that built by Lady Compton for training servants. Lady Ashburton gave the ground, and the home, built under the direct superintendence of Lord and Lady Compton, now the Marquess and Marchioness of Northampton, is admirable in all its appointments. The work going on here is very good and practical under a very sensible matron, and is becoming well known for the good training the girls get. Most of them come from the East End of London.

affairs. She thought that Michael meant exactly what he said and no more. She was very glad that she had given him this happiness, and that he hoped to see her again before long. And she looked forward to this time also.

She ate little at luncheon—a fact which Aunt Ella observed.

"I hope no mischief has been done," she thought. "But if she has any

fancies she will lose them when we get back to London."

After luncheon she asked her what her letter had been about.

Beattie blushed.

"He only wrote to say good-bye," she said.

"I should like to see the note, my dear," said Aunt Ella. And Beattie handed it to her.

Mrs. Swannington glanced at it.

"Perhaps it is as well he has gone," she said. "You mustn't believe that nonsense about his happiness. Besides, now he has gone away he won't think any more about us, you will see. But mind, if he does, I will have no correspondence. Of course your writing to him is out of the question, and if he should presume to write to you again, I must insist on your showing me the letter at once."

(To be continued.)

GENTLEWOMEN WHO DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO THE POOR.

PART II.

THE MISSES SKINNER, FRIENDS OF GIRLS IN BUSINESS.

THE women workers who form the subject of this sketch are two sisters, gentlewomen of independent fortune and high culture, and the work they have devoted themselves to during the last quarter of a century is the giving of joy and rest to the overworked and weary girls who toil for daily bread in the shops of London and other great cities.

I will tell you what induced them to undertake such an important task.

It is now a quarter of a century ago that these two ladies paid a visit to London during the hottest month of the year, and on going back to their pretty home in Babbacombe, Devonshire, they were haunted by the wan, weary faces of the girls in the various houses of business at which they had been shopping.

They set themselves resolutely to consider whether anything could be done to render the lives of these girls healthier and brighter by breaking through the dullness and monotony of their "daily round," and the longing that sprang up in their hearts was, "Oh, if we could give some of these girls a breath of our sea air and a run on Babbacombe Downs!"

Regarding this longing as an inspiration, they at once looked about for a way in which

it could be made practical, and the result was that they took a cottage close to the Downs and secured a matron; they made the house pretty and home-like and fitted up six beds; they made the purpose of the cottage known in several journals together with a sketch of their plans: for example, a subscriber of one guinea would have the privilege of giving a recommendation ticket to any business girl of good character in whom she was interested, and thus reduce the girl's payment from twelve shillings to five shillings a week, and enable her to get a fortnight's holiday for £1 6s. 9d., including the railway journey there and back at single fare.

Without a subscriber's "recommendation ticket" the cost would be two guineas. The payment by the girls themselves of a certain sum was considered by these ladies a necessity, in order not only to prevent its being looked upon as a charity, which would have spoiled the whole, but to keep up the girls' self-respect and soothe their sensitive pride, for they possess largely both these qualities.

As a rule neither sick people nor convalescents are received at the home of rest, which is meant to be a real holiday home to prevent illness, not to cure it.

The establishment of this home was the first attempt in England to brighten the lives

of shop girls, by giving them a chance of recruiting their strength and teaching them the effect of happiness and rest in a beautiful climate.

It was scarcely less a blessing to many rich people, for it opened out a means of being useful to girls toiling for daily bread without hurting their self-respect.

The arrival of the first guests was naturally looked forward to as an event of great importance, and Miss Skinner and the matron were at the door to receive and welcome them; they were five girls from a house of business in Regent Street.

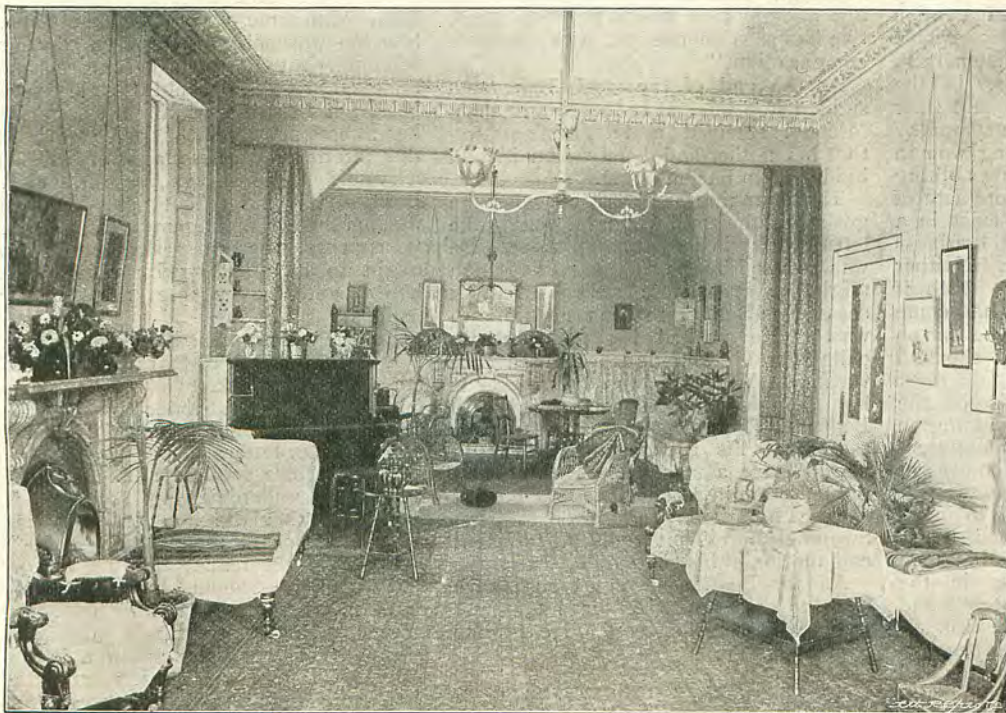
From that day to this the work has gone on without a single check to its success. After two years the home was removed to one with fifteen beds, and this proving too small the house next door was taken, and for several years they worked with what Miss Skinner calls "a thirty bed power." To-day the home consists of two beautiful houses standing side by side in the same grounds on Babbacombe Downs, with a magnificent view over the bay, and capable of accommodating a hundred guests or visitors as they are called; one house is known as Ferny Bank, the other as Ferny Combe.

The Misses Skinner are anxious to make it known that the aim of their work is not to provide a superior boarding house with merely improved physical comforts for business girls, though these are scrupulously attended to, but that it is an effort to put beauty, joy, colour, warmth and light into their lives, to create varied interests, to rouse up dormant energies and to stir up hope within them.

It is with this distinct object that every detail has been made as beautiful as possible, and books, pictures and music all pressed into service.

Miss Skinner says that the lives of girls working for their bread are often stunted and monotonous, and this is why she and her sister desire to help them out of the dull routine and lift their lives to a higher level. The perfect beauty of the place with its freedom from the vulgarity of many other seaside resorts helps to effect this in a very marked degree.

It is not easy to imagine what a holiday of two or three weeks in this beautiful place is to a girl whose life in London or other great towns is one fierce struggle in more ways than one. How it rests her tired eyes and wearied



"THE DRAWING-ROOM OVERLOOKING THE SEA."

limbs; how it strengthens and cheers her both in body and mind!

Of course it is something more than the charming houses, beautiful climate and scenery that makes the holiday at Babbacombe the desire of the heart to so many. It is the comfort, care, love, restfulness and consideration which each one experiences the moment she enters the home.

It is by personal intercourse and sympathy with the girls, and by advising them what to read and what to see, that the Misses Skinner help them to change mere existence into life; it is their influence which teaches them to discern the beautiful and true, as well as how to make life richer, fuller and sweeter both for themselves and others.

These ladies live close to the home and visit it every day and at all hours and if, for

love still belong to you. Don't make the girls afraid of middle life, for it is to some the very happiest part of life, the fullest, the richest, the brightest."

In this way the sisters move about among their guests, spreading cheerfulness, sowing seeds of kindness and leading them without ostentation to the highest life of all.

The girls and women who make use of this beautiful home for their annual holiday are mostly shop assistants, dressmakers and milliners, post office and telegraph clerks, cashiers and type-writers. The home is expressly for business girls; neither governesses on the one hand nor domestic servants on the other are admitted. I asked why this rule had been made and so rigidly adhered to; the answer was that the home had been established expressly for the rest and joy of business girls,

worship and family prayers in the home if there be no conscientious scruples.

A pleasing feature of the home is that a clear and simple report embodying income and expenditure is issued annually and audited by a well known man.

Of course it is essential that each visitor should bear a respectable character; this being so, there is no distinction made between those who are sufficiently well off to pay for themselves and those who are poor and come with help from subscribers; indeed I believe that no person in the home, save the Misses Skinner, knows to which class each girl belongs.

I have seen the home both in summer and winter; those who visit it in the former are able to indulge in boating, bathing, swimming, excursions and picnics; it does one's heart



THE MISSES SKINNER.

example, they find a girl regarding with interest any of the pictures and engravings which hang on the walls, one of the sisters will pause by her side and tell her something about the artist and his work; or if she finds a girl depressed and out of sorts she will sit down by her and listen to the troubles of her "daily round," and encourage her to make the most of life, begging her not to drift or be crushed by sorrow; and when, as sometimes happens, a girl says, "I don't care for myself; life is over for me," she will say, "Life is not over as long as you live in it. Pick it up again and force something out of it."

To women who have grown out of their first youth she has an occasional word to say. "Make the most of middle life; make it pleasant; dress as well as you can; don't get dowdy; keep up your courage and be bright; the time of personal beauty may have gone, but after all that is not everything, there are a lot of things left to enjoy; for example, work, books, scenery, pictures, and best of all,

and that being so they, the Misses Skinner, could not allow the holiday to be spoiled by class prejudices; for example, a governess would have but little in common with a shop girl or needlewoman, and although domestic servants are often very superior to some dressmakers, yet the former would be looked down upon by the latter and there certainly could be no harmony where these prejudices existed.

These ladies have made a few rules as possible, but where they exist they must be kept; they are intensely gentle in their dealings with the girl visitors, but they hold the reins of government with a very firm hand.

Socially the laws laid down are those of cultured society; there are books, piano, games; every girl is expected to be neatly dressed and to conduct herself with good manners such as would obtain in good society. The home knows neither creeds nor politics; Church people, Dissenters and Roman Catholics are alike admitted, but all visitors are expected to attend their respective places of

good to see the girls resting for once lazily in the hammocks under the trees with a book, or drinking tea out of doors.

The residents of Torquay show their sympathy with the purpose of the home by inviting the visitors to their beautiful houses and grounds. I was present at one of these gatherings a week or two since and had long talks with the girls who spoke to me of their "daily round," their struggles and the intense enjoyment of the holiday at Babbacombe.

Everything in the home bears witness to the taste and care of the two sisters, who have left nothing undone that could comfort and rest the girls who come to them after their long months of weary, monotonous toil.

Every detail shows their love and consideration for the tired ones.

The drawing-room overlooking the sea is beautiful and the bedrooms are extremely pretty and comfortable. Each room is called after a flower and painted and furnished to match. The sanitary arrangements are excellent.

There is a reading and writing room and an excellent library which, with its catalogue and contents, is an example of the infinite care and trouble taken by the Misses Skinner to render the holiday spent in this home a rest for mind as well as body.

None know better than they the effect upon girls of reading intelligently good, well selected books, and one is not surprised to find that great attention and intelligent, loving care have been bestowed on this department of the home.

There are now over a thousand volumes, and the catalogue in which they are arranged and registered is in itself unique and well worth a study. First the books are arranged in sections; for example, poetry, biography, novels, theology, essays, science, history, hygiene, domestic economy, French books and magazines.

Each section is prefaced by remarks for the benefit of the guests and to guide them as to what to read and how to make the most of what they read. These remarks are so good that I should like to give them all, but space will only allow me to give a very few of them.

POETRY.

Poetry is the most perfect expression of the highest thoughts of the greatest men.

Try to like the best poetry. Don't say, "I don't care for poetry" as if it were something to be proud of; try to cultivate a liking for it. Ruskin says, "I do not wonder at what men suffer but at what they lose."

Don't lose poetry out of your life; climb the Alps when the valleys suffocate you; get out of the dust into the fresh, pure air; out of the grey into the blue; you will do your work all the better for it. Read the best poetry. For better appreciation of the poets read *With the Poets*, Dean Farrar, and *Theology in the English Poets* by Amy Sharpe. Those who wish to understand Browning's poems should read Browning's *Message to the Times* by Dr. Bardeol. Read *Aurora Leigh* by Mrs. Barrett-Browning for a noble ideal of what women can be and do.

If you have but little time use that little for the very best. If you read the best you will like the best; as Tennyson says, "We needs must love the highest when we see it."

Spare half an hour a day to be a man or woman as well as a worker; your work will be the fresher for it. When the noise of the Strand or the whirr of the machines deafens you take ten minutes each day resolutely out of the dinner hour to go into green meadows with Matthew Arnold in the *Scholar Gipsy*. I do, and go back cooled and refreshed, as if I had rested under the shadow of a spreading tree on a sunny lawn.

The drama or plays come next in literature to poetry.

Read Shakespeare's plays, especially *Macbeth*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and afterwards you will wish to read the historical plays. Read Donder's Primer on Shakespeare and the notes to the plays and you will not care for inferior ones.

BIOGRAPHY.

Lives of good or great men and women. Read them to stimulate and lift up your own life, to enable you to conquer difficulties and to be brave and strong as those men and women were to stand up and not lie down in life.

To see what men and women like ourselves have been and have done; how they have fought with life and gained the victory; how they have gained strength out of suffering and learnt sympathy from sorrow; how they have helped other people and done good to the world.

Read *Kingsley's Life*, *Dr. Arnold's Life*,

Sister Dora's Life, *Father Damien's Life*, *Mary Carpenter's Life*, and *Father Matthew's Life* to see what good work for the world they have done, and to stir us up to do our part in making God's world what He intended it to be.

Women are inclined to be narrow, to care only for what belongs to their own families. Lives such as these help to broaden them and make them feel that they are citizens of the world as well as members of a family; the world belongs to them because it belongs to God, and they must do their part in it as Lord Shaftesbury, Charles Kingsley, Dr. Arnold and Mary Carpenter did.

In ourselves we can only live one life. In biography we can enter into the lives of many. Our own life is often dull because we have to do the same thing over and over again. Get out of your own life by getting into the lives of others. Dulness is being shut in; get out. You are sitting in a dreary London room with no outlook but chimney pots. Look out with Charles Kingsley's eyes on to the Devonshire moors; with Tyndall on the Alps; with Ruskin up into the sky.

Look over the list of people's lives in the catalogue and see how many acquaintances you can make.

You would have liked to know Charles Dickens. Well, make his acquaintance in his life in the library.

Every one who enjoyed reading *Westward Ho!*, *Hyppatia*, and *Two Years Ago*, would like to know the author, Charles Kingsley. Read his life; it is most interesting. You would have thought it an honour to have a letter from him, read his tender loving letters which might have been addressed to you or me and see with his eyes the beautiful scenery he describes.

Read Charlotte Brontë's life to learn what difficulties a woman can struggle with and overcome; how genius can be combined with a stern sense of duty, not as some foolishly think that genius is an excuse for neglect of duty.

The higher the mind the keener should be the sense of duty, for brains help us to discern it. Intellect is a help to goodness; goodness is strength. It is a poor thing to be overcome by the lowest part of you. Goodness is victory; wickedness is defeat. The lesson of biography is fight and conquer.

FICTION.

"Novels! When I read at all I read novels to amuse me."

Yes, only read the best novels—those that tell you about different kinds of life.

Novels are of real use in showing different kinds of life in different ranks; they also enlarge our sympathies by depicting various kinds of suffering which you have not experienced and this enables you to help other people better. Use novels that way, to help you to make other lives brighter. Novels are like society. Choose the best society, it is the most interesting. It is not a bit of good tacking a good moral on to the last page of a book if you have been wading in dirt for three volumes.

Never read a novel after which you have to wash your mind or which weakens you for the battle of life or which makes you discontented with ordinary healthy life.

Don't read any book which makes you feel as though you were in low society. Choose novels which depict different sides of life. Read historical novels, for they teach you of other times and of foreign countries, for example, *On the Edge of the Storm*, *Richelieu*, and others like them. Read, however, something beside novels. It is not good to live upon even wholesome sweets; always have another book going as well as a novel—meat and pudding I call it.

THEOLOGY.

"I do not wish so much for religious books as books written in a religious spirit."—*Dr. Arnold*.

All good books are religious, for it is God who helps the poet to see the beauty of life, the historian to see facts, the scientific man to search out the secrets of Nature and the novelist to put forth a high ideal.

Some books are specially about God and His action in the world. This is theology; and we have set apart a section of the library for theology.

Books which give us high and noble and generous ideas of the kind of life we ought to live, not poor, mean and grasping notions of what we can get for ourselves. Books which show that religion includes all good things, not only sacraments and prayers for the soul, but education for the body and training for the mind.

Read *Kingsley's Sermons*, and don't set yourselves against them because they are called sermons; read *The Good News of God*, *From Death to Life*, *A Little Pilgrim in the Unseen*, and *Religions of the World and Their Relation to Christianity*, not an easy book but deeply interesting to the thoughtful. For hymns choose strong vigorous ones that stir you up to action, not lull you into repose. Lift yourself up to your religion, don't lower your religion to yourself.

Your religion is your life, your life and nothing less.

SCIENCE AND NATURAL HISTORY.

"Science? Oh, it is so dull and one wants something amusing."

Dull, nothing of the kind! It's the most interesting thing in the world if you get into it; geology especially; it means understanding something of the world we live in. Doesn't it seem rather stupid to know nothing about the earth we are treading every day?

Science opens our eyes. God meant us not to be blind but to see. Science is one of God's teachers.

Science, even a little knowledge of it, removes many difficulties. Science teaches us that the world is governed by law; the laws of storms for instance. Captains of ships learn them and avoid certain currents, etc. It teaches also that pestilence follows dirt. Science is a true friend to religion. It has swept away many wicked superstitions. It is God and man working together. It is a great pity so many women do not care for science. A knowledge of science enlarges your minds, gives you another world, many other worlds to live in.

Don't sit down before the doors of science, enter in. The harder you work the more you need change of thought. Read Sir John Lubbock's *Beauties of Nature*, and *Pleasures of Life*.

ASTRONOMY.

It is strange how little people know about the sky.

Ruskin says, "It is the part of creation in which Nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man and more for the sole purpose of talking to him than in any part of her works."

The sky is intended for our perpetual pleasure, therefore look at it. Study the sky and learn something of the countries in the firmament. Learn the difference between the stars which do not move and the planets or wanderers which appear from time to time.

BOTANY.

If you know nothing of botany the flowers are strangers to you. Even a little knowledge makes them into friends.

Botany is about the flowers you see in the lanes, the plants and ferns, mosses, and lichens. When you go into the lanes bring in all the flowers you can find and look them out

in Anne Pratt's coloured pictures and learn their names. Read Anne Pratt's *Rambles in Search of Wild Flowers, Ferry Combes, and Common Objects of the Country.*"

HISTORY.

"History is the record of God's dealings with mankind."—Dean Stanley.

History means—How men and women came to be what they are now. Books about England, the infancy of England, the children of England, the manhood of England.

Try to understand something about your own country. Isn't it a pity that all the past of your own country should be a blank to you? Read Green's *History of the English People*, and Macaulay's *History of England*. History is the record of the education of the world. Read English history to see how England grew up, to see how it became more and more

and more free and how we ought to use our freedom.

What a pity it is not to know about history when you go to old castles, towns and cathedrals. I advise you whenever you go to see an old place to look out first in an English History the stories about it; it will double the interest. If you know the stories belonging to the places you can fancy the ladies of the castles looking out of the slits in the towers for the men returning from the wars, and so on. The places will seem peopled instead of empty. This will make your mind richer. Knowledge of history doubles your interest in life. When you read any period in history try to read an historical novel at the same time. If you are studying the French revolution read the *Atelier du Lys*, and *On the Edge of the Storm*.

These are some of the remarks which

preface the various sections of books. As I said before I wish I could give them in their entirety; they form such an excellent guide in the selection of books. The care shown in the library is a sample of that displayed in every part of the Home of Rest. A holiday spent here strengthens the girls in mind and body, and it is no small thing that we, by giving a yearly subscription, may help this good work and strengthen the hands of those ladies who devote their lives to it.

I only wish that all who read this paper could see the home and the guests and the gentlewomen whose lives are spent in giving rest and joy and strength to shop girls. It is a Christ-like work done in the quietest manner possible. One can only give the barest outline of what is done here, but I beg of you, who can, to go and see it, and you will understand better what women workers are doing.



"THAT PECULIAR MISS ARTLETON."

By FRANCES LOCKWOOD GREEN.

CHAPTER I.

"You won't wear that old dust-cloak, Miss Joan?"

"Yes, I shall, Rendel; it is such a splendid cover-all."

"But it is so terribly shabby and old-fashioned."

"Now, Rendel, you have enlarged upon its defects for the last five summers. I know them by heart. With all its faults, I love it still."

"There is this lovely velvet cape—I am sure it is comfortable," ventured Rendel respectfully.

"All bugles, and dangles, and lace! Yes; and there is that silk atrocity you persuaded me to purchase in Paris; and there are several other garments equally as useless. I shall wear my old dust-cloak—do you hear, Rendel?"

"Yes, ma'am. But suppose you meet the De Quincey Joneses or Lady Anne Ponsoby?"

"What shall I do?" cried Miss Artleton in tragic tones. "I shall rush into the nearest shop and cry, 'Hide me, oh, hide me, for Rendel's sake!'" And the little old lady broke into a merry laugh. "Don't look so disappointed! My friends will not blame you; they know you are a jewel."

"It is not for my sake, ma'am; they might think it strange—" Rendel stopped in confusion.

"That a person of my position should wear such an antiquated garment," concluded Miss Artleton gaily. "They can think what they like—I shall wear my dear old dust-cloak. I have made up my mind, Rendel, and you know what that means; you have lived with me nearly thirty years."

"Only twenty-six, ma'am," ventured the maid.

"Don't blush! We are both growing old—I am not ashamed of the fact. Reach that black sailor hat; it will be so useful. Now I can see a look of horror in your eyes. You thought I bought it merely from pity for that poor half-starved milliner. I bought it to wear, Rendel—understand that! Her Majesty wears a common or garden hat, and she is ten years older than I am, so I follow her example. When she rides a bicycle, I shall ride one also. I am truly loyal." And with a laugh, Miss Artleton perched a girlish sailor hat upon her grey curls.

"I am going by train to Sandrington, Rendel. There is a pretty girl in a fancy shop there in whom I am interested. Yes, I have a fad for shop-girls at present. That little vulgar boy who stole my diamond brooch rather damped my ardour for shoe-blacks. But I have faith in human nature. He will return it to me, I feel sure he will. Now I am ready. No, you need not accompany me; you suffer such agonies when I disgrace the noble name of Artleton. You ought to have been an aristocrat, Rendel!" And, waving her tiny gloved hand, Miss Artleton left the room, tripped down the broad oaken staircase, and went out into the open air.

With a despairing sigh, Rendel walked to a window and watched her mistress out of sight.

Among her lady acquaintances, Miss Artleton was generally described as "a good old soul, but slightly peculiar—a love affair when she was a young girl, you know," the latter part of the sentence being accompanied by a significant tap of the forehead. Only a

favoured few saw the priceless jewel that lay hidden behind the little lady's odd exterior.

Years ago, when she was young and pretty, she became engaged to a noble but penniless young fellow, who, to make for himself a position in life, set sail for India. The outward-bound vessel was lost and with it Miss Artleton's lover.

For months the poor girl went about a mere shadow of her former self; then she suddenly aroused all her energies, and her fashionable friends began to shake their worldly-wise heads and say that she was peculiar. The visible form her peculiarity took was vaguely hinted at. It was a form unknown to the idlers who lounged their lives away in heated drawing-rooms or raced across the Continent in search of happiness.

Many a young couple happily married blessed the name of the "peculiar" Miss Artleton. A few pounds here, a little influence there, and many a bright home sprang into existence where, without her assistance, there would have been long years of weary waiting, until, as the little lady herself put it, "The poor young folk would be too tired to enjoy each other's society."

Purchasing a few yards of ribbon in a fancy shop one day, Miss Artleton's attention was arrested by the fair, open countenance of a young assistant. Her romantic fancy was immediately captured, and, without knowing it, Clarice Day found a valuable friend. This visit was succeeded by several others, but only once did Clarice "serve" Miss Artleton. Still, the little lady kept her eyes and ears open. The result will be seen later.

(To be continued.)

from excitement or that she was tired? For the first time since he had known her he felt she was not quite at ease in his society. She asked him presently to take her to her aunt.

Beattie was not a person who could easily keep things to herself. When she was pleased or sorry, or interested, she was always disposed to tell someone about it. In the carriage under the cover of the darkness she told Mrs. Swannington what she had overheard.

"They oughtn't to say such things, Aunt Ella; I have never thought of marrying Mr. Musgrove."

Aunt Ella laughed.

"You are a silly child, Beattie. What is there to be so angry about? There is no doubt that Mr. Musgrove thinks a great deal of you. Anyone can see it, and if you weren't such a baby you would understand. I believe myself he is in love with you! and," she added, "if you heard what he says to the Gilmans about you, you would see I have reason for my beliefs."

"Oh," said Beattie, "I hope he doesn't care for me."

"You hope he doesn't!" said Aunt Ella, amazed and angry. "Why, what nonsense! You ought to consider yourself a most fortunate girl."

Something in her aunt's voice silenced Beattie. She suddenly felt sorry she had followed the impulse which had prompted her to speak. She would not have done so if she had imagined Mr. Musgrove really loved her. If he did he ought to be the first to tell her so. Somehow Aunt Ella's attitude of mind towards the subject made her feel as if she had been unmaidenly to mention it. But as they drove on through the darkness, Mrs. Swannington humming the air of the song the peasants had sung, and Beattie busy with her thought, it flashed upon the girl's mind that if she had any feeling towards him, she would have been too shy to tell even her aunt that their names had been coupled together. And would not something of gladness have mingled with her confusion?

"I don't care for him," she said to

herself, "and so I am right in hoping he does not care for me. And yet, suppose he does? Could I learn to love him? Should I like to be with him always? Should I mind if I never saw him again?"

And then for a moment her thoughts reverted to the day when Michael Anstruther had gone away from Crabsley. She remembered the loneliness, the sense of void, the length of the days that followed his departure. She saw the dark, boyish, earnest face. She recalled the sense of companionship, of mutual comprehension they had in one another's society. She knew of nothing in which Michael was superior to Cecil; indeed it would seem as if the older man had the advantage. And yet, if at that moment she had had to choose between them she would have chosen Michael.

At that moment. But impressionable, easily influenced, and warm-hearted, what might not time and persuasion do? If he loved her?

(To be continued.)



GENTLEWOMEN WHO DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO THE POOR.

PART III.

IN AND OUT OF PRISON.

"I was in prison and ye visited me."

Pioneer.

Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, passed to her rest.

A Few of the Present Workers.

Mrs. Meredith, Adeline Duchess of Bedford, Lady Battersea, Miss Bartlett, and Miss Cadbury.

OF all work undertaken by women in the present day for the sake of comforting and helping the sad, the afflicted, and despairing of their own sex none requires more tact, discretion, and self-control than that of visiting the prisons and helping discharged prisoners; and even these qualifications would avail but little unless the women-workers believed in humanity and loved it.

It is not a work handed down through the ages from women to women; it is an outcome of this nineteenth century, started and set going by one gentle, delicate woman in 1818, a period of our history when, if any woman moved perceptibly out of the ordinary ways of life, she laid herself open to misconstruction and even contempt, for the days of Woman's Mission had not then dawned.

One of the characteristics of Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, the pioneer prison-visitor, which so peculiarly fitted her for the work, was that in every human being, however degraded, she saw the spark of divinity, which, as she said, might be overlaid with sin, vice, and ignorance, but was never wholly extinct. She believed in all, and despaired of none, and such, I take it, should be the spirit of those who would be her successors.

When she first visited the wards of Newgate

she found them so demoralised that even the governor entered with reluctance. In fact, they were more like dens of wild beasts.

Clever woman that she was, she found her way to the hearts of the prisoners by caring for their children. But all this is matter of history, and I have to deal with the work of to-day, which is so quietly and effectually performed that outsiders have no idea of its extent and influence.

To begin with Mrs. Meredith—all the love of her heart, her means, her energies, her great organising talent, her fascinating manners, her strength of character, have been and are devoted to the service of the class of women known as criminals. She has immense power over them, and whatever their sins and shortcomings they know how to reverence and love her. I happened to mention to some of them that I was going to see Mrs. Meredith, and their quick response was, "Pray, lady, give her our love."

Her interest in female prisoners began as a child, and her earliest recollections are of visits to Irish prisons with her father, and Bible-readings in gloomy cells. As she grew older she yearned intensely to improve the condition of women undergoing long sentences of penal servitude, and she spared no efforts to gain permission from the Director-General of Convict Prisons to visit them in their cells. At length in 1866 she succeeded, and every morning for some years she journeyed from her home in Bayswater to visit the prisoners in the London prisons. In her own words, "I had personal dealings with every individual in Brixton Prison, then the chief convict prison for women; with some as they sat at work, with others in the infirmary as they lay in bed, and occasionally in the cells with those condemned to solitary confinement. I had perfect freedom to converse with them and to inform myself as to their condition."

The conclusion she arrived at was that help was even more needed at the time of their discharge than during the actual period of their imprisonment, for passing out of the prison gates they found themselves once again in the midst of their degraded associates, and necessarily fell into the old temptations unless love and sympathy were powerful enough to make them pause. It was the recognition of this fact that started the Prison Gate Mission, the members of which take their places among the criminal gangs waiting to receive the discharged prisoners, and take them past the public-houses to a good breakfast, which was presided over for many years by Lady Emily Pepys.

Nor was this the only outcome of Mrs. Meredith's knowledge of the needs of these poor people. She rented two houses next her own in Bayswater which she opened as a Refuge, where women needing help could get it, and a kind encouraging word besides.

But Bayswater was eminently respectable, and objected very strongly to the intrusion of this class of woman into their midst, therefore Mrs. Meredith removed her Refuge to Nine Elms, and under the sanction of the Home Office it became the "Discharged prisoners' aid," in connection with H.M. prisons. She opened a laundry here in 1867 in order to give employment to those whom no one else would engage. In 1881 the laundry was removed to Clapham Road to what had formerly been the marble rink. It is still there, adjoining the headquarters of the various missions carried on by Mrs. Meredith and her many helpers.

So rapidly did her work increase, that help became necessary. The first to volunteer was her sister, Miss Lloyd, who has been her steady assistant from that day to this; gradually others volunteered, till now she has an army of three hundred and seventy-five devoted women-workers, seventy only of whom are paid, and

they all spend their lives in the service of outcast women and their neglected children.

We spent some time in the laundry last week, where we found as many as sixty women and girls, all discharged prisoners, working quietly and industriously; and in another room, those who were not strong enough for laundry work were occupied in making felt slippers, rugs and dusting-brushes. For a day's work each receives one shilling and two good meals. I hope one day to tell you all I saw here and at Princess Mary's Village Homes, where the children of prisoners are cared for by Mrs. Meredith—there is not room in this sketch.

One of her great desires is to detach prisoners from their friends when they come out of prison, for unless this is secured, they almost invariably fall into the old grooves and habits of crime.

There is no limit to Mrs. Meredith's sympathies where women prisoners are concerned. I think it is a beautiful thought of hers that every woman in prison, not only in England but in other countries as well, should receive a letter on Christmas morning, prettily illustrated and in her own language—not printed but written—to remind her of the season, and to show her that she is not forgotten by friends outside. Think what this is to each individual shut away from all life's joys?

If Mrs. Meredith did nothing else her name would be held in reverence and love. God grant her life and strength to continue her works of loving service to the criminal class.

The appointment of lady visitors to female convict prisons was not decided on until 1895, when the first to be nominated were Adeline, Duchess of Bedford and Lady Battersea, the first for long sentence prisons and the latter for short sentence prisons; Miss Cadbury and Miss Bartlett were also visitors in the latter.

By long sentence is understood from three years to five, ten, fifteen, and reaching to life sentences; short sentence from a week to three years.

Strictly speaking the only long sentence prison for women in this country is that at Aylesbury, lately removed from Woking, where about two hundred women and girls are working out their sentences; many for very grave offences, and several for life. The years of imprisonment may be reduced to two-thirds by good conduct, and many succeed in getting this reduction.

The work for these ladies was new and might have been very difficult had not the authorities done all in their power to render it possible. The appointment of lady visitors to the various prisons is a most merciful deed. Think what their presence means inside those walls; the kind words spoken, the interest displayed in the prisoners' past, the mention of husband and child, the pleasure of being called by their name instead of by a number, and to feel that they may look forward to these glimpses of happiness at stated times during the long years of imprisonment. Why, it makes all the difference in the world to the poor women shut away from outside life and hope.

Of course, the success of this new departure in prison life must depend in a great measure on the character and capability of the visitors appointed. It is essential that they possess the power of real, true, human fellowship and sympathy without indulging in sentimentalism; it is equally necessary that their compassion be bracing and their sympathy have moral force.

These qualifications are possessed largely by the ladies appointed in 1895; they are gaining influence over the prisoners who trust them, and the governors, matrons and chaplains look upon them as fellow-workers.

Any break in the fearful monotony of

prison life is a boon; this was seen last year at the re-opening of the chapel at the Aylesbury convict prison. It had a cheering influence upon the prisoners, and as the Duchess went through the workshops and twine rooms and among the women gardeners after the service, she noticed that they looked happier and brighter, and some of them said, "The church will be like home to us," while others remarked, "We feel out of prison on Sundays."

Any reasonable suggestions made by the visitors for the benefit of the prisoners are listened to by the authorities and granted if they do not interfere with the prison discipline.

Adeline Duchess of Bedford, speaking from her own experience, says that "To be of use the visits should be frequent and regular, that visitors should each keep a diary recording all dealings with each individual case, that it is better to know a few prisoners well than many superficially, that promises once made by lady-visitors to prisoners must be strictly kept and confidences respected, and that hope must be the keynote of their work."

The help given by these ladies to prisoners before their discharge is very important, and in many cases influences the whole of their after-life for good. We cannot give details of this lady's visits to the Aylesbury Prison, as they must be held sacred between her and those whom she comforts and strengthens. It is enough for us to know that she is working, and that she is exactly the one to cheer and brighten and build up the characters of those among whom she ministers.

Short terms are those varying from a week to three years. Lady Battersea, Miss Cadbury, and Miss Bartlett are all visitors in short-term prisons.

Short-sentence prisoners are under great disadvantages. The time they spend in prison is not sufficient for visitors to gain a hold on their hearts or consciences, nor have they the opportunity of lessening the term by good conduct.

Many of the prisoners have been dragged down by bad companions, drink, or evil inheritance, and the value of lady-visitors is often very great.

The quiet of the cells is sometimes salutary, and they will occasionally turn to the visitor voluntarily, and as Miss Cadbury says, when such an opportunity arises the visitor must answer to it by showing at once that she is a friend and not a judge.

I have been astonished to find that long-term prisoners look down upon short-term prisoners, and consider themselves greatly superior to them. When I asked for an explanation the answer was "short terms" go in and out of prison for dirty, mean actions or for drunkenness, while the "long terms" are in for some great intellectual failure, or for the committal of some crime through accident."

One of the great difficulties in dealing with short-term prisoners is the impossibility of believing them. They love to baffle the visitor by false statements, and are quite pleased if they succeed.

A lady, after listening to a woman who is constantly in and out of prison, said—

"But is it not a very dreadful state to be in, that of being obliged to tell lies for your living?"

"Not at all, ma'am; we like it."

"Like it?" said the lady. "Do you never think of the end of those who tell lies?"

"It never troubles me, ma'am; but I have heard of some afraid to die when the time comes."

"Suppose your time was come, wouldn't you be afraid, too?"

"I don't know about being afraid, but I shouldn't be surprised if I told the truth then."

"It may be too late in a dying moment to

get out of the grasp of the father of lies," said the lady.

"There, ma'am, you'll never terrify me. I don't mind and I don't care nothing about the fire and brimstone. I'm not a criminal; I'm only a poor beggar, and that's the truth."

"I thought you were often committed for drunkenness?"

"Not I, ma'am; I daren't drink lest I should tell the truth."* I give this as a specimen of the difficulties met with by lady-visitors.

"No work is harder," says Miss Cadbury, of Birmingham, "than that among inebriates, for whom short sentences are useless. The far larger number of our short-sentence prisoners come in through drink, many of whom belong by right to what is called good society."

Miss Bartlett's experience is that if a visitor wishes to gain the confidence of the prisoners she must not be the least official either in manner or dress, but be as natural and sincere as possible. In illustration of this she says that a very refractory girl had been placed in the punishment cell, and for many days she was not allowed to see her. At length permission was granted, and Miss Bartlett waited in the matron's room, trembling secretly, and wondering what she should say to the culprit.

Presently the girl entered and, as she did so, burst into a laugh so natural and infectious that she could not help joining in. This broke the ice, and they became fast friends. The girl improved wonderfully, and when she came out married a steady, good man, and last year sent Miss Bartlett a photograph of her first baby.

A visitor must deal with the prisoner as woman to woman, not as woman to criminal, if she is to be of real service.

All lady visitors speaking from their experience say that short sentences are a mistake. They harden the girls, whereas long sentences are better for the women and better for society generally.

Lady Battersea tells a pathetic story. During her visits to the Protestant prisoners the Roman Catholic priest asked her if she would be so good as to visit his women as well. One of these was taken so ill that when her sentence expired she was dying and could not be removed. It was very bitter to her to die after all in prison, but Lady Battersea in her own infinitely tender way, soothed her by promising to send flowers to be put on her grave, so that it should not look like a common prisoner's grave. This removed the sting, and cheered her greatly, and she told all who came near her of the good news.

It is by such little acts of womanliness the hearts of these poor people are reached and taught to hope.

The work being done both for women and girls to prevent them drifting into crime, and being criminals, to lift them out of the condition, would fill the whole number of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER. Quite an army of gentlewomen are devoting their lives and means to this end. Not the least Christ-like work is taking the little children of the criminal class right away from their surroundings, caring for them and training them to be good useful members of society. An account of this special work I hope to give some other time, if I am allowed by the Editor to do so.

The whole work in connection with prisons which has been growing all through our dear Queen's reign is one that will do it honour, and be the means of making good citizens and loyal subjects out of those who might have been a terror in our midst.

"I was in prison and ye visited me."

* This is part of a conversation between one of Mrs. Meredith's helpers and a woman always in and out of prison.

GENTLEWOMEN WHO DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO THE POOR.

PART IV.

EYES TO THE BLIND.

"Infinite is the help which man can yield to man."—*Carlyle.*



It is more than a quarter of a century ago that the lady I am about to introduce to you took up the special work of caring for the blind poor who live in and wander about the streets of London.

Seeing that their needs were so great and their condition so forlorn, she gave herself heart and soul to their service, and through all these long years they have been her care and her joy, and what she has been to them can only be known fully to Him who gave her the work to do, though something may be learned from the blind themselves.

She visits them in their homes; she knows the character and condition of each individual among them; she is acquainted with their needs and how best to supply them; she sympathises with their sorrows and understands how to comfort them; and in times of sickness her help and her presence cannot be overrated. She provides them with medical advice and medicine free of charge. She sends those who are weak and ailing to the seaside, and she strengthens and supplements every effort at self-help.

She has drawn towards her many girls of good position with time and talents at their disposal who, under her guidance, visit and read to the blind poor.

To enter fully into the details of this Christ-like work would fill a volume, and certainly would be out of place in a sketch like this; still, I have a plan for showing you this lady in the midst of her blind people, which will interest you greatly if I am not mistaken.

I propose to take you to one of the poorest districts in the neighbourhood of King's Cross, where, in a large hall obtained from a chapel at a small rent, this woman-worker holds a reception every Thursday evening.

She started it when she first began her work, and, with but few exceptions, it has never been put on one side for any other engagement whatever. From one end of London to the other these gatherings are known as "Mrs. Starey's Thursday evening receptions," and stand quite alone in their power of giving and receiving pleasure. Invitations are eagerly accepted, and it must be a serious thing indeed which prevents the arrival of any guest. The hours are from seven till nine, and as a rule they are very punctual. A peculiarity is that the guests never drop in one by one, but always two at the time and, no matter what the weather, they come on foot. It cannot be for the refreshments they hope to partake of, for, except the blind people who come from the workhouses and the very poor who walk long distances, not even a cup of coffee is provided, and yet they will tell you that Thursday evening is the bright spot of their week.

Many of them come very long distances, viz., from Westminster, Lambeth, Hampstead, and Edgware Road, and they would not miss coming for any consideration.

A little time ago I took some friends of my own to the reception, and as we walked up the street leading to the hall, we noticed several dark figures, each attended by a smaller one, walking rapidly in the same

direction; indeed, so rapidly and unhesitatingly were they moving along, that one could scarcely believe they were deprived of sight.

Arriving at our destination, we walked up the hall, already crowded with blind people, noticing as we did so many old acquaintances whose faces we were familiar with in our streets. Mrs. Starey received us and directed us to the platform, where the "sighted" were accommodated, and went on to welcome her special guests, to whom she spoke a few kind words while guiding them to the chairs arranged in rows across the hall, which were nearly all occupied although it still wanted a quarter to seven. The hall is anything but beautiful, yet it is called by the guests "The hall of light for the blind," a name given to it by a blind Chinese boy, whom Mrs. Starey's blind people support by their free offerings in the school at Chinchev.

Each blind person is bound to have a guide—generally a child—to bring him or her to the reception. Therefore Mrs. Starey allows threepence a week to each blind person as guide-money—an item which amounts to considerably over £100 per annum.

While waiting for the clock to strike seven we chatted with some of the guests, first to a girl who told us she earned something towards her keep by type-writing; then to a man with a most intelligent face, who raised his eyes towards ours as he spoke in such a way that we thought it impossible he could be quite blind. He gave us a good deal of interesting information about the employment of the blind. He also said that, no matter what privations the blind are called upon to endure, they will cheerfully bear all to preserve their home life, such as it is; their objections to being sent to a home or institute are simply insurmountable. Ninety cases out of a hundred have become blind by accident or through illness, so that a small number only are born blind.

Many of those in the hall, he told us, had seen better days; but blindness soon reduces them; indeed, it is difficult to realise the enormous obstacles in the way of blind people earning a living.

We were specially struck with the face of a man sitting a few rows back from the platform; it had an abiding sadness on it, as if at some time or other it had been suddenly struck with some intense sorrow. I called on him a few days later in his room, which was very clean, for he had a "sighted" wife. I found him knitting stockings.

He speaks even now with reluctance of the time when he lost his sight. He said, "Just at the time when this awful sorrow fell upon me, which is some fourteen years ago, I was about as happy as a man could be. I had married the woman I loved, I had bought a little business with our savings, and we were to start in it in a day or two, when I had finished up some work for my old master; this I was doing when the accident occurred which deprived me suddenly of my sight and every hope at the same time. I dare not even now think of the despair which took hold of me body and soul, and deprived me of faith in the good God and urged me to take my life."

"How did help come?" I asked.

His answer was—

"Mrs. Starey came to us."

With a sad smile he said, "Fancy a man who was going to do such good work in the world sitting here knitting stockings! But it is the only way in which I can contribute to my keep."

This is only one of the many visits I paid to those who had interested me at the reception. I went to one house soon after the birth of a

baby, and the mother attacked me at once. "Oh, ma'am, are my child's eyes right? What colour are they? Is my baby pretty?"

After answering these questions satisfactorily, I asked in my turn, "Who looks after you and your family while you are in bed?" Her response was, "Oh, Mrs. Starey provides help for me."

I was very interested to note while visiting the blind in their homes how very clever some of the blind mothers are: they will alter a dress given them by a friend, and make it to fit the child and put quite good work in it; they will do the washing and cooking almost as well as those who have their sight.

To come back to the reception: the clock was striking seven, and as the last sound died away a blind man seated himself at the piano, while another with sightless eyes and earnest face gave out in a clear, firm voice the first verse of the hymn, "Brightly beams our Father's mercy," which was sung by all in that crowded hall. As the second verse was in a like manner given out and sung, one line struck us as very pathetic and filled our eyes with tears, considering that all those singing it would never see anything again in this world; it was "Eager eyes are longing, Watching for the lights along the shore."

This done, the blind man who gave out the hymn offered a very short prayer for them all; and then came a few bright, cheery words from the hostess, who then described the "sighted" visitors on the platform who had come to help her entertain the special blind guests. She did this in such a way that they had no difficulty in picturing us in their minds. She next introduced a gentleman who was about to give a description of his travels in Switzerland. It was, I believe, very interesting, but the truth is that my every faculty was engaged in watching its effect upon the audience. While he addressed them many of the women worked, some were making lace, others doing fine needlework, their little guides merely threading the needles for them, while a few were crocheting petticoats. All paid the greatest attention to the speaker, the slightest noise being at once hushed, while all the faces were directed towards him as though they could see him. We were specially interested in three men who sat close to the platform and who were not only blind but deaf as well. One, however, was not absolutely deaf, for by the help of an ear-trumpet he now and then was able to catch a phrase or two; whenever he did so he conveyed the meaning to the other two by a peculiar method of touching their hands, and they asked each other questions in the same wonderful manner. The lecturer would have found it difficult not to be satisfied with his audience; they seemed to understand every turn. When the address was over any one among the audience was permitted to get up and say a few words, and this two or three of them did in very good English and with common sense.

At length the roll was called by our hostess with the assistance of one of the blind; and now occurred what to us was the most curious part of the proceedings.

As she called out the names, those present answered "Here"; sometimes after the call of a name there was a silence broken by her blind helper, who would look round the room and say, "She has been here but has left," or "No, he is not here this evening," or "She is coming in." His knowledge of the audience seemed to us almost uncanny.

Since we last heard him taking part in the "calling of the roll" he has "sighted the Golden Gate."

After a verse of "God save the Queen" the

evening came to a close; then followed a hearty "Good night and thank you," and each one took his or her way home accompanied by the guide. These receptions sometimes take the form of beautiful concerts or of praise and prayer meetings, for Mrs. Starey's work is definitely a Christian work. A week or two ago Mr. Jackson devoted an evening to them and told them about his Arctic expedition.

Can you not see what a break these Thursday evening receptions make in the monotony of the lives of these blind people? They give them something to think of, something to look forward to, and last, not least, they bring them into communication with the one human being who cares for and loves them.

As to Mrs. Starey, she is like a hen with her chickens. She gathers the blind around her and shields them under her wings of watchfulness and tender care, and at the same time does not pauperise them.

But to return to the reception: one more full of pathos and interest we never attended, and if any who read this sketch of Mrs. Starey and her work would like to be present at one of her evenings they would, I am sure, be heartily welcomed; they could then see for themselves that she is the mother, friend, guide and comfort of the blind poor in their homes, and it will be strange if a strong desire does not arise in the heart to help her in her labour of love.

Of course these weekly gatherings form but a fringe of the work. Every day she is occupied in visiting them, getting suitable employment for those who are capable, cutting out and making clothes for them, providing them with nurses and doctors in sickness, and in sending the weak to the seaside, in fact doing everything for them that a loving mother does for her own household.

To many she gives regular weekly allowances ranging from one shilling to ten shillings. She gives this with a full knowledge of the circumstances of each person, and finds it decidedly the best method of helping.

Some of the cases requiring weekly help are very touching. For example, one of the oldest of Mrs. Starey's blind people was cared for by a loving, good daughter. This girl married a respectable young shoemaker, who became like a real son to the blind old man. All went happily for a time in this humble home; a baby was born, and was the delight of all three, but it died, and not long after this first trouble the young husband, while busy at work, had the misfortune, by the slipping of his hand, to run the gimlet right into his eye. Intense agony of pain followed, and he was for months in the hospital, where he underwent one operation after another. At length by the aid of glasses he hoped to see well enough to do a little work; his own business was gone, but he worked for some weeks at house-painting. At length the eyes speedily lost their sight; his case is now hopeless and total blindness is before him; nor is this all: he suffers such terrible pain in the head that one fears the effect on the brain. Work is impossible. Meantime the blind father has just passed away, and the poor young wife is earning a scant pittance by making gentlemen's ties for a City house. Mrs. Starey is allowing her five shillings a week and helping in every way she can.

Another pathetic case. A blind man died quite lately leaving a wife and five children. He was an educated man and in good position until he lost his sight. Latterly his reason went by the same disease which caused his blindness. Mrs. Starey through the kindness of a friend is able to give weekly help for a year at least. I could tell you of many like cases in which Mrs. Starey proves herself friend and comforter.

She has succeeded in forming a small committee of people like Mr. and Mrs. Peter Graham and Sir Robert and Lady Romer, of whom she can seek advice and support in the many cases of difficulty and sorrow which are constantly coming before her.

Her work is not all sorrowful. There are periods of great rejoicings among her blind.

For example, just before Christmas some three hundred attend a special reception which is known as "parcel night," when each person receives at her hands a large parcel containing such things as Mrs. Starey knows she or he most needs. Each parcel is made up and directed with this kind friend's own hands.

This is one of the most substantial benefits of the year. In addition to the parcels which contain clothing, groceries, or bedding, a new half-crown is presented to each person, the gift of one of Mrs. Starey's most valued helpers, Mr. Lindsay Bennett, who is, alas! now passing away.

Mrs. Starey had an intense desire that her poor blind friends should share last year in the Jubilee gladness, and a few friends of hers made this possible. Of course their eyes were closed to all the gorgeous, joyous sights enjoyed by the sighted; nevertheless they had a grand Jubilee reception. Each person received a Jubilee medal, five shillings, half a pound of tea, and a sweet-smelling nosegay.

Lord Salisbury proved himself a friend of Mrs. Starey and her work, and on June 30th he threw open Hatfield for the day to enable her to take down five hundred and seventy blind people and guides, and gave her the use of the riding-school for meals. As they all went over the house the blind felt the carving and objects of interest, and listened eagerly to the descriptions given, and thus, in their own pathetic way, they "saw" everything, and took a most intelligent interest in all. It was a happy party and a glorious day.

Mrs. Starey, who lives at 53, Hilldrop Road, N., would give full particulars of her work to anyone who desired to know more of it.

From my knowledge of Mrs. Starey and her work among the blind in their homes, I can say it is earnest and persistent, filling her time and heart, and demanding her means as well. To use her own words to me: "I do certainly give the very best of my time, strength, and all I have to my blind. They are my portion of my Lord's vineyard, and I would not change my work for any other in the world."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

STUDY AND STUDIO.

MUSICAL JESSIE.—We think the little girl you mention must be unusually advanced in music for her age. We advise you to write to the Secretary of the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, 52, New Bond Street, London, W. You will receive full details from him of the local examinations held by the "Associated Board." It is a matter of proficiency rather than of age as to when musical examinations shall be taken.

WHITE LAUREL.—We should strongly advise you to undertake the study of Italian. It is the easiest of all European languages, and you would readily acquire it, especially as you seem to write English so well. The book we usually recommend is Dr. Lemmi's Italian Grammar; but we presume, as a Frenchwoman, you would prefer a grammar written in French. The reading of Dante in the original will repay any effort in the way of preliminary study.

PEGGY.—The names you mention are probably fictitious, although we cannot be absolutely certain. Many thanks for your kind letter.

META E. G. RANKIOR.—1. *Glaucus*, by Charles Kingsley, is published in a 3s. 6d. series. We believe the publisher is Macmillan.—2. We are afraid we cannot tell you of any cheap and thorough works on Rotifera, Infusoria, and Diatoms. There is *The Rotifera, or Wheel-Animalcules*, by Hudson and Gosse, with coloured plates, in six parts, 10s. 6d. each; supplement, 12s. 6d.; complete in two vols., £4 4s. Perhaps Morgan's *Animal Biology*, 8s. 6d., would suit you; or Dr. Schenk's *Manual of Bacteriology*, 10s. The illustrations of necessity make such books costly. We recommend you to write to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., 39, Paternoster Row, E.C. (the publishers of the above), saying what you want, and asking if they have issued anything at a popular price.

BELVOIR.—You will find all rules relating to the Puzzle Competitions in THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER itself, and if you consult them, you will see your question answered there. We are glad you are pleased with your success. Your suggestion appears below.

OUR OPEN LETTER BOX.

We still have answers for "ROSEBUD," and a correspondent, GOLD DUST, has kindly copied out "The Doctor's Fee," and sent it to us for her. HILDA GOSLING says it is to be found in the January number of *The Sunday Magazine* for 1891. GOLD DUST inquires where she can get a poem entitled "Tit for Tat."

MISS N. J. KNIGHT informs "An Inquirer" that the recitation she seeks (describing the telling to a child of the story about George Washington and his little hatchet) is in a book called *American Humour*, one of the *Humour of the Nations* series. Miss Knight adds, for the benefit of "VEE," that there is a serio-comic version of "Old Mother Hubbard" in a book called *Cole's Fun Doctor*.

KATE wishes to know where she can procure the poem called "Kate Barlass," and the author's name.

LENNOX wishes to find the poem of George MacDonald's in which occur the two following verses:—

"Alas! how easily things go wrong!
A sigh too much, or a kiss too long;
And then follows a mist, and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again.

For things can never go badly wrong
If the heart be true, and the love be strong;
For the mist, if it come, and the weeping rain
Will be changed by the love into sunshine again."

We must say we do not recognise the two verses as belonging to the same poem. The first is familiar to us; yet we cannot light at the instant upon the volume in which it occurs.

BELVOIR recommends to R. A. T. a book entitled *Stories from Dante*, by Morley Chester, published at 3s. 6d. by Fred. Warne & Co.

M. C. K. inquires the author of the lines under Landseer's picture "The Monarch of the Glen." They are from *Legends of Glenorchay*, and begin—

"When first the day-star's clear cool light,"

CECILY wishes to know the derivation of the surname "Snewin."

MISCELLANEOUS.

INQUISITIVE.—1. We have answered your question very recently. There is no difference of opinion on the subject of how cheese should be eaten by persons who are acquainted with the rules of etiquette and good breeding in the upper class of society. To put your knife to your mouth under any pretext whatsoever would stamp you at once as an ill-bred person. Place a small piece of cheese on a small piece of bread, and convey it to your mouth without touching the cheese. Butter is served with it, and thus it can stick to it without trouble.—2. You slope your letters so much the wrong way that it dazzles the eyes.

FATIMA (Smyrna).—1. English girls do not wear natural flowers in their hats; they are always artificial.—2. The names given to dogs much depend on the breed of the animal. The following are common, Rover, Lion, Jack, Marcus, Prince, Snap, Bruno, Pelo, Jack, Queen, Rigo, Rita, Roy, Spot, Mungo, Sprig, Pero, Haco, Spey, Juno, Turk, Shot, etc.

D. L. A.—When Charles II. was crossing the channel from Brightelmstone to Dieppe, an inquisitive mariner went up close to him, puffing tobacco in his face. Observing this, the master of the ship desired him to retire further off. Upon which the sailor replied, "A cat may look at a king." This is the origin of the popular saying.

well as Cecil was a friend of the Gilmans. If once he mentioned the matter to Mrs. Gilman, Aunt Ella trembled for results; it would be sure to reach Cecil's ears, and then if he knew that Mrs. Swannington had appropriated him in the way she had done it would probably disgust him with the whole family, and Beattie's chances, where he was concerned, would be at an end. And though Mrs. Swannington was more or less indifferent to the opinion of the world except where her personal appearance was in question, she somehow felt she would rather not offend Mr. Musgrove, who had a way of saying sarcastic things when he chose, not only to, but of a person he disliked. Still, she thought, it was a comfort he had, at any rate, proposed to Beattie. It gave her more reason for having said what she did, and there had only been a day's difference between her announcement and Cecil's declaration. Nevertheless, she did not enjoy her position, and it made her angry with herself as well as with Beattie, though the latter had to be scolded for both.

"I trust that to-morrow you will rectify your mistake," she said at last, when she had talked both Beattie and herself into a headache. "If you do not I cease to take all interest in you. I tell your uncle so this night. It is time we remind you you are not our child to take as a matter of course all the kindness you have received."

Aunt Ella did not mean this. She could have bitten out her tongue directly she had said the words. She knew that her husband would be really sorry if she reminded Beattie that his home was not hers. Never before had anyone done so. But it was useless to regret it now. She had said it, and spoken words can never be recalled. To Beattie, who was acutely sensitive, and who really had regarded her aunt and uncle almost as a mother and father, they were like a cruel wound. The startled, sorrowful look that came into her eyes made Aunt Ella angrier than ever with herself, and again Beattie had to bear the consequences of her wrath. But after another warning sentence or two Mrs. Swanning-

ton left the room, and Beattie remained to pass a more miserable night than she ever remembered to have spent.

Perhaps she was rather foolish, but she was young and inexperienced in what is generally known as life, and she had always unhesitatingly submitted to Mrs. Swannington's authority, consequently now she believed that all she had said to her was true. She began to think she had behaved unfairly to her aunt as well as unkindly to Cecil. She had refused offers before, and Mrs. Swannington had laughed and shrugged her shoulders. She knew Aunt Ella desired the marriage with Mr. Musgrove, but after all, her rejection of him had not been final, and even if it had been she had no reason for expecting such a scene as she had gone through. If she had anticipated it perhaps she would have been less independent. But she was too much in the habit of acting spontaneously to have learnt not to follow the impulses of the moment.

Mrs. Swannington, leaving Beattie to shed tears and meditate in a most unwonted manner, went to her own room, where she walked up and down till her husband appeared. Then she immediately informed him of Beattie's iniquity. Mr. Swannington took it to heart far less than satisfied the irate lady.

"Well, I think she knows what she's about, Ella. Perhaps he took her by surprise. It's a pity he didn't ask us first, and then we could have prepared her. I expect it'll come right."

"I don't believe it will," said Mrs. Swannington, who was now on the verge of tears herself. "He may never ask her again."

"Well," said Mr. Swannington colloquially, "Musgrove isn't everybody's money. He's good-looking in a sort of way, but if I may say so of my guest, I think he's rather a prig. I daresay Bee would get on more happily with a heartier chap. I wouldn't worry her about it if I were you. Besides, I daresay Musgrove can manage his own affairs. I shouldn't be surprised if they are engaged by to-morrow evening."

But the next morning Mr. Musgrove announced that the post had brought

him a letter which necessitated his return to town that day. As nobody had the courage to say they didn't believe it, they had to accept his excuses with a good grace. Beattie was pale and looked tired. She regarded Cecil wistfully once or twice, but he avoided meeting her eye, and retained an attitude of dignified reserve towards her. To Mrs. Swannington he was affable to a degree, and more attentive than he had yet been to her husband. Mr. Swannington had an idea that Mr. Musgrove patronised him, and did not particularly like him in consequence. When he had gone without giving himself the opportunity of being alone with Beattie a moment, and having bidden her good-bye almost coldly, the latter, who really liked him very much as a friend, and who minded the possibility of losing him in that capacity, showed so poor a spirit that her uncle found her weeping disconsolately in the room where she had parted from him.

He was far too easy-going to make much of his niece's love-affairs, but he wanted to have things comfortable all round. Beattie did not take him into her confidence, but he told her he knew all and spoke to her, as he thought, very kindly.

"I hear you've sent away poor Musgrove," he said. "I should advise you to think the matter over again. I doubt if you'll do better as men go, and I believe, though he's not a demonstrative fellow, that he's thoroughly fond of you. Of course he's a bit huffy just now; it isn't every man who can bear to realise he's not irresistible."

But for her aunt's speech last night Beattie would have taken these words exactly in the spirit in which they were meant. As it was, however, she thought that her uncle, too, wanted her to realise she must not pick and choose too much, but was expected to find her own home before very long.

"Perhaps, after all, I have been mistaken," she thought. "At least he desired to have me with him always."

And her heart began to turn towards her departed lover.

(To be continued.)

GENTLEWOMEN WHO DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO THE POOR.

PART V.

THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS.

"A long life of golden days fruitful of golden deeds."

OF the many women-workers engaged at the present time in trying to make the world brighter and happier, the one best known to every class of society is the Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

With her vast means and position, everything was possible to her, yet she chose to devote herself to the service of those in need, whether of love, sympathy, pecuniary assistance or moral support.

Above all, she has striven to increase the

usefulness of women in their homes, and given them opportunities of self-improvement.

Passing over her early work of building churches and endowing bishoprics, her time and her wealth have, as a rule, been expended among the very poor in the East End of London and in the poor parts of Ireland; but so varied and gigantic in proportion has her work been, that it is next to impossible to convey any idea of it.

Nor is it only what she has accomplished, but what she has set going, which is so marvellous—works and schemes which are fertilising and developing in a thousand ways as the years roll on.

One of her early efforts for the good of women, in which she had the hearty co-operation of Charles Dickens, was the establishment

of a home at Shepherd's Bush for those who had forsaken the straight path but longed to get back to it.

Charles Dickens wrote the anonymous letter which many of these sorrowful people received, and from which I will quote a few passages:—

"There is a lady who has seen you from the windows of her house, and her heart has bled for you. She is what is called a great lady, but she has looked after you with compassion as being of her own sex and nature, and the thought of you has troubled her. She has resolved to open at her own expense a home very near London for a small number of women such as you, where they will be taught all kinds of work which will be useful to them in homes of their own, and enable

them to make them comfortable and happy . . . Because it is her wish that they may be restored to society, they will be supplied with every means at the right time to go abroad, where, in a distant country, they may become the faithful wives of honest men, and live and die in peace."

In emigration the Baroness found the best means of effecting permanent improvement in these people.

From about the year 1860 she devoted time and money to the East End weavers, whose occupation was destroyed by the treaty with France in that year. She started some of the weavers in small shops, and others she sent abroad as emigrants, while their girls she trained for service.

Even when this was done, there were still helpless numbers to provide for, and for these she opened an institution in Brown's Lane, and called it the "sewing school." Its purpose was to afford elderly women, recommended by want and good character, the opportunity of spending a profitable afternoon each day.

The school opened at half-past one, and, before beginning work, each person was provided with soup and bread. The work they were set to do was making shirts for the army and police. About five hundred were thus assisted annually, many of them earning eight shillings a week, some even as much as fifteen.

This alone would have been a great thing for one woman to do, but it was a mere fragment.

Connected with Brown Lane Institution was a complete system of help for the neighbouring poor, one part of which was the employment of professional nurses and clergy to visit the sick.

On their report being handed in each afternoon, meat, wine, maternity boxes and blankets were distributed.

To young servants going to their first place complete outfits were given.

Casual work was provided in the after part of the day for unemployed workmen, who, while still free to seek permanent occupation, were thus enabled to keep their homes together.

Money alone could never have made this scheme successful; it was its combination with thought, sympathy and the desire to help which gave it force and power.

During the bitter winter of 1861 the Bermondsey tanners were unable to follow their occupation, and it was the Baroness who came to them in their time of trouble and kept their homes together without pauperising the work-people.

It is impossible to overrate the help she gave in the East End during the time of the cholera in 1867. She distributed 1,850 meat tickets, value one shilling each, five hundred pounds of rice, two hundred and fifty pounds of arrowroot, fifty pounds of sago, fifty pounds of tapioca and oatmeal, twenty gallons of beef tea, thirty pounds of black currant jelly, eighty quarts daily of pure milk from her own farms, four hundred yards of flannel, one hundred blankets, twenty-five gallons of brandy and fifty gallons of port wine. In addition to all this, she had immense quantities of beef-tea made and sold at cost price. She distributed disinfectants by means of four agents, and appointed two sanitary inspectors. Think of the giant proportions of this work for one woman to undertake! Yet a few years has almost effaced the remembrance of it except among a small number of people.

The costermongers to this day look upon her as their best friend; she started a club for them with the object of advancing money to members for the purchase of barrows, the amount to be repaid at the rate of a shilling

weekly—the sum usually charged for the hire. In this, as in all other of her work, she neither destroys the independence of those she helps nor pauperises them.

The club has ever since been quite independent of outside aid, and the members themselves conduct its affairs.

The Baroness was, I believe, the very first to consider the recreation of the costers and to make it possible for them.

Some three or four years ago, when the costers were threatened with the loss of their trade, they at once turned to her, knowing that she would not fail them. Nor did she. She at once directed her own solicitor and an able barrister to take up their case, which was decided adversely in the first Court, but the decision was reversed in the Court of Appeal.

She has thrown in her interest and sympathy with Mr. Groom's work for flower-girls; she has enabled the factory girls of Manchester to have a paying home instead of going to common lodging-houses.

The gulf which divides East and West London is nothing like so wide and deep as it was formerly. It has been bridged over in a great measure by women's love and sympathy, by women's work and women's wealth, especially by this one woman's work and wealth and love, and even by her life itself.

To-day we could hardly recognise the description given of the East End by Charles Dickens, who visited it in company with the Baroness. Speaking of one part, he says, "Everything is perverted, childhood is old and careful; infants, imitating the violence they have seen about them from their earliest recollection, are shrill and shrewish with the smaller infants placed under their care; the home, instead of being a haven of rest, is an earthly hell; the women are unwomanly and the men like brutes; the air carries from window to window the vapours of corruption; the sun's rays, instead of bringing wholesomeness and purity with them, draw up a new wealth of nastiness from every nook and corner, and, heating it to fever pitch, breed death far and near."

Into the centre of this district came the Baroness, then Miss, Burdett-Coutts. It was known as "Nova Scotia Gardens"; but, notwithstanding its name, every evil in an exaggerated form had its dwelling there, and the stench arising from the mass of decaying matter was simply horrible. Fever and other diseases were rampant, and the inhabitants were starving weavers, thieves, disreputable women, prize-fighters, and dog-stealers; a most unpromising spot indeed, yet it was chosen by the Baroness as a platform on which to carry out her noble enterprise which was to improve the condition of the London poor.

The reeking mass of refuse was removed, and four blocks of model dwellings for the poor were erected—the first of the kind in London. They afforded accommodation for two hundred families, or about a thousand persons, and the place received the name of Columbia Square.

Each block contained about fifty complete residences, mostly of two and sometimes of three rooms each, one of which was provided with a good kitchen range. Special attention was paid to securing light and ventilation, and the drainage, lavatories, and baths were better than those enjoyed by the better-off classes.

At the top of each building a large laundry was fitted, also a reading-room and a library of five hundred standard books provided.

The buildings were opened in 1861, and from that day to this the rooms have been eagerly sought after, and drunkenness and disease have in great measure disappeared.

We paid a visit to them last week, and found they were kept in admirable order—bath-rooms and lavatories were perfectly clean and in working order. Every residence was occupied, and there was an air of respectability and prosperity about the building. The cost of each residence per week is about 4s. 6d.

Three years after these were opened, a very important work was begun not a hundred yards distant, viz., the building of a wonderful market, the object of which was to secure an abundant supply of cheap wholesome food for the poor of the district.

It was known as Columbia Market, and it stands out from every other market in the world for lavish decoration and adornment. It was a gift of Miss Burdett-Coutts to the poor of that poorest of neighbourhoods, and cost a quarter of a million of money.

The gates are masterpieces of scroll wrought iron work, and every pillar is of polished granite. The Halls of Paris and the Central Market of Brussels are as nothing when compared with this almost cathedral pile. Imagine a building such as this occupying the site of the old Nova Scotia Gardens!

The opening ceremony was performed on the 28th April, 1869, in grand style.

By this time Miss Burdett-Coutts' work had really reconstructed a neighbourhood which had fallen into such dilapidation and squalor as to be a source of danger to London.

Unfortunately it did not fulfil the object for which it was built and must have caused the Baroness great disappointment; still it is productive of much good at the present time. It is in the Shoreditch district, about ten minutes' drive from Liverpool Street.

On arriving there a few days since we saw an open market for the sale of potatoes and green-stuff, and wondered where all the beauty was hidden away, for we could see nothing but an ordinary frontage. At length we saw the Secretary, who was very courteous, and by his means we were admitted to all parts of this wonderful pile of buildings.

The large hall, with its beautifully-carved arches, slender polished pillars, and twisted ironwork, is now used as a polytechnic, known as the East End Church Polytechnic, which is kept up by the Rev. W. Dawson almost entirely at his own expense. Of course the noble proportions of the building are spoilt by the many wooden partitions put up to divide the social room from the gymnasium, and that again from the billiard and other rooms. In like manner the galleries are used as reading rooms and recreation rooms.

Mr. Dawson is doing a wonderful work here among the working-men of the district. The two sides of the square are let out as shops and private dwellings. This picture will give you a very good idea of the place.

In 1871 the Queen conferred on Miss Burdett-Coutts the honour of a peerage of the United Kingdom, under the title of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. It is the only instance of a woman having been raised to the peerage in recognition of her own life and deeds and independently of any other consideration.

Greatly as she prized this royal favour, I do not think she values less the spontaneous and fervent ejaculations of "God bless you!" by the poor.

Nor must you think that her life and money have been spent only in the very great and prominent deeds for the benefit of the poor. There is scarcely a good work going on anywhere that this good woman does not help quietly and substantially. The position she occupies in the hearts of the people is one that belongs to her alone and to no one else. The life she has lived among the poor will never die. Her name may be forgotten in future ages, but her work never.

Deborah was far too excited to sleep that night; the whole scene came again before her, from that first hiss of "Fire!" to the moment when she and her mother had been imprisoned in the box, and she had sat there in numbed terror watching the wreaths of smoke that had curled through the heavy drop-curtain, wondering if their fate was to be burned to death. But God in His mercy had answered her prayer, and here she was safe back in her bed with no injury to either her mother or herself. A great wave of thankfulness burst over Deborah; she slipped out of bed on to her knees and was sobbing out her thankfulness aloud to God, realising perhaps for the first time His real personal presence in time of trouble. It was one of those eras in life when the girl's whole being was stirred. She did

not know that she was talking aloud. She gave separate thanksgiving for each life that she loved, for her mother and herself, for David and Monica, and there her prayer suddenly stopped short. She rose from her knees and seated herself on the floor. She was full of a new idea that had suddenly presented itself to her mind. She remembered Monica's appeal to David to save her, and his answer came back to her mind, "I will, my darling."

It had not seemed strange to her at the time, but now it seemed very strange, unless—unless—and Deborah's heart began to beat fast with happiness. Perhaps David was going to marry Monica! Men did not call girls "darling," Deborah thought, unless they were going to marry them, and oh, how lovely it would be! Outside her home

circle there were no two people whom she loved like David and Monica. The blind was drawn up and a gas lamp just opposite threw alternate lines of light and shadow across the room, and a ray of light rested on Deborah as she sat on the floor, with her arms clasped tightly round her knees, and a smile was on her face as she thought with shining eyes of the probable future of the two she loved. Suddenly she became conscious of cold, and rose and shook herself. She felt herself the happy possessor of a secret that she would mention to no one, for it was not her secret at all. Then she crept back to bed, and laid her tired head on the pillow, and her last thought before she dropped off to sleep was of David and Monica.

(To be continued.)

GENTLEWOMEN WHO DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO THE POOR.

By EMMA BREWER.

PART VI.

LIFTING OUT OF THE MIRE.

MISS MACPHERSON;
or, as the Indians call her,
Ke-gha-wah-de-ze-qua—"Benevolence."

"Such multitudes she fed, she clothed, she nursed,
That she herself might fear her wanting first."
Dryden.



HE work of this one woman in the densely-populated East End of London during the last twenty-five years is almost beyond belief. Not only has she raised the condition of those to whom she has devoted her life, but her

influence in drawing towards her earnest workers of both sexes is almost beyond precedent. She seems to have been a gift of the loving

Father to His poor and sinful in a certain district of our great city, just when they were in the direst need.

While such women as those I am describing live in our land, providing loving care for the bodies and souls of the helpless and destitute, it never can be said of us, as once of the people of old, "That we are a shameless nation, who neither reverence old man nor pity child."

I think we should all like to know some of the circumstances which induced a woman like Miss Macpherson to forego the comfort and happiness of domestic life and throw herself heart and soul into the lives of the starving, degraded, and despairing inhabitants of East London.

Her child-life was spent in a village where there was nothing to disturb its quiet monotony. Her disposition was active, inquisitive, resolute and earnest, and she early developed vigour of mind and body, which has stood her in good stead in her "life-work."

Her youth was passed happily, and at the age of nineteen she looked with eager eyes on the world which lay before her, but a word spoken suddenly by a friend gave quite a new outlook, and from that moment she began to work for Christ with an intensity of enthusiasm that has never abated.

In the winter of 1860 and 1861, Miss Macpherson came up to London to hear Reginald Radcliffe preach in the City of London Theatre, Shoreditch. Here she met Dr. Elwin, who introduced her to Lady Rowley, Mr. Morgan, and others, at the Young Men's Christian Association, Great Marlborough Street, on the following evening. This was the turning-point in her life.

Sad and humiliating as the sights and sounds of many parts of East London still are, none who visit it now can realise the sense of desolation, the stunning tide of human care and crime that obtained when Mr. Radcliffe began his preaching there. The space now occupied by the great railway stations in Broad Street and Liverpool Street was then crowded with unwholesome dwellings, well remembered for the large percentage of deaths which occurred within them.

There were no centres where Christian people could meet for prayer or counsel, and such a thing as a temperance coffee-palace had never been heard of.

As a result of Mr. Radcliffe's preaching, Lady Rowley rented a room in Welclose Square for the purpose of receiving young women on weekday evenings for Bible-reading and prayer. It was at these and at Lady Rowley's mothers'-meetings in Worship Street that Miss Macpherson began her London work.

She now commenced to visit the poor in their homes, and the toil and suffering she witnessed among the matchbox-makers made her heart ache.

In answer to an invitation of the Society of Friends, she held Bible-classes for young men on Sundays and week-days at the Bedford Institute. One of the young men, who violently opposed her work, became one of her valuable helpers, and is now a preacher of the Gospel in China.

Her Sunday Bible-class became an object of great interest, and attracted helpers from all parts of London.

Her work was interrupted for a short time

in 1866 while she crossed to New York and back, but she resumed it immediately on her return, resolving to do all in her power to help the little destitute children with whom she came in daily contact. Her return was indeed a blessing to the poor little matchbox-makers, who numbered many hundreds.

She herself describes her first sight of these children.

"In a narrow lane we mounted a tottering spiral staircase till we reached the attic, where we saw a group of tiny pale-faced matchbox-makers. They were hired by the woman who rented the room, and paid by her, each receiving 3d. for making a gross, that is, 144. The wood and the paper were furnished to the woman, but she had to provide the paste and the firing to dry the work, and for all this she received 2½d. per gross.

"Every possible spot on the bed and under the bed was strewn with the drying boxes, a loaf of bread and a knife stood on the table ready for these little ones to be supplied with a slice in exchange for their hard-earned farthings.

"This touching scene," she said, "gave her a lasting impression of childhood's sorrows. Never a moment for school or play, but ceaseless toil from light till dark."

Her first attempt to help them was to open evening schools, the inducement to attend being the gift of sadly-needed clothing. Here they were taught reading and mending.

While helping the girls she longed to help their brothers, and at a tea-meeting given by George Holland, one of the boys was so intensely to be pitied that it was felt he must be saved, even if they had to leave the others. Money was not at all plentiful, and the condition of the East End was but little known, but, as if by God's special direction, a young Christian in Minorca had just set aside a portion of his salary to help some London boy, and the letter telling this was on its way when this poor boy's history became known. With this help he was educated, and eventually raised to a position in which he became a helper of others.

Many other homeless boys were found among the guests that evening, and Miss Macpherson felt it was impossible to improve their condition without receiving them into a Home, where they could be taught and trained to regular work, and by the help of

Mr. Morgan, the editor of the *Christian*, the means were provided. A house was found at Hackney, where thirty boys were received at once. Looking at them somewhat later, it was difficult to believe in the dark surroundings of their earlier years. So great was the success of this work that it was found necessary to get more house-room, and a dilapidated dwelling at the back of Shoreditch church was taken, and fitted up for yet another thirty boys.

Mrs. Merry, Miss Macpherson's sister, gave her so much help that she was able, not only to hold the evening-school for the match-box makers, but a sewing class for widows, and to provide a home on the upper storey for destitute little girls.

Still, more room was wanted for the increasing numbers, and it came in answer to prayer.

Along the great thoroughfare leading from the docks to the Great Eastern Railway, lofty warehouses had taken the place of many unclean tottering dwellings which formerly stood there.

During the cholera epidemic in 1866, one of these had been secured by Miss Sellon's sisters of mercy. Water and gas had been laid on on every floor, and arrangements made for convenience and cleanliness. When the cholera was over the building was closed. It was suggested to Miss Macpherson by one of her friends that she should secure it as a refuge. It had been closed twelve months when she and some of her friends entered the deserted dwelling, and prayed to God that where death had been seen in all its terrors, there souls might be born to God, and that the voice of praise and prayer might be heard within those walls, which had once resounded with the groans of the dying. Twelve months after this, through the kindness of Mr. Morgan, Mr. Dobbin, and Mr. Blair, the building was secured and the rent promised.

It was not without danger that Miss Macpherson undertook the work of this home, for the streets round about it were known as the thieves' quarters—about three thousand had their headquarters there.

Within the square mile on which the refuge, now the Home of Industry is situate, 120,000 of our poorest population are to be found, and it is difficult to name any form of distress, or any class, which has not been relieved and blessed at this home.

In a letter she wrote to the *Christian*, describing her early residence there, she says: "No words can describe the sounds in the surrounding streets during the night; yells of women, of murder, then of police, with the rushing to and fro of wild, drunken women and men into the street next our home, where more criminals are to be found than in any other part of London."

The need of emigration was greatly felt by Miss Macpherson about this time. In her own words, "Boys came to us for shelter instead of going to empty barrels, railway arches and stairways; but our walls had limits, and our failures in finding employment for many away from their old haunts became a great difficulty, and God opened the way of emigration to Canada for us. It was a new and untried way."

Here is a picture of the first batch of emigrants on the eve of departure. These once ragged, shoeless wanderers stood in ranks dressed in rough blue jackets, corduroy suits and strong boots, all made within the Refuge, the work of their own hands; all alike had scarlet comforters and Glengarry caps. A canvas bag across their shoulders contained a change of linen for the voyage, towels, tin can, mug, knife, fork and spoon. The day before starting a friend brought each one a present of a strong pocket-knife, much to their delight. A Bible, a *Pilgrim's Progress* and a little case of stationery were

provided for each, and while they were indoors singing their last farewell, a dense crowd had assembled outside in the street, having waited for hours in the pouring rain.

At St. Pancras Station a band of Christian friends had assembled to wish them God-speed, nor must it be omitted that a number of young matchbox-makers ran all the way from Spitalfields in the pouring rain and rushed on to the platform to grasp once again the hand of their best earthly friend, Miss Macpherson, who was herself taking the children to Canada. The passengers and railway officials were deeply interested and struck with the sight of the boys of whose history they had heard; they thought they had never seen more intelligent faces, and were heard to observe, "Well, this is real religion."

When questioned as to the result of emigration, Miss Macpherson says, "We do not take little angels to Canada, but very human little boys and girls; but ninety-eight per cent. of the children do well, and for the two per cent. we do the best we can."

How I wish I could tell you about some of these children; it would touch your hearts, I am sure. A brother and sister who had lived in a dreadful place in Drury Lane, whose parents had been buried by the workhouse, and whose occupation had been picking up rags and bones, and whose condition was too deplorable to be told, were taken by Miss Macpherson to Canada; they are now able to read and write; they are well clothed with their own honest earnings, and the boy is thinking of having a farm of his own.

Another, the son of a drunken woman living in Ratcliffe Highway, has been many years in a lawyer's family, and has saved enough money to be apprenticed as an engineer, and I might go on with a hundred such.

The Home of Industry has been likened to the Pool of Bethesda, as love for the sick and suffering is shown there in a way hitherto unthought of.

The Bible Flower Mission had its origin here and is still one of the principal centres. It was brought about in a very simple way. In the early spring of 1874 a few snowdrops and primroses, with two or three violets, which had been casually enclosed in a letter to Mrs. Merry, were passed round her sewing class of two hundred poor old widows for each to have a smell, and then given to three dying people, one of whom breathed her last fondly clasping them.

From that time flowers were collected through the medium of women's work and distributed by the ladies at the Home of Industry among the sick in the neighbouring courts and in various hospitals.

It is not too much to say that these flowers going deep down into the haunts of vice have proved ready-made missionaries; they have opened doors and hearts hitherto locked, and have prepared the way for the ministry of the word of salvation. Natures hardened by years of sin feel their hearts melt at the sight of flowers, which recall the days when they were innocent and happy. Indeed, no one can say where the blessing ends.

The Bible Flower Mission is carried on still in the Home of Industry. Twice in the week one of the immense floors is devoted to receiving the flowers, and friends come long distances in order to arrange them and attach to each little cluster an ornamental card containing some message of redeeming love. By twelve o'clock the baskets are generally filled, and all the helpers assemble for a few words of counsel and cheer before taking up their lovely burdens and dispersing them among the sick and poor.

Of the number of flowers, labourers and texts required, you may imagine when I say that the Home of Industry supplies thirteen

hospitals, four unions and one lunatic asylum, beside the supply to the Bible women and City Missionaries, who bestow them upon sick people in their homes. Think what these flowers are to the sick ones in these courts and alleys, whose aching limbs have nothing better to lie on than heaps of shavings on the hard floor of a room filled with noisy children and disorderly men and women!

I think, as there must be many thousands of our readers who have never seen the Home of Industry in the Bethnal Green Road, and who know nothing of the varied works going on within and in connection with it, it would interest them to accompany us there.

It is an immense building. The ground floor is really a large hall where, on this evening of our visit, a large number of men and women workers are assembled and who will, after tea, give a report of their work; so while the tea is going on we will look about us. The first floor is one large class-room provided with double windows to deaden the sound of the traffic, and mounting still higher the stone staircase (a gift of Louisa Lady Ashburton) we arrive at the second floor, which is divided into cubicles for the seventy-five workers who, with Miss Macpherson, live on the premises. Each cubicle is panelled with polished wood and is just large enough to sleep in in comfort. Texts and mottoes brighten each one, and they all open into one large space called the square, which is a very large room. Still up a flight of stairs and we come to another big room with forms all facing one way and tables covered with red cloth. Here sewing-classes are held for factory girls on a free-and-easy principle, so that they can roam about and talk if they like.

The only time they are required to be silent is during the ten minutes' gospel talk, and then you might hear a pin drop.

A little sitting-room opens out of this large one specially for the factory girls, but they like the class-room best. We were surprised at this, as it looked so pretty with its ornaments, photographs and nice furniture.

Every corner of the building is utilised, and every day has its special work and special workers.

The poor widows have a sewing class to themselves on Monday afternoons. Each has a good tea and sixpence for the work. It would fill your eyes with tears if you could follow some of the widows on their way home and note how they spend their sixpence—breaking it up into farthings and halfpennies' worth of articles necessary for life.

Every nerve is strained to the utmost and every moment is occupied. Hospitals, workhouses and lodging-houses are visited by the workers; children are helped to emigrate; men are encouraged to fight against drink, and women are taught to be self-respecting and to keep their homes clean and respectable.

Miss Macpherson is the moving spirit of it all, though she herself asserts, "It is not my work but that of my many helpers."

Sunday is the busiest day of all, and the work done here on that day will require a chapter to itself.

We will now go down to the lower room and listen while the workers give an account of their work to Miss Macpherson, who is well enough this evening to occupy the chair.

We were greatly interested in the various accounts: The Colonel's address was general, but two things in it struck us; first he related seeing a card in a friend's house with these words written on it:—

"Lost,

Somewhere between sunrise and sunset,
Two golden hours, each containing sixty
diamond minutes.

No reward is offered as they are gone
beyond control."

The second was his seeing his son and Bishop Selwyn off to India, and his hearing the man on the platform say to the guard, "Right behind?" "Yes, sir." "Right in front?" "Yes, sir." "Then right away." Good mottoes for life these.

One of the speakers was the colporteur whose barrow full of Bibles and other books was standing in the room. He may be seen any day with his barrow at the further end of Whitechapel. He said he could not talk like a college student, because standing in the streets twelve hours a day selling books did not give much chance of learning. He gave many very interesting stories of his daily experience. One was of three young men, swells, he called them, who passed by his barrow a short time since, and one said to the other, "Tom, buy a Bible." The colporteur followed this up by the remark, "You might buy a worse thing, old chap." "What's the use?" said the one called Tom. "It's all

lies; there isn't any God. What have you got to say to that?"

A crowd was collecting, and the colporteur prayed that he might give a convincing answer. Looking up at the man, he said, "Well, at least it's true where it says, 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.'" It ended in the sale of a Bible.

He told us it was quite a mistake to suppose that in a place like London there isn't a house without a Bible. It was very far from the truth. This man was once an Atheist, but is now a very earnest Christian worker.

His wife next spoke of her experience among women and girls in the women's lodging-houses. She described their love of hymns, their special favourites being "Rock of Ages" and "Abide with me." She spoke also of their love of flowers and their appreciation of kindness.

Then a workman rose and spoke of the great good visitors did in coming to the workshops

and factories. Visiting factory-girls while at their work is very difficult; if the visitors pose as their teachers they are up in arms at once.

The requirements of Miss Macpherson's mission annually are from £4,000 to £6,000; as it comes in so it is spent, leaving her often with a very small balance, but always on the right side.

Whatever the state of the funds, neither she nor her workers ever fail in sympathy with the "Christies" grinding their old organs, and the "Jessicas" with broken hearts crying for bread in the alleys of London.

More workers are wanted, if only for one day in the week, and gifts of flowers and clothes are greatly needed.

It would be quite impossible to touch upon all the work done in this home, but enough has been said to show what this one woman has effected, and how much more she could do if only she had an increased number of workers and more funds.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MEDICAL.

DORIS.—It is natural for the hair to comb out, and it is only when it becomes thin from combing out, that we can consider that there is anything wrong with the hair. The amount of hair that normally combs out varies very much in different individuals. Thus one girl will comb out handfuls every day, whilst another will not lose so much in a month. Yet in both cases the hair may be quite healthy. The point is, therefore, is your hair getting thinner? not, is your hair falling out? If you are certain that your hair is getting thinner, then it cannot be considered to be in a healthy condition. We have previously discussed the various causes of hair falling out. If the scalp is quite healthy, a pomade containing cantharides and rosemary is a very good application. Bay rum and brilliantine are useful in some cases. The yolk of an egg beaten up and rubbed into the scalp is said to strengthen the hair and to render it more glossy.

VIOLET.—It is not exactly painful to have your teeth scaled. It merely gives rise to an uncanny feeling when the teeth are scraped. No, scaling does no harm to the teeth, on the contrary, it improves their appearance and makes them last longer. The enamel of the tooth is not removed by scaling; indeed it is such an exceedingly hard material that the edge of any instrument would be turned long before the slightest impression could be made by it upon the enamel.

VINCENT.—1. You cannot do anything to prevent yourself from growing taller. Decidedly six feet two is rather tall for a girl of sixteen. It is as impossible for us to tell you why you are so tall, as it is either to prevent your growing taller or to lessen your height. It is exceedingly probable that you will stop growing soon, if, indeed, you have not attained your full height already.—2. We have given advice to very many readers about "red noses" during the last few months. If you will read the correspondence in the back numbers you will obtain all the information you require. This condition is usually caused by indigestion, and in women is a very frequent sequel to excessive tea drinking.

MIRABEL.—It is safer to have teeth extracted without gas. The administration of gas is accompanied with a minute amount of danger. There is practically, however, no danger to be feared from having teeth taken out either with or without gas.

CHRISTMAS ROSE.—If it is necessary to feed an infant on cow's milk, the milk should never be given undiluted. The best way to prepare it is to mix one part of fresh milk with two parts of barley water and add a little sugar. The milk should be scalded and used when slightly warm. Barley-water must be prepared freshly every day. It must not be kept over-night. As the child gets older the relative quantity of milk should be increased. Be very careful to keep the bottle and tube scrupulously clean.

PANSY.—Hiccough during sleep may be dependent upon a great variety of causes. As hiccough is most commonly due to reflex irritation from the stomach, it is not surprising therefore that when hiccough occurs during sleep, it is also usually due to some disorder of the stomach. Taking a late supper, especially if it is composed of indigestible food, is very likely to bring on hiccough. Drinking tea or coffee, or above all, alcoholic drinks, before going to bed is very liable to produce this effect. You should take nothing but a small glass of warm milk for supper.

LABURNUM.—The condition of your hair may be due to neuralgia, but we hardly think that this is the direct cause. You say that your hair is of a dry nature. Are we correct in our surmise that your hair is brittle and lustreless, and that you are subject to scurf? If this is so, then it is easy to account for your hair falling out. This is the condition known as seborrhœa or dandruff. This affection is often associated with neuralgia, for it is one of the number of complaints due to "the nerves." We advise you to wash your hair occasionally with warm water and borax (one teaspoonful of the latter to a pint of water). The yolk of an egg well beaten up and applied to the scalp is useful, but remember that if you use this remedy you must wash your hair thoroughly afterwards. A little sulphur ointment, rubbed into the scalp, may be used from time to time.

ROSEBUD.—In our answer to "Fair Isabel" we omitted a most important item in the treatment of acne, that is, *perseverance*. It is no good expecting to be cured from acne in a day or two. It is a question of months, often of years, before the annoyance is completely quelled. If you persevere in the treatment, and pay attention to every detail, you are almost certain to get relief. You can do practically nothing for the "open pores" left by acne. They will go in time if left to themselves.—The second of your questions is very "ridiculous." If you were twenty years older, then the chance of your being "left on the shelf" might be considered. But for a girl of twenty to ask such a question—well, most people would not consider a girl of your age sufficiently old to think about marriage yet awhile!

ALICE MAY.—We strongly advise your friend, and, indeed, all our readers who are prone to stoutness, to have nothing to do with any drug which is *supposed* to cure corpulency. If a person is stouter than she wishes, she may try to reduce her fat by carefully-regulated diet and exercise, but on no condition should she take drugs to "cure" herself. Personally, we know of no preparation which can make you thin without seriously injuring your health at the same time.

CYCLIST.—It is a disputed point whether cycling strengthens or weakens the back. It seems probable, however inconsistent it may appear, that cycling may do either in different subjects. We think that, as a rule, excluding racing, cycling strengthens the back. That it injures the back in some cases is unquestionable. We have seen more than one serious disease of the spine which we strongly suspect was due to over cycling.

A. B. H.—We can give you no better advice than to read the answer to "Fair Isabel," and accurately follow every detail there specified. Sulphur by the mouth is quite useless for acne. It is the local action of the sulphur upon the skin that is required. We cannot say that we have ever seen the slightest effect from any form of internal treatment in acne. The use of sulphur ointment does not materially affect superfluous hairs.

AN ENGLISH GIRL.—We have answered both your questions quite recently. For the face spots read the answer to "Fair Isabel," which appeared in the correspondence column last April. For the freckles wear a red veil or a red parasol when you go out in the sun. Always walk in the shade. Remaining in a darkened room will often remove freckles. Glycerine and rose-water may be applied locally. It does not matter in the least whether you wash in warm or cold water.

SUNFLOWER.—The symptoms you mention do not suggest sciatica to us at all, but they sound very like "osteo-arthritis" (rheumatic gout) in the hip joint. Indeed, taking your age and all your symptoms together, we have little doubt that rheumatic gout is the cause of your trouble. This is a condition which we cannot cure, but can to a certain extent alleviate. Friction over the joint, massage, an occasional small blister or plaster, will often relieve the pain. Always wear flannel surrounding the joint. We do not think that you would derive any great benefit from internal medication. Are you certain that your truss fits well? An ill-fitting truss may very easily cause your legs to swell, and it may produce symptoms very much resembling, if not identical with, sciatica or hip-joint disease.

EMILY.—1. You would do well to go to an oculist and have your eyes tested. They are evidently out of order, and can, in all probability, be relieved by treatment. Only go at once. If, as we suspect, you need glasses, it is imperative for you to obtain the proper kind. You say that you have a tendency to squint. If you do not obtain proper treatment you may develop a permanent squint, which is both disfiguring and inconvenient, and very difficult to cure.—2. Wash your face with sulphur soap and apply a little sulphur ointment to the spots. Scarciness of the face has nothing to do with the "blood being out of order."

PERSPIRER.—The first question we would ask you would be, Can you account in any way for your perspiring more freely now than formerly? For instance, do you dress the same now as you did formerly? Have you suffered from indigestion or any other complaint? Do you eat and drink as you did formerly? The answers to these questions might give a hint as to the cause of your excessive perspiration, and also suggest any special form of treatment. If, however, nothing can be gathered from them, we must suggest remedies which are equally applicable to all cases. A bath, either hot or cold (a cold bath is perhaps better if you can stand the shock without danger), in which a little toilet vinegar, household ammonia or borax is dissolved, should be taken every morning. During the Franco-Prussian war the German soldiers were supplied with a powder consisting of one part of salicylic acid to a hundred parts of silica. This powder prevented excessive perspiration of the feet during long marches. We have frequently used this powder, and can highly recommend it for excessive perspiration of the hands and feet. A little of the powder is dusted into the stockings and gloves. Washing with toilet vinegar will reduce excessive perspiration of the face.

CEDAR.—The nightingale is rather locally distributed over England. There is a popular idea that the bird only occurs in the Home counties, but this is not quite accurate, for the nightingale is found as far north as Yorkshire, and as far west as Devonshire. It is rare in Devonshire, and does not visit Cornwall; indeed, we know of no single instance of its occurrence in the latter county. Though it usually sings in the evening, its song may frequently be heard at any time of the day or night.

LUCIE SOUTHERN.—We cannot give you the address of the correspondent you mention, as we do not know it ourselves. She says in her letter that the doctor mentioned died four years ago.

HEALTHIER.—A former correspondent has asked us exactly the same question as yourself. Doubtless before you see this you will have read the answer to the correspondent referred to.