

which evaporates before the moisture has time to penetrate to the roots.

But if watering a long border was out of the question last year, watering half-a-dozen tubs could be accomplished, and the result was that the gayest feature of my garden was the halved petroleum tubs which stood at intervals along the path and on either side of the porch.

One good canful every evening kept the plants in vigorous growth (the sun shining on the sides of the tubs causes the water to evaporate quickly, so that nightly watering is a necessity), so when the rest of the garden was looking very much dried up, these tubs had their sides decorated with petunias and ivy-leaved geraniums, while from the centres were fine specimens of white French marguerites. They were only small plants when I turned them out of the pots in which I bought them, but before they were taken up they quite filled out the tubs, and were always in bloom. Of course, to keep one's plants in bloom, it is necessary to go round pretty regularly to snip off the seed-pods, or better still to cut freely and so prevent the flowers seeding. People who have gardens make no greater mistake than being niggardly in cutting their flowers, for by cutting them you force them to go on blooming, as you thwart nature's desire to produce seed and cause her to make fresh efforts to propagate her kind. This is seen in such plants as sweet peas, which can be kept in bloom until late autumn, whereas if the first crop of blooms goes to seed, the plants dry up and bloom no more. Of course, bulbous or tuberous plants of the lily tribe which produce their blooms from within, as it were, only bear the one crop, but many perennials and all annuals and biennials should be kept from seeding if the flowering period is to be prolonged.

The tubs I use are ordinary petroleum casks cut in half with holes bored in the bottom, with a centre bit for drainage. Pieces of broken flower-pot should be placed over these holes before filling the tubs. This I do with decayed leaves, which one sweeps together in the autumn and allows to rot all the winter, and ordinary garden soil. The leaves should go at the bottom, as they not only form a good compost for your plants to root into, but act as drainage, always a most important point to be observed in pot culture, for stagnant water

at the roots of plants is a sure way to kill them or produce unhealthy growth. On the top of the leaves, which can fill the tub half way, may be put a little manure, and then fill up with soil taken from the top of the ground, as flowers require mellow soil to flourish in, and will also stand a rich one. The manure from a spent hot-bed is the best for flowers, as it is easily assimilated by the plants. Rank manure, *i.e.*, fresh from a stable or yard, except so far as it retains moisture and ammonia, benefits flowers but little and makes the soil hollow. Leaves will do this, so it is well to fill your tubs up to the brim and leave them for a few days to settle, and then tread them before putting out your plants, for it is most important to secure a firm seed-bed, as plants will do no good where the ground is hollow, as they make no roots, having nothing to push their way through. In pricking out seedlings, press the soil firmly around them, and there is nothing like the fingers to effect this. In very hot weather it helps the seedlings to cover them with a flower-pot until they get hold of the soil.

Almost anything can be grown in tubs, though geraniums, asters, petunias and marguerites not only produce gay spots of colour, but have a long blooming season, which, I take it, is a very important consideration, as you do not want to replenish the tubs. Dwarf nasturtiums would do, but they are very quick-growing things and would be apt to occupy too much space. Petunias, especially the frilled variety, are capital for the purpose, as the colours of the flowers are bright and varied and they are fairly free-growing. This year I am trying in two tubs single dahlias in the centre, while in another I have two fine plants of the German scabious.* I have also used in several the white tobacco plant as well as a few ten-week stocks. These latter take up little room and can be pulled up when the flowering season is over. *Lobelia* would be a pretty edging and *lilium auratum* and *speciosum* fine plants for the centre. In fact, any of the lilies could be used, but it must be remembered that the

* Since this was written I have tried the dahlias, but cannot say they were a great success, as they made too much growth to flower freely. Scabious, on the other hand, did well.

flowering season is after all not a long one, for there is no second lot of bloom to succeed the first.

The outside of the tubs can be painted a bright green. It would be as well to let the first coat be white or nearly so, for there is little or no body in green, whereas white, being composed of lead, "covers," and two coats of green will yield a good result. Brunswick green is the colour generally used, and it loses its crudity after a time and changes to a charming bluish green tint such as Marcus Stone loves to put in his pictures.

Other tubs, such as those small Canadian butter tubs, can be used, and these might be nailed to pieces of oak boughs, such as rustic seats and porches are made of, so as to raise them from the ground. Those living in the country can easily procure some oak boughs stripped of their bark to make some rustic stands of to hold these small tubs, and the whole could then be given a coat or two of oak varnish, for these butter tubs are made of white wood.

Another use to which petroleum tubs can be put is to have large holes made in the sides through which alpine plants and strawberries can be grown. Some people, I am told, are very successful in getting strawberries to fruit in this way, and a doctor friend has this year tried growing them in this fashion. The effect is very pretty, and I don't see why petunias, ivy geraniums, and some alpine plants should not be so grown. Of course you have to fill the tub with soil, and the top of the tub must be knocked in so that the watering can be done from the top.

I give a couple of sketches taken from some of the tubs I gardened last year to give the reader some idea of where they can be effectively placed. I have one on either side of the porch and two at the ends of one of the paths leading through the garden, while others are placed at intervals along the wider walk leading to the gate, a walk wide enough for a dog-cart to be driven over. In a limited garden the use of tubs would greatly add to the area under flowers, and these tubs can be more easily weeded than a border, being immediately under one's eyes, while slugs and snails do not so easily reach the tiny seedlings to devour them—always a great trouble in the early spring.

WHAT GIRLS ARE DOING FOR SOUTH LONDON.

THE UNITED GIRLS' SCHOOLS MISSION.

By REV. THOMAS B. WILLSON, M.A.

ALL over England girls are helping on every good work—helping, with money and by the exercise of their brains and hands, to bring relief and assistance to their poor suffering brothers and sisters, both at home and abroad.

But the particular work in South London, which I am about to describe, differs in one way from that done by girls anywhere else. In other places they have helped, and helped nobly, in various good works which have been already established, but which are not exclusively confined to them. They assist, for example, in the work which is being done among the waifs and strays of humanity in the great cities, they help to maintain poor children in orphanages and schools, and in organisations like the "Gleaners' Union" and the "King's Messengers," they take their part and share in the great work of the evangelisation of the heathen world. All this has been done in the past, and will be

continued throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The work carried on by the United Girls' Schools Mission is, however, something different from auxiliary help in other institutions or societies. It has taken upon itself the entire responsibility of a large and populous district in South London. It began, as it were, from the very beginning, everything necessary for its working being directly supplied by the Associated Schools.

A section out of a large and very poor parish was allotted to them. They did not start provided with buildings and the usual organisations. Only living agents were found to undertake the work, and everything had to be done from the very beginning.

It is in this way that the work of this mission differs from that of many others which are also much indebted to the helping hands and kind hearts of our English girls. Indeed it may well and truly be called "The

Girls' Own Mission," a work in which most surely the readers of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER* cannot fail to take a real interest.

It is only of late that people have become alive to the terrible problem of South London. For many years past the East End has been a popular field for philanthropic effort of all kinds, and it was forgotten that South London contained abodes of misery, squalor and poverty quite as bad as, if not worse than, that which was so much talked of and written about in the East End.

Those who travel from London by the South Eastern and Chatham and Dover lines pass over a perfect sea of roofs, and yet comparatively few have any idea of the condition of the lives of the people who live below them, the extraordinary density of the population, the overcrowding and the fierce struggle for existence which is to be met with there.

It is no part of this article to enter upon

any disquisition upon these things, upon which a terrible light has recently been thrown by investigations which have been made into the subject; but in order that the readers may realise the extent and value of the work done by the help of the Girls' Schools Mission, it is important that they should remember some of these conditions of life in South London.

Calmington Street and Kempstead Road lie not far from the well-known Old Kent Road, S.E., and in the midst of a district which for dead level of monotony and comparative poverty can perhaps only be equalled in South London. It is not, however, a "slum district." There are no slums in the ordinary sense of the word. There is only a dead level of poverty and incessant hard work when work can be got, and when that fails there is often semi-starvation, and "famine fever" is not unknown.

Not many years since this part was an open field on the northern side of the Grand Surrey Canal and came into the hands of the builder, ever on the look-out for space on which to build houses for the working classes in that part of London. On this open space of some six and a half acres a vast number of houses were run up, three-storey houses with bow windows looking well enough externally, so that one would not be prepared for being told of the poverty of the inhabitants. There are no such thing as back or front gardens and indeed hardly back yards, so closely are the houses built to each other.

These six and a half acres contain a population of 6,500 souls, and when one remembers that the population of London (on the average) is fifty-seven to the acre, it will be easily seen that here it is exactly *one thousand!* Every house has from three to seven families, and all of them poor. With the majority the wages of the father will not average more than eighteen shillings a week. "Everybody" (says a mission report) "is

poor, not, however, generally penniless, though we have had cases of terrible destitution, such as children being sent to school with only a little warm water for breakfast." Everyone who can get work has to work. With children it begins at the age of thirteen, and work lasts as long as health and strength will permit.

It is easy to see how life with such surroundings must of necessity be dull and monotonous, and without anything which is glad and beautiful in it. The children, and of these there is an abnormal number, have no playground except the street; the elders have no bright spot except the public-house, and it is no wonder under such circumstances that drunkenness and all its attendant evils should flourish.

It was in the midst of such a locality that the United Girls' Schools Mission began its work in March, 1897. The Rev. H. G. Veazey was placed in charge of it, and the wonderful measure of success which has attended it is due, under God, to the self-denying efforts of the missionary and his wife with their devoted band of helpers.

It was a happy thought which suggested that the girls' schools about London and in England generally should take up a special work of this kind. The great public schools of England have done it for years past; Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Radley, Marlborough and many others have established missions.

Now as no single girls' school of the same class as the great English public schools for boys would probably be able to carry out such a work, the difficulty was overcome by a number of schools joining together to form a United Girls' Schools Mission, with the Hon. Mrs. Talbot (wife of the Bishop of Rochester, in whose great diocese all South London lies) as President, and a strong committee of head-mistresses and others to superintend and carry out the work.

At the end of the first year of the mission

work, forty-one schools in all parts of England were helping, and at the end of 1899 this number has increased to seventy-five.

In order to join in the work a school must first affiliate itself to the Union, by paying an annual subscription of one guinea to the Mission Funds. After that, each school does what it can to help by extra donations from pupils and friends by sales of work, school concerts, making clothing for the poor, and in many other ways in which help and sympathy can be manifested.

The work of the Mission began in a small way by the renting of a house in Kempstead Road, which, by knocking two rooms into one, made a space large enough to hold sixty-five chairs. From the first it was necessary to hold the Sunday schools and services by relays. Into this room two hundred children were packed, and more by far sent away, and the services of two policemen had to be requisitioned outside, to prevent the crush when they were let in. The services for adults were also filled to overflowing. Then a kitchen was thrown into the room, the stairs were packed, and still they came. Soon the adjoining house was taken, and still there was not room enough, or anything like it, for those who wished to come. Mothers' meetings, girls' sewing classes, working girls' club, men's and lads' clubs, all were quickly organised and all quickly supplied with members, along, of course, with all the mission services and Temperance work usually carried on in a mission district.

Such was the beginning of a work which, although only in its infancy, has, by the generous help of girls themselves in different parts of England, already brought sunshine and hope into many lives and helped to point them to higher and better things. The progress from this encouraging beginning was truly marvellous. "We did not dream," writes the missionary, "that within the year, the staff of one missionary and his wife would have



TWO MORE GARDEN TUBS.

increased to two missionaries, five lady-workers giving the whole of their time, and an honorary lay-reader, making eight in all, besides 'settlers' and others who have come over to help."

In September, 1898, a workers' settlement was opened at Albany Row, not far from the original mission house, where there are now a number of ladies living and helping in all kinds of work. The head of this settlement is Miss Gooch, who is always ready to let visitors see what is being done. In this house there is an admirable club for working girls, an especially important branch of work in this district, as there is literally no place for the girls or children to go to, if they leave their overcrowded homes.

As time went on, the place where the mission dwelt was, to quote the old record, "too strait" for it, and at the back of the settlement house there has recently been erected an iron room capable of holding some three hundred adults, and here the regular services are held; and the two houses in Kempshead Street are given over to clubs, classes, and meetings of a size which they can accommodate.

It is not, of course, intended to rest content with such buildings as are at present in use. Beside the original mission house was a large space left for the building of a public-house. This piece of ground has been purchased and plans prepared, and it is estimated that £8,000 will be required to erect suitable premises, and it is hoped that in time the girls' schools will provide a large part of this sum, so that the work may be carried on in suitable buildings.

This may seem a large amount for the girls' schools to raise, in addition to the maintenance of the mission staff, but I am sure that a visit to the work carried on there, or a visit from the head missionary to the various schools in the Union, would tend to create enthusiasm

sufficient to raise the required amount in a few years at any rate.

Then it must not be forgotten that these poor people are not indifferent to the work which is being done amongst them. It is no small proof of this that in two years these people, who are all poor, have themselves contributed (largely in pence, halfpence and farthings) a sum of no less than £300 to the work of the mission. Surely such efforts deserve the help of girls.

One pleasant way in which the schools associated come into actual touch with the work is by providing "outings" for children and adults. During last summer a good many schools in the country around London have entertained parties of this kind. The joys of a day in the country can only fully be realised by those who know something of the conditions under which the poor live in South London. Keats has expressed something of it when he said—

"To one who has been long in city pent
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of Heaven—to breathe a
prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament."

And although these poor people have never heard of John Keats, and their prayer may be but an almost unexpressed one, yet those of us who have worked among the poor of London know something of the joy and pleasure which the green grass and hedgerows of the country and the waving branches of the trees bring to them on the one day in the year on which they can revel in it, especially when they come from a district like that I have been describing, where there are literally no gardens, and where there is not a single tree.

An amusing story is told of one of these "outings." A girls' school was entertaining a party of factory girls connected with one of

the clubs of the mission. A friend of the working girls was explaining to them something about the school where their more favoured sisters were educated, and mentioned incidentally that some of the girls in it were seventeen years of age, or older. On hearing this (to her an amazing statement), one of the girls turned to her friend—

"D'ye hear that, Mariar? Wot a dunce she must be, seventeen, and ain't got her labour certificate yet."

Poor girl! when *she* reached thirteen, she had passed enough of "standards" to entitle her to the "labour certificate," and she had to begin to earn her own living.

What has the mission done for the district? "Much every way." Of the depth and reality of the spiritual work nothing need be said here, but of its other aspect, the raising and elevating the social life of the people, I may mention two facts, both curious ones in their way, one to be regretted, but both evidence of the good work which is being done. First, the landlords have raised and are raising the rents, because the people have become more sober and respectable, and they think they can get more—a very unforeseen occurrence and one, as I say, to be regretted, because rents in South London are already a great deal too high.

The second is an amusing testimony. The owner of a number of houses recently gave the missionary £5, because, he said, there was, since the establishment of the mission, such an enormous saving in the outlay on broken windows in the houses!

But it is not only broken windows which the mission has done much to remedy. It has sought, in following the Master's example, "to bind up the broken-hearted," and it has, like other similar missions, brought hope and comfort and peace to the homes of many toilers in our great and overcrowded districts of South London.

VARIETIES.

FACTS ABOUT PUMICE-STONE.

Pumice, as is well known, is of volcanic origin, being a kind of lava which has been rendered light by the escape of gases when in a molten state. It is found on most of the shores of the Tyrrhenian Sea and elsewhere, but it is at present almost exclusively obtained from the little island of Lipari.

Most of the volcanoes of Lipari have ejected pumaceous rocks, but the best stone is all the product of one mountain, Monte Chirica, nearly two thousand feet in height, with its two accessory craters. The district in which the pumice is excavated covers an area of about three square miles.

It has been calculated that about one thousand hands are engaged in this industry, six hundred of whom are employed in excavating the mineral.

Pumice is brought to the surface in large blocks or in baskets, and is carried thus either to the neighbouring village or to the seashore, to be taken there into boats. The supply is said to be practically inexhaustible.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

"I will not willingly offend,
Nor be too soon offended;
What's amiss I'll strive to mend,
And bear what can't be mended."

KEEP THE PEACE.—Restraint in the expression of unpleasant feelings or harsh thoughts is the foundation on which many a happy home and many near and dear friendships are built.

SAVINGS FROM RUSKIN.

To paint water is like trying to paint a soul.

No royal road to anywhere worth going to. When you have got too much to do, don't do it.

If you can paint a leaf, you can paint the world.

Nothing must come between nature and the artist's sight.

Anybody who makes religion a second object makes religion no object.

To live is nothing unless to live be to know Him by Whom we live.

The sky is not blue colour only, it is blue fire and cannot be painted.

There is material enough in a single flower for the ornamenting of a score of cathedrals.

The most beautiful things in the world are the most useless—peacocks and lilies, for instance.

BOOKS FOR ALL THE WORLD.—A French critic has recently declared that of cosmopolitan classics there are only two—*Don Quixote* and *Robinson Crusoe*. He tells us that "other masterpieces take higher rank, from the perfection of their art or from the sublimity of their thought, but they do not address themselves to every age and to every condition; they demand for their enjoyment a mind already formed and an intellectual culture not given to everyone. Cervantes and De Foe alone have solved the problem of interesting the little child and the thoughtful old man, the servant girl and the philosopher."

AN AFFECTIONATE LION.

A passion for pets of an unusual character was one of the characteristics of the late Sir Henry Rawlinson. He even numbered some of the larger *felidæ* among his four-footed friends.

When he was at Bagdad he had a pet lion which had been found when a cub on the banks of the Tigris, its mother having been shot. He alone fed it, and the lion when grown would follow him about like a dog.

One hot day the animal moped and rejected its food. It paced about its master's room, and he being very busy called to the servants to take it away. The lion would not go with them, but drew nearer to its master and at last sat down under his chair with its head between his knees. "Oh," said he, "if he won't go, let him bide."

The servants went out and Sir Henry wrote on. The lion sank from a sitting posture into that of a "lion couchant." All was quiet for an hour or two save for the scratching of Sir Henry's pen. When his work was over, he put down his hand to pat the lion. The lion was dead.

NOT NUMEROUS.—If the sun had nothing to do but shine on the truly good, it would not have to get up so early.

THE NATURAL ORDER.

"Whene'er the course of love is smooth
This sequence is obeyed,
At first there is a maid so true,
And then a trousseau made."