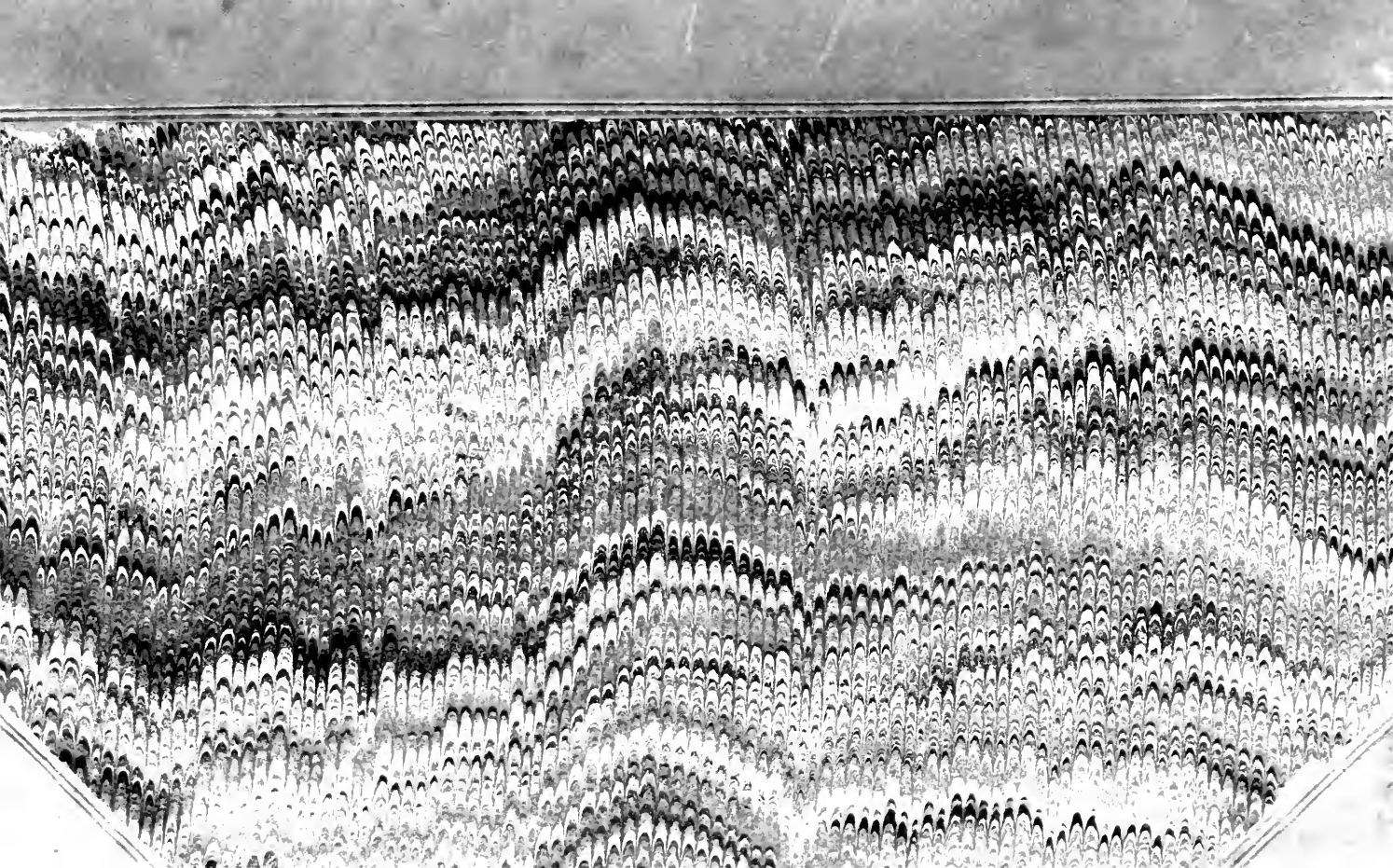

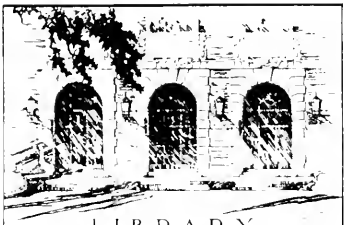

DEACONESSES

FOR THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

REPRINTED FROM THE

Church of England Monthly Review.

DEDICATED TO

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

ALSO A PAPER ON

THE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

OF

WORKHOUSE GIRLS.

BY LOUISA TWINING.

READ AT THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AT BRADFORD, OCT. 1859.

"The harvest is ripe. Where are the sick and the poor wanting? Let those women of England, who sit in busy idleness, look at Germany. There are your sisters all at work. Christ in their midst. Let Him not say, I have called my English handmaidens, but they would not answer. I stood at their door and knocked, but they would not open."

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1860.

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DEACONESSES

FOR THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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1. *Church Deaconesses. The Revival of the Office of Deaconess Considered; with Practical Suggestions.* By the Rev. R. J. Hayne, Vicar of Buckland Monachorum, Devon. London: J. H. and J. Parker. 1859.
2. *Hospitals and Voluntary Nurses. A Short Sketch of the Commencement of the Cottage Hospital, Middlesborough, Yorkshire.* London: Mozley. 1859.
3. *Fifteenth Report of the Establishment of Deaconesses at St. Loup, Switzerland.*
4. *Seventeenth Report of the Institution of Deaconesses in Paris.*
5. *Eleventh Report of St. John's House Training Institution for Nurses.*

EN years ago there was probably not one English publication on the subject of Protestant deaconesses; now numerous pamphlets are before us, treating it in different ways, and telling of various experiments, but all pointing to a want which is felt and expressed, not by one party or section of the Church alone, but by men and women of various opinions. Yet we cannot call it altogether a new subject. Expressions of the want we have alluded to have been uttered at intervals during a long period. The first revival of the subject, if we may so express it, was made by Southey, who, nearly forty years ago, brought it forward in his letters and other writings, and, amidst the immense pressure of his literary labours, found time to dwell upon the social wants of our country, and to suggest remedies to meet them. The idea seems to have been implanted in his mind during his

travels in the Netherlands, and his opinions were shared by an eminent physician of that day, Dr. Gooch, who was also a philosopher and a philanthropist. Another friend added suggestions for a kind of "associated home" for women,* such as has been recently once more brought before the public; but the time was not yet come when these thoughts should meet with a response, and result in action; "the good thus sown only slept, like the seed in wintry ground." More and repeated discussions were necessary to bring it fully before the public mind; further and more startling revelations of the needs and miseries of our great cities, with their ever-growing populations and their sin and ignorance, outstepping all the means provided to meet them, were needed to make us realize the urgent necessity of bringing more labourers into the vast field of work before us. And these revelations have not been sparingly given. From all quarters we hear of the thousands needing care, nursing, teaching and reforming, while the labourers for this work are numbered but by units or tens. This proves the reality of the want to be supplied, and that it is no artificial demand that is being made. We are not asking for women to be again enrolled in communities, in order to gratify a selfish love of seclusion and contemplation, nor even to rest in peaceful and innocent repose, however congenial and harmless it might be. Such a demand would be so entirely contrary to the spirit and every feeling of this age in which we live, that it could have no chance of success, at least in our own Church. Only in *work* will this success be found, and we have said that there is a real demand abroad for such persons as will perform it. A voice is heard from prisons, hospitals, reformatories, and workhouses, calling for the help of women. Multiply the clergy, scripture readers, and missionaries, as they ought to be multiplied, there must still be the want of

* The remarks made by the editor of *Southey's Life* on this subject are so valuable that we cannot help quoting them, embodying as they do his father's opinions:—"Institutions of this kind, however, so long as their object is limited to the benefit of their own inmates, have not in them a sufficient largeness of purpose and general utility to command the interest and admiration of mankind to any great extent. But when regarded in another light, as an influential machinery for the moral and religious cultivation of the people, they become highly important. * * There must be a centre of union, sufficient to overpower, or at least to keep in harmonious subjection, individual characters; this can only be supplied by religion and the habit of obedience. * * It seems also an absolute essential that they should have their definite work—an object which may fill their thoughts and occupy their energies; and this my father suggests, arguing that they ought to be devoted to purposes of Christian charity, and showing how wide a field is open to the members of such societies in attendance upon the sick, in affording Christian consolation, and in the relief and education of the poor; and, with reference to such offices as these, he concludes with the hopeful prognostic that 'thirty years hence the reproach may be effaced, and England may have its Sisters of Charity.'"—*Southey's Life and Correspondence*, vol. v.

women to do that work in the world which God has by many indications of His providence assigned to them as their province and their sphere.

We hardly know how far we can venture to say that the problem has been solved in England of bringing the various suggestions and theories relating to this subject into shape and practice; but there can be no doubt that it has been done on the continent, and why should the difficulty have been greater here than in other Protestant countries? Numerous institutions have existed abroad for many years past. The oldest, that of Kaiserswerth, in Germany, has now acquired a world-wide fame from having been the school in which one of our countrywomen learnt how to carry out that work of mercy which will never be forgotten, and which opened the way for others to follow in her steps. The history of this institution, and of its humble commencement in the year 1833, has been so often repeated that it is hardly necessary to revert to it here. Its progress was slow but sure, and in every continental nation institutions formed on this model have since sprung up, varying in their details and size, but still retaining the main features of the parent house. Two hundred and forty deaconesses are now at work after being trained at Kaiserswerth, and flourishing houses are established in Jerusalem, Smyrna, Constantinople, Pittsburg in North America, and other places. And let it not be supposed that *this* was copied from the surrounding institutions of the Roman Catholics. The order of Protestant Deaconesses claims descent from the early ages of Christianity, when pure and holy women ministered in the Church of Christ, and spent their lives in the service of her lost and suffering children. Nothing is more clear than the fact, or at the same time so little understood, that these Protestant institutions do not owe their existence to Roman Catholic example or precedent, but have existed quite independent of them. Were this once clearly comprehended and admitted, much of the difficulty in our way would disappear, for it is lurking suspicion and fear that form the lion in our path. In the fourth century we have the example of a noble woman of Rome, who assembled round her a community of women in Bethlehem of Judea, who together spent their days in prayer and good works. In the seventh and eighth centuries there were deaconesses in the Western Church, and in the Eastern as late as the twelfth century. The office existed in the churches of the Waldenses and other Protestants in the fifteenth century. Luther sanctioned and encouraged them. In the sixteenth century the order was revived in the Netherlands; and even in England in the reign of Elizabeth they were not wanting. And all this was *before* the establishment of the great work of St. Vincent de Paul, and independent of it. The revival of the work

in the nineteenth century was owing to the zeal of the good pastor Fliedner at Kaiserswerth, and there are now establishments of Protestant deaconesses in all the countries of Europe. One was begun in Paris by the French Evangelical Church in 1842; at Echallens in Switzerland in 1843 (now removed to St. Loup, near Lausanne); and there are others at Zurich, Strasbourg, Utrecht, and in Sweden; and many hospitals are served by the deaconesses in other places where institutions do not exist. A personal visit to those of Paris and St. Loup have convinced us of the excellence of the work, and of the admirable adaptation of the means to the end proposed.

The institution at Paris is only older by one year than that of St. Loup, near Lausanne, and has been established eighteen years. In most respects it resembles the largest and oldest institution of the kind, that of Kaiserswerth, as it comprises works of different kinds under one roof, and thus gives occupation to persons of various tastes and capacities. It is situated in the Rue de Reuilly, in what was once a suburb of Paris, but is now rapidly being surrounded by streets; there is, nevertheless, a pleasant garden, and an airy, country appearance about the house, which now contains above one hundred persons. Of these, there are twelve deaconesses and eighteen *elèves* or probationers. The directress has been at her post from the beginning of the work. The founder, the good pastor, M. Vermeil, who spoke to us years ago of his great desire to see the work established in England, has been obliged to give up the superintendence from ill health for two years, but he has lately returned, hoping to be able to resume some part of his labours, with the assistance of another pastor, who had taken his place meanwhile; (he was, however, absent at the time of our visit). The work has grown and prospered since our last visit five years ago, and it left the same calm and pleasant impression. It appeared perfectly simple and natural, as if all the workers were in their right places, without the smallest affectation of manner or of dress, and this is the great charm of both these institutions; they seem to have solved the problem of *doing the work* according to the spirit and form of their own Church, without any straining after effect, or the smallest approach to what is perfectly unnecessary, an imitation of the mere outward garb which does not belong to them. But to return to the work itself, which comprises three divisions—the school and nursery, the refuge, and the hospital. Above 100 children are collected in the day-schools from the poor of the neighbourhood, and when we saw them were eating their dinners very happily from the baskets they had brought with them. The eight neat little cribs in the Crèche were empty, as the sister who took charge of this part of the work was ill and absent.

The refuge receives girls who are in the way of temptation, as well as those who have already yielded to it; and some who have no homes, or bad ones, or who are found to be unmanageable by their parents; one part of the house is set apart for them; each one has a small room to herself, with a text of Scripture on the wall. The deaconess who was with them spoke with hope and satisfaction of the results of the care, and said many were rescued from their evil lives, and willingly remained for the two years appointed for them.

The hospital is for men as well as women, though there are but six beds for the former; here, as in all institutions abroad, there is a man nurse for them, as well as the deaconess who superintends the ward, and all the beds are surrounded by neat white curtains. The only addition which has lately been made to the institution is the opening of eight rooms for lodgers of a superior class, paying from four to eight francs a day for everything, with board and medical attendance; when this becomes more known they expect it will be a very welcome assistance to many Protestant governesses and others who may be ill and solitary in the great world of Paris; the rooms are small, but very neat and pleasant. In the chapel there is service on Sundays, attended by many persons from the neighbourhood, and daily prayers in the wards; several of the pastors in Paris preach in turn.

There is no limit to the work which might be done, for there is no other Protestant hospital in Paris, but the want of deaconesses is great, though at present there are eighteen who are training for the work. Those who are chiefly of the class which seems suited to it are in great demand as governesses, and do not then willingly turn to such a different vocation; another class which has been thought of with hope seems to prove a failure —girls from orphan institutions; the total want of all experience of life, and the too frequently benumbing effects of a life passed in an institution of any kind, do not fit women for duties which require energy, devotion, and the enlarged affections of the heart.

Perhaps a still more pleasing impression was left upon us by the smaller institution of St. Loup, which was removed from Echallens six years ago. Visitors wishing to go there must take the Iverdun railroad from Lausanne, and stop at the Eclèpens station, about three-quarters of an hour distant; there they will find a char and a rough cart-horse to convey them about four miles to the village—long enough in a vehicle without springs. The institution gives the idea of a family, of which the good, kind M. and Mme. Germond are the heads, and have been for the last seventeen years, assisted at first by their two young daughters, but now by one only, for the other has lately

married—not the less fitted for her present life because she has shared the work of the deaconesses for a few years previously. Like many other works of the kind, this has had its trials and its struggles, even its persecutions, for being supported by the clergy of the *Eglise Libre*, it was, of course, disliked by the *Eglise Nationale*, and this led to its removal to its present situation, where a house was kindly given by its liberal benefactor, M. Butini, of Geneva, whose munificence is not limited to this good work alone, seeing he has just opened a new hospital at Geneva for thirty patients, which is to be served by deaconesses from St. Loup, and has, besides, in the grounds of his beautiful *campagne* two chalets for the reception of convalescent children.

There is a second house in the grounds of St. Loup, to which he occasionally comes, but which he says is destined for the home of the deaconesses in their old age—a provision which is absolutely essential to the work of free and unpaid service. This institution is for the sick alone, and there are beds for thirty-six—men as well as women and children. M. and Mme. Germond seem, indeed, a father and mother to all in the house, A deaconess from the hospital of La Tour, in one of the Vaudois valleys of Piedmont, had been to pass her holiday in her old home, and was taking leave to return to her work, over which she presides; it was pleasant to see the unity and affection there was amongst all who had once worked together. The deaconesses are bound by no promise or engagement, yet one had been there from the beginning. M. Germond prefers to leave the will to remain entirely free; and it is the same in Paris, but not at Kaiserswerth. No doubt both plans may work well.

At St. Loup the dress is a dark brown stuff, with a very simple white cap; at Paris it is black. At twelve we dined together—deaconesses and convalescents, all at the same table.

There are in all about thirty deaconesses belonging to the establishment, but scattered in different places; eight were in the house. M. Germond is perfectly devoted to his work, and full of earnest desires to see it spread. An institution is just opened at Darmstadt, the Grand Duchess having built a beautiful house for the purpose. The lady who is to superintend it had lately been to St. Loup, and also the directress of the Hospital of Berlin, both of whom are persons of rank, but have gone through all stages of the work, even in the household and the kitchen. No doubt such knowledge must always be useful to a woman; but we doubt if our English ideas will ever accommodate themselves to the plan, and though great stress is laid upon it in all the foreign institutions, it does not appear to us essential to the work. There are only two paid persons in the house. More deaconesses are wanted, as numerous

applications are continually refused from different hospitals and institutions, where the superior value of their services over those of common, paid nurses is appreciated.

M. Germond asks—and we all ask—why do not more persons offer themselves for the work? Numbers are never wanting for the institutions of the Roman Catholics, where the self-sacrifice required is far greater; but *here*, in England, it is rather the opportunities that have been hitherto wanting than the persons.

At the summer *fête* last year six hundred persons were assembled, and the day was most successful. Many pastors of both the Free and National Churches were there, and spoke in favour of the institution, which was very gratifying to the good founders of it; services were held in a tent in the garden, and a pretty scene it must have been with the scattered groups, and the lovely view in front, extending to the distant range of the Alps, with the faint, exquisite, snowy peak of Mont Blanc amongst them; behind are the Jura, and such sights and such air may well be envied as elements of cure for the inmates of a hospital.

Considerable help, too, was given to the funds, which was much needed. Nothing is received from the Government; all, therefore, depends upon voluntary aid, except the small sums received from the few patients who can pay a trifle.

Such are the labours of deaconesses abroad: the question for us is, Have we work for them to do at home? We shall not long be able to overlook or ignore the rapidly increasing difficulties presented by our large cities, which we believe will help to hasten the time when the organization of communities of women devoted to the work of the Church will become absolutely necessary. In all the parishes of eastern and central London complaints are heard of the gradual disappearance of those who once aided both personally and pecuniarily in the work of caring for the poor. Everywhere families of the upper classes, and of tradesmen also, are leaving the crowded and noisy streets for country and suburban villas, where their interests become concentrated, and their energies and their money are expended. In these parishes district visitors are not to be found for week-day work, and a few Sunday-school teachers only are forthcoming at the clergyman's call; and these are generally of the lower class of tradespeople, not those whose influence it would be the most desirable to procure. And as this process goes on, we must remember meantime that the poor do not cease out of the land, but, on the contrary, increase, filling up the blanks left by wealthier inhabitants.

Another cause of the loss of "parish helpers," besides the

removal of persons in trade from London, is, that in many parishes houses formerly occupied by families of the upper or middle classes are now taken for institutions, which obviously require, rather than give, help, to the manifest loss of the poorer classes.

In some parishes district visitors are still to be found, and there will always be room for their efforts; but with regard to the working of district visiting societies, while thankfully acknowledging that they have filled up many gaps in our social system in the past, and we doubt not have prepared the way for more definite work in the future, we are sure that those visitors who have most conscientiously endeavoured to fulfil their duties, will be the first to confess how great are their short-comings and how imperfect is their organization.

To dwell upon many of the alleged abuses of the system would be unjust, because we believe that whatever they may have been (and in what human work are they not to be found?), the good it has effected would far outweigh them. Yet if a training is considered to be necessary for any regular and organized work (and surely it must be for those who undertake to be visitors and almoners to the poor), we cannot expect to find every one who lightly takes this office upon her fitted for its duties. What has been the previous training of the school girl to prepare her for intercourse with her poor and suffering and sinful fellow-creatures? In those schools where the mistress does not consider plain needlework too vulgar an accomplishment to be taught her pupils, some garments for the poor are perhaps made in leisure hours for distribution at Christmas; and so the thoughts of some may have been turned to the "naked," whom we have been commanded to "clothe." But we would venture to say, that the general subject of the wants of the poor, and of our intercourse with them, is not brought before the minds of girls in any of the schools which educate the higher classes.

We know that the office of district visitor is often undertaken by those who, in the midst of a life of weary and unsatisfying gaiety, long for something real (even though it be a painful reality) on which to expend their energies and a portion of their time. We would not grudge them the satisfaction, or the benefit of a reaction so necessary to those who bear about them the consciousness that they are responsible beings, approaching an eternity in which they will have to render an account of hours given for the highest uses, but spent perhaps on vain trifles,—of talents bestowed for the purpose of influencing others and turning many to righteousness, but wasted in endeavours to "kill time," and to provide for self-amusement. But while we would not grudge such persons even one hour rescued and redeemed from vanity, and which may perhaps be one day

looked back upon with satisfaction, we must still be allowed to doubt if they are able or willing to do *all* the work that we are demanding of women at the present day. The word of sympathy and consolation, spoken from a true woman's heart at the bedside of a sick or dying fellow-creature, may be blest both to her who gives and to those who receive it, and we have always considered that the proof of sympathy shown in these visits was the most precious part of the whole system; yet we cannot but acknowledge how often this is mixed up with much that is positively injurious to the classes who are the subjects of this visiting. And here we cannot refrain from quoting a few lines from one who has had much experience of the wants and sufferings of the poor. "How many we know, who are suffering from ill-health, merely from having nothing particular to do. 'Go and visit the poor,' is always said. And the best, those who have the deepest feeling of the importance of this occupation, answer in their souls (if not aloud), 'We do not know how. If we only go into the cottages to talk, we see little difference between gossiping with the poor and gossiping with the rich; or, if our intercourse is to be merely grounded upon the "two-and-sixpence," or the load of coals, we don't know whether we do as much good as we do harm.' On finding a cottage, generally comfortable-looking and respectable, one day in the strangest state of nakedness and disorder, the woman answered, 'La! now; why, when the district visiting ladies comes, if we didn't put everything topsy-turvy, they wouldn't give us anything!' To be able to visit *well*, is not a thing which comes by instinct, but, on the contrary, is one of the rarest accomplishments. But when attained, what a blessing to both visitors and visited!"*

There is a considerable difference of opinion as to what should be the real aim of district visiting; some assert that it is not for the spiritual benefit of the visited, this part of the work being entirely the clergyman's province; while others declare that to give help in money or in tickets is the surest way to pauperize and lower the character of the poor. Yet for the well-clothed and well-fed lady to enter the miserable room and find a want of all the means whereby comfort and perhaps health may be restored, and having the power to bestow them, yet refrain from exercising it, is a hard and painful act of self-denial which can hardly be expected of her. And great no doubt as are the evils of indiscriminate almsgiving, we cannot believe that words spoken without corresponding acts of kindness can be of any avail. To our own feelings nothing can be more repugnant than the practice urged by many good people of intruding upon the poor at all hours and seasons for the purpose

* The *Institution of Kaiserswerth on the Rhine*. By Miss NIGHTINGALE. 1851.

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of reading the Bible to them in the midst of their daily toil and household work, when we ourselves should consider such an intrusion as unwarrantable, and the proposition to receive it both out of time and place. If the feelings of the poor are not respected, but, on the contrary, a patronizing, condescending tone adopted, we have no hesitation in saying that such visits do more harm than good.

There are some admirable remarks on this subject in the Lecture on District Visiting, by the Rev. J. Ll. Davies, in the *Practical Lectures to Ladies*. He defines a district visitor as "a lady seeking to administer to the poor on the basis of Church-fellowship;" and touches upon all the dangers and difficulties of the work. One of these is, "that of becoming a mere dispenser of relief. The whole matter of giving assistance in money, or money's worth, to the very poor, is one full of pain and perplexity. I find that experience forces me more and more towards the severer side. * * The general greediness, the envy and ill-feeling, the deception occasioned by even careful almsgiving, when it is large and liberal, are so inevitable and so fatal, that most of those who have had anything to do with distribution amongst the needy must often have wished that there were no money to be given away." There is a great danger, then, of the district visitor being regarded only as a "relieving lady;" and there is another "character in which the true function of a lady visitor is apt to disappear—that of a tract-distributor;" and, Mr. Davies adds, "I think all visitors of any experience will sympathize with the want of faith I have expressed in the virtues of wholesale tract-distributing."

A hopeful and new branch of the work is lately begun by the establishment of a system of visiting by women of a humble class in the houses of their still poorer and more ignorant sisters.* The first and ostensible object was to sell Bibles by collecting subscriptions in small sums towards the purchase of them; but this object speedily extended into a far wider scheme of benefiting the whole moral and physical condition of these families, by enabling them to purchase bedding, clothing, and even articles of furniture. In this case the benefits received are paid for, and the visitor is a real helper to the poor and miserable families in her district. Such a "parish helper" more nearly realizes the picture of the "parish deaconess" of Kaiserswerth than any worker which district visiting societies have furnished. Referring to the former pamphlet we hear how the latter has learnt her work.† "In the hospital, the school,

* See the *Missing Link, or Bible Women in the Homes of the London Poor.* Nisbet. 1859.

† The *Institution of Kaiserswerth.*

the asylum, the household, they learn the wants of the poor, the wants in themselves, and how to treat them. It is beautiful to see the accomplished parish deaconess visiting. She makes her rounds in the morning; she performs little offices for the sick, which do not require a nurse living in the house, but which the relations cannot do well; she teaches the children little trades, knitting, making list shoes, etc., and all this with a cordiality and charm of manner which wins sufficient confidence from the parents to induce them to *ask* to be taught to sweep and cook, and put their house in order. The parish deaconess at Kaiserswerth is continually receiving curious little notes written to ask her advice upon such and such household matters, and wherever she goes the cottage gradually puts on a tidy appearance. How often a parish clergyman sighs for such an assistant! how often lady visitors sigh to be able to render such assistance!"

Now, if there were some central home in each parish as the head-quarters of the district visiting society, with a body of residents, such a teaching of beginners could be carried out, and the new-comers might at least gradually enter upon their work under the care and guidance of the more experienced visitors, without going through a series of painful preliminary mistakes.

In urging these wants and claims of parishes, we of course presume that the entire co-operation of the rector would be required and obtained before any attempt was made to introduce an organized system of operations, otherwise its intention and efficacy will be entirely frustrated. We believe in the case of Scripture readers and city missionaries this (as it appears to us) very necessary and important condition is not always respected as it should be, to the manifest injury of the parochial system and machinery.

What, then, can meet this serious and ever-increasing difficulty in our London parishes but the bringing in of some extra-parochial workers who would live in the midst of these deserted ones, and aid the clergy in their single-handed labours?* Many women with small means might, by living together, find a comfortable home instead of the solitary and scanty lodging which thousands are compelled to endure. And when such institutions were once recognised and established, we do not think funds would be wanting to aid in their support, and provide for the maintenance of some members who could not contribute their share of means, and also to make that provision for sickness and old age which is essential to the carrying out of such a plan.

* We believe that the same want is felt in Liverpool and other large towns, where the most wealthy inhabitants live chiefly in the suburbs.

We need not enumerate all the offices which these women would be able to fulfil; but great as we have shown the needs of *parishes* to be, we cannot allow that there are any greater or more urgent than those of our workhouses. Of all the institutions where deaconesses are required, in none is the call for them so pressing as in these. Hospitals can command the services of nurses who will be forthcoming with the inducement of good salaries, but in workhouses this mode of procuring them cannot be tried.* There is too jealous a watch kept upon the expenditure of poor-rates for us ever to expect to see highly-paid nurses employed in these abodes of extremest destitution and misery, into which, as has been well said, "all the misery of our land drains sooner or later." A well-paid matron we may aspire to see, but not paid women in the numbers which are wanted.

The voluntary devotion of Christian women is, then, the only hope of remedy for these great needs. Such "associated homes," might be established within reach of every workhouse, as well as in every parish, and would furnish either visitors or residents, or both, as they might be required, entailing no expense upon the poor-rates, but in many respects saving them. And here we cannot help alluding to the various ways in which women might help among the thousands of their own sex who are inmates of our workhouses.† It is strange to find what a subordinate position women fill in these institutions at present. The matron is placed entirely under the master, whose salary is more than double hers; and yet, out of the 135,650 persons who were inmates of workhouses last year, no fewer than 42,414 were women, and 53,551 were children. And the most monstrous point of all this substitution of man's for woman's work and influence, is the supervision of the young women in our unions by "task" or "labour-masters," whose duty it is to see that

* But even with regard to paid hospital nurses we cannot refrain from remarking how very far they fall short of the standard we require in such positions. Here and there may be found a woman of religious mind who perhaps connects her work in some remote way with her religion, but we know that bribery is still in many cases the accustomed mode of securing attention and kindness, not only from nurses, but from matrons also. We would thankfully acknowledge, however, that the standard of character has lately been greatly raised by the influence of public opinion upon this subject, and by the establishment of training institutions.

† We would venture to suggest whether women might not be fitly employed in doing, partly at least, the work of relieving officers amongst the *out-door* poor? This would be *remunerative* work, which is now being demanded for women, and it would be merely an extension of district visiting, and a co-operation between that and the parish authorities, which might prove highly advantageous to both,—and lastly, if perhaps least, a decidedly economical plan. We have only to look abroad to see the Bureaux de Bienfaisance in Paris, corresponding to the administration of relief to our out-door poor, entirely managed by women

they fulfil their appointed portions of work. Can it be believed that men, young, inexperienced, and, in a word, totally unfit, are appointed to these difficult posts? The results of such a system may be better imagined than described, and surely it will not be said that women are asking too much, when they demand a greater share in the management and supervision of these institutions.

Without in the least depreciating the great and invaluable labours of those "10,000 sisters of charity," whose merits have lately been brought before our notice, it cannot be denied that there is work to be done far beyond their reach and powers, with all those duties of the home and family devolving upon them which are without doubt the first in importance for every wife and mother. We can hardly, therefore, wonder or regret that they are unable to meet the pressing wants around them, and all that we wish to prove is the necessity for some other and supplementary mode of action. In visiting pauper schools we have frequently asked (seeing the urgent need of some womanly influence over the poor orphan girls especially), if the chaplain's wife did not occasionally accompany him and take some interest in his charge? And how often has the answer been that "a large family and delicate health" prevented her from doing so; and that though other schools were visited, no one ever came to these. Yet ere long such an influence will be demanded on economical and prudent grounds, if for no other reason. Chaplains and Guardians, who a few years ago declared any suggestions and offers of help to be "quite unnecessary and uncalled for," now begin to see that women can do for women and helpless children that which *they* cannot do, and acknowledge that they have even succeeded in producing order, submission, and gentleness, where all was before confusion, disorder, and despair.

We cannot discuss this subject without alluding to the vague fears and suspicions that have hitherto retarded the work, and we fear still hinder its complete development amongst us. The dread of imitating Romanist institutions is the strongest hindrance of all, and doubtless, if the Protestant models of the continent had been more prominently brought forward and copied in England, this fear might have been in a great measure counteracted. Even the title of "sister," suitable and beautiful as it is, is associated in the minds of many with suspicious tendencies, and with that Church whose influence is dreaded by the larger portion of our countrymen and women. It is certain that it is regarded with fear on the continent, where it has been carefully avoided, and those who there desire most earnestly to see the work begun and carried out among ourselves, urge us to follow their example, and adopt the more truly scriptural and safe title of "deaconess."

The following is the opinion lately expressed on this point by the founder of a deaconess institution abroad:—"Nous sommes heureux de savoir qu'on s'occupe en Angleterre de donner un plus grand développement à l'œuvre des diaconesses. Je suis convaincu que rien ne contribuera plus efficacement aux progrès du règne de Dieu dans votre pays, pourvu que l'institution ne soit pas copiée sur d'autres, et qu'elle ait son caractère national, Anglais, et surtout evangélique. Mais pourquoi repudiez-vous le nom biblique de *diaconesses* pour adopter celui de *sœurs?* J'espère que ce n'est pas une concession faite à l'Eglise Romaine. Quoi qu'il en soit, l'adoption de cette dénomination me paroit regrettable; elle excitera au sein du Protestantisme continental des défiances qu'il seroit mieux de travailler à détruire. Non, ce n'est pas au moment où Rome semble afficher l'exagération de son principe, où son Pape, se disant infaillible, proclame des dogmes nouveaux, où l'adoration de Marie prend de plus en plus la place de l'adoration de Jésus-Christ, non, ce n'est pas dans un tel moment qu'on peut laisser croire qu'on incline le moins du monde du coté d'une telle Eglise. Il me semble qu'il est au contraire le devoir des Chrétiens de protester plus hautement que jamais contre des aberrations qui vont en s'aggravant de plus en plus. L'Eglise épiscopale d'Angleterre est parfaitement bien placée pour accomplir ce devoir. En dessinant d'une manière parfaitement nette sa position vis à vis de l'Eglise Romaine, elle rassembleroit autour d'elle les autres Eglises protestantes et se concilieroit leur reconnaissance et leur entière confiance. Evitons de fournir une occasion à ceux qui ne cherchent pas qu'une occasion."

For our own part, however, we are inclined to think that this is a prejudice which will disappear when the work done by those who bear the title is once fairly appreciated and understood, especially as we are already in a measure accustomed to the term "sister" in some of our London hospitals. Were it once sanctioned by some whose opinions are respected, and boldly adopted as the one most suitable for an order of women which would combine all ranks in a common work of love and service, we believe that it would soon cease to be regarded with suspicion; for there can be no possible objection to the term "sister," except that it has hitherto been adopted by Roman Catholics. Every one must feel that it expresses the womanly and sisterly influence which we are endeavouring to extend and strengthen, and the want of which has been so detrimental to many of our works of charity and national institutions. In none perhaps are the evil results more clearly traceable or more fatal than in our workhouses and pauper-schools, which have sent forth the thousands who have been and are now the inmates of the adult wards and of our prisons. Such training-schools for depravity

could never have existed had women of education and benevolence been allowed to share in the management of them.

The subject of dress is one which cannot be passed over in the present consideration, for trifling as it may appear to be at first sight, it is one of real importance. No one who has had any experience in these matters will deny the necessity of adopting some uniform costume for the members of a society who are to work amongst the poor, and who are to possess any kind of organization.

When we consider the extravagant ideas about dress held by many really good people, to say nothing of the want of taste which we fear is a failing in too many of our countrywomen, we cannot advocate the rights of private and individual judgment in this matter. Mrs. Jameson* tells us of the painful want of propriety both of taste and feeling displayed by one who went forth to visit the poor attired in flounces and artificial flowers, and there would be no possibility of guarding against such inconsistencies except by a uniform and simple rule. We cannot conceive that this need, or would, be a cause of offence to any reasonable person. It would be wise to avoid as far as possible all appearance of imitation of the costume adopted by Roman Catholic sisterhoods,† which we must remember was merely assumed at their original institution because it was the usual dress of the time, and has since been continued, because to be constantly changing the fashion of their garments was considered to be the sign of a worldly spirit. Black, brown, gray, and dark blue dresses are all adopted by Protestant institutions abroad, and we think that no one can see the beautifully neat and pleasing costume worn by the deaconesses of Kaiserswerth, both in Germany and at the German hospital in London, without admiring the truly Christian appearance and manner of these women, while we fear at the same time a comparison must be made between them and others of the same class at home, some of whom appear in the flounced dresses and artificial flowers and bugles of our matrons and hospital nurses, while others are placed beyond the pale of respect in the dirty, wretched garments and black caps of not a few of our workhouse nurses. When we consider the moral influence exercised by the women who adopt either of these extremes, we cannot consider the subject one of slight importance for the success of this work: at the same time we are convinced that a suitable sim-

* See *Two Lectures on the Social Employments of Women* (Longmans), which we earnestly wish was as widely circulated among the middle classes as it has been among the upper, and which we especially desire to see in the hands of every Guardian of the poor.

† We have reason to know that such an imitation is an offence and stumbling-block, not only to the more prejudiced middle classes, but also to the simple-minded poor among whom such persons would labour.

plicity in form, colour and material, both of dress and cap, is a matter of perfectly easy attainment, without the least approach to those costumes which will be sure to prove a hindrance in the way to success, by associating our work with those errors and peculiarities against which our Church protests.

We have mentioned the dread of Romanism, so deeply implanted in the national mind, as the chief hindrance to the progress of this cause; but there is another fear, perhaps more reasonable and more real, and one also connected with a strong national feeling,—namely, the reverence for domestic life and family ties.

If it could be shown that the work was intended exclusively for those who are without home or occupation and object in life, we should gain many advocates, but there is a great dread of persons leaving their natural duties and vocations for those which are selected and chosen by themselves. We cannot deny that there is a deep truth contained in this reasoning, and we would fain see it met by the exercise of great care and discretion; at the same time we think the objection is often carried to an unreasonable extreme. It is, for instance, frequently assumed that it is wrong for daughters in the higher classes to leave home for any purpose but that of marriage. Yet the voice of public opinion is not raised against those (and they are a numerous class) who leave their homes to be governesses, teachers, or servants, and we do not see why the object of gain or maintenance should be the one legitimate cause for such a step. We believe that it would be well for parents to consider if they are not making it an act of rebellion in their children by refusing their consent to a step which in itself and under certain circumstances can be no sin, but rather one to be encouraged and tenderly dealt with. We do not deny that there may be many self-delusions about "vocations," and sentimental aspirations, which after all may be only different forms of vanity, self-will, or restlessness, but we are not to assume that all desires for definite and active service are such. It is not likely that Roman Catholics are entirely mistaken when they speak of a woman's "vocation" being an indication of the duties which she will best fulfil. We believe that there are many women in England whose true vocation would be to be actively employed in works of charity, but whose lives are passed uselessly because no path is open to them. We would not be supposed to despise or ignore either self-culture or amusement, still less any of the sacred duties of home; but the former alone cannot suffice for women who have passed through their early youth, and who are now longing for opportunities of practising that which they have acquired during that period. We do not see why parents should not cheerfully and readily sanction one or two of their daughters in giving themselves to some really useful work of

charity, supposing that their own wishes lead them to desire to do so. There is no question in England of irrevocable vows separating parents for ever from their children, and in case of necessity or sickness they would be always ready to return to their homes. Without, however, dwelling on this disputed point, we are convinced that out of the half million women in England said to be "superfluous," an ample supply would be found amongst those who are literally homeless and objectless. We would, however, desire most distinctly to state that these objects are not advocated for the sake of individual self-indulgence, or to gratify the longings of romantic temperaments for an exclusive and peculiar mode of life. *The work* must be the object contemplated: the love of Christ, and a desire to serve Him in the persons of His suffering poor, our fellow-members in His body, the sole motive and ground of our service. A lady, offering herself for the work of a deaconess, and being asked by the good pastor who had founded the institution what was her motive in doing so, replied that it was love and pity for suffering humanity that induced her to wish to help her fellow-creatures: but this answer did not satisfy him, and he declined her application in these words,—"When I can meet you at the foot of the cross of Christ, and find that love to Him is the ground of your wish, then, and not till then, we shall welcome you among us."

In the recent attempts which have been made in England to engraft these institutions upon our national life, it has been well to take some of the leading features of those which have been long established abroad,* but we do not know that one of their most beautiful customs has been adopted here—namely, that of the dedication of the deaconess by an especial and religious service. Those who have been present on this occasion describe it as most solemn and impressive, and well calculated to inspire the members of the society with strength and courage for their work.† They are then told that they are to serve in a threefold capacity—as "servants of the Lord Jesus, servants of the sick and poor for Jesus' sake, and servants one to another." But this dedication involves no engagement extending beyond a limited period (at Kaiserswerth it is for five years), and in many institutions no promise is required, however conditional, or for any length of time. Deaconesses have not often retired from the work, but some have married, and family claims and emergencies are always respected.

With regard to what may be called more particularly the "religious" life of a deaconess, we believe that those only who have had experience of its duties and its trials can judge

* See two pamphlets at the head of this article.

† See *Kaiserswerth Deaconesses*. Masters, 1857. Service for the Ordination of Deaconesses, in the Appendix.

of the need that is felt of frequent opportunities of united worship and private prayer, and of all the means of grace provided by the Church. If there is any meaning in the promises of strength and refreshment to the weary heart and fainting spirit through communion with God and contemplation of things unseen, we cannot wonder that such opportunities are sought after by those who would be supported through any arduous work.

The pamphlets noticed at the beginning of this article show what efforts are being made within our own Church for the organization of woman's work in two widely separated counties; both have been begun within the year. The following extract gives some account of the work that is being carried on near Plymouth, and it may be useful as furnishing hints for similar undertakings :—

"Our work has commenced with training girls (who for the future will be orphans) for domestic service. Some we shall also train as mistresses for village schools; we have at present one such. Three deaconess sisters are now engaged with this branch, and at the same time are learning parish visiting and nursing. As soon as we can obtain the services of a lady to superintend it, we trust God will permit us to open a small hospital for sick children, which would become the centre of our nursing department for training some of the sisters for hospital or private cases. As our numbers and funds increase, we look to taking up other branches of work, so as in time to be capable of fulfilling the object of the institution as a society for assisting the clergy in all works of charity.

"These are a few points of our system :—

"1. Our aim is to become diocesan 'servants of the Church,' under the authority of the bishop, as special and gratuitous assistants to the clergy in works of charity.

"2. To give an opportunity of embracing a life devoted to pious works to women of all classes of society.

"3. To admit only those who are without any domestic duties of paramount importance, who feel themselves called by God to a devoted life, and who therefore would have no legitimate inducements to abandon the work once undertaken.

"4. To require a long period of probation, probably two years, in order that motives and power of perseverance may be well weighed and tested.

"5. To have no compulsory bond in the shape of a perpetual vow to coerce unwilling or unworthy members.

"6. To leave their private property at the free disposal of the sisters. Those who can, to pay for their maintenance; others who cannot, being supported by the society so far as its means allow; in all cases a home for life being guaranteed to the deaconesses.

"With regard to the designation of 'deaconess,' it is a name generally highly approved by those who approve the work. There is one objection. The primitive deaconess was evidently bound for life (*vide* 1 Tim. v. 9, 11, and Eccl. Hist. generally). But the answer to this is, 'deaconess' simply means 'servant of the Church,' and the

Church has at all times 'power to change the terms and conditions on which it employs such servants,' and that it is not essential to a deaconess that she should be sixty years old or bound for life. Each bishop can regulate this for his own diocese."

Additional workers are greatly needed in both these institutions, and, as long as such undertakings are languishing for this reason, women cannot complain that there is no field open to them, or excuse their sympathies with Rome because no other Church offers them the active employment which they desire.

In the metropolis the sisters and nurses of St. John's House have long been quietly and steadily at work. In the year 1848 the "Training Institution for Nurses" was established, with the express sanction of the late Bishop of London, with the intention of supplying the great want of trained nurses for the sick in private families in the first instance, but with the ultimate object of providing them also for hospitals. In the great emergency of the war in the Crimea, in 1854, above twenty persons were sent from this house to the various hospitals in the East; and in the same year some of the nurses took charge of the men's cholera ward in the Westminster Hospital, during the prevalence of that disease in London. In 1856 a still further development of the original design of St. John's House was made by the establishment of the lady superintendent, with some of the sisters and nurses, in King's College Hospital, where they have ever since been successfully at work, to the entire satisfaction of the council and medical officers, and to the undoubted benefit of the poor patients under their care. Although above fifty nurses are now employed in private families and in the hospital, more are still urgently needed to meet all the demands that are continually being made for their services in some of the hospitals of London as well as in the country. The want of sisters for the whole work of training nurses, and for superintending wards in hospitals, and also for work amongst the poor, alone hinders the extension of the plan, which it is hoped may ultimately embrace within its scope an orphanage as well as a convalescent home. A new house has lately been taken in the neighbourhood of the hospital,* situated in one of the most crowded of our central London parishes, where there is an ample field for the labours of both sisters and nurses. The gratuitous nursing of the sick poor has always been undertaken from time to time as circumstances allowed, but now that the staff of nurses is larger, and the demand for their paid services still increasing, this object is about to be more definitely brought forward. Two nurses will henceforth be reserved for the special service of the sick poor, and, amidst a population numbering 10,000 of the lower classes, it may well be imagined how

* Nos. 7 and 8, Norfolk-street, Strand, in the parish of St. Clement Danes.

gladly their aid will be received. Those persons who attend as out-patients at the hospital will probably have the first claim to the care of these nurses, as in such cases of sickness and slight accidents the daily short visit of an experienced nurse, or a day or night's attendance, would often be of the greatest service if promptly rendered.

Thus it appears as if we might by this means attain a step nearer to that most desirable object of co-operation between the different efforts that are being carried on, often within the limits of one parish, for the benefit of the poor. At present a hospital or dispensary may exist for the relief of the sick and destitute; but it is isolated in its efforts, which are entirely independent of those which are being made by the clergy, district visitors, and guardians of the poor; though it is obvious how much might be done in each of these departments of labour if there were co-operation between them. District visitors might in many ways assist in carrying out the orders of the medical men, who earnestly desire such aid* (and here the donation of relief in the shape of nourishment, etc., could not but be well bestowed); and much imposition would be checked if poor-law guardians and relieving officers were in more frequent communication with the clergy as well as the laity who give relief to the poor. And we would venture to suggest if this co-operation might not in the first instance be promoted if the meetings of district visitors were not limited to these persons alone, but embraced all those who are desirous of assisting in any way in this work of relief, whether for the bodies or the souls of their poorer brethren.

There are other portions of the great field of labour which have not been forgotten, and are being diligently cultivated by earnest labourers, but still there is room for many, many more. We have not space here to allude to several works which have been begun with the especial object of rescuing a particular class of unhappy women from ruin and despair, and which limit themselves to that object alone.

We heartily wish them all God-speed in their noble and blessed work; and, while confessing the hopelessness and impossibility of seeing any one system established which shall unite persons of widely differing opinions, even within the limits of our own Church, we cannot but think that there is still a work to be carried out which shall claim a wider range of sympathy and a yet stronger allegiance than has yet been given in our country—a work which shall be truly national in its tone and organization, and also breathe the spirit and obey the order of our own Catholic Church of England.

* See Dr. Sieveking's excellent Lecture on Dispensaries and Allied Institutions in *Practical Lectures to Ladies*. Macmillan.

APPENDIX.

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The following is the testimony given by a high authority in Ireland as to the advantage to be derived from the agency of Protestant associations of women with regard to convicts:—

"The Roman Catholic sisterhood in Dublin have an institution of their own, called the 'Golden Bridge Refuge,' in which a certain number of the sisters reside, and receive well-conducted female convicts for certain periods *before* their liberation. These periods are proportionate to the length of sentences. The Government pay a sum (not exceeding the cost of supervision and maintenance in the prison) weekly to the sisters for each convict. The work of the sisterhood does not terminate with the liberation of the convicts, but follows them by interesting sisters and clergy in their new localities, whether at home or in the colonies, in their behalf. A Protestant refuge receives the convicts in the same manner, but for want of organization is unable to exercise an influence after liberation.

"After some years' experience of the daily work and results of the sisterhood, I am satisfied that nothing is accomplished but what might be done by an association of Protestant ladies or deaconesses in England. Systematic organization and earnestness will, under the blessing of God, produce as good fruits as I have witnessed in Ireland. The difference with regard to the institution at Fulham is that it is a Government prison, and the matrons exercising an influence over the prisoners are paid servants of the Government. It is all important that in addition to the good effected during detention, a protecting influence should be secured after liberation, when temptations become formidable to resist."

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"The prevailing error in English dress, especially among the lower orders, is a tendency to flimsiness and gaudiness, arising mainly from the awkward imitation of their superiors. If their superiors would give them simplicity and economy to imitate, it would in the issue be good for themselves, as well as for those whom they guide. The typhoid fever of passion for dress, and all other display, which has struck the upper classes of Europe at this time, is one of the most dangerous political elements we have to deal with."—*The Two Paths*, by JOHN RUSKIN, Lect. iii. p. 131.

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"Deaconess, a woman who served the Church in those offices in which the deacons could not with propriety exercise themselves. This order was also appointed in the apostolic age. They were generally widows, who had been only once married, though this employment was sometimes exercised by virgins. Their office consisted in assisting at the baptism of women, in previously catechising and instructing them, in visiting sick persons of their own sex, and in performing all those inferior offices towards the female part of the congregation, which the deacons were designed to execute for the men. St. Paul speaks of Phœbe as servant, or deaconess, of the church at Cenchrea, which was a haven of Corinth. Deaconesses appear to be the same persons as those whom Pliny, in his famous letter to Trajan, styles 'ancillæ quæ ministræ dicebantur;' that is, female assistants, called assistants, ministers, or servants. It appears, then, that these were customary officers throughout the churches; and when the fury of persecution fell on Christians, these were among the first to suffer. They underwent the most cruel tortures, and even extreme old age was not spared. It is probable that they were blessed by the laying on of hands, but it is certain they were not permitted to execute any part of the sacerdotal office.

* * * * The deacon's wife appears sometimes to have been called a deaconess."—*See* Dr. HOOK'S *Church Dictionary*.

ON THE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING OF WORKHOUSE GIRLS.

BY LOUISA TWINING.

A Paper read at the Meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science at Bradford, October, 1859.

THE subject of "Workhouse Relief and Management" is placed amongst the topics to be discussed at the present meeting, which proves that it is not losing, but rather gaining, ground in the estimation of the Association and of the public. There is, no doubt, a growing opinion that it is worthy of deep and earnest attention. In the daily papers and other periodicals there has been, during the past year, frequent notice of it, either in the shape of comments upon facts, or in mentioning the efforts that are being made in various ways to improve the condition of the lowest classes. In one way or other public opinion has been aroused, not only in this country, but also in Ireland, where an important investigation has been made into the condition of the children in the Cork workhouse, which will no doubt result in improvement there and in many other workhouse schools besides.*

In the paper which was read in this department last year on the Workhouse Visiting Society, a more kindly care of the poor children in our pauper schools was especially dwelt upon and urged, and it is satisfactory to find that the plans there recommended were proposed by the medical officer who reported upon the state of the Cork schools to the guardians—namely,

* See the *Investigation into the Condition of the Children in the Cork Workhouse, with an Analysis of the Evidence.* By JOHN ARNOTT, Esq., M.P., Mayor of Cork. 1859.

the appointment of visitors who should assist in the supervision of the children, and more particularly with regard to their condition after they leave the schools. Experience is every day showing us more clearly that all the care and teaching is in vain, if some protection is not extended to the children when they are first sent out into the world. The idea is certainly also gaining ground that, by careful teaching and training, the poor children of these schools may be made useful and valuable members of society. Suggestions have been made to train many of them expressly for the army and navy—a proposal which, it is to be hoped, will receive serious attention, as we have already far more tailors and shoemakers than can find employment.

The added experience of a year has convinced the members of the Workhouse Visiting Society of the necessity of carrying out, by increased efforts, this one of their chief aims—namely, "to befriend the destitute and orphan children in the schools, and after they are placed in situations." In one of our large cities it is now proposed to organize, on a small scale, a plan of encouragement and protection for the girls on leaving the schools, and the proposal has met with the approbation of more than one board of guardians. It involves no expense, and would be applicable to every union and workhouse school where ladies could be found to carry it out. It is, in fact, merely an extension of the present system of inspection by the chaplains of our large district schools. If the names of ladies who would undertake this work were known to the chaplain or guardians, notice would be given to them when any girl went out into service, and a friendly protection might thus be extended over her during the most perilous time of her life. Of the nominal inspection and visitation by the relieving officer of those who quit union or workhouse schools I shall not speak, believing it in most cases to be worse than useless.

Last year, at Liverpool, I strongly urged the adoption of some such plan on behalf of the numerous children leaving the industrial schools at Kirkdale and the union schools, in the conviction that it would go far towards preventing many of the grievous failures that we now have to lament. Till some system is organized which will be supplementary to our carefully and expensively arranged district schools, their results will fall far below what we have a right to expect. The following is an outline of the plan sent to me by the lady who has established it.

Proposed Plan for Protecting Workhouse Girls.

"(1) To obtain from the matron the addresses of all girls lately sent out to service from the union; to obtain from the schoolmistress information respecting the girls' character and acquirements, and take from her some message of inquiry; to call on

the mistresses of these girls, explaining our wish to befriend them, offering, if needful, some small additional articles of clothing to those provided by the workhouse, and engaging the mistress to careful guardianship, and to the promise not to discharge the girl without giving us due notice; to ask to see the servant, and endeavour to make friends with her; to arrange if possible that she be allowed to attend a Sunday class at the house of one of the ladies, and be visited at stated intervals.

"(2) To obtain from the matron the names, and from the mistress the characters, of such girls as are fit to be sent out to service, but for whom no one has made application; among these to attend first to such as have reached the age at which they are threatened with removal to the women's ward; to find safe and suitable services for these girls; to visit them and bring them to classes in the same manner as the other girls, having the advantage of a previous acquaintance with them at the workhouse."

It is hoped that by these means such supervision may be exercised as may preserve a most helpless class of girls from obvious dangers attendant on sudden discharge from service, and that they may be afforded some measure of that individual attachment of which they stand in so much need; for, however well taught they may be when they leave the schools, it is a well-known fact that they later fall into ruin from their unprotected condition. The chaplain of a large union has expressed his opinion that, had such a plan as this been in operation, scores would have been saved in that union alone, who are at this moment returned to the workhouse in vice and despair. The offers of help frequently received lead us to hope that persons may not be wanting to carry out these suggestions in various localities.*

Far more ambitious schemes are also being carried on elsewhere. In Dublin the Roman Catholics have opened a home for orphan girls rescued from the workhouse, apparently with the best and most satisfactory results; and one, for Protestant children, has been begun in Surrey, the success of which up to the present time has already called for its enlargement.† The

* In one large industrial school I found 213 children, of whom the master supposed 200 were orphans. I asked what care was taken of the girls after they leave at fourteen, and was told, none: if they like they may come to the school to visit their teachers, and the best disposed do so, but the others are left to their fate, being just those who require the most care; those who leave their places from no fault may return to the school within a year, the others go to the workhouse or elsewhere. The teaching, both intellectual and industrial, was no doubt excellent; but here, as elsewhere, there appeared to me a total want of all effort to supply that which a voluntary interest alone could give. Indeed, I was told no one visited the school but the guardians. I heard a touching story of one poor little girl who had lately died without having had one relation since she was in the school.

† See a *Few Words on Behalf of the Orphan Girls in our Unions*, and a *Plea for the Helpless*. Bell and Daldy, 1859.

first of these is an entirely voluntary work; in the last-mentioned home the guardians contribute to the maintenance of some of the children; but both serve to establish the principle that voluntary and supplementary aid may do much where the moral and religious character is concerned, that can never be accomplished by merely official machinery.

I would now pass on to another plan which is suggested by the Workhouse Visiting Society, and which it is hoped may be carried out in the course of a few months. Though it may be expected that its necessity will be greatly lessened by the adoption of the plans which I have just mentioned, there will probably be but too much need of it for some time to come. It is an undoubted fact that many (I believe I may say nearly all) of those most hardened and difficult to deal with of all workhouse inmates—the young women—have been brought up in pauper schools. I do not say that *all* the blame is attributable to the training; there are, no doubt, other causes to be found in their parentage, early bad example, and also in the short periods of their remaining in the schools; but still, when we consider the large proportion of orphans who have been under the guardianship of the parish all their lives, we cannot suppose that such results and so many failures as we find, are necessary and inevitable. We are surely justified in looking for great improvement in this respect from the yearly increasing care of the schools, and especially from the extension of the separate district school system. At present it would seem as if some pauper schools trained the girls expressly for the able-bodied women's wards, so surely do they find their way there after a few years. How is it that guardians and teachers rest contented with such a state of things without ever endeavouring to find out the cause of it? Still, out of the thousands who are sent into the world from workhouse and district schools, we must suppose that there will always be some girls who will be leaving their situations from one cause or other, many from their own fault, and many also from causes beyond their own control. Let us consider for a moment what is the position of one of these girls, who, leaving her place, is homeless, and has therefore no refuge but the workhouse, where, above the age of sixteen, she is placed in the able-bodied women's ward. Whatever she may have been on entering it, there is scarcely a possibility of her leaving it otherwise than contaminated and ruined. In one London workhouse there were lately fifty of these women, the comparatively, or even entirely, innocent being associated with the very worst and most hardened. What a hopeless mass did they present to the authorities!—to the one over-worked matron at the head of this large establishment, and to the woman whose duty it was to superintend them. (In this instance, we believe, there was a

paid superintendent; but in general it is one of the inmates who is placed in authority over the ward.) They were not even entirely separated from the rest of the house, but communicated with the other inmates in their hours of work as well as of idleness. Discipline was impossible, and the scene was, as may be imagined, most sad and perplexing. To such persons the workhouse ceases to be a test, for with the licence that prevails there, and the liberty of indulging in evil gossip and companionship, it is preferred by the badly disposed and idle girls to the hard work which is required of them in service. Such work as they have to do in the workhouse is hardly any preparation for that which is expected of them as servants, and many of them are only employed in oakum-picking, which, whether it is intended as a punishment or not, certainly does not answer the purpose of deterring them from entering the workhouse.

Now what I would suggest is, that we should endeavour to reverse this degrading process into one that would raise the character, and fit it for something better than the able-bodied women's ward. I would ask if it is possible that such a life and such a system can produce any but the results we find? Would it not really be looking for grapes from thistles and figs from thorns, if we expected anything else? And I do not see that any other fruits are possible, or any remedies practicable, as our workhouses are at present conducted; for there is no machinery in existence whereby to exercise anything like reformatory discipline for changing the hearts and lives of these women. All experience shows that the same persons are continually returning to the workhouse, and not only they, but their children after them, will probably be lifelong burdens upon the parish. I would only ask, then, upon the lowest grounds, if this is a wise or economical plan? and on this account, if on no other, I would entreat a hearing for what we have now to propose. I may mention that some experienced masters of workhouses have expressed their conviction that only such a plan can secure the results we desire, and which they confess are far beyond their attainment.

It is proposed by the Workhouse Visiting Society to open a home for girls of the ages when they must necessarily be admitted into the adult wards, the guardians undertaking to pay to the home the cost of their maintenance in the workhouse. In this home they would be trained under the care of a matron for all the duties of household work and service, and the principal aim would be to fit them for emigration to the colonies. And this is no vague or indefinite idea, for we have the positive assurance that such is the want of women, especially in western Australia, that they would be eagerly welcomed there; and, were the plan successfully carried out, we might even expect their passages to be paid by the colonists, which

would thus leave only the outfits to be provided at home. Such a plan would necessarily involve careful arrangements for superintendence during the voyage, as well as on arrival; but they could be easily made; and the advantages offered by a life in a new sphere, removed from all former associations and temptations, would be far greater than could be looked for at home. We cannot be surprised that, desirous as the colonists are for emigrants, they should yet refuse to receive those who would be sent to them straight from our workhouses; but were any sort of training or preparation given to them, we are assured they would be gladly received.

If suitable and safe places could be found for some of these girls here, they would not be refused; but the chief aim and object would be to fit them for emigration. From the eagerness with which offers of emigration have in some instances been received, there can be no doubt that the plan would be acceptable to many who here have no chance of any but the lowest places, where certain temptations await them. We have reason to believe that such a proposal would be acceptable to some boards of guardians, and, as the plan would only be begun on a small scale, the immediate consent of all the metropolitan boards would not be necessary. Anything like success would no doubt secure the concurrence of many to our proposal.*

The length of time for remaining in the home, and many other details, would be easily arranged, and also the principle of selecting the inmates, on which much would depend; the visiting of this class of persons in the workhouses by ladies would of course be a necessary part of the plan.

As it is well to foresee, and as far as possible meet, all objections and difficulties before beginning a new work, I may mention that the only one that has yet been made to this proposal is, that it might prove an encouragement to girls to come to the home for the sake of the advantages it would offer. To this I can only answer, that as discipline and hard work would be the order of the home, in a greater degree than in the workhouse, I do not think it would be likely to prove so very attractive to this class of persons. But even supposing it did induce a few to enter it, it would be only for a time, with the certainty of an ultimate disposal of them in the colonies, where they must cease to be any further burden; whereas their present career may probably lead them to be a far greater expense in prison, if left to themselves, or even to the refuge of the workhouse.

To another objection that may possibly arise—namely, that

* The proposal was readily accepted by five boards of guardians (six only being applied to), but still there are difficulties in the way. It is hoped, however, that steps may ere long be taken to render practicable the carrying out of the plan of the proposed Industrial Home. (Jan. 1860.)

they would have to be kept for a longer time than in the workhouse—I would reply, that it would certainly be longer at *one time*, but, without doubt, shorter in the end, if all the numerous returns to the workhouse were reckoned up, arising both from want of will and capacity to keep the places found for them.*

From what has been said I think it must be clear to all, first, that something like reformatory discipline is the one only hope and chance for this class of persons; and, secondly, that such is impossible at present in our workhouses, from want of space (more particularly in those of large towns), as well as from the total want of persons to carry it out.

It may perhaps be said, why not send these women to some of the already existing institutions? But as a class, they are not admissible into any of them, even if they could be received; they are neither all fit subjects for penitentiaries, refuges, or reformatories; and besides this, some separate home is required which can be recognised by the guardians.

If two or three unions will combine to sanction the plan, it will be carried out; but, besides this support, we are anxious to gain the sympathy and approval of those who are here met together, and who are occupied in somewhat similar plans for the benefit of their fellow-creatures, and who are capable of judging, not only of the need of such a scheme, but also of the probability of its success. If the experiment can once be made and fairly carried out in London, there is no reason why it should not be tried in the country as well, so that every county should in time have its homes and penitentiaries (for the two might well be united), where every effort might be made to rescue and restore those unhappy ones who are now, whilst supported at our expense, thrust down into the lowest depths of despair and degradation in the able-bodied wards of our unions.

* In one London workhouse there are now seventeen women under sixty, and therefore in the "able-bodied" class (in the winter there will probably be many more). Of these, since the year 1850, one has been admitted eighteen times, one fifteen times (now twenty-one years of age), one twelve times (age twenty), one eleven times, one nine times (age twenty-two), and one seven times, whose age is now but seventeen! Is it possible to doubt that something might have been done with these poor women to prevent such a state of things?

WORKHOUSE VISITING SOCIETY,

IN CONNEXION WITH THE

National Association for the Promotion of Social Science.

President.

* The Right Hon. W. COWPER, M.P.

Committee.

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The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of OXFORD.
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Miss WILLIAMS WYNN.

This Society has been established to promote the moral and spiritual improvement of Workhouse inmates, of whom there are upwards of 100,000 in England and Wales; and will provide a centre of communication and information for all persons interested in that object.

Acknowledging the importance of moral influence over all classes of Workhouse inmates, the chief object at which the Society aims is the introduction of a voluntary system of visiting, especially by Ladies, under the sanction of the Guardians and Chaplains, for the following purposes:—

(1) For befriending the destitute and orphan children while in the schools, and after they are placed in situations.

(2) For the instruction and comfort of the sick and afflicted.

(3) For the benefit of the ignorant and depraved, by assisting the officers of the establishment in forming classes for instruction; in the encouragement of useful occupation during the hours of leisure, or in any other work that may seem to the Guardians to be useful and beneficial.

Communications may be addressed to, and Subscriptions will be received by, the Secretary, Miss L. TWINING, at the Office of the National Association, 3, Waterloo-place, London, S.W.; or at 13, Bedford-place, London, W.C.

* Sub-Committee.