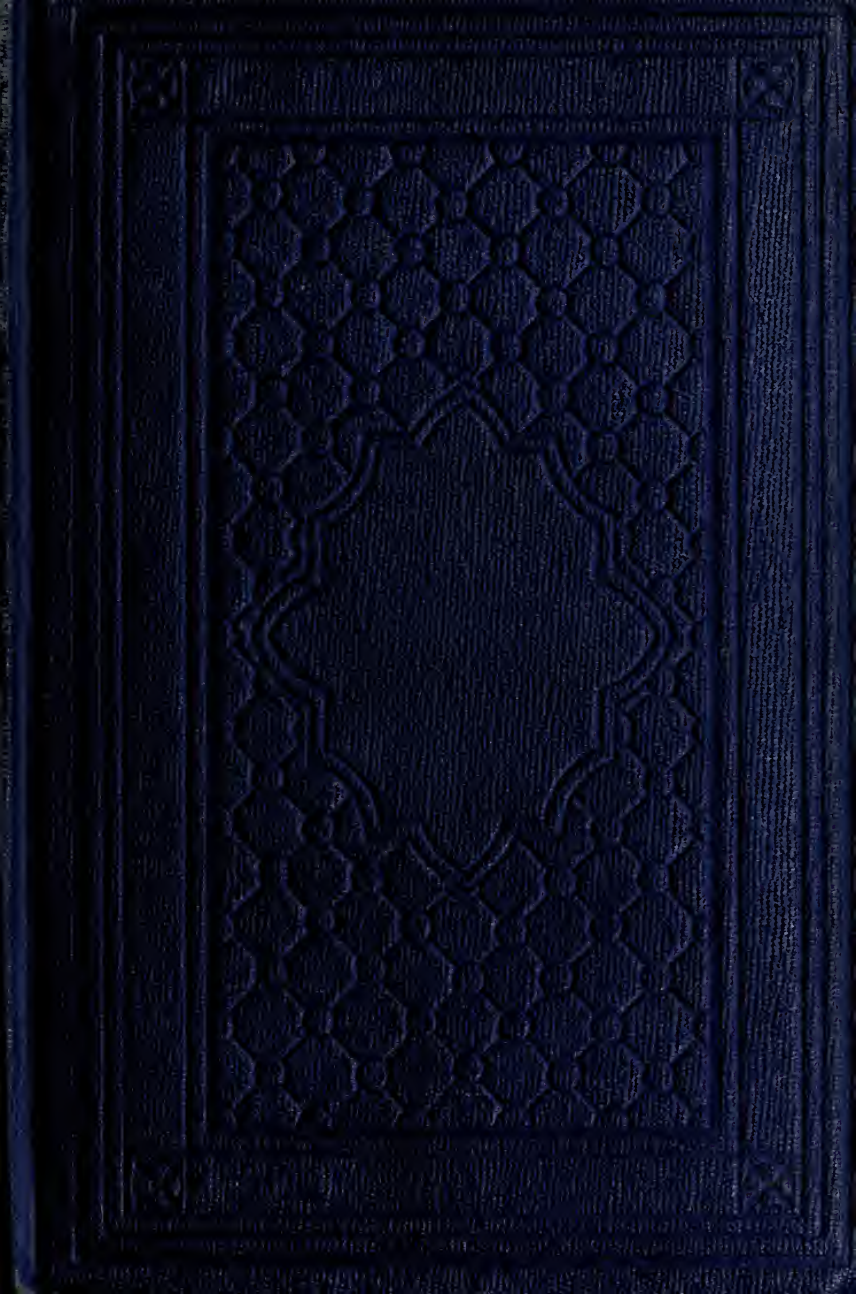
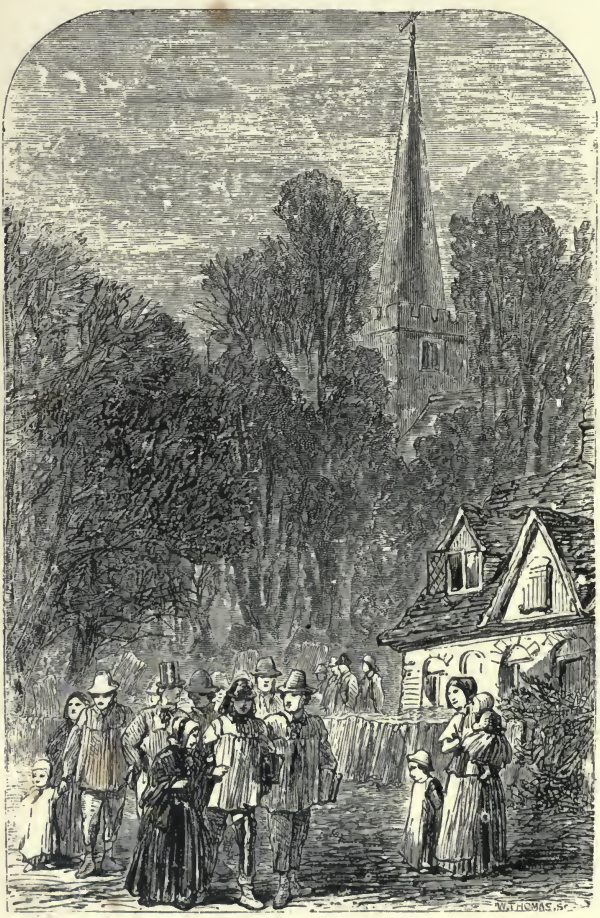


ENGLISH HEARTS

AND ENGLISH HANDS.



English Hearts. FRONTISPIECE.

ENGLISH HEARTS AND ENGLISH HANDS;

OR,

THE RAILWAY AND THE TRENCHES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE

"MEMORIALS OF CAPTAIN HEDLEY VICARS."

[Miss Catherine Marsh]

Love found me in the wilderness, at cost
Of painful quests, when I myself had lost.

Love on its shoulders joyfully did lay
Me, weary with the greatness of my way.

Love lit the lamp, and swept the house all round,
Till the lost money in the end was found.

Love the king's image there would stamp again,
Effaced in part, and soil'd with rust and stain.

'Twas Love whose quick and ever-watchful eye
The wand'rer's first step homeward did espy.

From its own wardrobe Love gave word to bring
What things I needed—shoes, and robe, and ring.

TRENCH.

NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,
No. 530 BROADWAY.
1860.

PREFACE.

It is but a few summers since the sun shone upon the woody heights of the Sydenham and Norwood hills, and now his rays may be seen gleaming from the crystal roof of that vast temple to the arts of peace, which has suddenly displaced the oaks and elms of the green woodland.

Whose were the hands that reared that colossal building? Its massive iron pillars, its huge girders, the ponderous supports of its complicated roofing, all tell us that it was the work of some of the hardiest and strongest of Britain's sons. But while those who survey the stores with which the wide structure is enriched, may perchance give a passing thought to the strength of frame and mechanical skill of the workmen who so speedily accomplished the setting up of such a fabric, it was the privilege of a few, whose dwelling had, in the providence of God, been fixed near its site, at the time of its construction, to become acquainted with a large proportion of the labourers, and to form and cultivate a friendship with them based upon the

firm foundation of "the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible."

When the author of these pages first began to speak to the earliest groups of stragglers who came to seek a labouring man's lodging in Beckenham, it was little thought whereunto this would grow. It was little expected that two or three hundred navvies could take up their abode in a country village for two winters, and, instead of spreading moral contagion, set a good example to many of its inhabitants. It was little supposed that memory would be crowded, as it is, with incidents and recollections of deep and hallowed, as well as of warm and manly friendship on the part of some of them, who, having witnessed a good confession, have finished their course with joy.

By what instrumentality so much has been effected —so much at least beyond the author's own anticipations—the narrative itself will explain. It is compiled from a diary which was at first intended only for private use; and the object of its publication is to interest our countrymen and countrywomen in a class of men possessing not only many noble and generous qualities, but even many latent feelings of gentleness and tenderness, pent up perhaps for years, and only waiting for the helping hand of cordial Christian sympathy, to flow forth in rich abundance.

The circumstance should not be unnoticed, that the interest attaching to some of the details is attributable to the providence of God having so ordered the times and seasons, that scarcely had the finishing stroke been put to a fabric specially dedicated to the pursuits of peace, before the whole nation was aroused by the alarm of war, and many of the hands which had lifted the burden, wielded the hammer, or otherwise wrought in the work at Sydenham, were suddenly called, if not "to hold the weapon," yet to labour in the mighty appliances for the siege before the terrible fortress of Sebastopol.

As might have been expected, some who thus left their country never returned: but both among those who have been gathered to their last resting-place in a foreign land, and among those who have been brought back and still survive, it is humbly hoped there are not a few, of whom, through the grace of God, it shall one day be said, "With joy and gladness shall they be brought, they shall enter into THE KING'S PALACE" — the heavenly Jerusalem, "having the glory of God, and her light clear as crystal."

FREDERICK CHALMERS,
Rector of Beckenham, Kent.

AUTHOR'S POSTSCRIPT.

THIS little book is not written for those who are usually called the Working Classes. Its purport, as has been said, is to shew men and women who are placed by the providence of God in another position of life, how much of high and delicate feeling is to be found amongst that great mass of their countrymen who eat their bread under the heavier portion of the primœval curse. Its object, also, is to suggest how much of that trial may be softened, and of that labour lightened, by the manifestation of a kindly interest in their daily toil and rare pleasures; of a ready appreciation of their better feelings, and of a true sympathy with all that they know of earthly sorrow or of heavenly hope.

After the publication of this diary had been urged by several persons in whose judgment I have confidence, I still hesitated long from a fear lest its publication might lessen the freedom of future intercourse

with its subjects. During the interim, nearly all the men personally named have been removed from any risk of being affected by it, either by emigration or by death.

With respect to the dead, this book is simply on the same standing as that of any other biography.

No surname of a living man is mentioned. With regard to the possibility of the very few who may be left to recognise their own initials, counsel was taken with two men of sound sense and humble piety who had been navvies themselves, and have since been employed as Scripture readers.

The first replied to the question, Would the navvies be pained by the publication of these conversations and letters? "As far as I can say, they would feel a pleasure in your care that they should be put straighter with other people."

To the query, Would it be likely to promote vanity in any of them? the other answered with characteristic honesty and simplicity—

"DEAR MADAM,—You ask me what I think would be the effect of publishing an account of your intercourse with the navvies, whether it would be likely to promote vanity? I cannot see how it could in any one but yourself; and I hope and believe, not that."

The originals of these letters which have been introduced were sent to the press, in the first instance, untouched; but, on further consideration, it seemed due to the surviving writers to correct those words which were mis-spelt, leaving all else intact. It was just possible that those errors in orthography might have been so pointed out to some one of the writers as to occasion pain; and dearly bought, indeed, would have been the preservation of the charm of the truly phonetic spelling chiefly in use, if it had caused the least vexation to one of those honest manly hearts, for the truer or more general appreciation of which this book is sent forth to plead.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Making Friends.

"The rugged rock oft holds within its bosom,
Deep hidden, a fount of sweet and living water,
That needs but the soft power of some meet influence
To call it gushing forth;—thus, too, the heart
Of many a rough, neglected child of labour,
When gently touched by the mild words of kindness,
Is found to be a source whence flow all plenteously
Trust, gratefulness, and truth, and those sweet sympathies
That make man loved and lovely."

EARLY in the year 1853, a large number of Railway excavators, amounting at length to nearly three thousand, were gathered from different parts of the kingdom, to work at the grounds of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. Many a pleasant meeting took place. Fathers and sons who had hardly expected to grasp each others' hands again, met there; and brothers who had parted in boyhood, to follow their wandering course of life apart, found they were working side by side.

Nearly two hundred of these men lodged in the village of Beckenham; so that, in visiting the cottages, we heard of them, but seldom met them, as they were generally employed till late in the evening. It was on Sunday, the 13th of March, that I first attempted to seek them out. About seven in the evening, I went to a cottage where several were lodging, and asked for one of the family (whom I had formerly visited in his illness), as an easy introduction to the strangers. A tall, strong man, in a fustian jacket, opened the door scarcely wide enough to shew his face. "Harry aint here just now."

"But I suppose I shall see him if I wait, shall I not? I will walk in, if you will allow me."

"Well, you can, if you like; but we're a lot of rough uns."

"Oh, thank you, I do not mind that; you will be very civil to me, I am sure. Would you get me a chair?"

An intelligent-looking youth darted forward, dusted a chair with the tail of another man's coat, and placed it for me near the table.

I inquired if any of them had been at church; but not one had thought of it. They listened with attentive interest to an account of Mr Chalmers' morning sermon, on the occasion of the death of a medical man who had been residing in Beckenham, with a sketch of his history.* Several of them expressed strong admiration of Dr R——'s kindness and generosity to the poor, whilst himself working hard, mentally, for his own support; and the young man, whose name was Edward Perry, said, "I know that brain-labour is harder than hand-labour."

When the narrative was ended, he said, "Well, ma'am, it 's a beautiful story, but in a measure it passes by me, because I don't believe the Bible."

I dreaded an argument, yet felt it necessary to reply, so prayed silently for wisdom; and then inquired the reason of his unbelief.

* The subject of "The Victory Won."

"Because I read in the Bible that God is a God of love, and yet that He has prepared from all eternity a place of torment for us poor pitiful creatures."

"In *my* Bible," I replied, "I have never read anything of the sort. I read that God is love; and that the Lord Jesus Christ will say, at the judgment day, to those who have believed and obeyed Him, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared for you* from the foundation of the world.' But to those who have rejected His salvation, and despised His laws, He will say, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire *prepared for the devil and his angels.*' If man chooses to reject God's offer of mercy through a Saviour, and to prepare himself for that place of punishment, he has no right to charge God with the result of his own sin and wilful madness."

"Well," he replied, "I do see that is a different case from what I thought before. But now, look here. I am a poor fellow—don't pretend nor profess; yet I have a quarrel with a mate—feel to hate him—will drub him well next time we light on one another. Think better of it—offer him half my bread and cheese, when we chance of meeting—and we're friends. Now, why can't God do a generous action like that, and forgive us outright?"

"Well, my friend, we must try and look at the case upon both sides. Suppose a father of a well-trained family — very obedient to his orders — an

ornament to the neighbourhood—a blessing to him and to each other. Suddenly he discovers one of them has fallen into disobedience to him, and is indulging in lying, swearing, or stealing. What is the father to do? His tender heart says, 'I can't bear to inflict punishment on my son;' his wise head says, 'But if I do not, disorder, sin, and misery will soon run riot in my family. The rest will say, Father does not mind our disobeying him—he makes no difference between the good and the bad; there can't be much harm in sin, then, after all. I also will follow my own inclinations, if nothing is to come of it.'"

"Well, I see what you mean, and it is sense, too. But how do you know that God has any other family besides men?"

"I know it from His word. I read of 'angels' and 'hosts of heaven.' And 'that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.' But tell me, when you are at work beneath the dark blue midnight sky, and look up from your shovelful of earth to the thousand stars that are glittering there, most of them worlds much larger than this, do you think they are only hung there for lanterns? Do you not rather think that God, who wastes nothing in His creation, as we see more the deeper we look into it, has probably peopled many of them with beings as intelligent as man? And what if the

news should be carried throughout God's creation, that a world had rebelled against Him, and that He had taken no notice of it—would not other worlds be liable to take the infection; and sin and its sister misery spread throughout God's beautiful universe — and blacken the whole? But He *has* taken notice of it. He has punished sin with death. 'Death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' And He threatens eternal death to unrepenting sinners. Yet, 'GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.' That Son of God became man; He was born into this world for one purpose. To bear the punishment due to our sins. To make an infinite sacrifice with infinite suffering—all for one purpose. *This* is that purpose. 'THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.' He is drawing nigh—He *is come to you, now.* He is speaking these words of His own by my feeble lips. Are you willing to let Him save you?"

"I am, I am," he said, with fervour, drawing his chair nearer to me as he spoke. "I never thought of Him before but as an angry God. You make Him out *a Friend.*"

"And so will *you,* when you read His Word. But I want you to kneel down and join with me in

praying that God would give you His Holy Spirit from this hour—that these better thoughts and feelings may not pass away. Shall I pray with you?"

"I should like it. But *this* man," pointing to one behind him, "never opens his mouth but to swear."

"But he will open it to *pray* now. Will you not, my friend?"

"Yes!"

And as we all knelt together, their voices followed mine, and two or three sobs burst from those strong men. As we rose up, I told them how much I should have liked to stay to read with them; but as it was growing late, would they therefore read the Bible together when I had left?

"I will read to the rest," said Edward; and took down the landlady's Bible. I opened it on John iii. for him; and lingered at the door to hear the full tones of his earnest voice, and to thank God, and take courage.

He sat up reading on, in that Gospel of St John, till ten o'clock that night. I was told afterwards that when speaking of our conversation, he said, "It was all true that she said to me. I felt it in my heart."

We have never met again. I fear now that we never shall meet until the day when we shall hear those two sentences passed, the solemn words of

which began our friendly discussion. He left before the Bible which I sent him reached his lodging. Bitterly have I regretted, ever since, a few days' delay in sending it. Every effort to trace him since has failed. But He who stood at the door of that honest heart then, and knocked, and said, "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him and he with me," will, I hope and believe, give him the victory that overcometh the world—even faith—and say to him, at the last, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and have sat down with my Father on his throne."

Encouraged by the cordial reception given to my friendly advances by these strangers, I felt anxious to meet them for the purpose of giving religious instruction on the Sabbath evenings, and twice in the week; especially as I found on inquiry that few, if any, of them, at that time, ever seemed to think of entering any place of worship. Some visits to cottages where they lodged brought several volunteers for these Bible classes; and two rooms, with an open doorway between them, were offered for the purpose. From that time Testaments were given to those who attended. One evening as I passed a cottage door, I heard a man called Jacob K—— reading from his Testament to an Irish Roman Catholic, who would not before that day come to the

"readings," but dropped in from time to time afterwards. Another, named Isaac R——, was laying the pipes at the Exhibition, when the earth fell in upon him. He said, that as he lost sight of the sun, he thought of the words read at the last cottage meeting, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The earth was cleared away, and he and three others were drawn out alive, but sadly bruised. At the time he seemed much impressed, but the impression, alas, wore away, although his gratitude and friendly feeling always remained.

William G—— was one of my earliest friends amongst the navvies. Three weeks before he came here, a serious accident had happened to him. He and another man were taken out alive from under a land slip, and went to a public-house to recruit themselves. His companion drank hard, and two hours afterwards fell down dead. William was deeply shocked, and began to pray that God would lead him to some place where his soul would be cared for. He had been well brought up by a good mother, who taught him early to reverence the house of God. But a wandering life had in some degree broken the habit, and

rendered him careless. William intended to emigrate to Australia in the course of the summer which he spent at Beckenham. On the last Sunday in July, he said to me, "I have attended all the readings, ma'am, since the day you first picked me up for one, and I bless God for them. I should have liked one more before I sail. You are going to be away next Sunday, are you not?"

"Yes, William, and perhaps the following Sunday also."

"Well, ma'am, I am going to Cheshire, to bid my mother good-bye; and if you would come back for the second Sunday, I would, too, and have another Sunday evening here before I go to Australia."

This, of course, was settled at once.

William returned to his lodging on Saturday night. Early on Sunday morning, I went down to see him. He was looking out of spirits.

"You have been feeling your parting with your mother, William?"

"Why, the worst is, I have *not* parted. I have promised her not to go. Mother had fretted herself ill. I am her only son; and she never stopped fretting until I gave over going."

"Cheer up, then, William; for God has said, 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land.' God has a blessing in store for you, for giving up your great wish for the

sake of comforting your mother. I believe He has a great reason for letting you be detained in England. And I cannot help being glad when such men as you do not go out of the country."

The next day he found he had lost his work at the Exhibition by his absence, and went off to Windsor for work. I went down to invite him to a projected tea-party; but found he had left, to my great disappointment.

His landlady said, William had been trying to persuade her husband to go to church with him on Sunday; but that the landlord answered, "It is all very well for *you*, William, with your good clothes and spruce boots; but look at my old shoes with the holes in them. I won't go till I can go like other people." At once William took off his new boots, saying, "Take them, P——, and I'll wear your old shoes, sooner than you should not go to the house of God."

His tranquil, generous nature seemed now always awake to be doing good. The same morning that he told me he had given up going out to Australia, a friend of his, who was to have been his "mate" thither, came in, and mentioned that he had no Bible. William said, after a moment's pause, "You won't think, ma'am, that I don't love the little Bible you gave me; but hadn't he better have it? He may not be able to get one out there."

About the time of first meeting William G——, I addressed a youth of nineteen or twenty, on my way to the cottage where we assembled on Sunday evening, and asked him his name, &c. His name was John H——. His fair face, straight features, and almost white hair, were eminently Saxon, and he himself the wildest piece of nature I had then seen.

"Will you come to church next Sunday?"

"Church! No; I never goes to such places!"

"Will you come to a cottage where we have a Scripture-reading for Crystal Palace workmen?"

"No; I goes to nothing of that sort."

"Perhaps you would like a little Testament to carry in your waistcoat pocket?"

"I shouldn't mind that."

Crossing the road, I spoke to another young man, who looked two or three years older, and received the same refusals; but met with fixed attention, when I told him of my father's first sermon, and the story of a man, who was called "Swearing Tom" before he heard it, and "Praying Tom" ever after. Turning round, I saw John H—— had followed me, and was listening earnestly.

"I 'll come now to that 'ere reading you spoke of. Where is it?"

"And so will I," said the other, a ruddy, fresh-faced youth. "I 'm Henry, elder brother to he."

They came, and attended regularly from that day.

Soon afterwards, I carried the little Testament to John's lodgings; he was not at home. A man and a boy sat on the door-stone, and answered by monosyllables. Presently some street music was heard, and a party of young men rushed down a by-lane, dancing to the measure, with John H—— at their head.

"Holloa, John," shouted the boy from the door-stone, "*yere*'s our lady."

John came back, and eagerly seized his Testament; then sitting down on the door-step, twirled it round between his finger and thumb.

"Now, aint it a rare beauty? I'll cover it with a slice off my best red choker."

The first time that many of the navvies came to the school-room service, was when my father lectured—the evening after his seventy-eighth birthday. I went about the village inviting our new friends, and found between thirty and forty who were really pleased to come. John brought some friends with him.

On leaving Beckenham for a few days, I wrote notes in printing characters to several of these men, to request them to attend the house of God regularly. Upwards of thirty responded to the appeal, on the next Sunday morning, filling the middle aisle, in their clean stiff white slops. News of this was sent to me; so I wrote letters to thank them, and to mention, that on the following Thursday evening a

missionary meeting would be held in the school-room. More than forty came. After it was over, I asked John H—— if he had received my letter?

"A letter for me!—all the way from where you went!" And he shouted for joy. "Well, the postman did bring one, and I said, 'T aint for me. Nobody cares to write to me; so I sent it back. But I 'll go and pull the post-office about their ears if they don't give it me back again."

A few days later, I met John with a noisy, singing party of young men. On the next Thursday evening, when I spoke to him, whilst the school-room bell was ringing for the lecture, he looked very much ashamed, and said in a low tone, "You aint agoing to ask me to come to the lecture after the way you heard me shouting the other evening? I had been to the 'public.'"

"I was sure of it, John. But still, I want you to come this evening."

"No, never again."

"Why not?"

"Because *it don't do to live two lives.*"

"I know it, John; and that 's the reason I want you to come to-night, and to begin all over again. The SAVIOUR of the world invites you to come and be pardoned. Come and hear about Him now. Don't put it off. You may never have another Thursday evening."

"I'll come, then. And I'll bring six!"

True to his word, he came, marshalling six comrades with a leader's pride. From that time, he regularly attended the services and readings.

Soon after this, it occurred to us that it would be a pleasant little plan to have a tea-party for our new friends, who, from their wandering life, seem so much cut off from innocent social enjoyments. We also felt it would be an expression of approbation of their attendance upon public worship, and at school-room and cottage-readings. As it was the height of summer, the late hour at which they returned from their work was no hindrance to their accepting invitations to a tea party, which were duly sent to each man, and were received with a kind of subdued excitement. Orders were given for shirts and smock-frocks (technically termed "slops") to be washed and starched with double care, and a large supply of soap was bought up for the occasion.

The school-room was decorated with festoons of flowers, and a button-hole bouquet of geranium and jessamine was tied up with blue ribbon, and laid upon each plate.

Long afterwards, I saw some of these flowers carefully preserved in books!

Whilst we were arranging these important matters, with no small joy we saw William G——'s calm, happy face at the gate. A letter from one of his

friends had advised him of the coming event, and he had returned from Windsor to take his seat at the tea-table.

To a minute, at the appointed time, our friends arrived; each man looking as clean as a baby on its christening day. Faces and hands had been scrubbed till they shone again. They quietly and quickly seated themselves; and no gentlemen in the United Kingdom could have conducted themselves more admirably.

There was no constraint of manner; on the contrary, perfect ease. There was no loud talking, but many a cheerful remark. Not an expression was used which we could have wished had been otherwise; but the frank and hearty enjoyment of the evening was delightful to see.

Some good pictures, and a missionary transparency were shewn them; and "God Save the Queen" was sung early in the evening. Towards its close, my father addressed them; and concluded with prayer, and the hymn, beginning—

> "Come, let us join our cheerful songs,
> With angels round the throne,"

in which they all joined with great zest.

As the clock struck ten, the chief speaker amongst them, after a short conference with the leaders of the party, said, "We have taken up a great deal of the ladies' time, and had better go now." Several said,

as they went out, "Never spent a happier evening —never, nohow!"

As they walked through the village, it was arranged, by universal consent, that not one should be absent from the school-room lecture the ensuing evening. "It would look so! as if they only came for tea and cake."

William G—— was "set on" again at the Crystal Palace work the next day, and returned to his former lodging in the village, to our true content.

On Saturday evening, August 13th, William M—— came "to speak about his difficulties," he said, "if it was not giving too much trouble."

"My mate and I were working in a pit; and, says he, 'I wonder, Bill, whether it is true what they say of heaven being so happy—whether, now, it can be happier than sitting in the public, over a good jug of ale, with a fiddle going? I don't know a pleasure as comes up to that.' "

I thought of their homeless lives, and wishing to sympathise as far as I could, said, "Well, I dare say you *do* find a pleasure in it."

"A pleasure!" he interrupted me, to exclaim, "you can't think the pleasure of it!" with an earnestness that was truly affecting, as the thought arose, "Is this the highest pleasure within the grasp of these noble fellows?"

"But that pleasure must pass away, William, and *you must die.* Would that pleasure help you to 'die happy,' and to live in happiness beyond death?"

"No! If you come to that, I've *seen* the two ways of dying. I had an uncle. You couldn't come into his room for horrors when he was dying—saw terrible things. And I had a grandfather—he loved his Bible—died a'most *too* full of peace. Couldn't speak for joy, like."

"And which way of dying are *you* bound for, William?"

"Well" (with a navvy's usual slow enunciation and pauses in the course of giving utterance to any religious sentiment), "I think—I'd rather—set off—to live so as to die like grandfather."

This same William M—— came up to the Rectory the night before the tea-party, to say that seven men who had not sent in their names, so as to receive notes of invitation, were waiting outside the gate, "too shy to come in."

I went out to speak to the shy seven, and as they received their notes, William said, "It will be so pleasant to us to talk of the tea-party when we meet one another by chance hundreds of miles away."

On Sunday night, after the services of the day were over, they assembled on the Rectory lawn to take leave of us, before we left home for some weeks, and to receive prayer-books, as an encouragement to con-

tinue attending Divine service, and to assist them in attention and devotion.

When each man stepped up to the hall door, to have his name written in his book, after having listened to farewell words, there were not many dry eyes; and we parted with a solemn impression that we should never meet all together again in this world.

The next day a fearful accident befel a large number of the Crystal Palace workmen. A scaffolding gave way, and in its fall crushed out the strong young life from some of those manly forms in a moment. Without a warning, they passed into eternity.

Oh! were they READY? Or was even their last breath a cry for mercy to Him whose ear is ever open, and who stipulates not for time nor for repetition when He says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

CHAPTER II.

Confirmation and First Communion.

"A sacred burden is the life ye bear;
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly;
Stand up and walk beneath it steadfastly;
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin;
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.
God guard ye, and God guide ye on your way,
Young pilgrim-warriors who set forth to-day."

It was a great relief to hear that none of the men whom we had known best, had suffered from the fatal accident of the 15th of August.

During the time of our absence, in Ireland, the navvies continued to attend the school-room lectures in large numbers; and some came, for the sake of further instruction, to Mr Chalmers' and his curate's catechetical lectures to the candidates for confirmation. Five navvies persevered in their wish to be confirmed.* One of these young men, named James Hewson, was only able to remain in Beckenham for about three weeks after his confirmation, as just at that time fewer workmen were required in the Crystal Palace grounds. His manner of devout attention at church and at the cottage readings, and his earnest desire to find work anywhere in the neighbourhood, so as to enable him to remain in Beckenham, interested me not a little. After all his efforts to find work within daily walking distance had failed, he called to say

* The Archbishop of Canterbury, who confirmed them, afterwards expressed both interest and satisfaction in their solemn and devout manner, as they knelt, alone, the last of the candidates to receive the rite.

good-bye. He was very young and sailor-like in his appearance, with an open, true face, and broad, strong shoulders. As he stood in the doorway of my sitting-room, after a parting prayer, with a choking voice he said, "You've been a mother to me. As long as I live I shall never forget you. And God grant I may practise what you've taught me."

Shortly afterwards the following letter was received:—

"*November* 11, 1853.

"DEAR MADAM,—I now take the pleasure of writing to you. I do hope you are in good health, as it leaves me at this time, thank God for it. I often wish I had stopped at Beckenham. I went to Birmingham to work, but did not like to stop there, for there was nothing to do me any good. It was a wild and drunken set about me. It did not suit me at all. I want to be somewhere where it is more still, so that I can do what is right in living for God.

"I always think of the words and good advice you gave me when I left. It never leaves me. I am sorry to say that I have been far from being right, but I hope that the Lord will help me, and give me a new heart, and teach me to do better than I have done before. I want to be nearer and dearer to Him who gave Himself for me. Your prayers, I believe, has reached me, I feel such a pressure on me.

"I hope the Lord will have mercy on me, a poor

sinner, and bring me in the right way for heaven. Oh that I may never turn away from Him no more, but ever live to Him who sent His only-begotten Son to die for me, and all to redeem us from sin.

"May He watch and keep a guard over us, and bring us all to heaven, to sit at His right hand, for the Redeemer's sake. O Lord, do thou help us, and bring us to thy heavenly throne of grace!

"From Birmingham I went to Liverpool, but there was very little work there, and a great many hands out of employ, so I came into Staffordshire, to my brothers. I think, if I stop about here, of working in a coal-pit, near to my brothers. If there was plenty of work at the Crystal Palace, I would come to Beckenham again. I long to be near you again. —I remain your humble scholar,

"JAMES HEWSON."

Then came another letter, written in great distress at having received no reply. He had forgotten to give me any address. Before I could obtain it by inquiring amongst his friends, he had sailed for America.

One more letter has been received from him, entreating some advice for his soul, which he said was in great danger. But as "Kansas Territory" was its only date, I have little hope that my answer ever reached him. It is painful to be unable to assure

him that his manly, grateful young spirit has never been forgotten, and that his name is remembered in prayer to this day, that he may "be faithful unto death," and "receive a crown of life."

It may be that we shall meet next in the presence of Him who has said, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." *

William G—— had been confirmed in his boyhood; and as his life was bearing testimony to the reality of the change in him, it was pressed upon him that he should come and partake of the Lord's Supper, with his five mates, on the Sunday following the confirmation.

A book had been lent him, named "Thoughts on the Lord's Supper," by Thomas Doolittle. It had been diligently studied; and William's quiet, consistent walk and conversation was remarked by all his companions.

On the previous Saturday night, he called to see me. "I have given up coming to the Lord's Table." His countenance was sad as he spoke.

* If this book should fall into the hands of any relative or friend of James Hewson, the writer would be greatly obliged for any information concerning him.

"Oh, William, this is a grievous disappointment to me."

"I knew it would be. And it is worse to me. Beckenham has been, I believe, my birthplace for heaven. So here I would have liked, of all places, to come for the first time for the Lord's Supper. But, you see, I live in the world, and there is a tempting devil, and I have an evil heart. And if I make a slip *after that*, they'll say, 'There goes your Sacrament man.' And it will bring a shame on the name of my Lord. And that I *could* not bear."

All this was spoken, as is usual with William, slowly and reverently.

"Well, dear friend, I too live in the world, and have an evil heart, and there is a tempting devil for me. But just for all this, I find the deeper need of obedience to my Lord's last command, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' My feeble faith needs the strengthening; my shallow humility, the deepening; my cold love, the warming, which I find by the Holy Spirit's blessing upon the sacrament of our Lord's Supper. *Never* does sin seem so hateful to me as when I receive the remembrancers of the death it cost Him."

He listened with fast filling eyes.

"Your faith does not waver, does it, William? You believe in God as your Father?"

"Yes."

"In Jesus Christ as your Saviour?"

"Yes."

"And in the Holy Spirit, as God willing to dwell with man?"

"Yes; and I have asked Him to dwell with me. And what 's more, He has come. Only I want more of Him."

I then led him to Mr Chalmers' study, and asked him to converse with William about his present doubt and difficulty. Mr Chalmers said, "William, can you tell me to whom our Lord administered His last Supper?"

"To His twelve apostles, sir."

"And what did Peter do, within a few hours later?"

"Denied Him, with oaths and curses."

"Did our Lord foreknow this?"

"Yes, sir; He must."

"Then, why did He allow him to partake of it?"

After a few moments' thought, "I suppose, sir, He knew that he had grace enough left to bring him back again, and set it all straight."

"Right, William. And has He not restoring grace, and preserving grace, too, enough for you?"

"Thank you, sir; I see. I believe. I am satisfied. By God's help, I shall come."

He came. And it was a thing to thank God for, to see his serenely peaceful face as he left the house of God, after his first communion.

From that time, all who were much with him,

"took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus."

Soon after that Sacrament Sunday, William went to Deptford to work at the docks. But the first Sunday in every month was spent in Beckenham. The two services in the church, and the Sacrament, seemed to be a deep and sacred delight to him; and he never returned at night until after meeting for prayer and reading the Bible at the cottage, which, he said, always seemed "like his *cradle* in the new life!"

On the first Sunday, he dined with the servants at the Rectory; but afterwards ate his own dinner on a stile in one of the meadows. On being pressed to say why he would not come in to dine every Sunday when he had walked over to Beckenham, he replied, "Why, you see, ma'am, the world talks! And if they said, 'Here's your Sacrament man coming for his good dinner!' don't you see the harm it would do to the Name by which I am called?"

One evening he visited with me a man with whom he had worked at the Crystal Palace grounds; and finding he was in distress, slipped back, unperceived by me, to put a sovereign quietly into his hand.

This must have been an effort of faith, as well as a mark of generosity and kindness; for he believed he had then just discovered the loss of thirty shillings, and did not remember that he had left them in the pocket of his working clothes, until after his

return to Deptford. This he mentioned to me when I told him that James W—— wished to return part of the money, and inquired whether he really could afford so large a sum. "Oh, fairly, thank you, ma'am, and find myself thirty shillings richer than I thought I was."

A day or two afterwards I received the following letter:—

"*January* 6, 1854.

"DEAR MADAM,—I now take the liberty to write these few lines to you. I received your letter with great pleasure, and thank you for it. I am afraid I am giving you a deal of trouble. The tract you sent in your letter is a very instructive and pretty one. I can only recompense your kindness to me by my prayers, that your own intercourse with God may be abundantly blessed to you and to all with whom you speak. I saw Jacob K—— last Sunday, and I had a little talk with him, but I think he seems quite altered; he would not come to any point, but appeared to want to talk of different trifling things, so that I cannot give you any satisfactory account; but we must pray for him, and hope that he thinks more than he appears to do. I often think of those words that the Lord said to Elijah, when Elijah complained of being the only prophet left of the Lord: 'Yet,' He said, 'have I prepared me seven thousand in Israel.' I think this should give us great encouragement;

though he may seem careless, let us not give up praying that little prayer of yours—'Fill him with the Holy Ghost.'

"I felt much last Sunday morning under Mr Chalmers' sermon. I think he was in great earnest. Let us pray it may make others in great earnest about their souls.

"Dear Madam, the three half-sovereigns I found all right; I had left them in other trousers pockets, forgetting to take them out. Your letter stated I must send you word which of the Beckenham lodgers I should see, and you would send by him a purse for me. I am much obliged to you, it is very kind of you; but as I shall come to Beckenham, if God will and nothing turns out more than I expect, next Sacrament Sunday, I will not trouble you to send it. So now I must conclude, dear friend.—From your affectionate son in the Lord,

"WILLIAM G——.

"If I err in boldness, pray pardon me.

"I consider the Saviour saying to you as He did to Peter, 'Lovest thou me?' and may your heartfelt experience say, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

Henry Hunns also, who had just been confirmed, was deeply affected by his first communion. It was

some weeks afterwards that he said to me, "Them tears that Sabbath day were pleasanter than the best smiles I ever had on." He was a much more demonstrative character than William, and had none of his peculiar composure and self-possession. The warm heart was in his glowing face and ready speech, and, that day, in his fast-flowing tears. He seemed only just able to check a sob, under the remembrance of the quiet solemnity of the service and the place.

During a few weeks absence from Beckenham, he wrote the following letter :—

"*November* 16 1853

"MADAM,—i received your Kind Letter and was very glad for your kind advice and i tell you the truth i am a tetotaler and by the Grace of God and health and strength i shall continue my six weeks of it and i hope by blesings of God i shall never drink the same again as i have done for i have been very wicked all my life and i hope and trust that the Saviour of sinners will help me to fight manfully under Christs banner against the world the flesh and the Devil and above all let me say teach me to do thy will O Lord and keep thy commandments and may the Saviour of sinners help me to do so for i have been a Great friend of the devil for 20 years and i am often sorrey when I think about it but praised be the Lord he had compassion on me and spared my

Life from being in hell for i could not have expected nothing else had he cut me down in my sins but thank God their is a Saviour daily pleading for me may i not Greive his holy Spirit but watch and pray that i may not enter into temtation and in the hour of temtation may the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ help me to Look up and say God be merciful to me a sinner and teach me to be on my watch at the hour of temtation for that very often is the time when Satan lead me by the hand where he like to Get me in the publick house and make a beast of Myself but may God help me by his Grace to say Get thee behind me Satan for i have been thy servant two long already Lord may I cling to the Crucified may his death be life to me life for eternity so now kind friend i conclude with my best wishes to you and hope you will enjoy a state of Good health as I have at present I remain a tetotaler and by the Grace of God I shall continue so. HENRY HUNNS."

During the winter, the attendance of the navvies at church continued to be large and regular: and the cottages, where "readings" were given, were thronged.

On the last day of 1853, the sergeant of the police, stationed at Beckenham, called to return thanks for the interest that had been taken in these noble fellows. He said that his duty had never been so easy before in Beckenham, for their example had restrained the

wilder young men of the place, and had even shamed a few into attendance at public worship.

So, we wrote at the close of our first year's intercourse with the navvies—"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

CHAPTER III

Honest Hearts.

"'Tis a rich, rough gem—deny it who can,
The heart of a true-born Englishman."

On New Year's Day, 1854, when I was on my way to visit James W——, I met Henry Hunns, and gave him the Bible which had been promised him in remembrance of his first day of partaking of the Lord's Supper. He told me that he "had felt more peaceable-like" in his mind, since our conversation and prayer the evening before; and, with an expression of deep and earnest feeling in his honest face, he added, that he "did *so* hope he should not be permitted to fall away."

Poor James W—— had been suffering severely during the night, and was obliged to give up his cherished hope of coming with his "mates" to the morning service and sacrament. Two or three of his friends were by his side, and had been uniting in prayer. I took the opportunity of giving them their Bibles, with which they were delighted; and especially with the texts written in them on the subject of the sacrament.

William G—— was in church, and remained for the communion with Charles F——, Edward G——.

William C——, and Henry Hunns. They were all very serious and earnest in their deportment, and seemed to realise the solemnity of the service in which they had been engaged.

William G—— walked up with me in the evening to the cottage reading. On our way, we called at Gibbon's lodging-house, to inquire why George P——, better known amongst his companions as "tall George," was absent from the last week's readings. He was there, cap in hand, but unwilling to come. "Paget had been so rude to him of late—he'd as good as determined never to set foot inside his house again."

"Oh, George, then you mind more about Paget than you do about me. I care for your soul, and want to ask you to-night to set out in earnest on the road to heaven; and it will vex me if you do not come."

"Well, now! I care more for you, ma'am, than for Paget, a thousand times. So, I 'll not mind about him being rude. I think I 'll go."

Just before I had left the Rectory, a basket had been brought me, furnished with writing and working materials, and intended to carry Testaments and tracts. A letter was inside it, from Isaac R——, Thomas Dibley, Thomas Paget, William M——, Frederick E——, and John D——, begging my acceptance of it, "to remind me of them when they are many miles away." I found Isaac, Frederick,

and Paget, at Mrs Elliott's. They seemed delighted to see my pleasure in their gift; and Isaac said, "They hoped the books in that basket would do a power of good to a many souls; though it might be, the books I had given *them* had not yet done them so much good as they should, by this time."

After a pause, and re-examination of the contents of the basket, Paget said, "I am sorry to say anything to vex you; but I'd best speak it out. If tall George comes to-night to the reading, I shall order him out."

"Oh, Paget, why so?"

"Because he said at the works, as I stole a medal off your Christmas-tree, that last tea-party you gave us."

"How very wrong of him! But if I were you, I would not take any notice; even if he said that you stole a hundred. No judge or jury, looking at your honest face, could ever say anything but 'Not Guilty!'"

Paget listened with a broad, hearty smile, which grew into a short laugh of satisfaction; but Isaac could not so easily pass over the affront offered to his friend; so he said,

"It is very kind of you to have such a good opinion of us; but it is not pleasant to be pointed at all over the works, as him as stole a medal off the Ladies' Christmas-tree."

"No," added Paget, stoutly; "I'll order George out."

"Oh no, Paget! you will not, I am sure. You lend me your room for a church! Now, if anybody were to say, Mr Chalmers was a thief, he would not order that man out of church, but would let him stay to learn not to bear false witness against his neighbour."

"Well, I see! That 's very good. Tall George may stay."

George, however, was invisible, having taken his place in the inner room. After the little congregation had dispersed, I asked Paget whether he did not think a Sunday and a New Year's Day in one, would be a delightful day for making up a quarrel; and therefore whether he would forgive George, if he should come and tell him he felt sorry for what he had said?

"Well, it would be a goodish thing, I think."

On the strength of this I walked back to George's lodging, with William G——, who was waiting with my lantern in his hand, to see me safe within the Rectory gate before he returned to Deptford.

"May I not go back with you and George, ma'am?"

"No, thank you, William. It would make Paget and George think I was afraid of a fight coming on, and wanted you to take care of me. That would

never do. It would be all over with my hope of making peace."

"That's true! And God will go with you."

George was at supper with four fellow-lodgers. He came out of the house to speak to me—standing up like a church-tower, in his massive height and strength. "George, I am sorry about this matter between you and Paget."

"Well, I daresay you are; but I am not. What business had he to say that I drank ten cups of tea, and ate seven bits of cake at your tea-meeting?"

"Indeed, that was bad manners, George; and I am surprised to hear it of Paget. But if I had been you, I would have answered, if I had eaten a dozen slices of cake, and drank twenty cups of tea, she would only have been the better pleased."

"Well! that would have been a good 'un! I wish I'd thought on't."

"So do I. But if you did not think of a ready answer, you had no right to say that Paget stole a medal. He never said that you stole the seven bits of cake."

"I didn't say he stole it. I said, I seed two medals in his hand, and never seed him put down neither."

"Oh! George, that was almost worse. It was so mean. I could not have thought it of you. And then the next person said he had stolen it—and so

the story went round. How sorry you ought to have felt when you heard it."

"No, I wasn't; I was very glad."

"That was very wrong. But you are growing sorry now? Come with me and tell him so."

"No, I can't—no, never."

"Then I shall go home sorry."

After a short pause, and with a strong effort, he rejoined, "No, no, you shan't do that, for my doings. I'll go to Paget."

When we reached the cottage door, I knocked quickly, for George looked half-disposed to walk away again. Paget opened it, and I said, "George is come to say he is sorry," and trusted that Paget would at once shake hands with him, and so that all would be right between them. Paget, however, wished to speak his mind before he gave his hand; and then there came such loud speaking of mutual reproaches, that I feared a fight would follow, and began bitterly to repent my folly and temerity in bringing the combatants together. Fists were raised and shaken so near each other's faces, that I thought best to glide between, and warn the disputants to stand further off as they spoke. The clamour grew louder and louder, until a pause for breath gave me opportunity for speech. Then I said, "Oh! Paget, Oh! George, this is terrible. On New Year's night, on Sunday night, and under the roof where half an

hour ago we were worshipping God, to have such angry words said! It will not do. It is very sinful. We must have no more. Let us kneel down and pray that the God of peace and love would prove Himself here, to be stronger than the father of strife and hatred, that is the devil."

At first I knelt alone, but soon heard the two men suddenly fall on their knees; and when we rose up, the tears were rolling down Paget's cheeks. "I'll never say another word about it, after that prayer," he said. "I'll forgive him from my heart, out."

George, however, stood with his hand on the latch, and said, "No, no! I'll never cross my hand on a man's as says he'll put me in the lock-up for a word. I never seed the inside of a gaol in my life, and now to be put in for a few careless words!"

"O George, how can you be so silly? Paget has just said he will forgive you from his heart. He would never dream, now, of getting you into prison. You *know* he would not. You have both been hot, and have spoken sinful words; but both are sorry for them. I am not going home until I have seen you friends, by God's help."

He stood irresolute, but sullen.

"Give *me* your hand."

"That I will."

"And now, Paget, give me yours."

Two huge, rough hands met in mine, and then,

independently, shook each other as heartily as if the men had been friends from the cradle, and would be to the grave.

"Thank God! It is all right now. Good night, Paget; you have behaved like a king. God bless you." As we went back, George confessed that "his heart felt more lightsome like," and there was a choking sound about his voice as he said, "God bless you, ma'am," at parting.

Faithful William G—— was waiting for me, a few doors further on. I told him how sorry I was that he should have waited so long a time, and asked him why he had not gone back to Deptford at once, as I had begged he would.

"Why, ma'am, you see we are a rough lot before we get the grace of God in us, and I was afraid you might see a bit of fighting, and be frightened. Yet I thought God would give you the power to make it all straight."

"And so you stood here praying that He would, and waited to hear that He had answered you."

"Yes, ma'am. I knew you were right to go alone, and shew your trust in them. So all I could do was to pray, and I believe there's nothing like it."

When we came to the Rectory gate, John Mynott was standing by it. He had waited an hour for a farewell. "Blessed Beckenham!" he said; "I wish I could spend all my days here."

I never saw him again. He was killed by the falling of some timber about a year afterwards.

On Monday evening, three hundred villagers and navvies assembled in the schoolroom, to see the dissolving views of scenes connected with the Jewish missions, for which my father had sent, to provide them with an evening's amusement. The navvies' exclamations of approbation were very cheerful to hear. I took the opportunity of privately thanking John D——, William M——, and Thomas Dibley for their share in the gift of my basket; and it was better than all the dissolving views in the world, to see the sparkle of their honest faces—one broad smile, as I held it up for their admiration—and M—— said, "We *are* so pleased you like it."

Another man said to me, in a low, confidential tone, "You 'll be glad to hear that when Paget and George met this morning at the works, they shakes hands, and speaks as friends each time they passes."

It was, indeed, a cause of thankfulness to God, that He made the generous impulse of those two noble natures a lasting principle. From that day they were friends.

In the course of the same week, I heard that some of the navvies were almost starving, the heavy snow having prevented them from carrying on their work since Christmas Eve. I found great difficulty in

making them acknowledge their distress. Henry Hunns said, "What's the good of telling you? you've done too much already." A soup ticket was sent to tall George, amongst others. Meeting him afterwards, I inquired if he had received it. "Yes, thank ye"—and he was passing on. "And did you get your soup?" "No, ma'am; there was none left when I got to the kitchen." "What food have you had to-day?" "None." "What had you yesterday?" "Bits, Bill and Tol gave me. I must have starved but for them."

I wrote an order for some beef-steak and a loaf for him. A hearty "thank ye" followed; but weak to the warmth of his reply when I said, "George, I was so much pleased to hear that you and Paget met again as friends on Monday. I was praying that you might, as I awoke on Monday morning; and above and beyond all, that you might be friends with your God and Saviour. That is what I long for."

"I know you do"—and the tears filled his eyes; "I know ye care for our souls."

On the following Sunday morning, Henry Hunns met me, with his face more than usually bright. "Well, Henry, I hope you are going to have a holy, happy Sunday."

"I hope I am. I think I went the right way to work for it, please God. I began it comfortable."

"How did you begin it?"

"I got up at a quarter past five, and came down

and sat by the candle to read my new Bible, and got a good long bit alone with my God, and felt peaceable-like."

The distress amongst the Railway men continued through the week, and rather increased, although a change in the weather had enabled them to resume their work. But the wages were not due until Saturday afternoon, and at very few of the shops could anything be obtained on trust by comparative strangers. I had understood that the wages would be paid daily for a few days, in consequence of the distress from the long frost. But on calling at Gibbons' lodging-house, I found that George had gone to bed supperless the night before, and to work without a breakfast; so we had a grand soup-making immediately arranged for the whole set of unfed workers during the remainder of that week, by means of the kind help of the Mr Wilkinsons; with additional meals supplied for those who had been prevented by illness or other accidents from laying by anything for a time of need. They seemed more than half-pained by having to accept it. "It do seem so!" said Henry Hunns, "to live on gentlefolks in this way."

One cold dark evening, as I was walking down the hill into the village, a man who was going in the opposite direction, turned round, and walked in the road on a line with my position in the path. Just as I was going to cross to the other side, he said,

"Not there, ma'am; you 'll be up to your knees in the snow-drift." It was Henry Hunns, who knew my step, and thought he had better take care of me. He went with me to the sick people whom I was on my way to visit, and then begged to be permitted to carry a lantern to light me back to the Rectory. He was walking silently up the hill, when suddenly his thoughts burst forth in the exclamation, "It 's the happiest life for a man to live—to live for God—even if there were no heaven."

Thus had this young reckless one, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, learned to say, with David, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

From the day when the treaty of peace was concluded between Paget and tall George, I had noticed an increased earnestness in Paget's manner at the readings. One evening he came to the Rectory to tell me of the cure of his rheumatism which Mr Williams' remedies had effected. After duly discussing this subject, we went on to other matters; and, whilst speaking earnestly to him, I saw his head sink down so low behind the hat he held in his hand, that I fancied he had fallen asleep. But when at last he raised it, I could see why he had hidden it, and had not answered two or three questions as to his faith in the Saviour's love to his soul, and the response in his own heart. His face was wet with tears.

A few days after this, Mary E—— told me that another man, who was slightly intoxicated, had sworn terribly at Paget; but that Paget had held his peace, and only said quietly afterwards, "I can't swear now; and it makes me sick to hear it."

During the dangerous illness of my beloved sister, the sympathy of the navvies was peculiarly delicate and true. They sent two or three of their number, as a kind of deputation, every evening, to inquire about her; and met for prayer concerning her, when I was unable to leave her room. One day I had a visit from a young man, named Edward G——, whom my sister had met at some distance from Beckenham, wandering—he knew not whither, with two fingers of his right hand crushed, and whom she had brought back, to provide him with board and lodging until he was able to go to work again. I told him that I had felt rather surprised that he had not sooner been amongst those who came personally to inquire after her. Tears started to his eyes.

"It wasn't that I didn't mind. I waited and watched for them as came, to ask how she were; but I didn't like to come to the house. I have been going on pretty middling badly of late, till just lately."

"What made you change just lately?"

"Why, I did not like to be going on so, whilst *she* lay ill." There was wonderful feeling in his voice and eyes as he said it.

"What is your besetting snare, Edward?"

"Evil companions, and going along with them. You see I'm lively; and when they come alongside of me and jeer, I jeer back; and my spirits carry me off."

"But Henry Hunns is lively enough, isn't he? And yet he is trying to live like a Christian."

"Henry Hunns is quiet-lively now. I a'most think I like it better. He's a changed man. I think I'll go along with him more than I have done."

Two or three weeks afterwards, a lecture on chemistry, with entertaining experiments, was delivered in the schoolroom. I gave Edward a shilling to pay for tickets for himself and Henry Hunns. He could not find Henry in time for the lecture, so he made use of the second sixpence for tobacco—having no money of his own till the week's wages were due. Meanwhile, I had met Henry, and fearing that he might be too late, had given him another ticket. Two or three days afterwards, when Henry inquired what had become of the sixpence, Edward told him he should settle about it with me. Accordingly, one evening in the following week, he came to the Rectory to speak to me about it. I said, "I should have been better pleased, Edward, if you had asked my leave to borrow it. You know how gladly I would have lent or given it to you."

"Yes, I do; and that's what makes me sorry

I spent it without your leave. But I meant to return it."

"Still, to borrow without leave is first cousin to stealing, is it not?"

"Well, I think it's closer than that. But I've brought it with me now. Here it is."

It went to my heart to have to take it; yet I felt that the lesson of rigid honesty must be taught. It would have burnt a hole in my purse; so I brought the Connemara Orphan box, and told him about little orphans being fed, clothed, and taught, for two pounds a-year each; and asked if he would like to have a fortieth share of the pleasure of supporting one. He smiled, and said, "Yes, indeed! but the sixpence is not mine. I haven't a right to the pleasure of dropping it in."

"But I give it you, to do as you like with it." He then put it in, with cordial delight.

About the same time, I was much distressed to hear that a young married man, of whom I had hoped better things, had gone away in a state of intoxication. It was a subject of grief, and of prayer also, at the cottage reading. A stout young navvy, named Samuel Bush, said, "Don't you remember, ma'am, when you first saw me, I was just like he.

Next day you saw me sober, and asked me to come to a reading. I thought I wasn't fit, but you persuaded me; and for five weeks past, now, I've kept sober—but only by praying hard whenever I see a public."

Young James —— was one of the summer tea-party whom we had not seen since that time. He had left, whilst we were in Ireland, to work as a bricklayer in Essex, and on his return to this neighbourhood had found work about four miles hence. From his elder brother, William, he had heard that I had expressed a wish to see him again, and walked over, in consequence, one evening. He seemed touched by hearing that he had been remembered by name, in prayer, for so long a time; and as we rose from our knees, his eyes were cast down, and I saw it was to hold back the tears. "I'll come to the reading to-morrow night," said he at last, "let it be ever so. I never thought when I went back to Essex that I should be asked for again, nor prayed for, like a child from home."

The next evening, William called to express his thanks for the kind words to his brother. I besought him to make sure of his own happiness by accepting at once God's free offer of salvation through Jesus Christ; and told him that if a man did not close with it when his heart was softened, it would grow harder than ever soon afterwards. He said with quivering lips, "I desire to do so."

He seemed, as William G—— used to express it, "in great earnest about his soul." He said he "had been a pretty regular church-goer before he came to Beckenham—but never had a pleasure in it before." And he added, "those cottage readings seem to make me love my church and my Bible better, and understand more about them both."

CHAPTER IV.

Happy Dying.

"The pilgrim they laid in a large upper chamber, whose window opened towards the sun-rising. The name of the chamber was Peace; where he slept till break of day, and then he awoke and sang—

'Where am I now?—Is this the love and care
Of Jesus, for the men that pilgrims are,
Thus to provide! That I should be forgiven,
And dwell already the next door to heaven.'"

Early in the year 1854, one of the Crystal Palace men, who lodged at Norwood, came to Beckenham to ask for an hospital ticket, as he believed he had an affection of the chest. We provided him with board and lodging at one of the cottages for a week, that he might have the kind and skilful medical attendance of Mr Williams of Bromley. He was then sent to one of the hospitals in London. Six weeks afterwards, he called to say that he was well enough to go to work again. He added that he had thought a good deal, whilst in hospital, of what he had heard at the readings he had attended during his short stay in Beckenham, and had talked to the other men in his ward about it, especially to one who was dying. This man had aroused him, one night, by suddenly exclaiming, "Oh! I am dying — I am dying — where am I going?"

John N—— rose, and went to the side of the sick man's bed, and asked, "What is your hope, for getting to heaven?"

"Well, I have done no murder, nor wronged my neighbour."

"But that is not enough," said John. "I used to think so; but just of late, I've learned different. I've got a bit of a printed letter to us Exhibition workmen, which tells the whole story, and I'll tell it to you. It says, 'I AM A LOST SINNER,—I HAVE A GRACIOUS SAVIOUR.' And a card of prayer which came with it says, 'My sins are very many, and only Christ's blood can wash them away.'"*

The poor man begged him to repeat the whole of the short prayer to him again and again, until he had learned it.

* TO THE WORKMEN OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS,—You are building a wonderful edifice, and we hope that it will be for the welfare, and not for the injury, of the people of Great Britain. You have witnessed a fearful accident. Oh! let it lead you to two thoughts,

I AM A LOST SINNER,—
I HAVE A GRACIOUS SAVIOUR;

And let every one of you lift up your hearts and say,—

LORD JESUS, SAVE ME,—
GIVE ME THY HOLY SPIRIT.

Let us beg of you to read the Word of God daily; and never let a day pass in which you look at the Crystal Palace without praying God to give you a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

M—— C——.
C—— M——.

Almighty God! pardon all my past sins; they are very many, and only Christ's blood can wash them away. Turn me, by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, from all my evil ways. Give me a new heart, guide and direct me in the right way, and help me to live a new and holy life. I ask these things in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Two or three times the next day he begged John to read to him out of his New Testament; and in the night he died—repeating almost with his last breath, "My sins are very many, and only Christ's blood can wash them away."

A stranger, named Henry Randall, called one day to ask for an hospital ticket. He said the ladies at the Rectory had sent him a letter and a card of prayer; and so he thought he might come to them in his trouble. He then shewed the printed letter and prayer sent to each of the 3000 workmen at the Crystal Palace, as his credentials. We sent him to board at James W——'s, whilst we waited for a ticket from a subscriber to one of the London hospitals. When it was all arranged, James brought him to the Rectory to say good-bye. After giving him a Testament and some little books and other small presents, with a few words of advice, I was parting with him, when James stepped back and said, "I hope it's not a liberty, ma'am, but would you have a bit of a prayer with him? I don't much think you or I will ever see him again alive."

It touched my heart to be kept up to my duty by a navvy—six months before, a drunkard!

A year afterwards, my sister and I received a letter by post from a poor woman, requesting us to visit her dying husband at Norwood. The signature and address were indistinctly written, so that we had

some difficulty in tracing them. When at last we entered their cottage, it was Henry Randall who stretched out both his emaciated hands, with the words, "Oh, I am so happy! I wanted to see you, to tell you that I am so happy in Jesus Christ."

In the course of the visit, he told us that during the time he was in the hospital, he had remembered the words said to him as he left the Rectory, "You have heard of a Saviour now; tell the sick and dying around you of that Saviour. Remember His own words, in the last chapter in the Bible, 'Let him that heareth say, Come.'" At once he offered to read the Bible every evening to the ward, which was willingly accepted. He believed that God had blessed this reading of His Word to two men who had died there. "Yet," he said, "I had not found Christ when I asked them to come to Him. I was only seeking Him. Now I have found Him, and He is my own Saviour. He has washed away my sins in His own blood. He has given me life by His death. He has opened heaven to me. My nights of pain and coughing used to seem so long; now they are too short for praising my Saviour, and enjoying His presence."

During two months of lingering sufferings, he continued "rejoicing in hope," and then quietly fell asleep in Jesus, "the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead."

He was buried in the cemetery at Norwood; and

by his dying request to his wife, the first letter he had received, telling him of a Saviour's love, was buried with him. He said he should like to awake up with it in his hand at the morning of the Resurrection.

CHAPTER V.

Fears and Hopes.

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
Some forlorn and shipwreck'd brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again."

About this time I remarked that Thomas Dibley, a navvy of about eight-and-twenty years of age, had become regular in his attendance at church and at the cottage readings; and from his earnest countenance, it was easy to see that his heart was awakening to the solemn importance of beginning a new life.

Desirous of knowing what was passing in his mind, I asked him to carry my lantern for me one evening after a cottage reading. As he was walking by my side, he suddenly exclaimed, "I thank God I ever came here!"

"Do you believe, Thomas, that God has really changed your heart, and has given you His Holy Spirit, so as to make you believe in your Saviour's love to you, and to enable you to wish to love and to live to Him wholly?"

"I do believe He has changed me. I do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ's willingness to save me, and I wish to live to Him." He could not add another word, and walked away from the Rectory

gate, without saying, "Good-night"—but ran back before I had reached the house, to say, "God bless you, ma'am.'

The next evening, he came for an hour's earnest conversation. He mentioned that the first serious thought he had ever had about his eternal salvation was when I had ventured to enter the supper-room of a beer-shop in the village, to invite the lodgers to come to an evening lecture of Mr Chalmers' in the schoolroom, and to attend the services in church on Sunday. A short prayer was then written in a Testament, and given to him; the words of which he pleaded that night:—"O GOD, WASH ME FROM ALL MY SINS IN MY SAVIOUR'S BLOOD, AND I SHALL BE WHITER THAN SNOW. FILL ME WITH THE HOLY GHOST, FOR JESUS CHRIST'S SAKE. AMEN."

From that time he continued to kneel down, night and morning, to pray its brief words, and then he read a few verses of his Testament. The next Sunday he came to church, and afterwards attended the services and the cottage readings regularly.

"In three weeks," he added, with a thankful smile, "my little prayer had pulled me up so far that I could not bear lodging at a beer-shop, nor to miss going to the house of God twice of a Sunday. But now, I do hope it is agoing to strike at my heart as well as my life. I think it *has*. I think God is hearing my prayer, and pardoning my sins, and making me

wish to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and His people." He added that, before he had removed to a quiet cottage, from the time he had begun to pray, the conversation he heard around him at supper-time had become so painful to him, that he used to take his bit of supper and eat it out of doors, and stay there until it was time to go to bed.

I asked him if he had not had a good mother; for I thought all this must be the answer to a pious mother's prayers. He hid his face in his hands, and said, "She was a tender-hearted woman, and taught me a prayer when I was little, and sent me to school, Sundays and week-days. She died four years ago, when I was four-and-twenty. *She was a good mother.*"

James W—— returned to his work in the month of February, after a long illness, accompanied with much suffering. At the close of his first day's work, he looked so worn and faint, that I insisted on his resting a week or ten days longer, and, with the help of a friend, enabled him to do so. He came to the Rectory one morning for conversation. Seldom have I more enjoyed half an hour's communion of spirit. He said that, whilst he was laid by with great suffering in his knee and leg, his soul was lifted up with joy in believing. "I felt that Christ was my own, and that we two should never part—for He bought me with a price. But now I have got back into life

and the world again, I feel so fainty-like in my body, as if I should go right off, and it is nigh as bad with my soul I fear I may go right off from Jesus. I find my love to my GOOD SAVIOUR is so little, it a'most daunts me."

"But would you give up that little for anything in this world?"

"Not to be a king! And oh, I do love Him dearly! only it is such pitiful love by the side of His great love to me. Pray God give me better and more in my heart."

He thought he ought to go to his home (in a village in Berkshire), if he did not get strong enough for work soon. "Parish and old friends might do a little for me. But I did so wish to live and die at Beckenham. Anyhow, if the Lord would give me strength for a bit, it would be a great thing. I owe a debt or two; and now I am a Christian, I should not like to leave in debt. I pray about it, and I believe the Lord will raise me up for it."

Ten days afterwards, he was enabled to resume his work.

Shortly after this conversation, James W—— called again, and seemed unwilling to communicate the object of his visit. At length he said, he would be so very sorry to vex me—did I think I could bear it? I asked anxiously what he meant.

"Well; it's about Henry Hunns."

"If it is anything bad of him, I do not think I *can* bear it, James. I have so rejoiced over him. But you had better tell me at once; for I do not believe there can be much to say against him."

"He bid me come and break it to you. He 's been to a public-house."

"But he has not given way to drinking, has he?"

"Not been insensible-like, but bad enough; and yet it wasn't his fault, over and above going in at all. Perhaps you don't know that he used to go very often to a public-house at ——, before he got changed; and the landlord of it said the other day he'd make him drunk, as sure as he was alive, because Henry had left off drinking, and grown religious. So, as he passes by, two young men stands there—one of them calls out, 'Henry, treat us to a mug. You're grown rather near of late.' And you know, ma'am, to us navvies to be called *near* is as bad as murder a'most. So Henry stops still. And then the landlord says, 'I've a kind of ale that's very good, I'd like you to taste it, Red Neck' (that's the name he goes by, because of that long red comforter he always wears, cold and hot). So landlord goes in and brings a mug, and Henry goes in and tosses it off. And all in a minute he feels it in his head, and knows landlord has drugged it to make him drunk. And Henry said it was a judgment on him for going into temptation again,

and that he deserved the trick and the disgrace it has brought. And he wanted to come and tell you on it; but he said he had not cheek enough. So I said, she won't scold you, Henry; 'taint her way with us. And he said, 'No; I'm not afraid of that. But it's them two tears I can't abear. They came in her eyes when I told her I had got drunk when I was with the militia last autumn, and she told me she was afeard of my falling away out of the right path. And I said to myself, I'd never make them tears come again. But it will be worse now that I've gone on straight so long, and received the sacrament, and shall bring a scandal on it all now.' And it made the poor boy so miserable, he couldn't go to his work."

I told James that I must see Henry, so that he had better send him that evening. He came accordingly, looking wretched—his eyes swollen with crying. "It's a bad business," he said at once. "I had better not think of going to the sacrament tomorrow; but I did so wish it;" and then came a fresh burst of tears. After a few words of mine, he replied, "Yes, ye see, that's just what I mind so bad. It brings a disgrace on the name of the blessed Saviour, now I'm called after Him—a Christian." He stayed for the meeting of those who intended to partake of the Lord's Supper next day, and seemed full of heaviness.

On Sunday morning, he called again, before the morning service; and said, "I think He would forgive me, and even let me come to His table to-day. But it would do hurt to others' souls—so I won't do it. I'll not go back to my dinner, though. I'll walk about in a quiet way after church, and read my Bible; and wish I was along of them that go up."

We shewed him the quiet shrubbery walk, where he might take his Bible and read, undisturbed, for which he was thankful; and he seemed more composed afterwards. On Monday evening, we had the 51st Psalm at the cottage reading. I was disappointed by not seeing Henry there, at first; but a few minutes afterwards, the door opened with a peculiar suddenness, and somebody came in with a kind of fling. I was sure it was Henry, and that he was feeling very awkward and unhappy about what had passed. After the concluding prayer, I turned round, and saw that he had been standing the whole time (for the room was full), and that tears were in his eyes.

On the next Saturday night, he came to the Rectory, and told me he thought he should never be happy again. "Ye see the fellows have at me so, about it—and chaff so about religion; and what is worse, I feel away from my God."

"Read the 51st Psalm to-night, on your knees, Henry, and turn it into prayer."

"I 've done it every night since you read it on Monday at the cottage; but I 'll try it again. I won't give up my hope, please God, without a pull for it."

On Sunday, he had his joyous face again; only it was more seriously and humbly joyful in its expression than before. He said he had spent nearly two hours alone with his God and his Bible, before the other inhabitants of the house where he lodges had awaked that morning. "And peace has come back to me," he said; "only with it a fear lest I should drive it away again. So I have asked God to keep it for me."

I had heard a high character in the village of young Richard B——, and had noticed his attention at the cottage readings. When I remarked this to him, he said he might well listen—those readings had made him go to church and read his Bible, and try to live a new life. I asked him if he had yet found peace in believing that his sins were forgiven him, for the blessed Saviour's name's sake? He said, "I believe they are. He 's so willing to do it, if we ask heartily."

I found he had laid by a considerable sum of money, and yet had contrived to send a handsome present to his parents.

Another young man, whom I met returning from his work, early in the spring of that year, told me that he had never entered a place of worship! I could not persuade him to go to church at first, but he came to a "reading," and after it was over, said he should like to come again, and bring his "mate," which he did regularly from that time.

During the weeks that had elapsed from the peace made between Paget and George, the latter had been constant in his attendance at the readings. But one Sunday night, towards the end of February, he was missing. I heard that he had gone to Croydon, and had my fears as to the manner in which he would spend his Sabbath evening there. On Monday evening, I sent to his lodgings, to ask if he would like to come to the Rectory, and to carry my lantern to the cottage. As this was a little gratification much thought of amongst these kind-hearted and truly courteous men, I was surprised that he did not appear. On my way, I called at the lodging-house. George did not look up from the supper-table, where he was sitting, but said, in a low voice, that he had not long come back. "Then," said I, "you must not leave your supper to come to the reading. Those who work ought to eat."

"I will come, though—it's better than supper;" and he rose up, with two others, to accompany me.

The next day, I called at the same house, to see a

sick child. The landlady said, "George was sadly put about by your message, ma'am. He was led away to drink a little too much when he went to spend Sunday evening with his cousin at Croydon, and it troubled his mind all yesterday. And when the message came, he said, 'No, no, I can't go. To be walking by her side, as if this hadn't happened; I couldn't do it, and I don't deserve to be treated so kindly again.' And what vexes him worse still, is, you see he had become so changed of late—never swearing now, and asking the others to leave it off; and one throws it at him that he's a saint; and he says, 'No, I'm not. But I wish I were. It may come to you, Joe, some day, to feel what I feel now; and I wish it would.' And now, all this grieves him so, lest he should have done a harm to their souls; and last night, after he came home from the reading, he told them how ashamed he was of himself, and said he prayed God it might not so fall out again."

The little boy in the house had been seized with croup in the night, and thought that he should die. "Oh, mother," he said, "I'm frightened to go before such a good God!" Then suddenly he added, "But I have prayed to Him to make me a better boy; and mother, there's the navvies' prayer that they pray beside their beds in the next room." And then the little child knelt up in his bed, and, amidst paroxysms of coughing, prayed, "O God, wash me from all my

sins in my Saviour's blood, and I shall be whiter than snow." Almost directly afterwards, with the simplicity of childhood's eager faith, he said, "Now, mother, I need not mind dying, because I am washed, you see, in that blood of Jesus Christ."

Information having reached me, that some new lodgers had come to ——'s beershop, I ventured to visit the strangers' supper-room again, to invite them to Mr Chalmers' schoolroom service. After a little conversation, four men promised to go, and kept their word. Charles S——, who had begun to attend the readings a short time before, was standing near the lane which led to a small inn, with the sign of "The Coach and Horses," kept by his father. He came forward to tell me that there was a large party of lodgers in their great kitchen, and that his mother and he would go into the circle with me, if I would like to speak to them. Under this escort I went with great comfort. The strangers listened respectfully; but not one promised to attend. However, about ten minutes after the service had commenced, a trampling of heavy shoes upon the newly-shingled path announced the arrival of "The Coach and Horses." Our new friends had "thought better of it," and had followed us.

William and James —— came to the Rectory afterwards, for conversation and advice. James shewed me his well-worn card of prayer, which he said had

never left his pocket since the day he had received it, excepting when he took it out each night and morning, to remind himself to use it. William said that he kept his Testament and card of prayer on a little table by his bed, that he might remember to read and pray the last thing at night and the first in the morning. I begged them to be firm in not missing the Sunday morning service, because it was best to *begin* the day with God; and a morning at home was seldom so spent as to be a good preparation for the afternoon service. William said "he had found that out, and wished to come regularly of a morning." He begged me to write down on a card the passage of Scripture quoted to him, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth—for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

One Sunday morning, I met Henry Hunns, gaily dressed in a blue jacket, blue cap, red tie, and white trousers, as a sort of anticipation of summer on a bitterly cold day in February. Without waiting to speak to me, he rushed into a cottage, and brought out a fine little boy of three years old, the child of

his sister, who had just arrived with her husband from Norfolk. "I am going to take him to church now," said Henry. "He is young for that," I replied. "Yes; I like him to learn his duty betimes." As they walked by my side to the church, he remarked, "I suppose we militia men will soon be called out now to defend the country, as the regulars are off. I don't mind about going, so much, now that I hope I've learnt Who I can look to, to teach and strengthen me."

Some strangers were lingering about the village street, who had succeeded the previous day in obtaining the promise of work at the Crystal Palace. They were glad to hear of the evening reading, having no Sunday clothes wherewith to make their appearance in church to their own satisfaction. The navvy has a peculiar enjoyment in being cleanly and well-dressed on Sunday. These strangers expressed great delight when Testaments were given, after the "reading" was over, to all who had not yet received them. All the men from "The Coach and Horses" were present. One of them, a lad of eighteen, gladly promised to teach the short prayer to those who could not read; and Charles S—— said that this youth had borrowed a Bible belonging to his mother, the landlady, to read to the rest, after supper, the last few evenings.

On the way home, I saw a young man sitting at the door of a lodging-house; and, after a few remarks

to him about the place, inquired whether he had attended either service in church that day?

"No. I never go to such a place."

"Will you tell me why you do not?"

"Because it would do me no good."

"Do you read your Bible?"

"No. That would do me no good neither."

"Shall I tell you what would do you good?" He looked up. "If you and I pray every day that God would fill you with His Holy Spirit. I will pray it for you, by God's help, if you will promise to pray it for yourself."

His lip trembled, as he slowly and earnestly replied, "I will."

CHAPTER VI.

Wanderers Reclaimed.

"And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge and to make them white, even to the time of the end, because it is yet for a time appointed."

It was towards the close of the month of March that a dark shadow fell upon the heart-cheering work which had hitherto, by the grace of God, been made to prosper in our hands.

One Monday morning, Mary E—— came to tell me a miserable story, which made my whole heart cold with disappointment and distress. On Sunday afternoon, Martha W—— had asked her husband not to go to church, but to take a walk with her, instead. He told her that he would go with the greatest pleasure after service, but could not "miss his church." She became irritated, and spoke bitterly of his "church-going ways." This was renewed at tea-time, until at length his spirit was stung; and he said in his anger, "Then I'll throw away my religion altogether, and you shall have a drunkard again for your husband."

His fearful word was kept, that night. The next day his misery and shame were so great, that he drank again, to drown remembrance and remorse. News of this, also, reached me on my way to the reading.

I went to his cottage, and found his wife alone with her baby, in an agony of remorse and fear. She had heard that he had been seen last on his way to a reservoir, a few miles distant, and believed he might be tempted to drown himself, to avoid the shame of returning to Beckenham—the scene of his new life and holy happiness, and then of his grievous fall. She saw so clearly her sin and folly, and the wreck thus made of the happy home with which God had blessed her for many a month past, that there was little need for me to add to her misery by pointing it out.

The cottage rooms that night were more than usually crowded. But the loss of that happy face of James W—— from his accustomed place, with a haunting fear lest I should never see him here again, or see him happy hereafter, and a whisper that Henry Hunns had been likewise led astray, overwhelmed me, and at the close of the thirteenth verse of the eighth of Romans, my voice failed.

They all looked up in consternation, and then I told them that two men amongst them, whom I had known longest, and of whom I had almost the best hope, had gone astray like lost sheep, having been taken captive by the devil, at his will.

There were very fervent voices joining in prayer that night. On my way from the cottage, I found them waiting in groups to say "God bless you," or "please take heart again," in low, kind tones, as I

passed. Near James W——'s cottage door, I saw Henry Hunns leaning against a wall, looking heavy and unhappy. I spoke to him strongly of his sin; and then asked him if he had seen James W——. He said, "Yes—in a tavern at Penge, half an hour ago." Mrs W—— said she would go and fetch him home. Knowing that it would not be safe for her to meet him alone, in a state of intoxication, as they had parted with a quarrel, I told her to accept Mary E——'s kind proposal of accompanying her, with Isaac R—— for an escort, as he had become so steady as to be safely intrusted with such an enterprise.

They found him where Henry said he had seen him, surrounded by about thirty or forty of the navvies who were lodging in that neighbourhood, and succeeded in leading him home. At half-past seven the next morning, I walked to his cottage. Five minutes more, and he would have left Beckenham, never to return. He was just looking his last at his little boy. But even that did not soften his heart. His face was so changed that it was difficult to recognise him. A possessing spirit had altered the expression of every feature.

My heart sunk so low that I could not speak at first. When I did, he would neither look up, nor answer a single question. No appeal to past experience had any effect. At last he said, "I have given it all up. I have sold my soul for drink—and all

through rage and revenge. There remains no more pardon for me—nor would I seek it if there was."

Nearly an hour passed. There was no softening. Never before had I so learnt my own utter powerlessness to influence the soul of another. All the powers of darkness seemed leagued against my feebleness. There was but one hope left. I knelt down and poured out my heart in prayer that God the Holy Spirit would drive out the Evil Spirit, and take possession of that soul again. He would not kneel, but seemed somewhat touched. "You have been like a mother to me," he said. "If anybody could persuade another out of sin, you would persuade me. But it is done—past hope. I am going now, for ever, from my wife and Beckenham, and from you, and from my God."

He rose to go. I took his wife by the hand, and led her to him, and told him of her grief and penitence for her great sin, whereby she had stirred up his. And then Martha wept, and said, "Oh, James, I will go to church with you every Sunday henceforth, and be obedient and kind—God helping me—if you will come back to your God, and forgive me."

He sat sullenly. I knew then it was "now or never;" and with the silent prayer, "O God, help now!" I said, "James, give your hand to your wife now; or you throw back her soul to Satan." He

stretched out his hand to her, turned his head aside, and wept.

Two evenings afterwards, on my way for a class of navvies who had met to read on the subject of the Lord's Supper, I called again. James met me with tears and blessings. "You saved me, then, by the help of God. But my sin has been grievous." Of course he did not attend the class that night. Henry Hunns was lodging in the house where it was held. He hid himself in the back room. I spoke sorrowfully to him for a short time afterwards. Thomas Dibley carried my lantern home. I asked him if, as he returned, he could spare time to see James W—— and read him the chapter we had just been reading—Ephesians v. He did so. On Saturday night I found those two reading it again. James pointed out the words "nor foolish talking nor jesting, which are not convenient"—adding, "all that condemns me. It has always been the beginning of evil with me."

Just before I left the Rectory that evening, Henry Hunns called to see me. He hid his face in his hands and sobbed, "It has been *down hill* almost ever since I was 'ticed into that public-house at ——, nigh six weeks ago. I have gradually grown colder to the things of God, and not thought so hard of sin; and then came this fall."

"Who led you into it?"

"My own evil heart. I've no cause to mention others; only it wasn't James W——, and needn't have been anybody, if I hadn't been sinful enough to yield."

His grief was great, and there seemed a clearer view of the injury to the cause of God, and the real personal wrong he had done to his Saviour, than even in James's mind. "I have wept bitterly every night since it happened," he said.

The genuine and deep repentance of that poor young man—brought up, as he had been, without a single religious advantage—taught me a lesson! When the balance shall be struck between small sins (so called) with great privileges, in the one scale; —and crying sins with few responsibilities, in the other scale—who shall say that infinite justice may not see deeper guilt in the unkind word, the uncharitable suspicion, the selfish act, and other manifestations of an un-Christ-like spirit, in which Christians are too often tempted to indulge, than in the more glaring departures from the law of God of those who have but just begun to hear of a Saviour's love, and to know anything of its constraining power.

When I told Henry that he might carry my lantern by my side down the village, his countenance expressed great surprise, and he said, "What, after all, will you let me?" At the door of the cottage where the men who gave me the basket on New Year's Day

were to meet me for each to receive the gift of a well-bound Bible, I bade Henry "good night." "May I not wait for you, ma'am?" "It is Saturday night, Henry, and you have some shopping to do." "I can get all I want, and come back again." He was "in waiting" as usual, when I came out of the cottage; so I walked home, with the returning wanderer by my side, thanking God, with an overflowing heart, for this fresh fulfilment of His own promise, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him."*

In the evening, something of his old brightness shone in his eyes, as he entered the cottage, after having attended the school-room service. But on the way back, he said, "I'm not a bit happier, beyond for a time, when I can forget it all. I'm very miserable."

"But do you not believe in these words, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

"I believe in my head, but not in my heart."

I saw the conviction of sin was very deep, and felt it was well not to disturb it; only to suggest the remedy, and to trust to the Holy Spirit to apply it, with power, in His own time.

* Hosea, xiv. 4.

The next evening, James W—— began again to attend the readings. He did not venture into his old place, but took a seat at the furthest corner of the room. His whole countenance and manner were remarkably subdued. Thomas Dibley said to me afterwards, "James feels his sin wonderful."

Shortly afterwards, during a few days' absence from Beckenham, I received the following letter in Henry Hunns' handwriting:—

"*April* 23, 1854.

"DEAR FRIEND,—With sorrow I write these few lines to you for dissgracing myself and setting a bad example to the other young beginers but I hope it will pleas God to forgive me all past sins, and blot out all my iniquities, and give me firmer faith to stand against the sin that so easily besetts me; but I will pray to God with my whole heart to strengthen me, and James W—— too. I know it will be a great temtation for me when I am in the militia for I expect we shall all have to be in different public-houses but I must not doubt, but trust in the Lord, for I know He can keep me from it but I must pray more earnestly than I have done these few weeks past. I have gave way a great deal to the devil; but the Scripture says to him, 'So far shalt thou go, and no farther' and may the Holy Spirit of God keep me and James W—— in the know-

ledge and fear of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and all that ever come to your kind lectures and readings and I hope none of them will fall into temtation the same as me and James W——. But I hope the Lord will not give me over to the devil any more. I have better faith that He will keep me from sin now. Me and James have had a comfortable Sunday morning. The text was, 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.'

"So I conclude, with better faith through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"HENRY HUNNS.
"JAMES W——."

About the same time Jacob K——, who had so long wandered from the good way which he seemed to have chosen at the first, desired an interview. "I wished to tell you, ma'am, how very unhappy I have been. There 's no happiness for me in this world, if I can't come back to my God."

"What has revived this desire, Jacob?"

"I went to see a friend at the village of Beddington, and went to church with him. There I heard a beautiful sermon on a verse of the psalm that first spake home to me when I was at sea a few years ago—the Fifty-first Psalm, and the verse was—'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' Then it kept troubling my heart how to

get *my* spirit broken. But that might have passed away if it had not been for what James W—— did. I never thought James would have gone back like that. And I said to myself, if the devil gets such power over him again—him as has walked with his God so many months, close-like—what will he not do with me when he gets into me strong? I haven't touched a drop of beer since, and I 've been praying night and morning."

"And do you also pray for James?"

"Yes, I do; and he prays for himself, and is sore sorry."

Wonderful is the overruling power of that grace which can bring back a wandering sheep even by a brother's fall, and then raise up the fallen one again, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence."

CHAPTER VII.

Self-Conquest.

"He also had a brave victory over his enemy: let HIM grant that dwelleth above that we fare no worse, when we come to be tried, than he f'—PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

WHILST waiting for a train at Sydenham Station one day in the spring of that year, I gave some small books to two young railway men who were standing on the platform, and asked if they had either a Bible or a Testament. One replied, "I've a little pocket Testament, and I wouldn't sell it for ever so much—no, never!"

"I am glad you prize it so highly."

"Well, I do; and the kind friend as gave it me."

"Who gave it to you?"

"You! Nigh a year ago, I lodged at Mrs D——'s in Beckenham; and you came in twice of Sunday evenings, and read and talked to us. I have read my Testament most nights since, and thought a deal of what you said, and wished I was back again to hear more. I'm at work in Essex, and only came down to fetch a mate of mine, as I didn't know how to direct to. And little did I think I should light on you, ma'am. It is a pleasure indeed."

That short interview was like a wave bringing

back, after many days, the bread "cast upon the waters."

The sensitiveness of these fine natures to every word of praise or blame from a friend whom they valued was almost affecting in some cases. Mary E—— came to the rectory one evening to tell me that "Martin had been *taking on* terribly, because one of them had told him at the works that I had said he was false." On the previous Sunday evening, after the "reading," it so happened that I had remarked—

"I thought Martin would have been here. He said he should come, and I thought he was sure to keep his word."

He had been sent for to visit a sick sister-in-law at Sydenham, to whom his kindness was most brotherly and tender until her death, some weeks later. Mary E—— said, "He was broken-hearted when he heard the men say that you had called him 'false,' ma'am. He has such a tender spirit. Whenever a man of his gang falls sick, he sends for Martin to put his pillow right and say a kind word; and many a nice bit of fish or something delicate he buys for his sister-in-law, now she is ill."

Of course, I lost not a moment in writing him a letter in printing hand, to tell him the precise words I had used, and how sorry I felt that even so small a foundation should have been laid by me for the

charge brought against him—adding, that I would take his word as trustfully as any man's bond.

He stopped after the school-room service was concluded on Thursday evening to thank me, with tears in his honest eyes. "It was so good of ye, and made me feel so happy and satisfied—a'most proud-like."

Early in the spring, John J—— came to bid me good-bye, employment having been offered him in the neighbourhood of Paddington. He said he had brought on a terrible disease in his chest by hard drinking, a year or two before he came to this neighbourhood; yet when, after much severe suffering, he had left a London hospital cured, he had gone back to the evil habit, and never had known how to stop, until he came to Beckenham, and went to the readings, and then to church. I said, "If you do not find your soul cared for, at the place to which you are going, as much as it has been here, will you come back again, John?"

"Well, that I don't look for, go where I may. But if I can't stand temptation away from here, I'll come back."

He had kept his little Testament carefully, yet bearing signs of having been read; so I gave him a small Bible, to his great joy. "I was just thinking of buying one, but shall love to have this as a parting gift. Please, ma'am, look at Revelation ii. 10, the end of the verse."

I read—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

"A few days after you gave me the Testament, I happened to open it on those words. What they have been to me ever since! God send I may never forget them!"

He promised to go to church regularly, and added, "I shall sometimes run over and spend my Sundays here. It will be a pleasant ten-mile walk to take at five in the morning to get a Beckenham Sunday again, I have so loved my Sundays here."

He, too, had a praying mother.

A few weeks after he had left Beckenham, he wrote to tell me that he went to church twice every Sunday—adding, "and in the evening I walk in the cemetery for quiet, and read the words on some of the gravestones, being, as there is, no lectures here on Sunday nights."

He came to Beckenham for Easter Sunday, and, three months later, wrote the following letter:—

"Dear Friend,—I received your letter on Sunday morning, and was very glad to hear from you, and a very comfortable letter it was to me. It gave me great pleasure on reading it. I will come over next Sunday, if I can get any-ways. I have been very ill. I have not done any work these last seven weeks but thank God I am getting better now. I

intend going to work this week if I can. I should like to see you once more again. I will be sure and come over next Sunday, if God spares my life. I go to Westbourne Grove School Monday and Wednesday night, and I go to St John's Church, Nottinghill, on Sunday. I have never neglected going to church since I left your place nor I hope I never shall. I have had several friends to see me since I have been ill. I gave them a tract a-piece—what you gave me when I left. I have not got one left now; but my Bible, Prayer-book, and Testament I still keep, and always will. I would sooner part from anything I have than them. I shall bring them with me when I come. I have not seen any one but little Charles that was at Beckenham, and he is listed for a soldier in the Rifle Brigade. When I met him I had a little conversation with him, and told him not to forget his Saviour, who died for him. He told me he would not. I told him to be steady. He said he would. I asked him whether he saw you. He told me he had not since he left. I told him to go to church when he could: what would it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what would he give in exchange for it? Let him seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon him while he is near. 'Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have

mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' I had a few more words with him. He said, 'I wish I was like you,' and the tears flowed in his eyes. I put my hand in my pocket, and gave him a shilling. He thanked me for it and for my advice to him, and we both parted, perhaps never to meet again. I shall be over on Sunday morning by church-time. I have no more to write this time. So no more from

"JOHN J——."

One Sunday evening, Thomas Dibley asked for special prayer for a dying friend at Sydenham, whom he visited daily throughout his illness (of brain fever), in the hope of being able to speak to him about the things concerning his peace. "I had such an answer to prayer, to-day," he said. "The delirium ceased for full ten minutes, and I repeated by him the prayer that I love so dearly, and made a bit more, and he caught at it so!"

The next day I found the poor man was quite clear in his mind, and eager for prayer, and the readings of God's Word. He had been in the habit of drinking to excess whilst working in Sweden; but on the day he landed in England, he determined to break it off by a desperate effort. Perhaps he did it too suddenly; but there was something to be honoured in that effort to reform at any

sacrifice. He continued to thirst for the Word of God and prayer to his last conscious moment. Captain Vicars' prayer by his side was almost the last he heard, but his own fevered lips murmured the words which Thomas Dibley had taught him, almost from hour to hour, until his death. His "mates" took it in turn to sit up with him at night, mindless of their hard work by day; and treasured up every word which encouraged their hopes that he had found peace with God upon his dying bed.

About the time that Henry Hunns left for two months' service in a militia regiment in the spring, a brother-in-law of his, who had been much opposed to religion, and had been in the habit of making bitter jests at him, came to a cottage-reading, and asked leave to bring a letter of Henry's to the Rectory for me to read. When he brought it to me, he said, "I never knew such a changed man as Henry has been the last half-year. Just look at his clothes!" It is an indisputable sign of steadiness when a navvy replenishes his wardrobe!

William C—— then spoke of his lovely little baby, whom I was visiting in its dangerous illness. "As white as alabaster," he said, "isn't he? and eyes like violets. I believe he won't live—he 's too clever —knows everything—never sees anything that 's nice but he cries for it—too clever and too pretty to live, *but I don't like he should die.*"

"God grant he may be spared to grow up a good and happy man. And oh! William, do you think that *God liked* to see His own Son die upon a cross; and yet He let Him do it for the sake of saving us—you and me, and every other poor sinner that will take Him at His word, and let Him save us. Do let Him save *you*."

His heart was softened, and he could scarcely reply "God bless you," as I gave him Walter Cradock's beautiful, brief words, called, "Good news from heaven to the worst of sinners on earth."

CHAPTER VIII.

Last Meetings and Last Partings.

"Farewell! 'But not for ever,' Hope replies;
'Trace but his steps, and meet him in the skies!'"

THE warmest interest was taken by the navvies in everything touching the welfare of our army, from that day in the month of February 1854, when the order for the Guards to hold themselves in readiness for active service in the East, startled England into the sudden conviction that the peace of forty years was broken.

Some ten weeks earlier, a private of the Grenadier Guards, named Henry Bonfield, was passing through the village, when I was on my way for a Sunday evening "reading." He accepted a Testament gratefully, and asked me to write his name in it, with the short prayer which I had mentioned to him. For this purpose, we entered a cottage, and its owners gladly united with us in praying that the Word of God might be made the means of his being brought from darkness to light. The day before the regiment sailed for the East, he wrote to say that his Testament and his little prayer were his chief comforts. He begged that the souls of his wife and child might be cared for; and asked for further advice to be

written to meet him at Malta. From thence, he wrote to say that he had copied the prayer for a great many men in his own regiment, and in others; because it had brought grace and peace to his own soul. He did not live to return home.

This man was one of fifteen soldiers and officers whose names were specially pleaded in prayer at all our cottage meetings from the time of their being sent out on active service. Very earnest was the interest of the navvies in uniting in prayer that God would teach us what could be done for the spiritual welfare of our soldiers. And when the plan was suggested for an immediate subscription to be raised to purchase Testaments for each man in the regiments then under orders for the East (before the Bible Societies came forward with their liberal grant), it was by the navvies combining with a few villagers who attended that cottage reading, that the first donation, of fifteen shillings, was offered for this supply. Their anxiety was great to hear that the Testaments were in time to reach the regiment on the point of sailing (the Scots Fusilier Guards). A letter from a missionary of the Soldiers' Friend Society, to whom we entrusted the work of carrying them to the ship, was listened to with two or three scarcely repressed shouts of joy; and his details of the facilities afforded him for their distribution, by the commanding officer, at the request of Captain A——

of that regiment, called forth, at the conclusion, an irrepressible cheer, which ended in an earnest "Thank God!"

The warm attachment, amounting almost to veneration, formed by these men for Captain Vicars of the 97th Regiment, during his visits to us in the preceding autumn and winter, together with the strong ties of relationship which bound many of them to our soldiers, gave the character of prayer meetings for the army to our little gatherings, from that time.

Letters from the seat of war were listened to with thrilling interest, especially those which were written by Captain Vicars, during the ten months which followed his embarkation for the East, before he entered into his rest. In the course of those months, three of the railway men who had known him in Beckenham, enlisted in regiments recruiting for the war, chiefly for the sake of going to the Crimea, to be within reach of Captain Vicars. Only one of the three saw his face again.

It was on the 29th of March that he gave them, as we then thought, his farewell address and prayer. About one hundred and twenty were present. Many of them were deeply affected. Several lingered near the door afterwards, to catch his hand, as he left, for a parting grasp; and there agreed amongst themselves to have a little gathering of their own, every Sunday morning, at James W——'s house, to pray for him.

But the delay of seven weeks before the 97th Regiment actually sailed, gave them several more opportunities of hearing the words of life from the lips of one whose manly simplicity and power of character, combined with the most genial warmth of heart, peculiarly qualified him to obtain an influence over these noble children of nature.

On the 10th of May, he addressed upwards of a hundred of them, for the last time, on the 5th chapter of the 2d of Corinthians, especially dwelling on the words, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," and "The love of Christ constraineth us."

We were obliged to be absent from home, at that time, and many regrets were expressed to me by letter, that I had missed hearing "the good, kind, beautiful things" that were said in that farewell address.

William G—— walked over from Deptford to hear it; and fearing to make Captain Vicars too late for the train, if he added to the thicket of hands surrounding him for a parting shake, he ran after the carriage which conveyed him to Sydenham station, but missed him in the dark. He then wrote to ask me if he could see Captain Vicars any where again. I mentioned that at the railway station, London Bridge, he might be able to see him for a few minutes about eight o'clock the following evening.

An hour before the time appointed William G—— was at the station; and then was well repaid by an hour's walk and talk with this so loved and honoured friend, who wrote of it to me thus—"Never have I more heartily enjoyed an hour's communion with a brother in the Lord Jesus."

Henry Hunns had received orders to join his regiment, then the Westminster Militia, on the morning of the 10th. But, with the independence of the navvy not yet merged into the obedience of the soldier, he wrote me word that he "should give himself leave to wait and see Captain Vicars." In a reply, by return of post, I said "Captain Vicars will not notice you if you neglect your duty as a soldier." So he went at the time appointed. But it laid heavily on my heart that I had cut him off from his last chance of an interview with one whose words and example had so powerful an influence for good over him, and that I could not calculate the amount of benefit of which I had thus deprived the poor young man.

He had promised to write to me with his address in London, and I had planned to send him to Kensington barracks for a parting word with his valued friend; but Captain Vicars' last day in England had come, and yet there was no letter from Henry. So by the early post I sent off a despatch, directed only "Westminster Militia, London," to tell him, if he could get leave, to go at seven o'clock that evening

to Mr Goodhart's church at Chelsea, and to wait for Captain Vicars at the vestry door, after the service was over, for a shake of the hand and a parting blessing.

The letter found him that afternoon. He went at once for leave, and then ran from Shepherd's Bush to Chelsea in time to hear the sermon. At the appointed place he met Captain Vicars, who, with a night of work before him, and a farewell in prospect for the next morning, which a voice within his heart foretold was final, cheerfully spared an hour to walk with the militia-navvy, speaking words of wise and kindly counsel which were never to be forgotten.

On the evening of the 1st of June, a lecture was to be delivered at the school-room with reference to the keeping of the Sabbath, by Mr Baylee, the Secretary of the Society for promoting the Observance of the Lord's-day. I ventured to go, with a friend who was staying with us, to the doors of the public-houses, to request the strangers who had recently arrived to attend. They came in large numbers, so as to fill the school-room. As I knocked at the door of a beer-shop, a notorious drunkard in the supper-room saw me, and said, "Here 's the lady comes that spoils our peace with the beer-jugs!"

"Bar her out, then," said a fine young man, without deigning to turn round. I turned to invite the landlady; and then stood still for a minute, waiting for courage to speak to the men in the supper-room. The landlady said, "Would you like to invite them, ma'am?" I then asked the youth who had proposed the "barring out." He said he could not go, as he was a stranger, and must leave in a few minutes. His dog-cart stood at the door, with beer-bottles in the "well." "Have you a Bible of your own at home?"

"Quantities! but they have never done me any good. They do for women and cowards."

"Very good for them, without a doubt," I replied, "and for brave men, too. I happen to have in my pocket a letter from a young friend of mine, who writes from the Guards' camp at Varna. Listen to what he says about the comfort of the Word of God and prayer for the Holy Spirit."

The young man listened to it with melting eyes; and then said, "There's both power and beauty in that." He was moved to tears by the story of Hedley Vicars' conversion; and when it was pressed upon him that the words, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," were just as true for *him;* and would he not likewise say, "Then, henceforth, by the grace of God, I will live as a washed man should," he was entirely overcome, and

rushed out of the house. When I went out, he was waiting for me, to say, "I thought, ma'am, you would let me speak to you alone. Will you let me buy one of your little Testaments, and will you write my name in it, and *that text*, to remind me of what you have been saying to me, and to shew to my two young sisters." His lip trembled; and he said again and again, "God bless you," as I left him, with the promise of sending him a Testament as a remembrance, and a letter with it, to recall to him, when at a distance, the subject of our conversation.

On Whitsunday, the 4th of June, William G—— and Thomas Dibley walked from Deptford to spend their communion Sabbath in Beckenham. I met them walking to church with James W—— and Richard W—— (another whose steady walk and diligent attendance at all the services and readings gave me great satisfaction that year). They referred, in the evening, with affectionate warmth, to their deepened interest in the prayers for the army since the preceding sacrament Sunday, Captain Vicars having sailed for the East on the 19th of May. William G—— spoke of the hour he spent with him on the platform of the London Bridge Station, as one of the best delights he had ever known. And several of the men alluded with deep feeling to his farewell address to them in the month of May.

Towards the end of June I left home for three or

four weeks. Henry Hunns was the last who lingered at the gate to bid me farewell. "I sometimes feel," he said, "as if I had better die than grieve the Lord by living on to fall away, as I have done. But He will take His choice about me; and all I say to Him is, I'm very weak, and easily led away. If I can't stand, hadn't I better go Home pretty soon?"

That was the last time I ever heard the frank confessions of his simple, true, young heart. He enlisted in the army the following week, and wrote me word that his best hope in so doing was to get ordered out to where Captain Vicars was, that his blessed example might strengthen him to walk with God. "I am a poor sinner," he added, "but I pray twenty times a day to be washed from it all in my Saviour's blood, and to be filled with His Spirit, and sooner or later God will answer me, will He not?"

That He did answer him, who can doubt? When did He ever say to a pleading soul, "Seek ye my face in vain!" "What soul ever perished with his face toward Jesus Christ?" He died of cholera soon after landing in the Crimea. Perhaps in gracious accordance with his own suggestion, "Hadn't I better go Home pretty soon."

CHAPTER IX.

The Bible in the Camp.

"Lord, it is not life to live,
If Thy presence Thou deny;
Lord, if Thou Thy presence give,
'Tis no longer death to die.

Source and Giver of repose,
Only from Thy love it flows:
Peace and happiness are Thine;
Mine they are, if Thou art mine."

Few features in the character of the navvies have attracted my admiration, and interested me so warmly, as their power of strong brotherly friendship for each other. Separated, as so often they are in mere boyhood, from the sweet influences of home—as beautiful and binding in the cottage as in the castle—the yearning of the young heart for human affection often finds its response in a friendship formed after the fashion of the unrivalled love which glorified the lives of Jonathan and David. An unselfish regard, and even generous preference for each other's benefit, is no uncommon trait; and many a man have I seen, in time of sickness, supported by his "mate" with a brother's kindness, and nursed with a mother's gentle care.

The friendship between Samuel Bush and Joseph W—— was an instance of this. They had wandered about the country together, and had worked side by side, mutually sharing their gains, and nursing each other through illness and accident. Together they had too often joined in the reckless revelry of the public-

house; together they had striven against its temptations; had fallen back into them again; and together they had made fresh efforts to live a new life.

It was in the month of February 1854, that Joseph W—— first became personally known to me, although Samuel had been in the habit of bringing him to the readings for some time previously.

One morning Joseph came to the Rectory in breathless haste, with a request that I would come and see his landlord, whom he believed to be dying from a sudden attack of inflammation. I promised to go immediately after breakfast; but he would not hear of any delay, urging that it might be too late.

When we reached the cottage we found that the poor man was quite sensible, and anxious for prayer. As I rose from my knees, I heard Joseph going down stairs, sobbing; and as I passed through the kitchen on my way out, he was sitting with his arms on the table and his face hidden. I said, "Joseph, I hope Clarke's sudden illness speaks to you to be ready."

"It do, it do," he said, without looking up; "and I hope it will speak to Sammy, too. Sam is a good boy, if it weren't for the drink; but that has been the ruin of us both."

"But you and Samuel are both trying to live better lives now? Be earnest in asking the Holy Spirit of God to help you to make the change at once, for 'the time is short.'"

"Yes; is it not?" (with his face still hidden.) "Look at Clarke! Oh, I hope he'll be saved!"

"I think you must have had a good mother, Joseph, who taught you something of the value of an undying soul."

"A good mother! Oh, hadn't I!" (looking up brightly through his tears.) "She taught me to pray, and all sorts of good ways"—then, suddenly dropping his head again—"but I broke her heart nine years ago."

"Oh, Joseph! how sad for you to lose so good a mother!"

"Oh, but she's not dead though! only she broke her heart about my taking to the drink, and going away from her on navvy work."

"Have you been to see her lately?"

"No, not for nine years."

"You write to her, of course?"

"Well, no, I don't."

"Why, how is that? You can write, can you not?"

"Oh yes; but you see there's so many things to think of in writing—too many for a navvy. There's the cover, and the stamp, and the paper, and the seal, and the pen and ink; that's six."

"Well, if you will come with me, I will give you a 'self-sealing' cover with a stamp on it, and the pen and paper, and the ink you can borrow from your landlady."

"Well, I will give you half-a-crown for them."

"No, Joseph; that would be a great deal more than they are worth, and you shall have them as a present. But go to the post-office, and spend your half-crown in stamps, and put them in your letter to your mother, to buy a new cap as a gift from her son."

"Well, that *is* a good thought."

He was off like an arrow, and arrived at the Rectory shortly afterwards, in great glee, to receive his treasures; and especially appreciated a steel-pen with a brilliant blue pen-holder.

On the next Sunday evening, I asked him if he had received an answer. He said, "No; and so I'll never write again as long as I live."

"Oh, Joseph, think better of it, and write again; if you have taken nine years to write your letter, you may allow your mother more than three days for answering it."

After the next cottage-reading, he said, "Well, I wrote again, and have got no answer. Mother has thrown me over anyhow; so I'll never write no more, to the end of my days."

"But your mother may be ill—too ill to write. What do you think of writing to your sister to inquire about her?"

"Mother ill! Ah! to be sure. I never thought of that, poor dear old soul! Well, I'll try it once again, and see what it'll fetch."

On the next Sunday evening Joseph was early at the cottage, and before the rest had assembled he handed an open letter to me. "There now, please read that, ma'am, and tell me what you think of mother. She *was* ill, bless her!"

The letter was so beautiful, that I read it, with Joseph's proud permission, to the little assembly, at the close of our Scripture reading; and the hearts of other sons responded to that Christian mother's tender and solemn appeal. It had so happened, in the awful providence of God, that the drunkard who had first led Joseph, when a boy of sixteen, to a public-house, had left a beer-shop in a state of intoxication, and had fallen into a reservoir, and was drowned. This took place the same day that Joseph's letter had caused his mother to say, in the gladness of her heart, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

On returning the letter, I asked Joseph to copy it for me. Accordingly, the next evening a copy, beautifully written on thick, gilt-edged paper, was left at the Rectory.

The fate of his first tempter had a great effect upon his mind; and he became extremely steady from that time, and diligent in his attendance at church and at the lectures. Two months afterwards he left Beckenham to work in London. The day after the opening of the Crystal Palace he called to

see me. A pleasant smile flashed across his dark face at first meeting; but then he sat down and cried.

"Nothing has happened to your dear, excellent old mother, I hope, Joseph?"

"Well, that's it—about the worst thing that could. I've gone and enlisted in the India Company's service, and mother's heart will break. And I sha'n't be in England to close her dear eyes; no, nor to go to any more of the readings after to-night's last one."

"Oh, Joseph, what made you do it?"

"Why, a new mate of mine (ah, if Sammy had been with me, he'd have had sense) says to me, 'Mate, would you like to see foreign countries? We could do it for nothing in the India Company's service. Let's go and enlist!' So says I, 'With all my heart!' and off we went."

"Well, Joseph, if I had been by, I should have said, 'Think it over first, and count the cost.' But there is no help for it now; so cheer up, and go to your new duties with a hearty good will. God can bless you as a soldier as well as He has blessed you as a workman, if you do your duty as unto Him. What if God the Holy Spirit should make you, amongst your brother-soldiers, something like Captain Vicars is in his regiment—a light to shew others the way to heaven."

This thought greatly cheered him. A short time afterwards, the following letters expressed the warm feelings of his grateful heart:—

"WARLEY BARRACKS, *June* 19, 1854.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I received your kind letter and presents, and I thank you kindly for them; and may the Lord reward you kindly for the trouble you have taken on my behalf since I first saw you at Beckenham. And oh, ma'am, I have a very kind letter from your aged, honoured father, and he gave me a good advice; and oh! may the Lord bless him and you, both, and if I should not see you to thank you in this world, may I meet you at the right hand of God, when He shall summon all nations to His bar. And I should like not to go to India till you come back to Beckenham. Oh, ma'am! I should like to come to Beckenham once more before I go, for it is as dear to me as my native place; and I should like to be at one of your lectures once more before I go, for very likely I shall not meet with such a friend as I did when I saw you.

"And there are two or three young men there that I should like to warn against that evil of drinking. Oh, ma'am, I can see the evil of it, and that makes me in earnest about others; but if I should not see them I will write a few lines, so that you may say it came from my own lips. My dear mother is sore

troubled about my going, and so is my sister; but I tell them that God will be my guide through life, and safely bring me to glory if I put my trust in Him; and I shall be as safe in the field of battle as I am in England. I shall write to you again in a few days, for I shall never forget your kindness as long as I live, for you are as dear to me as my own mother for the instructions and advice you have given me. Oh, remember me in your prayers, for they are worth more than thousands of gold and silver. So I remain your most humble servant,

"JOSEPH W——."

"WARLEY BARRACKS, *July* 3, 1854.

"DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND,—I now take the liberty of writing a few lines to you, hoping that you will not be offended with me for taking so much liberty, for I know that I am troubling you very much; but I shall value your letters as if they were gold. And if I should never see you again before I go, I shall take them with me; and if God should spare my life to return, and if you are living, you shall see them again, for I will never part with them as long as I live, for they will pass many a dull hour away. And I must inform you that I have had a letter from my dear, good, kind mother, and she is nearly broken-hearted about me, for there are some family affairs to be settled next October, and they cannot be settled

unless I am present. Without my being present it will be a great disadvantage both to her and myself; and she wishes me to ask you if you would write a few lines to the Colonel to ask him if he would allow me to stop at the depot till October, so that I might have an opportunity of going to see her and settle this affair. You may tell him that I have no wish to be bought off, or to be discharged; and if he will grant my mother that request I will endeavour to obey all orders in a soldier-like manner as long as I remain in the service. This would be doing both my mother and myself a great kindness, if it would not be troubling you too much. And oh, ma'am, may God reward you for the kindness that you have done for me, for it will never be in my power to repay your kindness; but there is one thing I can do, I can remember you in my prayers, for I shall never forget your instructions as long as I live; for if you had been my own mother you could not have been in more earnest about my never-dying soul than you have been since I first saw you at Beckenham. And if I should never see you again, may the Lord bless you and reward you for all your trouble; and may your prayers be answered, and may I meet you in heaven. Oh, ma'am, if there is as much wickedness carried on in India as there is here, I shall go out of my mind, for I thought before I enlisted that I should not have so much temptation here, but I find that I

have ten times as much. Oh, ma'am, it is a blessed thing that I came to Beckenham, or else, I think, I should have been lost for ever. Oh, how thankful ought I to be to the Lord for not cutting me down in the midst of my wickedness, for great would have been my condemnation, after the advice that I have had from time to time. And there is one thing I want to ask of you, that is, to remember me in your prayers, that the Lord may give me strength against all temptations, and fill me with His holy Spirit, and give me the power of winning many souls to the Lord Jesus Christ; for the Scripture says that one man's soul is worth more than the whole world. Oh, ma'am, if every one that knew the love of God in his own heart were to endeavour to gain one soul, what a happy change we should see in a short time. And may God grant that the time may soon come when we shall see it so.

"I must conclude, hoping that, if I never see you in this world to thank you for your kindness, I shall meet you in glory; so I remain your most humble servant, trusting in God for all help through this life for ever,

"JOSEPH W——."

"WARLEY BARRACKS, *August* 4, 1854.

"KIND FRIEND,—I received your letter this day, and was very glad to hear from you; but I am very

sorry that I did not answer your letter that you sent before with the one enclosed that you received from Colonel ——, but I wrote a letter home to my mother and sister, and I was waiting to get an answer from them, so that I might be able to tell you what she said, but I have not had one yet; but I can answer for her and myself, and I thank you kindly for your kindness, and may God bless you for the trouble that you have taken in my welfare.

"This is the day that I should have had to embark for India. There are just about three hundred gone to-day to a distant land, perhaps never to return again; and I fear many of them are gone in a dreadful state of wickedness, and that death may overtake many of them before they repent of their sins. Oh, ma'am, what an awful thing it will be if, after living in this Christian country, they should be lost for ever. Oh, ma'am, God forbid that it should be my lot, after having the instructions and the good examples that I have had shewn me.

"And, ma'am, I was very much pleased with what you said in your letter about Captain Vicars going into the cave to read his Bible, for I am just the same myself; I often take my Bible and go into the woods where I can open my heart to the Lord, and tell Him my wants without being molested by any one. Oh, ma'am, I shall never forget Beckenham, for it was there where I first felt the love of God shed

abroad in my heart; and, oh, may it never part from me again. Although at times I do not feel so much of the love of God as I would wish, still I will never give over praying till I get a blessing, for I often think of a little hymn that I learned when a Sunday-school scholar, where it says:—

> 'Tis religion that can give
> Sweetest pleasures while we live;
> 'Tis religion must supply
> Happy comforts when we die.'

"I think, ma'am, now that I am going to stay till October, that I shall have an opportunity of seeing you before I go away, perhaps never to see your face again in this world; but if I should not, may I meet you in heaven at the right hand of God, where those that love the Lord will never part again for ever, but live in glory with the angels of God. So I remain your most humble servant,

"JOSEPH W——."

"WARLEY BARRACKS, *January* 2, 1855.

"KIND FRIEND,—I received your letter this morning, and I was very glad to hear from you, for it is quite a pleasure to me to read your letters, for it often gives ease to my troubled mind. When alone, I frequently get and read all of them; for they speak so much of that dear Saviour, who took upon Himself the sin of mankind, when nothing but the death of the Cross could make atonement for the whole world. Oh,

ma'am, I often think what encouragement this is for mankind to give their whole hearts to the Lord; for surely He who died for the sin of man will not be against him if he call on Him while He may be found. But delays are dangerous; for He has said in His holy Word, that His Spirit shall not always strive with man. But may the Lord give me grace and faith sufficient for my day, that I may go on continually seeking Him. And, oh, may I not be satisfied by the saving of my own soul, but may I be in earnest about the souls of others; and may I be the means of bringing many to seek that Saviour, who had compassion on me when I was on the very brink of hell. And how very thankful I ought to be to Providence, who guided my feet to Beckenham; for if I had not met with you, and went to your lectures, I believe I should have been lost for ever. But thanks be to Him who died for my sins, that I am still where hope and mercy may be found. The Scriptures tell us that 'God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent;' then how can He refuse us that everlasting happiness which He has promised to all who call upon Him? And oh! may that day soon come, when we need not say to each other, 'Know the Lord, but all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest.'

"If I should never see you again in this world, may I meet you in glory, where you may see the

fruit of your labours, and the answers to your prayers, kind madam.

"So I remain your most humble servant, trusting in God for all help through this life,

"JOSEPH W——."

Joseph W—— remained in England until the autumn of 1856. His conduct in the regiment was excellent; and before the close of his first year of service he rose to be a sergeant. Shortly afterwards, he became desirous of entering the company of Sappers and Miners, and passed the necessary examination with credit.

Twice, by the leave which was kindly accorded by his colonel, he was enabled to spend some days with his excellent mother, and married, with her blessing, an amiable and pious young woman, who sailed with him for India shortly after their wedding had taken place. He brought her to Beckenham, on his farewell visit. Both seemed desirous of "following the Lord fully."

Samuel Bush left Beckenham at the same time with Joseph W——, to share his fortunes as usual. But, failing to find work under the same master, he left his mate, with the full intention of joining company with him again, when Joseph's temporary employment should have ceased. But, impressed with the idea that he could never become a steadily

religious character, unless assisted by the advice and example of such a man as Captain Vicars, he enlisted in a draft for the 77th Regiment, in the hope of being sent to the seat of war, and of finding that regiment, as he expressed it, "alongside of the 97th!"

He came to Beckenham, in the summer, to bid us good-bye, and to fetch his books. I was absent from home, but I heard that he had said "his Bible and he should never part company again." It was under his pillow when he died.

The next time I heard of his welfare was through a letter of his own, written in the autumn of the same year, by the hand of a Roman Catholic soldier in the same regiment, to whom Samuel Bush's Bible, and the brief words of the prayer written on its fly-leaf, brought the message of pardon and peace through the blood of the cross.

"ISLE OF WIGHT, *September* 25, 1854.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—You will no doubt feel surprised when you find who sends you this, and that I am now a soldier. But though I am removed thus far from you, I now feel the full extent of my obligations to you. Yes, madam, you were the first to teach me that which now I feel is better by far than any worldly things. Indeed, words cannot convey the gratitude I would express to you for teaching me a knowledge of Jesus. I feel quite happy, as I have

hope in the mercies and all-atoning blood of a Saviour.

"I have time in my present calling to read the Testament which your goodness supplied me with; and I find in it, that if the sinner turn from his evil ways, He will not cast him out; and mine, you know, madam, has been one continued series of wickedness till I came to Beckenham. I attend church every Sunday to hear the Word of God; and I am getting better at school, for I can now read my Bible pretty well.

"And now I have no more to say, but to ask your prayers.

"My much respected friend, accept the feeble thanks of my repentant, grateful heart, and join with me in extolling the mercies of my God, in whose hands you were an instrument of snatching me from the brink of that bottomless pit, over which I was hanging. Was it not for this, I might still be wallowing in the mire of my iniquity, or, having incensed my merciful Saviour, be buried in *Hell.*

"Believe me to be, yours in gratitude and sincerity, SAMUEL BUSH."

"Direct to Samuel Bush, private, 77th Depot, I Co., No. 69, Parkhurst Barracks, Isle of Wight."

"*N.B.*—I sent you a letter long since, but the directions were wrong, and it came back again."

"*October* 25, 1854.

"My Dear Madam,—I feel very thankful for your kind gifts. I continually read, or repeat, some of one of your little prayers. I find great comfort in repeating them. Oh! what pleasure do they not find who seek the Lord! Hitherto I sought to satisfy my thirst with muddy water, and my hunger with husks, like swine; but I hear those consoling words, 'Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Oh! that I had sooner known faith in His blood. Oh! why do so many drink of those muddy waters, which will not, nor cannot satisfy them. Is there no balm in Gilead, or is there no physician there? Is there no compassion in the heart which is tenderness itself? Why do not all fly to the atoning blood of Him, who said, 'If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it you.'

"I got a letter from our friend Joseph W——, and have good reason to hope in the Lord that He has opened the treasures of His grace to him. I expect to go out in a draft soon, but your letters will follow me. I am not in the India service, but in the 77th regiment of infantry. It is to the present seat of war I am to go; but my Jesus will be with me. In the army it is very difficult to find a Christian friend; but yet I have a Christian friend, though a sinful one. He who writes this, and my other letters, claims

that title, not through his own merits, but through the conquering blood of his Divine Master, and who now begs leave to recommend himself to you, and your friends' prayers. If it would not be too much trouble, me and my friend would wish to receive more of these soldiers' prayers at your hands, humbly hoping that our use of them will correspond with your wishes.

"And now, my dear madam, I conclude with grateful prayers that God, in whom you trust, will bless you in this life; and when you leave this earth, may *He* take you to the place where no care, nor sorrow can appear—where the sorrowful shall cease mourning, and the weary shall be at rest. I remain,

"S. BUSH."

"PARKHURST BARRACKS, *October* 30, 1854.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—We would be very happy in getting some tracts, they would be of much use; and any other prayers that you have, please send them to us. Nearly all have got Bibles now. We strive to disperse the tracts, and we often borrow from others. The schoolmaster lends all his books to L——, and we read them together. He is just reading to me part of the 'Anxious Inquirer,' by John Angell James.

"My dear madam, you pray that we may meet with Jesus. Of that I have a good hope, through

His grace; for, though I never deserved to rejoice with Him, yet it is not through my own works that I hope to earn heaven, but through the merits of HIS BLOOD; and those who come to Him He will in nowise cast out. Oh, yes! there is in His Word that which makes me happy.

"And now, my dear friend in Jesus, pray for me.

"There is a hundred men going to Russia one of these days; but me nor my friend are not going yet.

"My love, through Jesus, to you; through Him henceforth all my wishes be conveyed; and in *Him* rest all my cares, even the important affair of my salvation.

'Though heaven and earth may pass away,
And sinners tremble for that day;
Yet I'll secure and happy be,
For JESUS' blood was shed for *me*.'

"Your humble friend, S. BUSH."

He continued to correspond with me occasionally from that time. Early in the month of January 1855 he landed in the Crimea, where the wish of his heart was gratified. The 77th was "alongside the 97th," and he and his friend had unrestricted leave to visit Captain Vicars for his advice, and for the reading of the Word of God, and prayer, until the 22d of March, when Hedley Vicars ended his brief, but bright career of love towards God and man, and of

heroic discharge of his duty as a soldier, on the ground before Sebastopol.

In the month of June, Samuel Bush was visited by Mr Duncan Matheson, whose apostolic self-denial and exertion, as a soldier's missionary in the Crimea, enabled him to sow the seed of eternal life broadcast, in faith of seeing the harvest in heaven.

He passed through a crowd of men, most of whom were cursing and swearing. In the midst sat a young man, who had just come back from night service in the trenches, refreshing himself by reading his Bible. There he sat, on the roots of a tree which had been cut down, reading almost as peacefully as if he had been in heaven. The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, was keeping his heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

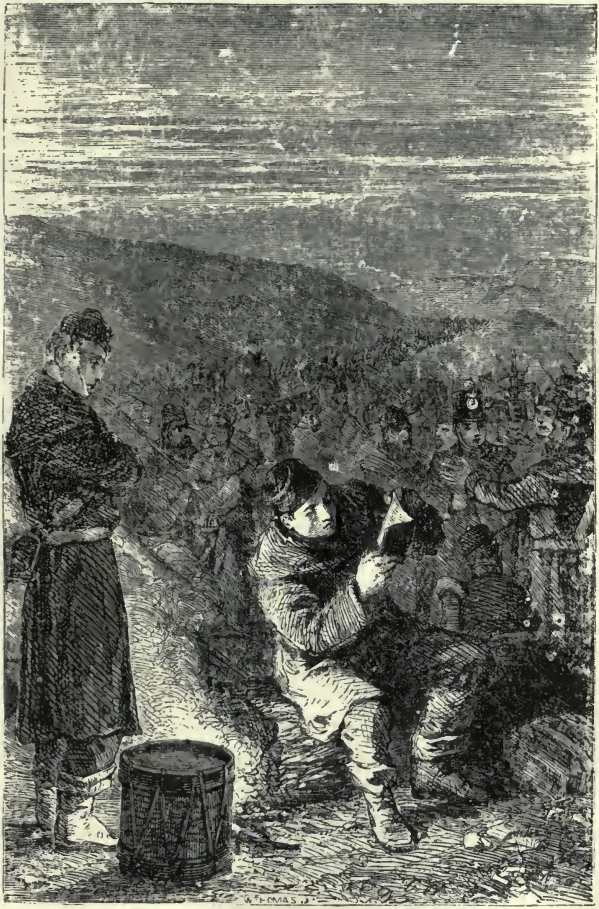
Mr Matheson sat down by his side, and the two held communion together with Him whom their souls loved.

"What do you think of Samuel Bush?" asked Mr Matheson, as he made his way back through the crowd an hour afterwards.

"He is a solid Christian, and a good soldier," was the answer.

In the following September he received his mortal wound, and died three or four weeks afterwards.

Meeting some wounded soldiers, about two months later in that year, who had the number "77th" on



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their caps, I asked if they knew Samuel Bush of their regiment, and how, and where he was.

"He died of his wounds some weeks ago," was the reply.

"Was he happy when he was dying?"

"Happy!" said one man, starting forward, "if ever a man died happy, he did. There was a little Bible he read till his eyes were dim, and then kept it under his pillow till he died. He *was* a happy man, living and dying."

The manner of his death, and of his entrance into Life, was written to his aged parents; and the following letter was received in reply:—

"*February* 10, 1856.

"MADAM,—I have taken my pen in hand to write these few lines to you, hoping to find you in good health, as they leave us at present, bless God for it, but not very well in spirits; but we are happy, by the grace of God, to hear that my son Samuel died with the grace of God in his heart, and hope, by what you say, he has gone to rest, and is far better off than we that he has left behind; but we hope to meet him in heaven.

"And I must say, that I feel very much obliged to you for all your favours towards my son Samuel Bush; and as it does not lay in my power to repay you again, I hope there is ONE above that will repay

you for all. Now I must conclude, with our best respects to you,

"MARK AND MARY BUSH.

"SCREMBY.

"And on the other side I have sent you a few lines that he sent in his *last* letter that he wrote me:—

'I was a wandering sheep,
I did not love the fold;
I did not love my Shepherd's voice—
I would not be controll'd.

'I was a wayward child,
I did not love my home;
I did not love my Father's voice—
I loved afar to roam.

'I was a wandering sheep,
I would not be controll'd;
But now I love my Shepherd's voice—
I love, I love His fold.

'I was a wayward child,
I once preferr'd to roam;
But now I love my Father's voice—
I love, I love His home.'"

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."

CHAPTER X.

The Armour of Light.

"There is a path that leads to God,
All others go astray;
Narrow, but pleasant, is the road,
And Christians love the way.

"It leads straight through this world of sin.
And dangers must be past;
But those who boldly walk therein,
Will come to heaven at last."

THE last of the three Crystal Palace workmen who enlisted in regiments recruiting for service in the Crimea, chiefly for the sake of being within reach of Captain Vicars, was a young Scotchman, named James K——, the son of pious parents, whom he had not seen for several years. When I saw him first, early in the year 1854, he was standing at the door of his lodgings one Sunday morning in his working clothes. On my requesting him to come to church, he replied, "I do not like the churches in this country. I cannot accommodate myself to your bits of prayers."

"I can quite understand your preference for the Church of your fathers. But when I am in Scotland I can be thankful to God for the privilege of attending your Church, in which I have found much profit and blessing to my soul, though I love the manner of my own Church the most dearly."

"I think that's sensible," he said; "and perhaps I would go up if I knew where to sit. But it's all strange to me, you see."

I promised to call for him in good time, and to shew him a seat in the church. From that day forward he became a regular attendant at the house of God, and availed himself of all the opportunities for instruction; and he dated from that time the commencement of the change which soon became apparent to all who knew him. There was a peculiar thoughtfulness and manly simplicity about him which interested me from the first time I saw him; and his progress in the new path was even and steady.

In the course of the next winter he enlisted in the Coldstream Guards, and wrote to announce it thus:—

"KIND LADY,—I am a soldier; and I have enlisted for the hope of doing my duty to my Queen and country, and especially of being near that blessed man of God, and good soldier and officer, Captain Vicars, whom I hope to be sent out near to pretty soon, and to gain the profit of his advice, and his prayers and example."

My answer to this communication missed him; and it was sometime before he wrote again. To the letter which at last reached him from Beckenham he thus alludes:—

"PORTMAN STREET BARRACKS, *January* 7, 1855.

"DEAR LADY,—I received your kind letter this morning, just before Divine service. I am happy to

think that our dear friend Captain Vicars is so well, and has gone through so many hardships and dangers; but he bears it bravely; but Jesus shields His people from all dangers; for if they should fall on earth, they rise in heaven—so that death to one of Christ's soldiers is just to raise him into glory; for the Lord is our shepherd, He will not let the sheep of His hand fail. I read Captain Vicars' letter over to my comrades. They were all happy to hear it, as it was from the seat of war. And we can do no more for him but pray that it may please Jesus to guide him through this war, and bring him home to his native land and friends. I had not much opportunity of prayer; but I had a few words by myself, like the sailor boy, alone in the crown of my cap. I have not time for more, for I have to get ready for the Bank picquet. The drum calls me to my arms. No more at present, but good-bye; and God bless you, kind lady, JAMES K——,

"Coldstream Guards."

"PORTMAN STREET BARRACKS, *January* 4, 1855.

"KIND LADY,—I received your kind letter on Monday night when I was on the Queen's guard, just as I was going on sentry, so I could not stop to read it till I came off sentry. I never spent two hours so unhappy all my life till I came off sentry, and then I read it; and I got your kind present that you sent

me yesterday. I cannot return your kindness, but by offering up a prayer to Jesus for you. I have read it over and over again, and those little books that I got from you when I was at Beckenham. I take great delight in reading them. When I am off duty, and sitting reading them, some of my comrades will say to me, 'Come man K——, into the canteen and have a pint; you will be so religious that you can't do nothing.' I make no return, but call on Jesus to give me strength to stand against these temptations. When I call on God he never forsakes me. That little prayer that you gave me, I have it always in my mind. When I am on guard I always have one of your little books with me. I have a good many temptations to bear; but the Lamb of God, when I call on Him, he puts a double strength in me, so I can stand them all. I have read that copy of a prayer that you sent me in your letter, and shewed it to some of the rest. They laughed at it, and said that there would not be much time for reading when they went out to Russia; but others said that it would just be a good thing to have, and they would like to have one; for the thought of going out to the East, it gives many one of them a thought of their souls; and they will come to, and say to me, 'Are you not afraid to go to the war?' and I tell them no; for I tell them that Jesus will save my soul if I should get killed; and He will in no wise

cast them out if they will but call on Him in time. I would like very well, if you please to send me the letter that came from Captain Vicars. No more at present; but God bless you.

"JAMES K——,
"Coldstream Guards."

"ST GEORGE'S BARRACKS, *April 6th.*

"DEAR LADY,—When I opened the paper it made the tears come into my eyes, for to hear that my beloved friend had left this world. He is gone to sleep in Jesus. I wish I had been by his side, and seen him fall asleep. But I know that he is in greater glory than is to be had in this world. When last I saw him in Beckenham amongest us, little did I think that it was the last. But he fell in duty and glory.

"I expect we shall leave for the East in a day or so. We are all at a minute's notice. I have all the little books you gave me packed up in my kit.

"I was always living in the hopes of seeing that beloved, respected Captain, and honoured brother in the Lord, out there, when I got a chance of going out to him; now I am disappointed, but I will put no trust in princes to get me to heaven, but I look on the blood of Jesus on the Cross. I will trust in Him, and He will never forsake me. For Jesus says—

'All ye that thirst approach the stream
Where living waters flow.'

"Our beloved friend is drinking of those living waters now.

"So no more at present from your humble and grateful friend,

"JAMES K——,
"Coldstream Guards."

"ST GEORGE'S BARRACKS, *April* 8, 1855.

"DEAR LADY,—I take the boldness of writing these few lines, to let you know that I leave London to-morrow morning. We are all in heavy marching order at six o'clock to-morrow morning. I put my trust in Jesus, and He will lead me safe through all the dangers of this world; and I hope that I shall meet my dear, kind friend Captain Vicars in heaven.

'And, oh, that will be joyful,
When we meet to part no more.'

"I have not much time—we are all getting things ready to start to-morrow morning. We take the train at Waterloo Station for Portsmouth. I must bid you farewell; and God bless you; and pray for us when we are on the field of battle. Your grateful, humble friend,

"JAMES K——."

Of the letters received from him whilst he was in the Crimea, the following, perhaps, best expresses his thoughts and feelings:—

"CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *August* 6, 1855.

"DEAR LADY,—I take the opportunity of writing to you to let you know that I am in good health, and thanks be to God for the same—who is the Giver of all good. I would have answered your kind letter before this time, but our duty has been so hard that I have not had time. We are in the trenches almost every night, and I am for them to-night again; but them I never think about. Many a one says that they don't like the trenches, for they are afraid of the shot and shell that is always flying about us; but them I don't fear, for I know that Jesus' right hand can take care of me in the hour of danger as well there as if I was in my tent. So I put my trust in Him. I fear no danger, for His right hand guides my way. I always take my little friend in my pocket, that is my little Testament that you gave me. I have had many narrow escapes for my life in these trenches, but my loving Saviour guards me through all dangers and hardships; and I must say our regiment has been the most fortunate in the trenches of any I know of. The most we have had wounded in one night yet was seven; one lost his leg and another his arm. I was close by when the shell burst that took them both, for the Russians are not bad marksmen. They murder our poor comrades the French most terrible with shot and shell; but they stand their ground, and are gaining upon

the Russians' advanced works, as we are. But I must draw to a close, as it is getting near time to be ready for the trenches again. I have seen some of the men of our dear Captain Vicars' Regiment; and they all mourn the loss of him very much. I have read to nigh all my comrades that little book about him; and they like it.

"Give my love to James W—— and all my old mates in Beckenham; and if the great King of kings gives me health and strength, I hope that I will see them all again at that place where I learned to know and love my Saviour; and you who taught me, by His grace.

"So no more, dear Lady, but remain,

"JAMES K——."

The prayer of faith was answered; and the soldier returned home "in health and strength," by the good providence of God.

CHAPTER XI.

More Hearts to Win.

"Hearts are not steel, and steel is bent;
Hearts are not stone, and stone is rent."

Scarcely had the latest lingerers amongst the Crystal Palace workmen disappeared from Beckenham, in the spring of 1855, before a new interest had sprung up for us in the gathering of the Army Works Corps.

It was formed by the suggestion, and under the arrangement of Sir Joseph Paxton; for whose courteous and cordial readiness to afford us facilities of intercourse with the men, as for that of every gentleman connected with the service, and in particular Mr Milner, the chief officer at the Crystal Palace department, we shall always feel truly grateful.

The Corps amounted, from first to last, to nearly four thousand men. The first detachment consisted only of railway labourers, sent out to make themselves generally useful in all works connected with the army and its position in the Crimea, which could be performed by manual labour. But in the succeeding draughts, the numbers of artisans of various kinds, smiths, stonemasons, bricklayers, &c., &c., preponderated above the labourers. The first ship sailed early in July, and the last about the middle of December,

1855. The men assembled to be chosen at the Crystal Palace Office, and remained in the neighbourhood until their several embarkations.

News was brought to the Rectory, on the evening of the 19th of May, that several strangers had arrived to look for lodgings in the village; so we went out to meet them, to begin acquaintance with them at once, knowing that the time would be short for the work before us.

It had been a sorrowful day; the anniversary of our last parting with Hedley Vicars occurring whilst we were yet in the first freshness of a sorrow which can never grow old. One of his sisters went with me; and we had agreed to plead, for that evening's work, the promise which seemed one of peculiar beauty to us just then, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

As we walked through the village we saw a group of young men, who were described to us as "the roughest lot as ever come to Beckenham." At the first words addressed to them they looked surprised, and somewhat disposed to walk away; but they soon began to shew signs of pleasure in the cordial interest taken in their prospects, and in hearing better information concerning the country they were bound for, than it had been in their power to obtain before. At the first few words about "another country," the smile of one bright, young face spread

into a broad laugh; but before we parted an expression of grave and serious feeling was there instead.

I briefly told the story of grace touching him whom we had seen for the last time on earth that day year. For a moment one or two seemed disposed to doubt its truth; so I said, "The young lady by my side is *his sister*." They almost started; and sympathy, as gently respectful as any man in England could manifest, was expressed in their countenances and manners. An Irishman, called Tom Hagan, said, after a few moments' silence, "I'm not a gentleman like he, but I'm a brother, and have a little sister that I love, so I can feel for her."

We had their hearts and confidence, then, for we stood upon equal ground. We had met them with friendly interest; they had returned it with generous sympathy. So it was easy to ask and obtain the promise of their attendance in church next day—a promise kept by all; and in the evening we met again for a cottage-reading.

By Monday night they had added to their numbers for another "reading," and listened with earnest attention.

We went to some of their lodging-houses the next evening to leave some little books. At one of these houses the landlady remarked, "I have three of the tallest, darkest, wildest men lodging here that I ever set eyes on. But one of them cried like a child

for an hour or so after he came back from last night's reading, and said he wished he might have listened to it all night. His name is Richard J——."

We promised to wait till he came in; and just then the doorway was filled by a figure of magnificent strength and beauty, whose very royal bearing contrasted rather amusingly with his speech, "I can't abear to walk into the room where the ladies are sitting; I am so horrible dirty." He was a man in the meridian of life, named William W——, who had been a private in the 88th Regiment; but was now dressed in the dusty fustian of a working man. He had married a wife in a position of life which he thought somewhat superior to his own, and had purchased his discharge, to obtain, instead, "waterside work" at his native place, Sunderland. He confided to me that he was sadly troubled in his mind about having left his wife without a word of kindness for a farewell. They had quarrelled; he went out to drink, as too often was his wont, and had been led into the railway carriage by his friends in a state of unconsciousness.

"Had he written to her since, and expressed his regret?"

"He could not write himself, but a mate had done it for him, and she would not answer."

"Should I write at his dictation?"

His countenance brightened, and the evening and hour were fixed for the purpose.

When I said a word or two about the misery which sin always brought, he interrupted me by exclaiming, "Now, don't ye say any more about that. You pressed me so hard about it at the reading that I could have cried out, and I did when I got back."

"And did you cry to God?"

"I did; and have prayed that pretty prayer you taught us, every night since."

Just then the other men came in, and we all knelt down for prayer.

Ten minutes after I had left these fine, impulsive, full-grown children with tears upon their cheeks, they were fighting with knives!

Two letters were lying on the table for the men who came in last. They were from their wives; and these men began to taunt William about the silence of his wife. He could not stand it, and seized his supper-knife. Just as they were attacking each other, the landlady nobly rushed between them, exclaiming, "Stop, for the lady's sake, stop. It will break her heart to hear of your fight, and after that prayer, too."

The men desisted, and sat down ashamed. She then told William W—— to seek lodgings elsewhere. He was received at a public-house—a

dangerous home for a man with his propensity to intemperance.

The evening he had appointed came, but no William W—— appeared; nor did I see him again for some days.

Several of these strangers walked to Elmer's End—a hamlet at one extremity of the parish—for the cottage-reading, which is always held there on Friday evening. One, after conferring with his friends, remarked to me, "I wish the whole lot could hear these things. We're all together outside the Crystal Palace at seven of a morning; and the paymaster says we're the finest lot he ever saw, and the wildest—just like four hundred roaring lions."

The hint was taken, and by seven o'clock the next morning, L—— and I drove to the ground appointed, where we found about fifty men assembled. We sent the carriage away for a time, and occupied ourselves at first in distributing little books and cards of prayer. Conversation easily followed; and by the time the remainder of the four hundred began to make their appearance, the first fifty had become our firm friends. Not one uncivil word was said; not one unwilling hand received the prayer. As they gathered round in increasing circles, I was struck with the earnestness of their listening countenances. They were the most peculiar body of men whom I have ever

met. Advertised for, in this first instance, for strength alone—men, whose muscle and sinew constituted their character, and whose working power, therefore, stood for their *morale*, were thus gathered together on that ground from all parts of the country. The north of England had sent most—from Lancashire, Durham, and Northumberland. But we had our Cornish men, too, and our Kentish, and a sprinkling from nearly all the coast; and a knot of "kindly Scots," and some warm-hearted Irish Roman Catholics.

Wild they might be; and absolutely undisciplined, doubtless, they were; but it is difficult to judge hardly of those who received every friendly advance with a cordial but ever-respectful confidence; who combined their manly courtesy with the trust of childhood; and who valued the kindly regard shewn them, during a few weeks of intercourse, so warmly, as to be unable to speak of it, many months afterwards, without emotion. And here I may mention, that in all my acquaintance with working men, never have they let me hear a single oath, nor one expression which could, in the remotest degree, shock or pain me.

In the background of the furthest circle, on the morning just referred to, stood William W——, vainly trying to conceal himself, remarkable for height and strength even amongst that remarkable four hundred. When he saw that I had perceived him, he bowed gravely and respectfully; and, as we

drove away from the crowd, I appointed him to call at the Rectory the same evening, that I might fulfil my promise of writing to his wife for him. We left with many a kindly "God bless ye," to cheer us on our homeward way.

At one o'clock a woman came to the Rectory, asking to "see the lady who had spoken to the navvy men; because her husband had sent her to have the same things said to her." She said he had been a hard drinker, and very unkind to her; and "that he had refused to allow her any part of his wages during his absence in the Crimea. But when she came down to Sydenham that morning, he had said that he had just been hearing things which made him wish to live different; and that he would allow her twenty shillings a-week out of his thirty shillings' wages, and wished they could both turn good, and be friends. After what he had heard about the good Saviour's love, he did not wish to live in hate, leastways with his own wife." Here the woman wept, and added, "I never heard the like from him, nor half such kind words since he became a London navvy five years ago."

On the Sunday week, both husband and wife *walked from London*, for the afternoon service at Beckenham Church, and were invited into the Rectory afterwards for refreshment. I asked him what were the words which God had made a message to his heart on the

day they had first met? He replied, "The story of the young officer, who had read in another man's Bible that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and had made up his mind at once to live as a washed man should—and then you said as *we* had better begin that morning, and so I did; and have been going on the same ever since, by God's help."

Punctual to his appointment, William W—— came at seven o'clock that Saturday evening. He was shewn into the dining-room on his arrival, where I found him taking a lively interest in the portraits on the wall, and the size of the folio volumes in the book-cases. He said afterwards to Mary E——, "She had me into a sitting-room, and it was just like heaven: such a sight of books, and such a large dinner-table." A luxury which, I suppose, we can hardly appreciate, without attempting to dine at a cottage dinner-table, some two feet in diameter, encircled by seven or eight children, and at last to find we must retreat to take refuge in a chimney corner, reduced to resting our plate upon our knees.

When I had brought in my portfolio, and asked William W—— to dictate his letter, his look of animated observation was subdued at once into grave thoughtfulness.

That letter was a sacred confidence between two hearts, of which I was in all honour bound to consider myself but as the mere pen to communicate

But to the high tone, which it conveyed, of that man's moral feeling, to his sensitiveness of conscience, to his noble and manly frankness in the confession of that which pressed upon his heart, to a wife who was then unsoftened towards him—no description could do justice.

When I had written three or four pages, he paused, and I inquired what else he would like me to say.

"Nothing more, ma'am, thank you."

"Then how would you like to conclude?"

"Not to conclude yet, if you please."

I looked perplexed. After a moment's hesitation he added earnestly, "Please, ma'am, would you work up her feelings a bit?"

"If your letter fails to do so," I silently thought, "my postscript will be to little purpose indeed."

However, I saw that his heart was set upon this, and accordingly I added a vivid description of the probable dangers of his life in the Crimea, and suggested that she would not be altogether happy if she should hear of his death there, without having written him one word of forgiving love.

The combination of letter and postscript did its work well; for she left Northumberland for Beckenham within twenty-four hours after she had received it.

When William had heard the whole letter read, and had pronounced it "as just what it should be," he confessed frankly, but with an expression of deep

remorse and shame, that he had been very unkind to his wife when he was under the influence of intoxicating liquors.

"Never otherwise, I am sure, William! You are not the sort of man who could be unkind to a woman, except when you are *not yourself*."

The tears stood in his eyes; "I don't think I could be, least of all to my good wife. I married when I was a boy, as ye may say, twenty-three years ago; and Margaret is as good a wife as any man was ever tied to."

This led to my urging him to give up drinking—to make a resolution at once about it, in the strength of the Lord of Hosts.

I told him that I could not bear to see men with fine intellects, and noble generous natures, degrading themselves lower than the beasts that perish; and then I spoke of the dignity of man before the fall, when he lived in the likeness of Him who had created him; and not alone his restoration, but his elevation to a still higher dignity by the life and death of the God-man, Jesus Christ our Lord—who had redeemed us unto God by His blood, and had made us "kings and priests unto our God."

There was something wonderfully interesting in watching the latent intellect and fine feeling in that remarkable man burst forth, as he listened to truths that were new to him then; and which opened the

way to a higher and holier life for him thenceforth. The tears glittered in his eyes, and his whole countenance grew radiant. Little did he think that before another year had passed, he should have entered into eternity; to realise in full, as I humbly hope and trust, through the merits of his Redeemer, that high and holy life, the first glimpse of which had wrought upon his soul so powerfully.

After the concluding prayer at the cottage, the next evening, he knelt on, with his face covered, after the others had risen up. A day or two later I took occasion to speak with the landlord of the public-house where he lodged. I rejoiced to hear him remark—"We have a man here, madam, who will thank God, I believe, that he ever came to Beckenham. He sat up with me for an hour and a half on Sunday night, and said he had felt as he had never felt before, at that reading and prayer, and seemed ready to cry any minute; I never saw a man more in earnest. He told me that he had had terrible fits of drinking, but that he wanted to give it all up now. And, says he, 'Landlord, don't ask me to take a glass, because I'm weak still, ye see, like a new-born baby.'"

Just then William W—— walked in, and requested to be allowed to speak with me alone for a moment. A letter from his wife had crossed his own. He had carefully wrapped it in various papers, and for further safety all were bound up in a crimson pocket hand-

kerchief. Its contents were not very remarkable; but he said "it was kinder than he deserved," and his heart was gladdened. He said "he had got a friend to write a line for her to come to Beckenham, if she liked. It could be paid for out of his wages. He should like to see her once again, and hear her say a kind good-bye."

These "country gentlemen" of the working classes —men of free, warm hearts and open hands—never harass themselves on the question of "What will it cost?" And least of all where their affections are concerned.

At this time Thomas Dibley and some others, whom we had formerly known, returned to lodge in Beckenham previously to going out to the Crimea, and joined with the strangers, with whom we were just making acquaintance, in attending the cottage-readings, which were held almost every evening, as the time was short, and many more wished to be present than could be accommodated at one time.

We now drove regularly to the place appointed for their "roll-call" each morning; and always met with a cordial and respectful reception. On Whit-Tuesday a general invitation was given for those who would like "a cottage-reading" under the trees on the Rectory lawn, to assemble for that purpose at ten in the morning. As rain came on, the coach-house was cleared, and seventy or eighty took

shelter there, and listened with lively interest to the 9th chapter of Acts, and other portions of St Paul's wonderful biography. Then my father came, and addressed them, and prayed with them. Many were in tears as they rose up, and thanked us heartily.

On the next Sunday morning, John R——, a navvy of considerable education and natural talent, who had great influence with his companions, called to say that a large number of the men, who were within walking distance, had agreed to come from their various quarters to attend Beckenham Church in the afternoon, and then to assemble on the Rectory lawn, if permitted, for a farewell address and prayer for themselves, believing it would be their last Sunday before leaving England.

Every aisle and every corner of the church were crowded with these men, who listened with profound attention, and especially when my father earnestly addressed them at the close of his sermon.

For some little time after the service was over, they walked about the Rectory grounds in companies, taking scrupulous care of the borders of beds in the flower garden. About a hundred were there. Each man received a Testament, with his name written in it, and a Cottage Hymn-book. Then they formed a half circle before the hall door, and united in singing Cowper's hymn, beginning,

"There is a fountain fill'd with blood."

English Hearts.

p 182.

Mr Chalmers then addressed them, and afterwards Captain Vandeleur.

Those who had walked from a distance were invited to remain and have some tea; but it grieved us that any should go away without it. So the next day we consoled ourselves by writing an invitation to all who had come for any of these gatherings for religious purposes to meet at the Rectory that afternoon for tea, coffee, and cake. A deputation of four arrived to refuse it! "They had rather not."

I felt pained; and probably they saw this, for a noble fellow, named Job Hesketh, said, "Don't ye think we shouldn't like it; but it goes against us, after that sight of beautiful books you have given us, to take anything more out of ladies' pockets. Why, we've cost you a fortune already."

We explained that the pleasure was beyond the expense of tea, coffee, and cake, and that we could not bear to be disappointed; but that, as it was growing late, the tea-party should be changed into a breakfast-party for the following morning.

Job Hesketh said, "I shall want you to put by a pound a-week for me, and to spend the interest of it on your scholars, like us, that you want books for."

"Thank you, Job; but I would rather put by the interest for you, and you shall give it to God yourself, when you come back by His kind care."

"Well, you'd do it best, anyhow. And we're all

saying we'd feel our money safer in a lady's hands than in our own, any day."

Job was afterwards discharged by the surgeon, as unfit to go to the Crimea, owing to an injury to his chest, from the blow of a cricket-ball. He looked the picture of health and strength.

In the afternoon we drove to the Palace, and found several new faces. They wished their names to be written down for the gift of Testaments, and begged that the list might be preserved to insure their being remembered afterwards. L—— overheard one of them saying, "She *will* have we to become religious."

An overflowing number came to the cottage-reading that evening. I heard men sobbing outside the open door. On my way back a respectable and nice-looking young woman stopped me, exclaiming, in a voice half choked by tears, "I've come from Sunderland to see my husband a changed man; and, oh, ma'am—God for ever bless you—it would be worth going to the world's end to see him so." It was Richard J——'s wife.

William W—— had brought *his* wife to the Rectory two or three evenings before. She was a very respectable-looking person, who spoke her mother-tongue without any vernacular, and had very good manners. He was decidedly proud of her, as "upper crust," according to his own expression. There was something truly great in the way in which he

listened to her exposition of his faults—great in its manly, yet humble acquiescence. A sort of manner which said, "She can't say too much, for I know too well that I deserve a great deal more."

At length I ventured to suggest that bygones should be bygones, and that we should all strive, by the grace of God, to follow the example of the father in our Saviour's wondrously beautiful parable of the prodigal son, who welcomed his penitent back to his bosom, without one word of reproach, and called for all the treasures and honours of his house to lavish upon the beloved one.

To my satisfaction she replied, "O yes, ma'am; and it is only to make you see how great the change is that I have been telling you of what went before it."

Half-past ten was the hour appointed the next morning for the breakfast-party. The gates were thrown open; and we felt rather surprised when the hour came and none entered. But on walking to the chief entrance, my sister found the three roads which met there literally lined with men, "waiting for one of the family to bid them welcome before they could take the liberty of coming in." They walked to the lawn four abreast, and sat down under the shade of the old trees. It was a most picturesque scene. Those magnificent men, who might have been coveted for the Queen's company in the Grenadier Guards,

dressed in their easy and becoming costume of white "slops," here and there diversified by a blouse, with rose-red neck-ties. They were very quiet, but very cheerful—ready for any little joke from those who waited upon them. Captain Vandeleur was in peculiar favour in this point of view, and also for the sake of his fresh information from the Crimea, whence he had just arrived. As we were to leave home that day, and the men expected to sail for the Crimea within two days later, I shook hands with them all after breakfast, and bade them farewell. Then Mr Chalmers prayed, and all their voices joined with his, audibly, as they knelt on the turf; and then they rose to sing "The Parting Hymn" in the Cottage Hymn-book.

An hour afterwards we left Beckenham to go into Essex. They were all "lining the roads" again by the Rectory gates, waiting for another farewell. Some of the younger men had proposed to cheer us as we passed, but the elder ones had said "it was too solemn for that." So there they stood, with hats held high above their heads, voice after voice murmuring "God bless ye!"

CHAPTER XII.

Hard Fighting with Old Foes.

"Deal gently with the erring!
  Ye know not of the power
With which the dark temptation came,
  In some unguarded hour.
Ye may not know how earnestly
  He struggled, or how well,
Until the hour of darkness came,
  And sadly thus he fell.

* * * *

"Heir of the self-same heritage,
  Child of the self-same God,
He hath but stumbled in the path
  Thou hast in weakness trod."

The expedition of the first detachment of the Army Works Corps met with a considerable delay in its embarkation for the Crimea; and the men were consequently remanded to the neighbourhood of the Crystal Palace.

Until ten days after the date of the farewell breakfast-party, Mr Chalmers was able to remain at Beckenham, and to meet the men for a short service, twice a-day, under a railway bridge in his parish, very near the Crystal Palace grounds. He found them uniformly attentive and grateful. They attached themselves to him heartily, calling him "our parson," and always inquiring for him afterwards with unqualified affection and regard.

A few days afterwards, Mr Chalmers having been obliged to leave home for a time, a sort of "round-robin" reached me, containing a pressing request from the navvies for my immediate return, "to give them some more good advice before they should go away from their own country, perhaps never to return."

This appeal at once recalled me; and as we drove from the Sydenham station I passed several of their friendly faces, and received many a hearty welcome. On my way to the cottage for a gathering of as many as could be called together at so short a notice, I saw William W—— standing at the door of the small inn where he lodged. He turned his head away, and I felt too sure that all was not right with him. His wife stood by his side, and said, "Oh, ma'am, whilst the Rector was here, and had him up to family prayers every day at the Rectory, he went on as well as ever you saw him, but he has fallen back since terribly."

It saddened me so much that I could hardly speak just then, so I only said, "Come with me to hear God's Word, and to pray to Him, whatever may have happened."

They came; and William wept as he heard of St Peter's fall and recovery, and of his great love for his Master ever after, and how his heart warmed as he wrote of having been not "redeemed by corruptible things," but "by the precious blood of Christ."

On Sunday afternoon a large number came to church, and into the Rectory grounds afterwards. The weather was threatening, so they were invited into the house, and filled the inner and outer hall, and the rooms opening into them. They seemed much in earnest, and nearly every voice united in prayer, after

we had read the first chapter of St Peter's First Epistle.

William W—— was not there; neither had he been seen at church, morning or afternoon. It was clear that he was determined now to take the downward path, and to avoid whatever would remind him of his better hopes and purposes. The only thing left was to go and seek him out, like the woman, who, when she had lost her piece of silver, swept diligently until she had found it.*

At the door of the inn where William lodged stood the landlord's niece. She entered heartily into the wish to see him reclaimed; and led me into a quiet sitting-room, whither she sent for Mrs W——. The poor wife told me, that the day after Mr Chalmers had left Beckenham, some old friends of William's had come to see him, near the Palace grounds, and had reproached him for being too religious now to "*treat*" them, and had called him "*near*" (the fatal word which drives so many of these poor fellows back into sin). He was stung to the quick, and then sold his clothes, in order to feast his friends with the money thus made. Mrs W—— seemed much distressed, and joined fervently with me in prayer for her husband, and for grace and wisdom for herself to enable her to win him gently back again. Then she went to see if she could persuade him to come and see me, but she said

* Luke xv. 8.

"he had almost vowed that he never would again." "Where was the good," he argued, "of being pulled up to be better for a day or two, only to go down the lower afterwards?"

"Tell him," I said, "that I shall stay here until he comes." A long time passed. It was close upon the hour of the cottage-reading. At length a slow, unwilling step was on the stair. It was William's. The door was opened by his wife; and closing it upon him, she slipped away. He sat down with a sullen, desponding countenance, and made no answer to anything I remarked or inquired, until at last he said, in a low but determined voice, "It is no use at all; I have sold my soul to the devil."

"But he shall *not* have it, William; it is not yours to sell! Jesus Christ has bought it with His own blood. Oh, William, I must—I will have it for JESUS CHRIST."

I could not say more, for my voice failed; but his whole countenance altered, like the face of a man from whom an evil spirit had gone out. The strong man bowed his head and wept. "What shall I do? what *can* I do?"

"You can pray. Let us pray now."

He laid his head on the table as he knelt, and cried like a child. He had become "a little child" again; in the sense of our Saviour's words, "Except ye be converted, and become as little

children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

As he rose up, I asked, "Did *you* pray, too?"

"A little," he replied, with characteristic truthfulness.

He and his wife were at the cottage-reading almost immediately afterwards. When we sang the hymn, beginning,

"Come, thou fount of every blessing,"

he was much affected; and he could only "make melody in his heart to the Lord" with lips that trembled too much to sing, as we came to the last verses—

"Jesus sought me, when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God,
He, to save my soul from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I 'm constrain'd to be;
May that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here 's my heart—Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it from Thy courts above!"

The 18th of June was a day of intense interest. A report had reached me that the men would leave the neighbourhood to go on board the following morn-

ing. In consequence of this, M—— L—— and I drove to the Crystal Palace grounds by eight in the morning to take leave of them, and to give Testaments, &c., to all who had not yet received them. The men were gathered in groups in front of their tents. An officer of the corps kindly arranged them in companies of fifty—comprising two "gangs" in each, with the "gangers" at their head—to be addressed separately. They were all grave and grateful; and many expressed thankfulness to God for having led them to this neighbourhood.

Previously to this interview, I had offered to take charge of any portion of their large wages which they chose to empower me to receive for them during their engagement in the Crimea, to deposit them in the Savings' Bank, in the form of a Friendly Club, and to keep a private account for each man. A large number of men gladly accepted this proposition. Many of them requested us to forward to needy relatives a portion of the money thus saved, which varied from ten to twenty shillings weekly. Not only wives and children were thus provided for, but amongst the majority, who had no such ties, an aged mother, an infirm father, a widowed sister, a sickly brother, or orphan nieces, were remembered, with a generous care for their comfort, in this "time of their wealth" by those who toiled for it night and day in the service of their country, and in many cases paid

for it by laying down their strong, young lives on that unhealthy shore.

Strangers, as the majority of those who daily arrived to swell the ranks necessarily were to us, and the rest only friends of a few weeks' standing, I thought it but right to give a stamped receipt to each man for the money-order which had been drawn out in my name, and carried these receipts to the Crystal Palace grounds on the afternoon of the 18th. It must have been a noble trustfulness in those manly natures which made them fling back those receipts into the carriage, by common consent, with something like a shout of disdain at the supposition that they could possibly require such a pledge of honesty from a friend and a lady.

On the back of those money-orders we wrote their "wills"—the disposition of the property thus entrusted to us, in case they should not be spared to return to claim it. This afforded us an opportunity of quiet conversation and prayer with each man, as they visited the Rectory at all hours on their pecuniary matters.

Numbers whom I cannot name here interested us deeply. James C——y, a youth of about nineteen or twenty years of age, told me that he was an orphan, and had a young sister whom he should like me to watch over. He said, "Mother's dying words are always on my mind, and I think God has helped me

to trust in Him, live steady, and take care of my sister, as she bid me with almost her last breath." His countenance, remarkable for its pure and peaceful simplicity, bore witness to his words.

On the evening of the 18th of June, I walked through the village for the cottage-reading. William W—— and his wife were waiting for me on the slope near the church; she was looking hopeful and happy, and he, full of earnest feeling.

At the cottage we read the fifth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and illustrated the words, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," by the wonderful parable of Matthew xxv. 31–46. We humbly believed that the Holy Spirit's life-giving presence was there, making the words, which the Lord Jesus Himself had spoken, "spirit and life" to our souls. We felt it to be our little Waterloo—and called it so. Battles were fought and won; souls were trampling down their old enemies, sin and Satan, by the mighty help of the Great Captain of their Salvation.

Richard J—— and William W——, two of the men who had lately fought with knives, were sitting near each other, with overflowing eyes, and with brotherly love in their countenances. The hands that wrung mine at parting had been lifted up in prayer to the King eternal, as they pledged themselves, by His grace, to be His faithful soldiers and servants to their lives' end.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Fight.

"It is nothing with THEE to help, whether with many or with them that have no power."

TUESDAY came, but brought with it no order for the men to embark; so we met again, morning and evening. At night their wages were paid in full.

Was it wonderful that, out of six or seven hundred men, who had received full wages, with no work for some weeks, with no officers on the spot to superintend them, and no restriction save the morning and evening roll-call—a number, somewhat under a hundred, should spend that night in drinking, taking it for granted that it was their last in England? It is only just to state that none of the regular attendants at the "cottage-readings" joined in that revelry; but some there were beneath whose wild spirits I had discerned a deeper tone, and of whom I had before —and have again, thank God!—a better hope.

On Wednesday afternoon we drove to the Crystal Palace gates to inquire when the embarkation was likely to take place. Two of the men of business of the Corps were standing there, and came to the carriage to entreat me to drive to Penge without a moment's loss of time. "There is a fight going on between the

police and some of our men," they said; "and if you ask them, they will go away quietly, drunk or sober."

The duty was plain—so we did as we were bidden. On reaching Penge, I saw two policemen who were terribly hurt; but the mob had dispersed, and seven men had been taken prisoners. After we had done what we could for the wounded police, they told me that about fifty navvies, who were all more or less intoxicated, had formed a ring, and a few began boxing. Two women became frightened, and insisted upon a policeman entering the ring to stop the fight. The policeman, a brave but prudent man, argued, very discreetly, that "if they were let alone they would soon be tired of fighting under a burning sun, and would fall asleep and wake up ashamed; but that if a staff were laid about them, they would be roused into tigers." But the women were not to be persuaded by logic, and insisted on his encountering the crowd of combatants. At first they deferred to authority so far as to remove their ground to some distance; but upon the policeman's second attack, truncheon in hand, with which vigorous blows were dispensed right and left, the natural result occurred—the boxing men made common cause against an armed foe. A second policeman came up, and fought desperately, but both were compelled by the numbers to retreat to the house of the first. The crowd followed, and its leaders broke in. Women and children were

carefully put aside, even in that moment of fury, maddened as they were by intoxication; but their rage with men who had struck them with bludgeons knew no bounds. It was a matter of thankful astonishment that the two policemen escaped with their lives on that unhappy day. In the thick of the fight, two or three gentlemen came up with a fresh force of police; and to the gentlemen the principal men concerned in the fight surrendered themselves, whilst the rest dispersed to their various quarters.

About an hour later, the men of the Corps came from the different villages where they lodged for their usual afternoon roll-call at the Crystal Palace Office. Hearing rumours of the recent fight, they stopped to inquire particulars; and at this moment a fresh detachment of police arrived. These had heard that two of their fraternity had been murdered; and supposing that the men around them were the guilty combatants, began knocking down and taking prisoners promiscuously.

Our coachman begged me to allow him to drive amidst the crowd to the Crystal Palace, as a restraint to violence on both sides. Richard J——'s wife was nearly fainting. I bade him place her in the back of the phaeton and walk by the side, for which he received three heavy blows between his shoulders from an official truncheon, probably under its owner's notion that Richard was taking an unwarrantable

liberty. I saw the northern navvy's dark eyes flash fire, and his arm uplifted to return the blow. One entreaty made it drop quietly by his side. Kemp stopped the ponies for me to shake that hand heartily with a "Thank you, Richard! I honour you from my soul. If Lord Raglan has got Sebastopol by now, I hold you the greater man at this moment; for God's Word says, 'He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city.'"

"I'd have borne a dozen blows for this," said he, heartily.

A sort of captain amongst the men, named John Thorndale, who, from his bright, cheerful spirits, strength, and manliness, had a leader's place always accorded him, at this moment dragged the policeman who was collaring him to the side of the carriage, and appealed, "You know me: speak for me! You know I never drink or fight."

"I know it, John, and will answer for you in every court in England; but for pity's sake go quietly now with the policeman, if he will not take my word for your character. The worst will be a night in prison. I will have you freed to-morrow; and if you begin a fight now, there will be bloodshed."

Just then a great accession of navvies poured down from the top of the hill, and from the Crystal Palace gates, with cries of "Down with the police!—rescue the prisoners!—punish the police well!"

The police stood to their arms gallantly enough, for the numbers against them were overwhelming, and the men not unjustly enraged. The moment was come. We drove between; and, like Nehemiah, in that moment's pause "I prayed to the God of heaven." Then, turning to the crowd of some five hundred men with already upraised missiles, I said, "The first man who throws a stone is my enemy. We will have no more fighting to-day, by God's help! Haven't we had enough of it already—two policemen nearly killed, and seven of our poor fellows perhaps to be transported for life, or hanged, if the wounded men die. Go back and give over, for my sake—for the sake of that God of peace of whom I have so loved to speak with you."

A brief silence followed, and then some remonstrated: "Do you go away, ma'am. We wouldn't hurt you for anything; but it is not fair to hinder us paying off the p'leece."

"I shall not go away till you are gone, if I stay here till midnight. You will not murder men before my eyes, I know."

"We don't want to vex you," said two or three spokesmen; "but we *will* set our mates free."

"They *shall* be free," I said—"these innocent men whom we have seen taken prisoners before our eyes. If there be justice in England, they shall be free to go with you to the Crimea. I pledge

myself not to rest till it is done. Will you trust me?"

There was a pause; and then a short conference between leading spirits was followed by loud shouts of "Trust ye to the world's end!"

"Then prove it by going back within the Crystal Palace gates."

In five minutes I was left alone with the police and with the prisoners.

The police were very grateful, saying, "You've saved a deal of bloodshed." They promised me to deal gently with the prisoners, and willingly then gave me back John Thorndale, for whose good character I could answer. It was "worth a king's ransom" to see his fine young face brilliant with smiles of joyful gratitude at finding himself free again, and to hear the shouts of the crowd as we restored to them their favourite. We met the superintendent at the foot of the hill, collecting fresh forces, but assured him that the precaution was unnecessary. He expressed his surprise and gratitude.

An hour after, Mr Chalmers, who had just then returned from Essex, drove back with me to see that all was still peaceful. They welcomed him with warm affection, and told the story of the afternoon with great point; adding, "A lady's gentle voice do more with us than forty thousand p'leece." They were all in high good-humour, shouting, "God bless the peace-

maker!" till their kindly voices must have been tired; and then they were ready to listen seriously to Mr Chalmers' service.

We thanked God heartily for the peaceful close of that day; nor could we help saying likewise—Honour to the noble natures, who, with the passion of revenge at its height, and with overwhelming numbers to insure for the moment its fearful success, ebbed back, like a quiet tide, at the earnest entreaty of a woman whom they held their friend, and fulfilled the Divine command, "In malice be ye children."

CHAPTER XIV.

Human Brotherhood.

"The manliest man that you saw going in a ragged coat, did you reverence him? Did you so much as know that he was a manly man at all, till his coat grew better?"

In the midst of the general enthusiasm which wrought up the feelings of this crowd of men, on the occasion just described, into an unusual state of excitement, effervescing in great good-humour, as just before it had been on the point of exploding in indignant wrath and rage, there was no lessening, but rather an increase of their respectful courtesy of demeanour. Universal was their condemnation of one poor man, from whom I heard the only word which ever reached my ears from the lips of a working man which could possibly be construed into an expression of disrespect. A half-intoxicated navvy, amidst the general overflow of kindly feeling, committed himself by saying three or four times over, "She's my sister!"

"What do you mean," cried the indignant bystanders, "by daring to call the lady your sister! Say it again, and we'll teach you! Take care you don't get torn in pieces!" And strong arms were seizing the unfortunate culprit to bear him outside the ring. Fearing a measure of "Lynch law," I

entreated to be allowed to settle the question for myself, and requested that the man should be permitted to come near the carriage for this purpose. When he stood by my side, I said to him, "Every sober, honest Englishman is my brother, and I am proud to call him so. But I have never had a drunkard for my brother—and I never will."

The poor man had sense enough left to be ashamed, and he slunk quietly away, amidst a murmur of satisfaction and approval of the verdict from the crowd. The next day he made a respectful apology, adding, with genuine frankness, "From this day forward, I'll try to be one of the '*sober* Englishmen;' I think I'm an *honest* one already."

It may be well to state here, that by the time the first ship sailed for the Crimea we had been able to prove to the satisfaction of the magistrate of the police court, to whose kindness and consideration we felt much indebted, that the men who were taken prisoners under our eyes were innocent of the previous fight, and accordingly they were all set free, to resume their position in their Corps.

On the morning of the 21st of June, a message reached me at the early hour of half-past five, to say that the men were to embark at Blackwall that day. By seven o'clock, M—— L—— and I entered the Crystal Palace grounds, and remained till nine, taking leave of the men. I thanked them from my

heart for their forbearance the previous day, and for their generous courtesy and kindness in yielding to my entreaty for peace; adding, that I believed it to be a distinct answer to my prayer to Almighty God in that moment of terrible suspense.

After shaking hands with each man, I took my leave, but was requested by an official to return, to hear the subject of a communication which had been passing from the men to the foremen of the Corps. It was to express the united wish of these warm and grateful hearts that I "should go out with them to the Crimea, to keep them straight, and to be with any of them who should die out there, in their last hours. And they humbly begged to know if they might take the best place on board for me, and pay for it amongst themselves."

It went to my heart to refuse to do for them what God might enable me, on that distant shore of danger and death. But when I explained to them the sacred home duties which withheld me from leaving England, they recognised them at once as paramount claims, and satisfied themselves by asking for a promise of one more farewell visit, on board their ships,—a promise, I need scarcely say, cheerfully given and fulfilled.

Meantime, many letters from them followed me into Essex, a few extracts from which are now given:—

"GREENHIVE, *June* 23.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I hope you will excuse the liberty I have taken in writing to you; but my name is John W——. We should be most happy to see you on board with us once more before we do sail. The same God that protected Daniel in the lion's den, and Jonah inside of the whale, can save me if I put my trust in Him; and I hope, if we should not meet again in this world, I hope we shall meet in that upper and better region, where troubles will be unknown. I must conclude; and may God guard you is the hourly prayers of John W—— until death."

"*Monday, June* 24, 1855.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I write to tell you that John S—— and me James C——, went on board ship on Saturday last, and we saw that old gentleman and that young lady on our ship, and we were both happy to see them; and we should be happiest to see you, my dear friend, for there is much talk of you on our ship amongst us men. Those little books that you gave to us we find very acceptable in passing many an idle hour away, but not in idleness or mocking God, but in sincerity and truth. And I hope it will please the Almighty God to bring us back safe to our dear friends again, and fill us with the Holy Ghost for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. We will write again as soon as we get to the Crimea,

and tell you the truth of the country, if it please God to spare us.—So no more at present from your ever well-wishing friends, "JOHN S——.

"JAMES C——."

"GREENHITHE, *June* 25, 1855.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have just received your kind letter, and am very thankful for your kindness. I will endeavour to follow your directions, and keep from drinking and swearing; and I do not forget the little prayer, but use it every night and morning. Dear Madam, I hope you will not be offended with me that I have enclosed the stamp, but when I consider the expense and trouble you have already been at, I think that it is very wrong to put you to any more expense, or cause you any more trouble than we can possibly help. I will now conclude with the best wishes of all, and the sincere gratitude of yours, &c.,

"THOMAS B—W—R."

"*June* 25, 1855.

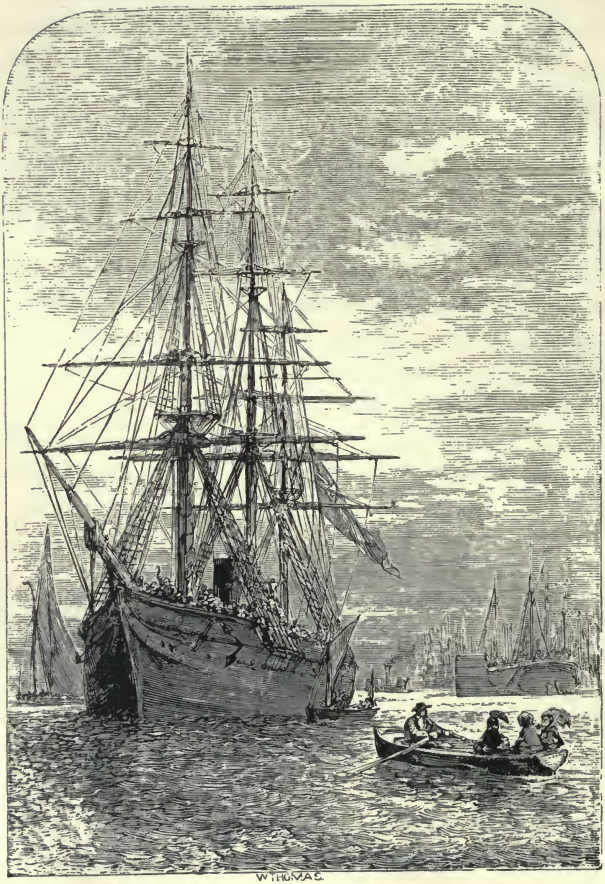
"KIND LADY,—It is with the greatest pleasure, mixed with sorrow, that I write these few lines to you, trusting you are well both in body and soul, as it leaves me in body—but I cannot say I am happy; but I am determined not to rest till I am happy in Christ my Saviour. But this I am not able to do of myself; but I trust in the Lord for help, and

I am convinced I shall not trust in vain. I am sorry to tell you that I am afraid we have not many praying men at present in my gang; but I think we have a few. But if I have to travel the road alone, by God's help I will do so. But I will try to do all I can to form a few together to serve God. May God help us; and let your kind prayers intercede for us.

"Kind Friend,—It is my desire that you will be so kind as to take five shillings every month towards anything that may be sent out to promote religion among us sinful navvies. May the Lord bless you and me; and if we never more meet in this world, may we meet at the right hand of God, there to praise Him for ever and ever. I shall feel thankful for a few lines from your kind hand. I remain your humble servant, "JOHN L——."

"SIMOOM SHIP, *June* 27, 1855.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I was very glad to hear that letter read that you sent for all the men who were on board. We gave three cheers for you, and three cheers for Mr Wakefield as read it to us; and I was very much pleased to hear it, and so was John R—— and Jacob K——, so were we all very much pleased to hear it. They said that it was the best letter they ever heard in their lives. They all send their best respects to you, and that pleased me most that ever I have been since I have been in the Corps. I felt more



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rejoiced than for some time before with them all; for I am sure you would have liked to have been there to have seen them. I know that I should have liked to have seen you *there*. So I must conclude with all our kind loves to you for that letter you sent for us all. The writer is THOMAS DIBLEY."

On the 27th of June, my sister, G. V., and I left Essex early in the morning for Blackwall, where we imagined the ships would be anchored which were to carry the "first battalion" (as it was now called) of the Army Works Corps to the Crimea. But on arriving at Blackwall we found that the ships had dropped down the river to Greenhithe; and accordingly we followed them as quickly as we could. The only ship within sight from Greenhithe was the *Langdale*, where a large number of the men were simply kept in floating barracks, until the *Simoom* was made ready for sailing. Cheery was the welcome which pealed in hurrahs from the side by which our little boat approached the ship. But a large number had gone on shore, as they did not expect us that day. "And how are we to tell them they've missed you?" said one and another; "Couldn't ye come again to-morrow?"

We promised to telegraph to the friends with whom we were staying in Essex that we should not return to them till the next day; and then the men

proposed our having "a cottage-reading" between the decks before parting. One of the men of business connected with the Corps came on shore with us, and watched with evident interest every fresh meeting we had with the men, who were returning in small companies. Looking into a public-house, he said, "There are thirty of our men in a large sitting-room here; will you be afraid of going in?—they seem pretty sober."

This was true; the poor fellows rose up to welcome us, and joined earnestly in a short prayer. Every man of the thirty went back to the ship, sober, almost immediately afterwards. When we passed through the outer room the landlord and landlady thanked us respectfully.

Just as we had seated ourselves in the train at Greenhithe, a "down-train" arrived with a large number of the men who had been to London on leave. It made my heart glow to see their faces brighten with sudden surprise and joy, and to hear the exclamations of "Why, Joe, yere's our kind lady—and there be her sister—bless 'em!—Why, where ever did they fall from?" The open window of our carriage was suddenly darkened with a shoal of hands stretched out for a farewell shake, to the evident astonishment of two young gentlemen who sat opposite to us, enjoying the satisfaction of their very delicate primrose-coloured gloves, which certainly

were never intended to come in contact with such brawny hands as those of our honest working men.

The next morning we went again to Greenhithe, and had a solemn and yet delightful hour on board the *Langdale.* We visited the *Barrackpore*, off Blackwall, on our way back. The navvies manned the rigging like sailors, and welcomed us with hearty cheers. John R——'s and Thomas Dibley's were the first faces I recognised. It was the last time I ever saw poor Dibley's grateful, beaming smile. He and John had bought a charming little travelling hand-bag for me, chosen by Thomas himself. It was recognised by a shopman, with whom we were in the habit of dealing, as I held it in my hand a few days afterwards; and he told me that he had never had greater difficulty in "giving satisfaction;" "the navvy was so particular about the pattern of the snap and steel chain!" That bag has a sacred value about it now.

Thomas H——, a Roman Catholic, whom we saw the first evening that a party of the Corps had come to Beckenham for lodgings, shewed me that his Testament was safe in his waistcoat-pocket. One of the numerous "John W——'s" was there, and said, "I *was* glad to have joined the Corps before that day you shook hands with them in the Crystal Palace grounds —I should have been proud for a year past to know as I was coming in for it."

"Why, are you one of my old friends, John? I had looked upon you as a stranger just arrived."

"Not quite a stranger, ma'am. In the hard frost at the beginning of last year, you stopped me in the road leading through Beckenham, and asked if I was ill or hungry. I suppose I looked bad enough, for I had slept on the snow the night before, and hadn't broke my fast for twenty-four hours. So you took me to a shop or two for something to eat, and gave me a shilling. It set me up like a fortune. I never wanted from that day. Don't know but I should have been lost without it. But what I cared most for was your speaking to me *first*, ye see, and saying you knew navvies didn't like to beg—they only wanted to work, and *then* to eat. I didn't know your name, but I prayed God I might see your face again,—and I knew it in a minute up at the Crystal Palace."

James C—— again asked me to be kind to his good, young, orphan sister; and two or three left their children under our care, making an allowance for their maintenance to respectable persons in Beckenham.

Many pleasant, hopeful words were said, and then the sound of their parting cheers rang till we reached the shore.

The next morning's post brought a letter from the chief officer of the Corps, conveying an earnest request from the men that I would join them in their first Sabbath service on board ship, as they were not to

sail till the next day. The officer urged that it might have a permanently advantageous effect upon the men, by teaching them to set a value upon their newly appointed chaplain's services.

Accordingly, on Saturday evening, L—— and I went to London. We felt some difficulty about going to and from the ship on the Sabbath-day. To go by the railroad we felt was impossible: it might be setting an example of Sabbath excursions to those who might possibly recognise us, without any opportunity being afforded of explaining our object and errand. The steamboat had similar disadvantages. We then determined to engage a cab for the day; and to tell the cabman to put up his horse, and then to accompany us on board for Divine service. I may as well mention now, that when we returned to London, this cabman expressed himself as so much pleased with his Sabbath that he begged to be allowed to return half the fare, and seemed almost uneasy at being made to pocket it.

The chief officer of the Corps and two others courteously came on shore to receive us, and row us back to the ship. Mr Hallward, the chaplain, arrived soon afterwards, and manifested, then and ever afterwards, the most cordial sympathy and benevolent satisfaction with the strong tie of friendship between the men committed to his spiritual care and those who had first sought their immortal welfare.

He read the Morning Prayers impressively, con-

cluding with an earnest and excellent address. "Never," said he, after it was over, "have I preached to such a congregation—so attentive—so evidently absorbed in the subject."

The men stood the whole time; William W—— and Henry H——p scarcely withdrew their eyes from him for a moment.

Soon after the service was over, Mr Hallward retired to his cabin, leaving us for an hour of last words with the men. Then we left them, followed by their quiet blessings from the ship-side.

"On board of the ship *Langdale*,
June 28, 1855.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I am striving to take your advice. Every day your words have taken a great impression on my mind. With the help of God, I shall write to you when I get to the Crimea, if ever I get there, and you will send a word of instruction to me, and I will promise you that I will persevere in reading God's holy Word. As for drinking and swearing I have left off that.—From your true and obedient friend,

"THOMAS B—W—R."

"On board the *Simoom*, *June* 30.

"DEAR MADAM,—We are full now—aboard of the *Simoom*—and ready to be off. We think a great deal of Beckingham and you; I have long cause. I pray God bless all your teaching to us. I saw some of

those little prayers that you gave to the men that last Sunday we were there, and I was glad to see some of them reading them; and I am glad to see some are anxious to read them. I will write and tell you of our journey, and hope it will please God that we may land safe in the foreign land. We shall keep a little company together, for we have already got together about twenty of our companions to sing, pray, and read; and I hope that from to-night we shall be quiet-like to ourselves, at a corner of the deck. With my kind love to you and to Mr Charmer, good bye, and God bless you all.—Your sincere friend,

"THOMAS DIBLEY.

"Jacob K—— joins in all with John and me."

"DEAR FRIEND,—I received your kind letter, and I am glad to see you have got my order to lay by in the savings bank for me; and I find the little books you gave me very handy. We sang the 189th hymn before dinner, and after that we read a chapter—Mark ix.; and a great many of our fellow mates came and joined in with us; but I am sorry to say, yesterday they would not join in with me; so I sat down and read my book by myself; but I don't think it will be hard to get them now, as I have got them once. They say they would sooner join in hymns than swearing. So no more at present from your sincere friend, CHARLES R——."

"GRAVESEND, *June* 29, 1855.

"DEAR FRIEND,—Pardon me for addressing you so freely; but your kindness to me has convinced me you are a true friend, and I most humbly thank you for granting my request. You may depend I will attend to the prayer with which you so kindly presented me. I am most happy that I should have the honour of receiving a letter from you. I will write to you, and tell you if I arrive in safety at my journey's end. Until then, believe me to be your obedient servant, JOHN B——."

"*July* 2, 1855.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I did hear that letter read to us, as you wished it to be, on Sunday before prayers; and we enjoyed ourselves quite well in singing of hymns and reading our Bibles and books, on Sunday; and I heard many of our men say, 'I wish that our kind lady was with us to-day; she would keep us all together and peaceable more than any officers could.' So no more at present from your dear friends, JAMES C—— and JOHN S——."

"God bless us all, my dear Friend."

"AT SEA, *July* 1, 1855.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I send these few lines to you, with my sincere thanks for the trouble you are taking for us poor, sinful men. Dear Friend, this is the first

Lord's Day we have had at sea. May the Lord enable me and all of us to give our hearts unto Him, and give us His holy Spirit, to lead us in the way of all truth, and to teach us the meaning of His holy Word, so that we may come to the Lord Jesus Christ and find pardon for all our sins, so that we may be received by Him into glory. May God bless you, and may we meet in heaven!

"JOHN L——."

"If I can, I will send you a few lines from Gibraltar."

CHAPTER XV

Brotherly Love.

"One standeth not as on a hill, beckoning to another to follow;
But ye toil up hand in hand, and carry each other's burdens."

During the remainder of the time of my absence from home, my sister daily visited the new candidates for admission to the Corps, who arrived in considerable numbers each morning at the Crystal Palace, from divers parts of the country. On our way home, L—— and I drove to the Crystal Palace, and found my sister seated in a sort of a chair of stones which the navvies had built up for her, on a little green hillock within the Crystal Palace grounds. About two hundred men were standing around, receiving Testaments from her, and listening to her gentle words of instruction and counsel with rapt attention.

On the previous day she had been pained by that which never reached her ears on any other occasion of intercourse with these working men—the sound of an oath. The man who used it was slightly intoxicated. Murmurs arose of "Shame, shame! to let a lady hear you swear! and so kind as she is, to come amongst us like this;" and then followed threats of condign punishment, and the man was forcibly borne outside the ring for the purpose. My sister was

obliged to insist upon taking the offender under her protection; and then solemnly and earnestly spoke to him, and to the by-standers, upon the sin against GOD of taking His holy name in vain; and of making a prayer the channel for a curse instead of a blessing.

On Sunday night we heard that the *Langdale* was to sail, either on Monday or Tuesday, with the remainder of the "battalion." M—— and I went early on Monday morning to Greenhithe, and visited the ship. William W——'s face was the first to welcome us. He had been transferred to the last ship, why, we knew not, unless it were that the kind providence of God had so ordered it, to enable us to see him once again, and to have the joy of hearing from his own lips that he had begun in earnest to "seek Jesus, and to hate sin." Whilst my sister spoke to the men about those wonderful words in the 17th verse of the 22d of Revelation, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," I noticed, amongst the earnest eyes around, none more earnest than William W——'s. When M—— said, "I wish you all to carry to the Crimea two thoughts from those words—COME, and *say*, Come," he rejoined in a low voice, "I tried to say, 'Come,' a little, yesterday. I got together a bunch of the men, as we'd no parson aboard this ship, and read my

Bible and good books with them, and then lots more came round us, and enjoyed themselves in listening."

The next time I heard of William was by a letter from Mr Hallward. He wrote that William W—— desired him to communicate from himself, with great grief, that he had once been overcome in drinking the Crimean brandy, in the great heat of their arrival at Balaklava and march to the camp; and had bitterly rued the consequences. He could not be easy, he said, till I knew of this fall; but that, since then, he had been enabled, by God's grace, to walk more like a Christian, and believed that God would help him to do so more and more. He had a long illness shortly afterwards, during which time Mr Hallward's unremitting labours in the hospital were of great value and comfort to our poor friend. His constitution never recovered the shock. He went to Scutari a few months later. Whether he died there, or on his way home, I have never succeeded in tracing. But it is all one to him, now, whether his body lies amongst thousands of his countrymen, in their distant burial-ground upon the Turkish shore; or was dropped alone into the ocean caves. We have an earnest trust that he "held on his way." I know that he spoke truth when he said to me, "I believe in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners."

"When THOU hast overcome the sharpness of

death, Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to *all* believers."

The four men who had been acquitted at the police court of all concern in the Penge fight, were on board the *Langdale;* and they expressed hearty gratitude for the efforts which had been made in their favour.

All the Army Works Corps men on board listened with earnest interest to the story of Zaccheus, in the 19th chapter of St Luke's Gospel; and when the words had been dwelt upon, "He is gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner," and the question was urged, "Will not you ask him to be *your* guest —now—this very day—and for ever?" many a fervent "Yes" was uttered with a choking voice.

Just before taking leave, we discovered that all the books which we had sent for the use of the three ships had been divided by mistake between the *Simoom* and the *Barrackpore.* The men frankly confessed that they gambled all day long for want of any other occupation.

We tried to point out the evils and consequent miseries of gambling, and then asked, "If we send you down some games for your amusement, would you pledge yourselves that there should be no betting connected with them in any way?" This pledge was earnestly given, and rigidly kept during the whole voyage. Of this fact one of the officers kindly in-

formed us, by letter, on the arrival of the *Langdale* at Balaklava, adding an excellent account of the conduct of the men.

On our way home from the ship we made a little *détour* to the London Bridge Station, and, at the Arcade Bazaar, purchased boxes and boards for chess and backgammon, games of "railways and coaches," Chinese puzzles, puzzles made of "Scripture pictures" and historic scenes, and last, but greatest in favour, as we afterwards learned, a huge Noah's ark.

In the course of the evening a still larger supply of similar treasures was sent down by the benevolent members of the firm of Mead and Powell, who had been informed of the object of the purchase at their bazaar, and generously added this handsome present for the men of the Army Works Corps on board the *Langdale*, with a letter expressive of their kind wishes for the welfare of the men, and the success of the Corps.

Early the next morning Mr Chalmers' coachman took the packages to the ship just before she sailed. He arranged with the men that the Scripture puzzles should be kept for the Sundays' amusement, when they were tired of reading; but that the other games should be put away on Saturday night, and not brought out again until Monday morning. A universal assent was given; and this word of honour was never broken.

On the 14th of July I visited the men who had

been taken prisoners at the fight at Penge. They were then under confinement in Horsemonger Lane gaol. As I entered the court where they were standing, the first momentary expression of surprise and pleasure which lighted up their countenances gave place to a look of shame and distress, and five out of the seven sobbed like children. Those were the five guilty men. They all told me that Thomas H—— had taken no part in the fight, and was a steady man; and that young William R——, who had been taken up, at eight o'clock the evening after the fight, upon suspicion, was absent from Penge at the time it took place, and could call upon the tent-maker who was employing him that day to prove an *alibi*. No sort of request was made to me to help them in their great strait; but when I promised to retain an able counsel on their behalf, their surprise and gratitude were truly affecting. It is only right to mention here the generous conduct of Mr Vokes, the landlord of a public-house at Sydenham, with whom Thomas H—— and his wife and child had lodged for some weeks. Three times he gave half a sovereign for a pleader for him in the police court, and supported the helpless wife and child until he could obtain permission to stand bail for H——, and thus set him at liberty to return to his work. Thomas H—— was acquitted at the trial.

I visited them constantly at this time, and met

with the most polite consideration from the benevolent and sensible governor of the gaol, and from his like-minded son. They both said the men behaved admirably, and were evidently honest, straightforward working men, very unlike the majority of their prisoners. They added that every night and morning the poor fellows took out their cards of prayer, and knelt down to pray the words together, and then read their books.

One day the poor men expressed deep regret for having brought me into so much trouble: "To think now of your name being talked over as coming to see prisoners, and they your own men, who had Testaments and all given 'em. And how it 'll be said, this comes of them Bible-readings—ending of such a way—drinkings, fightings, and prison!—and no account taken of the lots as kep' steady."

I told them that this last thought had also occurred to me, and had troubled me; and that I had been thinking of the triumph which Satan had got on the 20th of June, until it had made me quite miserable. But then it had come into my mind, that the Lord Jesus Christ might yet bring a greater triumph out of it all to Himself, by giving them his Holy Spirit, to change their hearts and make them children of God in that gaol; and then, whether they left it for liberty or for another prison, they would walk out of it Christ's freed-men! Then I stopped, and said,

"Which would you like to get the triumph—the devil, who wants to get you into his power, to torment you; or Jesus Christ, who loved you, and died for you, and lives again to love you and make you happy for evermore?"

From the most hardened man amongst them, the man said by the police and the witnesses to have been the leader and the fiercest in the fight—from the lips of William ——— burst forth, with a sob and a gush of tears, the words, "Jesus, Jesus—only Jesus"—in a tone which I can never recall without believing that, then and there, that man made his choice "whom he would serve." Nor has he ever given me cause to doubt it since.

> "Then will I praise my Lord and Saviour,
> That angels shall
> Admire man's fall,
> When they shall see God's greatest glory grow
> Where Satan thought to root out all."

There was in the manners and expressions of each a humble penitence; and they were all deeply conscious that it was the curse of drunkenness which had brought them into this great evil and trouble. These men shuddered, in their sobriety, at the remembrance of the ferocity of their drunkenness, more than at the prospect of years of penal labour and imprisonment; heavily as that, too, pressed upon their freedom-loving natures.

Oh! what can be done to rid Britain of this beset-

ting sin of her working classes? Will no great soul give to this subject serious thought and persevering effort? Is there no "wise man" who will stretch forth his hand to "save a city" or a nation by his wisdom in suggesting, and his energy in carrying through, a moral or legislative cure for this corroding disease? Will the day never come when we shall be able to give our working brothers their holiday, their one little green isle here and there upon a sea of toil, without its ending by numbers of them drinking themselves into ferocity or idiotcy?

It cannot be that our working men are incapable of higher pleasures. Men who have such great hearts—and the heart of an Englishman is the home of every generous and noble feeling, when that "house is set in order" by the grace of God—must also have a capacity for refined enjoyment. Gentlemen of England, these working men are "the raw material" from which you have been moulded. They are bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. The same sea-girt land has given them, as their birthright, the independence of your own island spirit. The same breezes of ocean from every side have brought them their like bodily and mental health and freshness. The same time-honoured institutions have given them your own steadfastness of character, your chivalrous loyalty, your even-handed justice, and your love of liberty without license.

The same open Bibles have spread an atmosphere of light before eyes that could not, as before those amongst you that would not, study its sun-bright letters, nourishing a higher sense of honour, a purer standard of morality, a larger generosity of heart, and a grander nobility of soul, than can be found in any other nation in civilised Europe.

Such men are worth an effort—the effort of a lifetime—to deliver them from the enthralment of one fatal habit, which deprives them, for the period of its power, of every good gift of God to heart and intellect. Save such men from crowding our prisons and overflowing our penal settlements. True it is, while the world standeth, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the one and only remedy for the disease of sin in any form. In the peace of a free pardon through the blood of His cross; in the gladness of a free salvation won by His merits; the heart of man is set at liberty from its toil after vain or sinful excitement, to consecrate every power to the service and glory of that Saviour who has redeemed him; and has made him "unto his God a king and a priest." But the loving wisdom of the Eternal Father has ordained that through the channel of human affection these waters of life should mainly flow. Few souls have ever been *threatened* into a Christian life. How many have been *loved* into it will never be known until the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

Remember these men are your brothers. "Love as brethren: be pitiful, be courteous." The working man values your courtesy above your liberality, and your friendship most of all. Let him feel that, whatever may be the difference between you, occasioned by the accidents of birth, education, and fortune, *you and he are friends.* Shew him your interest in his welfare, your desire for his improvement, your care for his happiness, and, above all, your trust in his honour. But let him feel he can give back as much as he gains. Tell him your trials. Let him share your hopes. Let him give you his sympathy. You will find it as generous and delicate as your own. Allow him the glorious equality of being able to repay friendship with friendship. God gives it to you, and will you not give it to your brother?

It was a noble sentiment and a great truth which Judge Talfourd died in uttering—"That which is wanted, to hold together the bursting bonds of the different classes of this country, is not kindness, but SYMPATHY."

CHAPTER XVI.

Safe at Home.

"No more away we'll go,
No more from Him we'll sever;
From our wand'ring woe, in the vale below,
We rest with Him for ever.
In His world of light, and His kingdom bright,
We've a home and a hearty welcome."

Amongst the varied sources of interest and pleasure occasioned by the gathering of the Army Works Corps, by no means the lightest was the return of some of our old friends who had formerly worked at the Crystal Palace, with news of many more whom they had chanced to meet again in their wanderings. Of some, indeed, we heard things that deepened our anxieties, and painfully quickened our prayers for them. But of others there were tidings which gladdened our hearts. There was one, especially, to whom the words could truly be said, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." There was a time when we all believed that William G—— was dead. And truly was he then mourned by all who had known him in Beckenham. He had been seized with cholera in Deptford, in the autumn of 1854; and, on partially recovering, had left the place. This I had heard on my return from a visit in the north of England; and every effort to trace him failed. We did not know where his mother lived, so as to be able

to inquire of her what his fate had been. Great was our joy, therefore, some months afterwards, when a letter from that excellent woman announced that her son was still living, although he had been long and seriously ill. After his recovery he worked as a farm-servant for some time, and was in the habit of gathering together his fellow men-servants, in an evening, to read the Word of God. His master said he was a most faithful and diligent servant.

When he was able to write again, his letters were a real refreshment to us. In one he wrote,—"There are many changes in this life. I pray that every change may find us better, more humble, more love to our neighbour, to our own soul, and, above all, to our God; that when old age come upon us, we may not have to look back upon a misspent life. I often think, when I come to look back upon only a few days even, there are many things which I might have done that would have been more to the good of my soul, or to the honour of my God; but when I look back over my whole life, I could oftentimes cry, and I think sometimes I could lay down with Elijah, and say, 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.'

"Dear ma'am, please to send me a few lines to say how your dear sister is, and how James —— is. Perhaps you may think it curious of me offering you half a sovereign for James; so I will tell you my

reasons; because I know you have done a great deal for him, and I thought you would lay it out better for him than he would for himself, as I have thought him rather thoughtless that way. I hope by me so saying I shall not hurt your feelings towards him, for I have no very particular reasons for so saying; and even if I had, we all have faults. I know I have many. So now I must conclude with saying you must continue to pray for me, that I may daily increase in grace and wisdom; and God ever bless and prosper you in all you lay your hand to."

Again, in February 1855, he writes,—"I was very glad that dear Captain Vicars is still alive, and in good health and spirits, amid all the war and pestilence to which he has been exposed; and I pray God he may still be spared to the glory of God and the good of souls. Dear ma'am, I very often pray for him, I loved him so well. And I pray God to bless all your labours of love for the Lord Jesus, and for poor souls, and to bless you and all that belong to you abundantly. I am sorry to hear that good Mrs Elliott died of the cholera last summer. She was an excellent kind woman, and I know you thought a great deal of her; and her poor family must miss her very much. But I am glad you say she died so full of love, and trust, and peace in Jesus.

"I often think how great a blessing it was to me

that I came to Beckenham. They were happy days indeed. But I shall have their like again and better still in heaven."

"*May* 11, 1855.

"DEAR MADAM,—I received your kind, interesting, though sorrowful letter—and I do as it were share a part of the sorrow. Although I knew little of Capt. Vicars, he was a man that I loved very greatly—and I hope he is now with his Saviour whom he so loved. It seems quite a pity that such a young man, and one that promised to be so useful for the comfort and eternal welfare of mankind, should be cut off in the very prime of life—but we must resign to the will of God. He alone knows what is best for us. It must indeed be very trying to those who loved him so much. And who can tell (if he lived any time after he received his deadly wound) what thoughts, prayers, and troubles would cross his mind about them; *not* but that I believe he would resign himself to the will of God. I have oftentimes thought of him and prayed for him and I hope I shall meet him and you and your aged and honoured father and the young lady-nieces and Mr and Mrs Chalmers, and many more for whom I would pray particular (nay indeed all the world) in heaven at last where sorrow, parting and death shall be no more—where we shall praise God to all eternity. So no more at

present from your humble, affectionate son in our Lord Jesus Christ and your most humble servant,

"WM. G——."

One evening, in the spring of 1855, I went into Mary E——'s cottage. Half hidden behind the door sat two travellers, who had just come to Beckenham to seek for lodgings, as I gathered by a glimpse at their dusty clothes and baggage. On turning to look at them again, admonished by the expression of Mary's eye, I recognised Thomas Paget's broad, bright face, and hearty smile; and welcomed him and his good wife back to Beckenham right gladly. "She knowed me again," said he, half aside to Mary, "and I thought she 'd forgotten me;" and for a few minutes his face was hidden on his arms, as he leant them on the table. Then came out, in broken sentences, his recollections of his life in Beckenham; and how "God had kept him *from drinking them away* after he had left, and made him and his wife keep up praying, and reading their Bible, and church-going."

Very shortly after this he became seriously ill; and although we had able medical advice for him, all remedies failed to arrest the disease. He slowly fell away from his great size and strength, and, at last, gave back his spirit to his God.

He was like a little child in that illness, so grateful and simple. He knew our steps as we drew near the cottage, and would often spend hours by the window, watching for the mere sight of any of us in the village street. His failing appetite was only gratified by little dinners cooked at the Rectory, and flowers from our garden were his peculiar joy. He would arrange them carefully in a little jar, and have them placed on a table where he could constantly see them. A pillow which was given him to raise his aching head from the hard mattress, "made him feel a'most in heaven," he said, "so easy and comfortable-like."

One day his wife sent me word that he was much worse, and was not likely to live many hours. As I took leave of him that night, not expecting to see him again in this world, I was quite overcome. There was something ever to be remembered in the mingled expressions of his countenance at that moment. Sorrow to see another's sorrow, it was not in his nature to avoid feeling; but this was almost swallowed up by his extreme surprise and pleasure at finding the value set upon his simple, honest friendship. Kindness he had looked for, but not to have his death mourned; and it was plainly an exquisite enjoyment to him, which I thank God he had, although he was going so soon afterwards to inherit fulness of joy for ever.

It was surprising to see how his spiritual understanding grew and was strengthened as his physical

power failed. The Bible was his great delight; "and Mr Chalmers," he said, "made it all as clear as glass to him."

He bore his great sufferings with unmurmuring patience, and prayed his favourite little prayer (the Soldier's Prayer) oftentimes a day. The last evening that I saw him he was speechless; but when I said, "Paget, dear friend, if you know that the Lord Jesus is with you, so that you fear no evil, raise your hand for a sign," he raised it at once, and waved it joyfully.

In the course of the night he recovered his speech enough to say to his wife, as she cooled his hot head with fresh water, "Who will wash me next, Lyddy?"

"Who do you mean, Tom?"

"God!" he replied; "quite clean, in the blood of Jesus."

Soon after that he went to join the company of those who wear white robes, "made white in the blood of the Lamb."

Shortly after the *Langdale* had sailed, and with her the last men left of the First Battalion of the Army Works Corps, I left home for some weeks, understanding that the numbers of the Corps would not be increased until the experiment of sending the first detachment was found to be successful.

Early in August, however, fresh advertisements appeared for working men of various trades, and railway men amongst them, to form a second battalion.

My sister drove to the Crystal Palace grounds every morning to converse with the men, to distribute books, and to take down their names for Testaments. She found all were obliging and respectful, and many of them full of warm and grateful feeling.

As we were obliged to spend that autumn by the sea-side, we fixed upon Brighton, as the coast which was the most easy of access to and from Beckenham and the Crystal Palace; and twice a-week we visited the new candidates for the Corps in the Crystal Palace grounds. Through the kindness of Sir Joseph Paxton's chief agent in London, Mr Wragge, a telegraphic message summoned us to the Thames whenever another ship received its complement of men for the Crimea, so that my sister and I had the satisfaction of exchanging parting-words with each man, and of giving to all a Testament as a last remembrance, accompanied generally by a Cottage Hymn-book. A large number of prayer-books were supplied by Government to the chaplains, for distribution amongst the men. Both the Bible and Religious Tract Societies were most liberal in making several grants of Testaments and hymn-books to us for the same purpose, and in allowing us to purchase many more at half price.

A large number of the men applied to me to receive their money-orders, as had been done for those who went out in the first detachment. This arrangement now became rather a formidable matter, the receipts averaging about £500 a-month. I should have found myself very unequal to the calculation, but for the able help of L——, who undertook "to keep the book" for me, and, assisted by her sister, to correspond with those relatives of the men to whom allowances were made. The correspondence with the men themselves about this time began to average about fifty letters a-week from the Crimea.

In the early part of the month of September, two young men of the name of B—— wrote from Wandsworth gaol to request me to pay a fine of £10 for them, to set them free to go to the Crimea. They were in gaol for having been found in a riotous state of intoxication.

Before answering this application, I wrote to inquire particulars of the governor, to whose firmness, discrimination, and benevolence—those high qualities which alone can fit a man for such a post—it is unnecessary for me to attempt to do justice. Mr Onslow replied that, from what he had seen and heard of the young men, he believed they were deserving of the effort, although they had been guilty of an excess which had brought upon them their present punishment. Of course the money was sent forthwith, and

few things gratified me more than the anxiety manifested by these young men to justify the confidence which had been reposed in them, both in their steady conduct from that time, and in securing to me the repayment of the sum lent, by having their money-orders drawn out in my name, so that I should receive the £10 owing to me before laying by any money for them in the Savings Bank. In consequence of the pressure of business at the office, a delay of some days occurred before this could be done. Meantime one or other of the brothers wrote almost daily to assure me that "they had not forgotten the arrangement, nor never would forget the kindness."

A navvy named John F., for whom my sister had advanced a sum of money under similar circumstances, shewed equal anxiety until she was repaid, and introduced her on board ship as "this here 's the lady that paid two pounds ten shillings to get me out of prison."

There were many artisans, in this battalion, of superior education and character, whose conversations greatly interested us; but as no notes of these interviews were written down at that time, owing to the pressure of the work amongst them, nor in the still busier winter months, we are afraid of trusting our memories now, lest the details should not be verbally accurate. On our return home, we formed an acquaintance with Mr Hudson, the chaplain who went out with the Third Battalion of this Corps, whose

manly simplicity of character—not forgetting the physical powers which had led him up Mount Blanc by the direct ascent—combined with his earnest desire to promote the best welfare of the men committed to his charge, qualified him well to be a chaplain to the navvies.

It was about this time that we heard of several deaths which deeply affected us, amongst men whom we had known in the First Battalion. Our old friend Thomas Dibley was amongst the earliest who, in his own simple language, "took a short cut to heaven, without going round by old England."

He and several others had met regularly for prayer and the reading of God's Word; and in navvy phrase, "he had lived according." His friend, John R——, told us the remainder of his earthly history.

"*August* 30, *the Year of our Lord* 1855.
"From John R——,
"Frenchman's Hill, Balaklava.

"DEAR FRIEND IN THE LORD—I now write to inform you of my bodily health, and spiritly wellfare, tho I am very poorly to day, but I thank God that I am spared to write to you, hoping this will find you all in good health as it leaves most of our company; tho we have lost some men very sudden, one was drowned on the 15 of August by coming on board drunk, when we lay in the water, and Robson was took ill at six oclock in the morning and died at one, and we have

six more very ill at the presant, and I hope that God will remove the heavy hand of death from us, if it be his will, and if not, I hope that the Lord Jesus will receive their souls to glory and I have not been landed a week un til the 24th and we have 3 more men dead in the same way, it is the cholera. Beloved Friend in the Lord, Thessalonians ii. 3: finally, Brethren pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, for all men have not faith: I remember last time I wrote to you it was in heaviness of spirit, but I thank God, through the faith and love of Jesus Christ, and the assistance of the holy Spirit, I am able to say this—

> "Peace, doubting heart: my God's I am;
> Who form'd me man, forbids me fear;
> The Lord hath call'd me by my name,
> The Lord protects, for ever near;
> His Blood for me did once atone,
> And still he loves and guards his *own*."

my dear friend, I will tell you how I have persevered on my pasage over. Thomas Dibley and I formed A reading class for all them that would attend it we used our little testaments and hymn Books, every day, and I exhorted a text every night and prayed with them and sung a hymn or two, and these is the two hymns we often sang, 136.—138, and I have felt the Lord to be very precious to my soul, and we had

a many members and I trust that the Lord will add hundreds more to his fold. The disease is raging, and death devouring us daily, and the grave is swallowing us up; there is four men died of it today, and the same almost every day. Oh, may the Lord have mercy on their souls, and I am still determined to persevere in the love of Christ, to find my way to heaven. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; for it has pleased the Lord to take my dear companion, Thomas Dibley, he died on the 28 of August, his illness was very severe; he was only fifteen hours ill. I visited him every opportunity, he said he was in good spirits for heaven. I begged him to look to Christ, and for the holy Spirit to comfort him, in the valley and shadow of Death, and this is his dying words, I am only going to HIM a little bit before you; as he grasped my hand fast in his; and William Mason is dead, we have lost 28 men, from the seventeenth of August; this is on my Dear friend Thomas Dibley's death:

Here are afflictions, and trials severe,
  Here is no rest—here is no rest;
Here I must part with the friend I own dear,
  Yet I am Blest! I am Blest.

How sweet is the promise I read in his word,
Blessed are they who have died in the Lord,
For they shall be called to receive their reward.
  There is rest, there is rest.

so God Bless you all at the present and J. K—— is

well, and I will write as soon as I can to you another letter so I hope and trust dear honored Lady to meet you all in heaven if not on earth Amen."

Young George Willis was one who had especially interested me in the summer. He was always ready to open the carriage door, to pull off his neckcloth as quick as lightning to dust a book or parasol, if it fell to the ground, or to render any other of those delicate little attentions by which these strong men shew their sense of a lady's friendly interest in them. One day I had noticed the earnestness of his fine countenance, as he listened; so I said to him afterwards, "George, you have a good mother, I am pretty sure?"

"Safe enough! Now, who could have told ye?"

"And I think you are a good son."

"Well! you are out there! But I should *like* to be, uncommon."

"How do you mean to begin?"

"Why, by leaving my money order with you, to allow mother something handsome out of it; and if I don't live to come back, you 'll please give it all to her."

The excellent Rector of the parish where George's widowed mother lived, wrote, in the course of the

autumn, to express the poor woman's joy in the dutiful consideration of her son, and the hope it raised within her that it might result from a real change of heart and principle, as he had, previously, been somewhat wild in conduct and neglectful of her wishes.

A sorrowful task was it, indeed, to have to say, in answer to that letter, that her son was dead. "The only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

Little as there was to tell her of what had passed between us, there was enough for Hope. I could not even write his name without remembering that those young eyes used to fill with tears and light at every description of a Saviour's dying love. I besought her to reckon on seeing those tears exchanged for smiles of joy in Paradise; for surely no single spark of love to Jesus ever went down to be quenched in everlasting darkness.

On our return home at the close of the autumn, amidst a large heap of letters there, we found one from George, written whilst he was in the full vigour of health, some weeks before his death. God only knows the depth of thankful joy with which it was sent to that widowed mother, with the words written upon it, without one haunting doubt, "This your son was dead, and is ALIVE AGAIN; he was lost, and IS FOUND."

"From George Willis, Army Works Corps,
"gone to the Crimea."

"DEAR MADAM—i received your kind letter, and was happy to hear from you. Will you be so kind as to keep my order and to let my Mother Mary Willis have 5s. a week until i do return, if it do please God that i may. if i never do return again, it w[illegible] be for mother Mary Willis, at Queen's Camel. Madam you can let my Mother have it as you please, and I thank you kindly for your Prayer and Hymn-book and your Blessing that was in your kind letter, and God's Blessing as well Which i am sure of if i do put my trust in Him, and i hope i shall for evermore. i hope to keep your Litel prayer constantly with me for your sake, and own Saviour's that shed His Blood for us.

"& I do remain your obedient servt.

"GEORGE WILLIS."

CHAPTER XVII.

True and Trusty.

"The honest man, though e'er so poor,
Is king o' men for a' that."

MANY more individual instances of holy living and dying, like George Willis's, and Thomas Dibley's, rejoiced our hearts, and filled us with fresh confidence in Him who loves to hear and answer prayer. But the statement of the conduct of a large portion of the Corps, after they had landed in the Crimea, made us anxious and disappointed. Perhaps it was too much to expect of men, who had grown up to the prime of their life in the enjoyment of entire liberty and independence, the freest hearted men in the land, that they should submit to the rigid discipline of martial law as well as if they had been trained to it, like soldiers, from their youth up.

One of their stumblingblocks was the order given to touch their caps to every officer who passed. They said "they had gone out to work, and couldn't awhile to do manners." For this many got into trouble. More than one wrote to me, "The men as is flogged say they 've one comfort; and that is that you are not here to see how they 're served; for you 'd wear your heart out with fretting about

them." A devoted missionary to the soldiers, who had heard something of our interest in the Corps, told me, that after being disappointed by the general character for wildness which was given him of the men after their landing in the Crimea, he could not but be moved, when he went amongst them during a sort of extempore *emeute*, and said, "Is *this* the lesson you learnt at Beckenham? what would *she* say if she heard of it?" to see many amongst them shew strong emotion, and the majority, for that day at least, return to order.

The last detachment of the Third Battalion was selected during the month of November. A scarcity of work at that time, brought candidates for the Corps from all parts of the country, including mechanics from the manufacturing towns, at the rate, according to the *Times* newspaper, of one thousand a-day. For the most part, these men brought very small means for their support during the time of waiting on the chance of being chosen; numbers were unable to afford lodgings, and therefore slept without a roof over their heads in the damp, cold November nights; many were almost starving. My sister and I, in our daily visits to them, were in the habit of buying from a pieman, who came down from London on speculation,

from one to two hundred "hot penny pies," containing a marvellous supply of nourishment for the cost, or coffee and bread and butter, for those who had had no meal in the course of the day.

It was a fine thing to see several hundred men fall back, leaving a ring around us of only the absolutely famished men, not to trespass on the little kindness, although many of those who retired had had but one meal in the course of the day.

The first day that we discovered this terrible state of destitution, I had only a few shillings with me, and with a keen sense of "what are they amongst so many?" I turned to one of the men by my side, and said, "Will you take the money and lay it out to the best advantage? I do not know who you are; but I am sure you will deal fairly by the rest. I have never yet found cause to doubt the honour of a working man."

"Then you shan't learn mistrust from me," he said. And many told me next day, how good and faithful a steward he had been.

At this time, characters were required of the men before the appointments could be made. And the men found that it greatly added to their chances of success, if we wrote for them to their former masters, and when satisfactory testimonials were thus received direct, we forwarded them to the chief officer engaged in selecting the candidates. And here again, I must

bear my testimony to Mr Milner's unwearied patience and courtesy, not to us only, but to every applicant who obtained an interview with him.

The Rectory was now transformed into an office for writing for and receiving characters of artisans of all descriptions, and of railway labourers. The men came daily from half-past nine till half-past three. This afforded us opportunities of speaking with each man separately, upon his interest in a world the fashion of which will not pass away. There were many whose names I should mention with pleasure and interest, were it not, that from their present position and circumstances, it is probable this record may fall into their hands, in which case, it will be enough for them to learn that they are all remembered constantly in prayer to God, that we may meet again to praise Him throughout a blessed eternity.

To provide more adequately than the pitiful allowance of the penny-pies, for a few of the most distressed and yet superior men amongst the candidates—men who would rather have starved than begged—we now boarded about a score of them at a time at cottages in Beckenham, until their appointments could be obtained. Two of these men, James P——, and John M——, I shall have occasion to mention further. It was during this winter—of 1855—that we first became fully acquainted with the character of the sergeant of police at Beckenham—a man who,

with spirit and courage equal to any emergency, has never, in any mob or fight, either received or struck a blow, though firm and strict in all the duties of his calling. In him, every honest working man who comes within his reach, finds a friend; and from his gentle and benevolent wife, every starving man, with almost equal certainty, receives a slice of bread and cheese, or a basin of soup.

Encouraged by his admirable Inspector * in every plan for the moral improvement of the men under his charge, and influenced, like that superior officer, by the highest of all motives in seeking the welfare of his fellow-creatures, Sergeant ——, with his staff of police, has been invaluable in preserving the peace and good order of Beckenham, when filled with strangers from all parts of the country. No collision in Beckenham is ever dreamt of between the wildest of the navvies and our policemen. Even in such a case as that of a man having to be imprisoned for misconduct, a pat on the shoulder, and "You'd better come quietly with me, my man," is found to be "the utmost rigour of the law" which is required to be exercised.

During this time, also, we experienced constant civility and courtesy from the policemen employed about the Crystal Palace and its neighbourhood; who all took a cordial interest in our friendship with

* F. M. Mallalieu, Esq.

the men; and latterly, in all threatenings of disorderliness, seemed to look upon us as a sort of "available contingent." "Oh! ladies," was their salutation, when we had missed a day in coming, and a slight disturbance had occurred, "if you had been here last evening, the men would all have gone away without giving us any trouble."

Shortly before the last five hundred of the Corps who composed the Commissariat branch, sailed in the *Jura*, from off Deptford, they gave me a Bible and Prayer-book, bound together in a very beautiful "antique fashion," as a parting remembrance of our pleasant intercourse — an intercourse which had left not a single painful remembrance. In all our afternoon visits to them, including the large crowds of unchosen, and therefore disappointed men, not one rough word was ever spoken to us. Darkness often came on, as we stood under an old oak, with these men around, reading and talking with them about the things which belonged to their peace; and when a torch was sent out from the Crystal Palace office, to light us back to the carriage which had brought us thither, it flashed on faces so full of feeling, that we understood by it the reason of the hush which had prevailed.

At last came the day in December when the *Jura* was to receive her complement, and to sail for the East. It was the sharpest day of a short, but intense

frost. My sister and I, with a beloved young friend, who has since entered into the "joy of her Lord," drove over to Deptford, and spent six hours on board the *Jura*, in taking leave of the five hundred. Amongst them were two men whom I have named, John M——, and James P——, whose honest faces had attracted us a few weeks before, in the crowd of men endeavouring to gain admission at the Crystal Palace gates.

We had then found it unnecessary to write for further testimony to their characters. The documents which they had brought with them had been signed not only by their employers, but also by the rector and curate of the parish, and the two churchwardens. Their countenances alone would have been amply sufficient recommendations,—they literally shone with honest and simple worth. At the time we first noticed them they were almost starving; so we told them to come to the Rectory for supper that evening; and then, finding they had nothing left to pay for a night's shelter, we lodged and boarded them in the village. As soon as they were appointed to the Corps, they commenced laying by the larger portion of their wages to repay us; and had time enough to do so, fully. A few days before the *Jura* sailed, they asked to see me, and with some hesitation and fear, "lest it should be thought taking advantage of kindness," requested the loan of half a sovereign to each, to enable them to

go down into ——shire, to take leave of their wives and children.

The night before the vessel sailed, both came to the Rectory, to repay the loan. "Are you sure, my friends, that you can afford to give it back?"

"Quite sure, and thank you, ma'am, a thousand times."

"But what have you left for your lodging to-night and breakfast to-morrow?"

"Oh, we've paid our lodging, all's square."

"But for breakfast?"

A moment's pause ensued; then came the cheerful answer, "With the good supper we've just made here; and the good dinner we shall get aboard ship, we don't want no breakfast."

Of course, *that* arrangement was not permitted to stand. But when we met on board ship, we found that whilst other men had been laying out from ten to twenty shillings a-piece in warm vests, John and James had been obliged to do without them to enable them to repay their debts. So there they stood on deck in that biting cold, with nothing warmer than a slop over their shoulders, and with small chance of having the warm clothing, provided by Government, given out for some days. It was not to be borne. So, early in the day we despatched a messenger for four warm knitted vests from London. Five o'clock came; the darkness of a December night was deepen-

ing. Our last farewell words were said; and the last man's hand had been shaken; there was no longer any reason for remaining; yet our messenger had not returned. There was, plainly, some mistake, and the ship would probably sail before the parcel could now reach our friends.

The colder blew the night breezes about us, as we drove through Deptford, the more unbearable was the thought of these two men suffering for their high and delicate sense of honour towards us. We drove from shop to shop before anything like the articles of clothing which we wanted could be found. At last at the fifth shop searched, they were obtained. But who was to take them back to the ship? No shopman could be spared.

Beneath a lamp in the street stood a group of boys. Its light fell on a face which seemed to introduce the sort of messenger I desired. The story was told him. "Now, my boy, we are strangers, and I do not want to know your name or where you live, nor any clue to either. You might take these vests and make twenty shillings upon them, or give them away to your father and brothers, if you choose. I should never send the police after you. But my confidence in the honour of English boys, which stands so high now, would be broken down. And those two nobly honest men would suffer, and might take cold and go into a consumption, and die; and

their wives and children break their hearts about them."

The boy's eyes flashed under the lamp-light, and snatching the parcel, he said, "Trust me. I'm the boy for it."

Eighteenpence happened to be the worldly all we had with us, after paying for the vests. I told him how sorry I was for this; but that it would pay his boat each way, and he would have sixpence and a happy heart to lie down with at night.

"It's a plenty. Father's a waterman. I shall get his boat for nothing. All's right!" and off he ran.

A note had been enclosed in the parcel to one of the officers with whom I had had some conversation, requesting him to send me one line by post that night or next morning, to say that the parcel had reached its destined owners.

The next day passed, and the next, but no letter came from the *Jura*. We read in the *Times* that she had sailed on Thursday morning. The day posts of Saturday arrived, but brought no news of the parcel.

My trust failed. "My boy is dishonest," I said; "and my confidence in human honour can never be the same again."

But by the last post on Saturday evening came a note from the officer alluded to, to say that about seven o'clock on Wednesday evening, a boy had

brought a parcel on board, and had requested permission to deliver it to two men, named James P—— and John M——, in the presence of the captain of the ship, the chief officer of the Corps, and the medical officer.

Having discharged his duty, the last sound heard amidst the splashing of his oars, as he left the ship's side, was the shout, "Tell that ere lady I kept my word, and the jackets was in time."

All honour to the English boy, who sustained my right to trust my brothers, young or old. The world is not so wide, but we shall meet again, I hope; and meet when we may, the trusty and the trusting will be friends.

The following letters have been selected, with no slight difficulty, from amongst very many of nearly, if not quite equal value, in point of truth, simplicity, and freshness :—

"*February, 2nd* 1856.

"DEAR LADY AND DEAR FRIEND,—I now take the pleasure of writing to you, as well as I am able, hoping that you are quite well, as I am, thank God for it. Since I took the last sight of you at Deptford, I have many times thought of you. We had a very fine voyage; on the Bay of Biscay, I was half afraid we should have been all lost, but God took care of

us, and guided us safe to Balaclava. We were three weeks on the water — we made it our practice, a few of us, to have a prayer-meeting with Mr Young, and bless God, for He was there too. We should have been in the harbour one day sooner, but it was full, so we was forced to go back to sea again; but we got in quite safe at last; then we went to work at Balaclava two days, and then we volunteered to go in front of Sebastopol; working at the commissary of the Fourth Division, me, P——, and W——, and we have got a very good place. I have not seen L—— since I left the Jura, but he is quite well I have heard. Me and James P—— received the four flannel shirts, and was so thankful for them. I hope God will bless you for all your kindness. I wish you was here, that I could hear you lecture, for there is nowhere here that I can get any good from but God and your Bible; I value that as much in the Crimea as you do your'n at home; I can sit in my little hut and read it. I am as happy as I can be, for I have everything that heart can wish for as regards this world's goods; and I trust I am living for the next. I should love to have a letter from you if it be not too much trouble; this country suits me very well at present, I cannot tell how long I shall be here, but if you will write, please to direct to me, at the fourth division commissary at the front of Sebastopol Crimea, or elsewhere. We have no clergyman up with us, more 's the pity. Give

my love to Mrs Hewitt, and all enquiring friends at Beckenham, for I have to thank God that I ever came there, but I should never have come, had it not been for you. I cannot say any more at present, only, if God don't spare me to come home, to see you again; I hope I shall meet in heaven, so I remain yours,

"JOHN M——."

"BALAKLAVA, *November the* 9.

"MOST HONOURED LADY,—I feel in duty bound to answer your most kind and affecting letter, and I am sure it gave me great pleasure to receive a letter from you. I hope this may find you and the rest of your family in the enjoyment of good health, as that is the greatest blessing we can expect in this sinful world—poor unworthy creatures; I am happy to inform you, this leaves me much better, than the last time i wrote to your ladyship; but this is a very unhealthy part of the country, where we are living. There is nearly 6 hundred more navvies landed here this Day from England, and there is a great many more expected out here. The Chief of our employment, is making a new Road from Balaklava, to the front right up to Sebastopol, close side of the rail road; but every night or morning, i never forget the soldiers prayer, you was so kind to give me, and I pray to God to give me strengh to uphold it. I am happy to inform you, that our tent is Convenient to

the Church, and a very kind minister we have; but his work has been very laborious. I am sorry to inform you, they do not regard the sabbath in this country, for they keep open the shops the same as any other day.

"'but a sabbath well spent, brings a week of content,
and health for the toil of to morrow;
but a sabbath profaned, what e'er may be gained,
is a certain forerunner of sorrow.'

"I should feel very thankful, if you would be so kind, as to answer those few lines, and give me all the information you can Concerning the affairs of old England; and you will Confer a great obligation on your humble servant HENRY S——."

"BALAKLAVA, *January the* 21.

"DEAR FRIEND,—i now embrace this favourable opportunity of answering your most kind and serious letter, which gave me great comfort to hear from you, and likewise to hear you was in the enjoyment of health, as that is the greatest blessing we can expect in this sinful world. I am happy to inform you this leaves me in perfect health, thank the Lord for his kindness to me. I am happy to inform you we have left the tents, and gone into wooden huts, and we find ourselves much more comfortable, for we have got a very nice little Stove, but I am sorry to inform you I cannot devote my time so much to religious ordinance as i should like to do, for I can assure you

there is great swearing, and so many temptations, that I really abhor it, and I wish I was back in old England again. Me and John W—— Sleep Next bed to each other, and there is never a night pass over our heads but we offer up a prayer for your welfare. we are given to understand that peace is about to be proclaimed; and God grant it may be so, and then I shall be able to live in a much better way, and live more in the fear of the Lord; but while the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return. I hope, my Dear friend, you will be kind enough to answer this letter, as it will be a great relief to my drooping spirits, for it gives me great pleasure always to hear from you at any time. I must conclude with prayer for your future happiness, and may God guard you, as is the constant prayer of H. S——."

(*From one of the men who was burnt in the conflagration of twelve huts in the middle of the night.*)

"*Feb.* 7, 1856.

"'OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND.'

"DEAR MADAM,—I hope you will excuse me in taking the liberty to send these few lines to you, hoping they will find you in a good state of health. I have the pleasure to inform you that we have a public worship on Sunday mornings and evenings, in one of our huts, but I should be very glad to see many more of the men belonging to the Army Works

Corps going to worship God and keep his Day. The old proverb is as I said above, 'Out of sight out of mind'—that may be true. But I must acknowledge this, that Beckenham, and the lecture one Tuesday night in Beckenham, is not out of my mind; those Excellent remarks on the words, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;' your solemn remarks come often to my mind, especially when I observe many of the working men in the Army Works Corps neglect the happiness of their immortal souls, and spend their time in nonsense and corruption, and through that neglect their own salvation: may God bring all to light, and convert their ignorance. If the soldiers are fighting against their Enemies, So the little *militant Church* of God here in the wilderness against a strong army. If our brave soldiers are fighting to Conquer, So the few Christians are labouring to conquer Satan, and to save souls. May the blessed time come soon that the Christian's war be over, and peace reign for ever, a sanctuary in every country, and the Lord be revered in every city, in every town, in every House, and every family, from pole to pole. May God soon grant the blessed time. O! what a word of Comfort is the following, 'God so loved the world That He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth,' &c. O! what a consolation. O! what a fact, a *blessed fact*, that Jesus took upon Him all our sins, Bore the

punishment in our stead, The chastisement of our peace, and by His stripes we are healed. Here's another word of Comfort to the wandering sinner, 'The Son of man is Come to seek and to save that which is lost.' Also, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to God, for he will *abundantly pardon.*' May God enlighten the mind of them in the *Crimea* to seek the way of salvation, and trust in God and serve him all the days of their Lives. I have no need to desire one favor from you, to Remember the little Church in the *Crimea*, and every Sinner here, Because I Believe that you think often of the men of the A. W. C. here.

"May the God of all Bless you in all your Prayers and Labours, and kindness to the poor, and all working Classes of all kind, and Bless you in all your efforts to Save Souls, that is my Prayer.—I am your humble servant, R. W——."

"N.B.—Please to excuse me send the above to you. My Best respect to Mrs Chalmers. may God bless her Body and Soul.

"I am rather short of Books to Read here. there is no Book selling in the Crimea.

"The Rev. C. Hudson is well, and follow his Divine Ministry. R. W——,

"3d Division, Balaklava, Crimea."

"KADIKOR, NEAR BALACLAVA.

"HONORED MISS,—With pleasure I take this opportunity of letting you know that God has so far been gracious to me in preserving me from all dangers since I left England. This is a very wild and desolate country, and I am sorry to have to inform you that the Sabbath is almost entirely disregarded out here; intemperance is so prevalent, that it is ruining both the bodies and souls of the majority of our Corps, but now, as there is every appearance of peace, I suppose we shall all be sent home soon: but, whether I return sooner or later, I hope to return thanking God for his many mercies to me, both in temporal and spiritual concerns. Hoping God, in His tender mercy, will long spare you to assist others in the way they should go, and thanking you for all your past kindness to me, —I remain, your Ever Obedient and humble Servt.,

"EDWIN G——."

"SEBASTOPOL, *March the* 20. 1856.

"MADAM,—I Duly Received your very kind letter and tract, for which I send you My Sincere thanks, as I often Derive a great Deal of Comfort, from that and the testament that you was so kind as to give Me before we came Away. I thank you very much for the kind Advice, and the good Wishes that you sent me in the Letter, And the kind Advice that you gave us all before we came Away, which is all for our good,

what you said to us About the Drink out here is very true, for there is A great Many of our Men is in the hospital through the Drink, but I thank God for giving me strength to withstand against the many temptations that are here to Drink, but thank God I have taken your Advice Since I have been out here, for I Do Not use the Drink, And I sincerely wish that my Comrades Would Do the same, for it is a sad thing to see them Drove to Madness, and killing themselves for the sake of Drink, and, after enduring the Crimea hardships to come home to england, if it should please God to spare us, in Worse poverty then what they came out in. I am sure they Will think then What A good thing it Would have been for them if they had took your kind Advice. We have shifted our quarters since I sent My last letter to you, We are quartered in Sebastopol Now, But I hear that We Are soon coming back to England again, for We hear that the War is at last over, thank God. I hope, Madam, these few Lines Will find you And your sister in good health, As, thank God, this Leaves me At present,—I remain, Your humble servant,

"WILLIAM S——."

"SEBASTOPOL, *April 1st*, —56.

"RESPECTED FRIEND AND LADY,—I received your kind and most Welcome letter this afternoon, and us Was most Happy to hear that you Was all quite well,

also to Hear that you Was receiving both of our moneys quite safe. The 10s. lent, which you mentioned in your letter, Was also quite right, and we hope you will Thank Mrs Chalmers kindly from both of us, for being So kind as to lend it to us When in need. I and my Comrade J. L—— are quite well, and in good Spirits, Thank God for it, I read the Little testament When I Can make time, and Last Sunday I read the Little book Called, 'Walking With God Before Sebastopol,' to 3 or 4 of my Comrades, and they liked it Very much Indeed. We Very often goes by the grave yard Where Captain Vicars was buried, and many more of his Fellow-officers. We are living about one mile from the North Side Where the Russians are. We can See them quite plain, and they can See us, but they dont fire now, they did When us first came down into the town,—But now We can go for a Walk on a Sunday down on the Tcherneya and shake hands with plenty of them. I dont know as I have any thing more to Say at present, only Wishing you All quite well.—We both Remain, your Well Wishers,

"THOS. L—— and JOHN L——."

"BALACKAVA, *April* 7, 1856.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your most kind letter on friday last, and was glad To hear from you, as I promised to write to you The day we came on board. I am one of the musicians That was playing

on board. I was very sick all my Voyage over, but thank God I have been very well All the time I have been here, and With God's Blessed will I trust I Shall while I am here. Thank God we are as well provided for as we Can expect out here. I am Happy and comfortable in My place, but I miss my little home and fireside, my Dear Wife and little children which I left behind. They live at No. 7 —— place, Brixton. If you Should wish to call or write at any time if You are that way, they would be glad to see you. I am Happy to tell you that Mr Hudson is with us Still, I was With him in Chapel last evening, And he is quite well I am happy to say.

"My Dear Friend, you say You think of us, and pray for us, and beg of us to pray for ourselves, our blessed souls we have within us. I pray daily for mine And others; thank God My prayers are answered hourly on myself. I see My fellow creatures sick And afflicted all around me Daily, but I am spared untouched, thank God for it. I hope with God's Blessed will this will find You quite well and comfortable.—With my best wishes, I am your ever obedient Servant, ARTHUR M——"

"CAMP BEFORE SEBASTPOOL, *March 7th*, —56.

"HONORED FRIEND,—I take the Opportunity Of answering your Kind and Welcome Letter, In hopes of finding you all well, as it leaves me. I have had

a Severe cold, But thanks Be to the Lord I am a great deal Better. the Climate is so Changeable, perhaps for 2 or 3 days we have fine Weather, and then we have Severe Winds, frost and snow. we have at the present Severe Frost, and Snow 18 Inches Deep, but perhaps in two or three days we Get South or South West Winds. it will Sweep it all away in a few hour, and We Get a field of Mud very near up to our knees, but I hope we shall Soon Get through the Worst of the bad Weather. Dear Friend, I must tell you I have been to Sebastopol twice, and I found a Young Gentleman, Mr J—— D——, I did one time live with his Uncle as Gardener, he was very pleased to see me, he with Great kindness asked me in to his house, and I taken a Glass of Sherry and a cigar with him. his house is in front of the Dry Dock, as they Our fellow Countrymen have Blown up, and the following Thursday I went to dine with him, I very much enjoyed my treat, he has invited me to call on him at any time, he had a very large Shot Came through the roof of his house, but thanks be to the Lord he was not at home at the time it happened. May the Lord Bless him and Protect him. Sebastopol has been no doubt a beautiful place, a great deal is Levelled to the ground, there was 10 Thousand Houses, with 50 Thousand inhabitants; how dreadful it must have been for the poor creatures to have had to depart in One Night, Leaving every thing Behind

them. they had splendid Dock yards, and every thing Comfortable for their use. We are very Glad it is peace. I think we shall not be Long Before we are all Home. Give My kindest love to my Dear Children. Glad to hear they are all well; tell them I have got a little Medal for each of them. May the Lord Bless them.—From your humble servant,

"WILLIAM A——."

"CRIMEA, *April* 10.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I am very comfortable in the Crimea. I am living with our Paymaster as his servant; but I should like to see home again, as we do not get half the comforts as we get at home. We have beautiful weather out here, though it is very changeable. We have plenty of crocuses and snow-drops grow out here. I hope I shall soon see you again, and thank you for your kindness to me. I have seen a great deal of Turkish religion; they are as bad as heathens. Some Turkish ladies left their homes because the telegraph wires run over the tops of their houses; they imagined that the wires could tell all their secrets. I do not think I have any more to say. I will conclude.—From

"JAMES L——."

"BALAKLAVA, *April* 18*th*, 1856.

"MISSUS ——, and sisters, I was very glad to hear from you, Also I feel glad to hear that our savings are all right, as several of our men have had a great deal of trouble to get their money, we all shall soon be at home. On Saturday 12th, there was 560 started from Balaklava, on Cleopatra a screw steam ship, please God all will arrive safe to England.

"Madam, I remember you speaking of Captain Vicars who was killed at the storming of the Redan, no sooner did I see his grave stone then it reminded me of you speaking about him, he has a beautiful stone at the head of his grave, and the grave yard is walled all round with stone.

"As I read through your letter, I find you urge me and all to attend to the chaplain's instructions, I am glad to inform you he does all that Lays in his power, I go to have Lessons in writing, we have pens ink and paper and all instructions, we have papers and a good variety of books, I must say Mr Hudson has done all that he can do. I must Conclude.—your Dear friend,

"JAMES M. S——,
third Divison No. 3571."

"I received a letter from home to say that you sent home that money which I spake to you about, I am very very much obliged to you, Missus ——, and Sisters."

"SEBASTAPOL, CRIMEA, *May 5th*, 1856.

"DEAR MADAM,—I am happy to inform you that we are now under orders for home, and we expect to Sail to Morrow, in a Vessel named the Clyde, and I hope with the Blessings of God, we may all arrive home safe, for I know that the same Lord that has protected on Land, is also able to preserve us on the sea; and I think when I get home, I shall never have cause to regret leaving my native home. My Dear Madam, I am happy to tell you that since peace has been proclaimed, the Russians have been over here and I have been over their side; but it is very painful to see the ignorance the poor creatures are living in, by all appearance I take them to be of the Catholic religion, for in every house, let it be ever so humble, they have a picture or figure of the blessed Virgin, and they keep a candle or Lamp constantly burning, for I enquired of a Russian that could speak English, and he informed me that they keep it burning night and day. They never partake of any thing without asking a blessing before and after eating it, but they do it in a manner quite unusual to the English, for they cross themselves several times about the chest and forehead, but I think that most of them are very religious in their way. And now, dear Madam, I think I have told you all, so now I must conclude with my best re-

spects and wishes to you, remaining, Your Humble Servant,

"WILLIAM S——."

"ARMY WORKS CORPS,
"CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL, *June 3d*, —56.

"HONORED LADY,—I beg to inform you that I sent you an Oil-Painting* that was taken from the large Church in Sebastopol at the time the Town fell into the Hands of the Allies, and which I beg to offer for your acceptance, as a small return, on my part, for the many Kindness, and for the great Interest you have allways shown to the Men of our Corps. I shall be very glad to hear of its safe arrival at Beckenham Rectory. I am very happy to say that we are Expecting very soon to return to England, Thank God for it, as the Climate does not Seem to suit the Constitution of our men. The weather is Beginning to get very hot, But I am happy to say that we have But very little Sickness, thank God. We have but 13 men in Hospital at present,—and God grant that it may remain so; for it was a shocking sight to See the Way our men Suffered, and the number who Died at the time of our arrival in the Crimea,—God Forbid that I should ever witness such Sights again. We have had as many as one Hundred and twenty nine at one time in Hospital. I am happy to inform you

* It never reached its destination.

that I have had the Satisfaction to hear a Book read Last week, Entitled, 'the Memoirs of Captain Hedley Vicars, of the 97th Regiment,' and you will no doubt be glad to hear that it was very carefully Read, and attentively Listened to by all the Patients in the Hospital, which gave great Pleasure to all present. I knew Captain Vicars, said two of the Patients, and a true Christian he was, if ever there was one,—and God send that he is at rest in Heaven, where we all hope to meet again, to part no more. I have to Humbly thank you, dear Lady, on my own part, Likewise on the Part of all the Patients in Hospital, for the great interest you have shown for us all in sending us so many Little Books and Tracts, for, Believe me, they have been the means of many tears being shed in the Camp, for it tells us, that, although so many Hundred miles away, that the Army Works Corps are not forgotten by you. I must tell you that the Book I have been speaking about was sent by our Kind Chaplain, the Rev. Mr Hallward, who is always ready to do any of us all the good he can. I have myself seen the spot where Capt. Vicars is interred,—and I am happy to say that the Grave yards are all neatly attended to,—there is several of our men that have got a Miniature Stone as a Remembrance of that good man—and I must at the same time mention that the grave yard where so many of our Poor Fellows Lie is very nicely Laid out, and a very neat Stone

erected to their Memory, as a last sad Remembrance to the Departed.

"I must now beg to close this note with my Duty to yourself, likewise your Honored Father, and Sister, Mrs Chalmers,—hoping you will Excuse my Boldness, I beg to Remain, Your Humble Servant,

"GEORGE M——"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Prison Doors Opened.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage.

"For though men keep my outward man
Within their locks and bars,
Yet in the faith of Christ I can
Mount higher than the stars."

In the month of February 1856, permission was granted my sister and myself to visit the six prisoners who had been convicted of having taken part in the Penge fight. Four were confined in Wandsworth House of Correction for a year and a half; two in the Pentonville Penitentiary, under sentence of four years' penal servitude. The governors of the respective gaols gave all the men excellent characters.

The men at Wandsworth were first visited. The governor kindly permitted us to see them in his study. The interview was an affecting one. Young William R——, who was brought in first, said:—"I am innocent of the fight; but I deserved trouble at the hand of my God, if not of man. I have been wild, and drinking, and thoughtless. If I had not been drunk the night after the fighting at Penge, they wouldn't have taken me up and said I had been along of them as did fight. But I thank God I ever came here; I never might have stopped to think, but for this. But when I had to part from my mates,

and go alone for the first time into a cell all by myself, and felt *gone down* in my heart, I remembered the story you had told us of the young lady of five year old, who spoke up out of her cradle one night and said, I think anybody wants but three things in this life—'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' to make him holy; and 'the love of God' to make him happy; and 'the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,' that he may always be in good company. And, said I, then I'll ask for all that in this little narrow place, and I shan't feel lonely. And I did ask; and *how* I've loved my Bible and praying! And we go twice of a day to chapel, and it's beautiful to hear our clergyman. He tells us such fine things about the blessed Saviour, and makes such prayers! and I go down of my knees when I get back to my cell, and bless God for sending me here to learn of such a good man."

All this was said with unusual eagerness and fervour. He had treasured up these thoughts for three months, and it was his first opportunity of pouring them out into the ear of his friends. For the time being, it changed the character of the strong, independent English navvy, slow to express his feelings, and far behind the mark of their real warmth and depth in his utterance of them, into the nature of a child, yearning for sympathy, and desirous of communicating that which was occupying his heart and mind.

Our conversations with the other men were scarcely less interesting; but the impression of William R——'s innocence, which we found was shared by those in authority over him, was an idea which necessarily filled our minds. After receiving an indefinite account of the neighbourhood in London where the one man, who could prove an *alibi* for him with regard to the place and hour of the fight, might possibly be found, or at least traced, we left the prison, asking God to enable us to procure freedom for an innocent man, if innocent he were.

The search was successful; the tentmaker who had employed him and worked with him in the Crystal Palace Gardens, at the very hour of the fight, made an affidavit before the Lord Mayor on a deposition taken down by a lawyer. The same day it was presented at the Home Office; and justice was done promptly.

In a few days William R—— was with us at Beckenham, and boarded at a cottage until he could find work. He arrived one Friday evening. On Sunday night, after being twice at church, he disappeared. My anxiety about him was great. On Tuesday evening, the serjeant of police brought me word that "on Monday evening William had been to see his old friend, Mr Vokes, at the Dolphin, Sydenham; had refused to drink a single glass of beer, because 'drinking had begun his troubles;' and had told the story of the blessing he had found during the

time of his imprisonment, so powerfully as to take off all the men who were there from drinking, for that evening at least—so that they went away as sober as himself."

This account cheered me not a little; and the next evening William re-appeared.

"Oh, William! how could you go away without telling me? I have been grieving about you, fearing you had got into mischief and trouble."

"There now! I said so to ganger; I know her 'll fret, I said. And ganger said, 'Don't think her 'll trouble herself about you. Her mayhap got ye out of prison, because yer innocent; but her 'll be glad enow yer gone off to provide for yerself.' Yer don't know her, I said. I 'll give up a quarter-day's work and wages, and just run over this afternoon, and let her see I 'm all right."

"But what took you away, William, so suddenly?"

"I met my old ganger on Sunday evening, and he said, 'Come along o' me and lodge at my house, three mile away, and at four to-morrow morning you shall be at work again, to keep yourself, like a man.'"

"And you never thought of sending a note or a message?"

"I should think I didn't. 'Twould have seemed a liberty, like."

From that time William, the ganger, and the ganger's little brother, came over to Beckenham

every Sunday to attend the Church services and the evening reading, bringing their dinner in their pockets, and having tea at a friend's lodging. The ganger told me that it was a pleasure to have William lodging with him, "he is so steady, and cheerful too; and we read our Bible together of nights, and he makes a bit of a prayer, quite comfortable like."

On the day of our visiting the Wandsworth House of Correction, to tell William R—— of his freedom, the governor considered it unadvisable to allow us to see the three other prisoners so soon again.

Little did we think that one of them was watching us, and went sorrowfully back to his cell, all the more lonely because his friends had seemed to forsake him.

" the 6 of March 1856.

"KIND LADY AND FRIENDS,—I write these few lines to you to thank you for the Good books that you have sent me, I thank you very much for them, i read them with Great care, i shall keep them till i come out of this prison, and there is a long time yet for me to stop here. I saw you on the first of March in the prison, and when i went to my cell and found that you was not coming to speak to me i sheded many a tear that night, but thank God I feals happier now then ever I did in my life before. I wish that I had took more notice what you told me on the sunday when i was haven tea on your lawn in the

front of your house. So I must conclude now for my time is up, so I must go to my work,

"HENRY K——."

The governor, with his wonted genuine kindness, had added the following postscript:—

"MY DEAR MADAM,—I did not know till this moment that Henry K—— had seen you and Mrs Chalmers the other day. I shall explain to him that you came on some other particular business, and that it was my fault, and not yours, that you did not go to see him. R. O.

"If you please to write to him he shall have the letter."

It need scarcely be added that Henry received a letter by return of post, and a visit shortly afterwards.

Some time before this, I had endeavoured to see the two prisoners at Pentonville; but had been informed that no interview with them could be permitted without an order from the Home Office. The excellent chaplain, Mr Kingsmill, offered to convey a message for me, and left the door ajar as he entered each cell. Thus I heard his kind words, and William ——'s answer, "Tell her, I read my Bible and pray the prayer she taught me—that's what she'll care most to hear." The deep depression of the tone, and the

languid utterance, struck me painfully; and when permission to visit them was most kindly offered me by the chief authority, shortly afterwards, I discovered how heavily solitary confinement weighs down the navvy. The punishment to him is one of double severity, owing to his being accustomed to spend his life in the open air. The excessive monotony of the employment supplied to the men—weaving a Penelope's web of coarse canvass for "wrappering," with no variation in it, yard after yard, for day after day, and month after month*—is surely an unnecessary aggravation of the terrible mental trial of the separate system; a system of unquestionable merit in its effect upon the moral condition of the prisoner, where some liberty is accorded to the Executive to relax its conditions with judicious and discriminating humanity.

I am, of course, taking it for granted that the governor has these qualities in no common measure. And I believe, in almost all the appointments made

* As this work is substituted for oakum-picking, by way of a reward for good conduct, it may be allowable to suggest, that in the centre of every seventh yard of canvass should be woven, in red, a large V. R. I believe that the brightness of the bit of colour would act like the charm of a cheerful voice in the lonely cell, and that on the "red letter day" many a man would break his sullen silence, to shout, "God save the Queen!" He would be a better man and a more loyal subject from that day forth, for the relief granted to the dreary sameness of each hour's work in his oppressive solitude, by being permitted, at intervals, to adorn his canvass with the initials of his gracious Sovereign.

of late years, the most earnest pains have been taken by Colonel Jebb, Chairman of the Directors of Prisons, to secure such men.

At Preston Gaol, where a chaplain of singularly influential heart and character is nobly supported by the governor, all those miserable partitions in the chapel, which render each man invisible to his neighbour, are pulled down; and a generous confidence, that the prisoners will not tamper with each other during the time set apart for the worship of God, has never been abused. There, also, those prisoners who have conducted themselves particularly well, are allowed to meet together for a certain number of hours in the work-room; and although communication is strictly forbidden, by word, touch, or look, the very sense of being assembled together has the effect of preserving them from an injurious despondency. That these modifications of the system have been found truly beneficial in their results, I was informed when visiting that gaol in the autumn of 1856; and could well believe it from the humble and softened expression of many of the prisoners' countenances.

Both the navvies were seriously altered in appearance, and were so weakened, bodily and mentally, that they could only welcome my sister and myself with tears. One had a sort of *goitre* growing in his throat, the result of the general depression of his system. We ventured to ask the governor—who treated us with

the most cordial courtesy—to put him on the sick list, in the hope that he might be ordered a nourishing diet for some little time to come. This request was most kindly complied with; and thus the poor fellow's constitution did not quite give way before the order was considerately given for them to be sent to Portland Island, for penal servitude more suited to their nature and habits of life. A few months more in that dark prison, and those men themselves believe their health would have been lost for ever. Owing to their good conduct throughout, the term of their imprisonment was shortened to half the time of their sentence; and they visited us the day after their liberation, with humble, thankful hearts.* The same favour was accorded to the remainder of the men, according to the measure of their sentences.

* They spoke with much gratitude of the kindness and zeal of the Rev. T. Dobie, chaplain to the convicts at Portland Island.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Welcome Home.

"The feast is spread through England
For rich and poor to-day;
Greetings and laughter may be there
But thoughts are far away,
Over the stormy ocean,
Over the dreary track,
Where some are left whom England
Will never welcome back."

On the 8th of May 1856, the *Cleopatra* anchored off Portsmouth, and six hundred of the men of the Army Works Corps, with exuberant joy, stood again on English ground.

From that time, until the last detachment of working men landed from the Crimea, we were in the habit of keeping open house for their visits. They came, usually in companies from three to a dozen in number, from London or other places, at once for a welcome back to England, and for a farewell before proceeding to remote parts of the United Kingdom—to the Continent, for the formation of foreign railways—or to America, Canada, or Australia, to remain there for life.

There was something both surprising and touching in the discovery that months of hardship, toil, and privation, amidst scenes of war in a foreign land, had not lessened the glow of grateful friendship formed, during so brief an intercourse, before they had left their own country.

Generally speaking, we had conversation with each

man separately, and heard much to give us hope, and sometimes full satisfaction—though too often, also, things which grieved us.

J. L——'s confession was one of the saddest. For three months after landing in the Crimea, he had found the peace and the pleasantness of seeking to walk with God. But the long and grievous departure which had followed, he traced to his first wilful breach of the Lord's commandment, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." In the afternoon of an autumn Sabbath, he had walked to the French camp for amusement. Hot and weary, he drank a glass of brandy, "and then I forgot my happiness—I forgot my God—and have gone down deeper and deeper from that day."

"And have been miserable?"

"Yes;" (in a firm but sullen tone) "miserable!"

"And have you ever thought of the dishonour you were bringing on your Saviour's name; or of the souls you were dragging down with you to Satan, instead of leading up to Jesus?"

He had been standing till then with something of the defiant air of a Red Indian chief, his tall, powerful form wrapped round in a Crimean cloak. But after pondering that question for a moment, he dropped into a chair, turned aside his head with a gush of tears, and went on weeping till every limb shook with his great distress.

Surely, I thought, the Spirit of God is still striving here, and striving mightily. After seeking to render him help by silently praying for him, I said a few plain words about the Saviour's goodness to the backsliding ones, and then besought him not to go on putting this forbearing, gracious Saviour "to an open shame."

"I want to get back to Him," he said at last; "and I believe I should, *but for this drink.* It is drink that keeps me from *Him*, and from *hope.*"

"I know it. And from this day forward, you must give it all up. You must make a tremendous effort, in the strength of God. This 'drink' is the great wave which is washing your soul down to the mouth of hell. It must be manfully resisted, by the help of God. Promise me you will give it up from this day."

He paused for some moments, then promised to make the effort, and joined earnestly in prayer for grace to keep his word.

It was some time before we heard of him again. When he wrote at last, he informed us that "he was engaged in a very serious bit of work, going to be married to a very comfortable person, and he hoped it would prove a blessing to all the parties concerned." From the tone of two subsequent letters, we trust and hope that he had escaped from the snare of drinking, and was seeking his God with an earnest heart.

As many of our friends came from some distance to see us, we provided coffee and cake for them—a little attention which seemed to give much gratification. Few came to us empty-handed. Some small remembrance, brought from the Crimea with anxious care, bore its little testimony to the thoughtfulness of their generous hearts. Coins of various descriptions; Russian charms; a Jewish phylactery box, dug up at Sebastopol; brooches and seals, cut and polished by their own hands from the rocks at Sebastopol and Balaklava; a pair of pigeons; coloured engravings from Malta; and, far more touching than all, stones, dust, blades of grass and flowers from *one* grave in the Crimea, to which all seemed to bend their steps. Many had attempted sketches of it. Others had spoken with the men of the 97th, and had treasured up their words of love and respect for Captain Vicars' memory.

Pleasant was it to hear their short, strong statements of not having forgotten us in the Crimea. "Once we heard as you was dead, and nigh two thousand of us ran together and prayed God it wasn't true!" And again: "Whenever any more comed over, we said, first thing, 'Been to Beckenham, mates? How was they?'"

Henry B—— told us of the death of his mate, William Hawkesworth. "He never was the same man after he came to Beckenham lawn, for the

breakfast and prayer; never swore from that morning; took to his Bible, and seemed quiet and happy. We used to sing our hymns together. He never fell off out of that way, but went straight on towards his Saviour, till the day he was blowed up by gunpowder —and I believe he went straight up to heaven."

"And how are *you* going on, Henry?"

"I'm trying to go on as he did. I never drank a pint of nothing in the Crimea, that I might keep me out of harm's way."

Henry was gravely glad to see the large sum of money to which his savings had amounted, and then inquired, "Pray, ma'am, what do I owe you?"

"Nothing, Henry."

"Oh yes, ma'am, if you please; I should like to pay something handsome for the trouble. It's but fair."

"Not fair to us, Henry; for that would spoil our pleasure in having done it for friendship."

"Well, then, you can't refuse to take a pound to put to getting Bibles for them as has none."

I saw his heart was set on giving a thank-offering, so I let him give a portion of the sum he named to the Bible Society.

Young Robert S—— came the same day. He was a fine specimen of a Highlander, with a broad, open brow, an honest, noble countenance, and a true, strong, Scottish heart. He did not say much, but all

that dropped from his lips was to the point; and he was full of gratitude, both for the goodness of God, and for the little kindnesses of friends.

A few days later he came again for his savings, and to take leave. He was delighted, with a child-like simplicity, to find that we had once spent a day or two in a house in the Highlands where his father had lived as butler. He chose only to take a third of his *property* home, deciding to write for the rest when he should have need for it.

After putting the gold into his purse, I saw him open and shut it two or three times, with something of nervous anxiety, unlike his usual calm, forceful manner; then, colouring up to the roots of his hair, he drew out two sovereigns. "I hope you won't be offended, ma'am; here are two pounds for you and the young lady, if you 'll just be pleased to take them for the trouble you have both had."

"Thank you, Robert, all the same as if we could take it from you. But you must put it back into your own pocket. If you had done any thing to serve a friend, to the best of your ability, out of hearty goodwill, would you be half as happy about it if you accepted a reward for it?"

He thought the question well through before he replied, "No, I think not; and if it would spoil your pleasure, I 'll say no more about it."

There was character in all this. It was not the

open-handed fling of a recklessly-generous heart—like that of a navvy who was throwing half-crowns and shillings to a knot of women and children in the road. But it was clear that Robert S—— felt it was the just thing to do, and he would do the just thing handsomely, with a full knowledge of the value of his two pounds, and of the use he had for them himself. He put them back, slowly too—not greedily, nor even readily, but with a conviction that it was as manly and generous to accept the free service of friendship, as it was to offer, in the first instance, to pay for it.

After some conversation touching deeper interests than even his well-earned little "capital," in the course of which he gave me reason to hope that his heart and his treasure were laid up in heaven, he stood with glistening eyes by the door, and said, "I had brought you, and all them at home, some nice presents; but my kit was stolen at Portsmouth. What I minded the worst was that your Testament was in it, that I had taken such care of in the Crimea."

We were glad indeed to replace it. After he had left the room, he looked back to say, "Father has to do with the salmon-fishing. If a salmon comes from Inverness some day, you 'll not be hurt about it?"

I need scarcely say we assured him that it would be the best salmon we could ever eat.

On the 18th of May we went to meet the whole

body of the men then returned, on our old ground by the Crystal Palace Pay Office. Their welcome was very cordial and pleasant. Whilst speaking to them, with the certainty of its being the last time on earth, excepting in isolated instances, about the things that belong to our peace, a man who called himself "an artisan," a stranger to me and to most of the men, interrupted me with an attack upon the character of our blessed Redeemer. Praying silently for wisdom, I answered him briefly, and then continued to address the rest. Just as he was about to speak again, another mechanic, with a pale, intellectual face, drew him aside, and L—— heard him say: "The lady has offered to discuss these points with you, if you will go to Beckenham for the purpose. When she comes here, it is to speak to us all of what is in her heart; and the hearts of nearly all the men go with it while they listen. I am a Catholic, but I can listen to it all, and agree with the main things."

"But I can't and won't," replied the infidel; "and I don't want to set *her* right alone, but all of you. I want all to hear me."

"Then get up on that heap of stones," said our friend, "and talk to all as likes to hear ye; nobody hinders. Only don't expect the hearts of us to go with you, as they do with a lady that cares for us as if we were her own brothers."

This colloquy was not repeated to me until after

we had left the ground. I went back to seek out the pale thoughtful face, and to thank its owner for his timely support. He stepped aside from the crowd. "You and I have a strong bond of sympathy," I said; "the love of that Saviour whose name we could not bear to hear spoken against."

"We have, madam," he replied. "We have one Father, and one Saviour."

"And one Holy Ghost, the Comforter," I added.

"Yes," he replied solemnly; "but I have not heard or thought much of Him. He is not much spoken of in our chapel."

He listened earnestly to the words, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

"When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."

"Is He not worth seeking—asking to dwell in *your* heart? Oh, would you begin from this day to entreat His presence, and never leave off asking

to be 'filled with the Holy Ghost' (like the disciples of old) until you are enjoying the presence of your Saviour face to face in glory?"

With earnestness he promised to pray that prayer, and to accept a Bible, which was sent by post that day. Our last words were a mutual agreement to pray for the conversion of the poor scoffing unbeliever.

Charles R——, a bricklayer, took back the whole of his capital at once to build a cottage at ——, "And you shall be the first to step across its floor, if you please, ladies." He began to have "family prayers" with his wife on his return from the Crimea.

A young navvy, with a bright, honest face, and sailor-like manner, returned to shew us how he had invested the first instalment of his savings. "I knew you 'd be glad to see I had not wasted the £12."

"Not wasted," indeed! The investment included a silver hunting watch and gold chain; a blue pilot coat; neat plaid trousers; and as the crowning glories, a green velvet waistcoat and a blue Glengarry bonnet, with a red band. Within this holiday attire dwelt a sober and steady little soul, who was returning to the home of his elder brother, a schoolmaster in the west of England, probably to provoke no small amount of excitement and admiration in the "circle of his acquaintance."

Another of the men, who had returned at an earlier date in bad health, came from his widowed sister's

house, in Staffordshire, to visit us about this time. He brought with him the present of a handsome China jug, which he had ordered according to his fancy, with an inscription in gold letters upon it. He tried to procure work in the neighbourhood; and said, "Ye see I wish to live and die here, for my soul's sake." But, alas! the temptation of meeting with some of his wilder mates, on their return from the Crimea, was too much for him, and he was led away to intemperance. He did not return to his lodging at Beckenham after this, nor should I have met him again, had I not gone to see a fresh detachment of the corps which had come for payment to the Crystal Palace upon their arrival in England. Poor T—— B—— was lingering about, but retreated outside the crowd when he saw I had noticed him. I followed. "Oh, T——, I have been in great trouble about you. Are you not coming back to Beckenham?"

"No! I came there for my soul's sake, and then up here for its ruin. The devil has got hold of me at them lot of gin-shops down yon, and now I 'm going away as far off as I can."

With some difficulty he was persuaded into a promise to spend the next day, Sunday, in Beckenham, and to come to the Rectory before church. His penitence was very affecting. But was this to be the end of his wish "to live and die in Beckenham"? We could hardly bear it.

Young William R—— stood outside the Rectory gate, waiting for a recognition and a word from us on our way to church. I called him aside, and told him my trouble. T—— had been a mate of his when the Army Works Corps was assembling for the Crimea. They used to drink together then! After church, William came to me, his countenance radiant with an idea. "I couldn't help thinking on 't in church, and praying, too. I 'll take him to my ganger, and get him to give him work alongside of me. He wants a helping hand. And he shall lodge along o' me. And he 'll be at our prayers of nights; and at them readings of yourn, whenever work 's over sharp enough for us to get in time for them from Penge."

"Oh, William, God bless you!"

From that time, for a fortnight, all went on delightfully. Then I missed both for four days. After one of the readings, I saw William R——'s bright young face overclouded. He wanted to see me alone, but could not speak. "What of T——, William?"

He turned his head away, with a burst of tears. In a minute or two, recovering himself, he said, "We had been so happy, and he seemed to love reading the Bible and praying along of me. But last Friday he met some of the old mates, and they treated him, and he never came back. I 've been all about the country these three days, looking for him; but

he 's gone right off; and you 'll be so disappointed; and, what 's worse, he 's away from his God again."

This came out, sentence by sentence, with a sob between each. I never saw that fine young man shew half so much feeling for himself, when he was unjustly imprisoned. Some time afterwards he heard of T—— on a distant line, and went off to work there, in the hope of being again a helper to him. God gave him his heart's desire. T—— has become a sober and steady man, and, I trust, a real Christian, by the grace of God.

Many of the men, after receiving their savings, or whatever portion they chose to have at first, came again from some distance for one of the cottage readings. George R——, an honest, simple, noble specimen of an English labourer, came from Stratford, in Essex, on a Monday, with this intent, and finding the reading was not till Tuesday, went back again, and returned the next day. He seemed to be "following the Lord fully." A few days afterwards he sailed for Australia. He begged to be allowed to leave a portion of the interest of his savings for the Bible Society, as did many others.

Alfred H—— said that he had been ill for many months after he landed in the Crimea. "When I went into hospital, and was laid on my bed, day after day, thinking each would be my last, God reminded me of all I had heard in Beckenham. I

believe I *did* come to Jesus then, and that He has kept me hard by Him ever since."

"And do you pray much for grace to live as a Christian?"

"I do pray; and God does help me. He has made me give up drinking. I don't believe I've spent one penny in drink since I stepped ashore in the Crimea."

George S—— gave much the same sort of account of himself, excepting the illness. He said that on the day of hearing the farewell words on board the *Berwick*, he had pledged himself to his God, and that his God had kept him ever since, and prospered him, too, on every side. His savings were partially expended on the purchase of a green-grocery business.

James G—— was one of the few men out of the whole number who caused us distress, by coming in a state of drunkenness. Five times in one week he came in the same condition; silly, yet always respectful and obliging. Each time I refused to give him his money until he could come for it perfectly sober. The sixth time he was himself. Then I spoke to him earnestly. He said, after a little while, "Don't go on, Missus; you'll make me cry."

This alarm was not sufficient to deter me. Finally, he did cry, and promised, by God's help, to give up drinking. I believed he would, because he joined in prayer so solemnly and earnestly. A week afterwards he came again, looking very much more of a man,

but pale almost to illness. He had not tasted beer or any other intoxicating liquor for seven days. A steady, respectable man, who came with him, said, "I lodge in the same house, and have seen his mates persuading of him. But it's no use. He won't touch a drop. He says he has promised his God and promised you, and he'll keep to it."

He went down to his father's house, in Norfolk, the next day, and we have never seen him since. God grant him grace to "hold on his way."

An Irish Roman Catholic, named Dennis M——, had long won our esteem by his generosity to a consumptive brother-in-law, to whom he transmitted the larger portion of his savings. He called for the remainder, which proved to be only the sum of £8, 15s.

With less hesitation and shyness than it had cost our fine young Highlander to make a similar request, he earnestly besought us to "accept of a sovereign."

"What! Dennis, do you think we would lessen your store, and after all your generous kindness to your poor brother-in-law?"

"Ah, then, lady dear, but I should be so happy if you and the young lady that has done so much would take the pound for your throuble."

It was with difficulty we could convince him that the thing was impossible. But with a love of giving which would not be overcome, and a delicacy that forebore to press a matter painfully, that man, with a

royal heart under a ragged coat, sent back a crown piece, for "getting Bibles for poor souls like him, because his own Bible that was given him at Beckenham, had spoken many a beautiful word to him when he was far away; and he would never give it up, no, never!"

Jack B—— brought his brother-in-law and his niece for the remainder of his money, which was to be settled upon the young girl. "Now I 've got rid of it all, and I'm going to sea again. I was born and bred a sailor, and don't like digging the earth so well as ploughing the sea, by half."

The only part of his property which he retained was his Testament with the "Soldier's Prayer." "That shall go with me over the world, and I 'll pray that little prayer when I 'm aloft."

As we walked up the village an hour afterwards, we caught a view of "Jack," his brother, and the little niece, in a grocer's shop. Jack shouted from it, "Oh! ma'am, here we are! eating bread and cheese. I would not have you catch me in a public-house for *any* money."

We found afterwards that they had declined the coffee and cake provided at the coachman's house by the Rectory gate, for all the Army Works Corps men who came from a distance, considering that, as two of the three were not belonging to the Corps, it would be "imposing" to accept it.

The coachman's wife remarked to me, that the thing which touched her heart the most, about the majority of those whom she thus entertained, was their delight in seeing little children again, after having only seen "grown men" for so many months. They watched the gambols of her own little boy, and of my sister's little son, upon the lawn, and said, "They looks like angels to us, after camp life in the Crimea."

Alexander S—— and Andrew M—— gave us great satisfaction. They were two of the Scotchmen who had written a letter nobly characteristic of their Bible-honouring country, in that its purport was to thank me for "having taught them nothing without appealing to the Word of God to prove it."

These men were strong, intelligent, and affectionate-hearted. Alexander had £40 in our hands, and said "he was going home, and would send for it."

"And where is your home?"

"Scotland."

"Whereabouts in Scotland?"

"Nowhere! I have no other home than the *country*."

"We are going to Scotland this autumn, God willing. If either of you should chance to see me, and I should not have seen you, you will come and shake hands with me."

"Would we not?" with a short, quiet laugh of surprise, at the request being supposed to be neces-

sary. "We would walk twenty miles to see ye. None of the men of the Corps thanked God for ye mair than the Scotch."

"Oh, Alexander! did you read your Bibles, and try to live as the Word of God told you?"

"We did try, and often thought of the words you used to say; and read, and prayed, and sang psalms amongst ourselves."

This man begged to leave the interest of his savings for the Bible Society. Andrew had no money to receive from us, having left his allotment paper with his relatives.

On the following Monday morning six men, all more or less intoxicated, came to the Rectory. Only one of them, poor John W——, had laid by money with us; but the chief speaker, Edward W——r, a "rough and ready" Lancashire man, was vehement in insisting that I should immediately give £10 to John W——, which it was clear they all intended to share. I said it was my rule to give no man his money without first seeing his Army Works Corps' Engagement Paper; nor would I, even then, give him his money unless he came sober. After some little time, seeing that I was determined, they gave up the point, John W—— saying, "Take care what you say to she—her's been very kind to me." The poor fellow remembered, even in his half-senseless state, that I had paid his fine of 10s. when he was imprisoned

for drinking, that he might be set free in time to go to the Crimea. He gave himself no rest till he had repaid the money. Before they went away, I said to them, "It would have been well if you had all laid by money, instead of lavishing it on drink in the Crimea; but what is worse than wasting your money, you are selling an eternal inheritance for a few miserable mugs of beer. And even if you sold it for a life of honours and pleasures, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'"

I spoke thus solemnly to them for a few moments, and one by one they turned half round on the bench on which they were sitting, and laid their heads on the hall table, and wept. Edward W—— made an ineffectual effort to get at the table, but it was too full, so he turned and walked away to hide his tears.

On Tuesday they all came again, sober, but without the Engagement Paper. Edward W—— had resumed his resolute bearing, eyed me firmly, and said, they would not *stir* without the £10. I felt it absolutely necessary to be firm, for although I well remembered poor John W——, it was essential strictly to observe the rule made of never giving up any money committed to my keeping, without the proof of identity afforded by the Engagement Paper. I therefore answered quietly, but in terms which I

knew they would understand, that "if the 3800 men of the Army Works Corps were to come and to insist on my breaking a rule which was made for the real interest of the men who laid by their wages with me, I would not give them one farthing if they waited till Christmas for it." I then left them, and from an adjoining room heard Edward say, "D'ye 'ear, she 's made up 'ur mind—there 'll be no turning she."

They were now anxious to go and fetch the paper, which had been left in London; so, finding they had no money left, I lent them a couple of shillings, and, after giving them some bread and meat, sent them away. About four o'clock they returned. Poor John consented to leave £20 of his money in my hands for a time, and carefully reminded me of every shilling which had been lent him, that it might be withdrawn from the sum which was to be paid to him at once. Whilst his companions surveyed his treasure, I said to them, "You see what a good thing it is to lay by your money instead of spending it recklessly."

"Yes," said Edward, "if I had laid by I might have had enough to have bought a wife with."

"If a woman is to be bought, Edward, she is not worth having."

"Ah! that 's true; and Solomon says they are all vanity and vexation of spirit."

"That was said of all the things of this world, not of wives only."

"Oh! so it were, and I learnt a proverb at school which said a good wife is from the Lord."

"Well, then, you must serve the Lord, Edward, if you want His good gifts."

I then said a few earnest words to them all. As we prayed, Edward was again overcome, and rising from his knees, went towards the door, but whilst endeavouring to open it, in his agitation he bolted it, and so knelt down again, leaning his head against the panel, and sobbing like a child. They were all as humble and grateful as children when they went away.

I must add that this was the only instance in which I have met with any failure in the utmost civility and gentleness of demeanour.

One Sunday, Richard T——, the hero who was "greater than he that taketh a city," on the occasion of the Penge fight, appeared at Beckenham Church in a fine suit of black cloth and a flaming red velvet waistcoat. In the afternoon he came to the Rectory, and we found him as strong, and simple, and warm of heart as ever. By God's grace he had stood his ground, and had brought back a high character for steadiness and excellence of conduct. He shewed me a charming letter from his wife which was worn about his heart. His mate, James H——, had returned with him, and was speaking on Saturday night with great joy of being up with the lark on

Sunday to go down to Beckenham; he didn't "know a pleasanter place," he said, "or a better friend." A little while afterwards he fell back upon his chair in a fit, and never spoke again. Every book and letter which he had received from Beckenham were found about his person after his death. Richard said he had been a steady man, and loved his books; more than that he could not tell me. But I hope he went on that Sabbath morning to a "pleasanter place" than Beckenham, to find "a Better Friend" indeed than any poor mortal one.

A day or two afterwards there stood in the hall, head and shoulders above the crowd, a huge Irishman. There was no forgetting the kindly heartiness of his smile. "Welcome home, Peter F——."

"Och now, she remimbers me, bless her sowl."

"You are come for your savings, Peter, and I think we have nearly £50 for you."

"Not a bit for the money to-day, but for the pleasure of seeing ye're alive. Then, lady dear, I'm going to lodge in the village a day or so."

The next evening I called at his lodgings to give notice of a "reading" next door. He was just sitting down to a smoking hot supper. "You must not come till you have done justice to that hot pie, Peter."

But in two minutes he was on one of the benches before me. "Oh, Peter, you have left your supper unfinished."

"And wasn't it fitting I should when you were going to speak for our sowls, lady?"

The next day he called for a small portion of his money, requesting us to send the rest after him to Ireland. He had worn out the binding of his Testament, so I gave him a pocket Bible. It so happened that I had never asked him if he were a Protestant or a Roman Catholic; in fact, a single question on the subject would, I believe, have frightened away some of my Irish friends. But whilst speaking of the commandments, in this conversation, I quoted the second, of which he had never heard. After he had shewn me his Catechism, in which it was omitted, with another commandment divided into two to make the number correct, I just said, "When you are in Ireland, perhaps you will see graven images of the Lord Jesus. Do not worship them. Look above them—up to the Living Man in heaven, the God-man, Jesus Christ our Saviour."

"I've thought more of *Him* and less of *them*," he said, "since I read that little Testament you gave me. Often I've blessed it, and you too. I brought ye some beautiful pictures home, but they were stolen with my kit as we landed. But I've one pretty thing left, I bought it at Malta," and he slowly drew out of his pocket a little silver crucifix; "you must have that."

"Oh no, Peter, I could not take it; it is too costly."

"No, lady, I did not pay much for it, and you had better take it—*you had better.*"

"Why had I better take it, Peter?"

"It is safer with you. You will not worship it. Perhaps I should."

I marked the effort of a struggling conviction, and thought of the words, "Ye have turned to God from idols." I took it, with tears in my eyes, from the great trembling hand: "Peter, each time I see this, I shall look up to heaven and pray, 'Lord Jesus, help Peter F—— to worship Thee, Thine own blessed self, and not a graven image.'"

A little more conversation followed, and then I told him of Cardinal Bellarmine's dying words, when prayers to the Virgin had been said for him, "It is safest to trust in Jesus."

After he had gone away, his little crucifix weighed heavily on my heart. It was "not safe" for him to keep it, he had said. But what had he left that could refine his taste, or be associated with softened feeling? Something he must have to make a little treasure of. A silver pencil, with an onyx-stone seal, was on my desk, and a carved ivory box for its case. It was the sort of thing to remind him of our conversation, and of the marked texts in his Bible. So I hastened through the village in the hope of finding him still at his lodgings. He stood at the door, and I put the pencil-case into his hand. It was

delightful to see his look of astonishment and pleasure.

"Did you walk so fast and come here out of breath to bring this for me?"

Then he held up the pencil-case delicately with the tip of his great finger and thumb, as if fearful of crushing it; and after a pause added, "It shall be buried with me."

I knelt down in the cottage, and prayed that God would give him a living faith in a living Saviour, and keep him worshipping, serving, and trusting in Him only. As we parted, he said, "I have never forgotten my kind dead father, and I 'll never forget you to my dying day."

"Nor my last words to you at the Rectory, Peter? Those are what I want you to remember."

"How can I think of you, lady, and not remember them? IT IS SAFEST TO TRUST IN JESUS."

He wrote afterwards for his money that he might be able to go to America; since then we have never heard of him. God grant we may see him again, at the right hand of the KING!

A Prussian, who had left his money-order with us in the previous autumn, after hearing some of the men of the Corps speak of us, came for his savings, and to inquire for a German Bible which Mr Chalmers had procured for him then, but which had failed to reach him. He was greatly pleased with it. After receiving

his draft, he said in broken English, "You have taken great trouble about my moneys, and I cannot recompense you, ladies, and you would not receive a recompense. But will you grant me the favour to spend a sovereign for me on the poorest old person you know in your village?"

I said, "Not a sovereign. It is too much out of your small capital. But if you like to give five shillings to the poor, as a thank-offering to God for your preservation, I will do with it as you direct."

"Ah, madam, take ten shillings."

"No, not ten. Five."

He laid them down; and then quietly slipped a third half-crown under the two, as he walked away, blessing us in broken English.

It was to the kind thoughtfulness of Mr Parrott, the chief agent at the office for the Army Works Corps in London, that we owed our being enabled to see almost all the men who returned, whether they came to the Rectory or not. Notice was given us of the hour of their rendezvous at the old spot, in the Crystal Palace grounds; and very pleasant were those short meetings. Once, and once only, the notice did not reach us in time. We were told afterwards that the three hundred men who came that day lingered for some hours, watching each carriage which came to the Crystal Palace, and often shouting as one came in sight, "There they be, at last." It was a grievous

thing, never to be able to tell them how it was that they were unconsciously neglected; nor how often they have been prayed for since—perhaps with double earnestness, because no little farewell charge was given to them as to the others.

The men who had returned in the *Tynemouth* were charmed to hear the delightful testimony to their good conduct borne by Captain Stewart's letter to the *Times*, which I read aloud to them, suggesting, if it was so pleasant to know that all England was reading this testimony in their favour, how overwhelming would be their gratitude and joy when they heard the King of glory own them, before an assembled universe, as those who had "confessed Him before men." There was an earnest Amen from many voices, as I said, "God, of His grace, grant it to be said of every one of you."

The next day was the pay-day for the carpenters of the Corps. We had a good deal of conversation together. They were, for the most part, "radical reformers;" and alluded to the want of sympathy between the different classes of society, with some bitterness.

I admitted that there was an absence of it too generally, simply because they did not know one another; adding that if they were to meet more frequently, and with more confidence in each other, they would soon find what cordial friendships could be formed

without losing their position on either side—positions made by the providence of God, and which, in their very variations, made the strength and excellence of Great Britain. After talking this over together, quietly and amicably, I said, "Let us never forget that there was ONE of Royal Birth, who for sympathy's sake became a working man, in the days when working men had their wages reduced by fraud or seized by violence, and dwelt with his foster-father, a carpenter, and was 'subject unto him.'" A few more words touching His sorrows, and His sufferings unto death, were listened to with feeling earnestness,—and then those words of living power, "Now then, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God," seemed almost to startle them into a resolution to live with a new aim. Many a hand was stretched out to mine from every side, with the simple words, or others of like import, "I'll try to do it, and to get others along with me, if God will help me."

Amongst all the men who had left their money-orders with us, there were not more than six to whom we gave up their savings with the fear that they would be imprudently or improperly spent. Nearly all the others took time to consider in what manner they should invest their fortunes; and most of them consulted us about the mode of investment, in the most confiding manner. In one and all we met

with cordial gratitude, variously expressed. Many seemed to take delight in recalling each little act of kindness shewn them before they went out. Frequent allusion was made to the sums of money which had been advanced to all who required it, for the purchase of a few comforts for their wardrobe, beyond the outfit provided by Government. The repayment of these loans was secured by their leaving their money-orders with us, involving only the risk of desertion or of death before their wages were due. Two deaths occurred, but no desertion, before these debts were repaid.*

We were enabled to carry out on a liberal scale the plan of advancing these loans upon the money-orders, by the thoughtful benevolence of one whose sun has gone down while it was yet day, the lamented SIR HENRY LAWRENCE.

Of the public character of this great and good man, it is not for me to speak. The highest in authority have borne testimony to the energy and wisdom with which he ruled a vast province. Those who served

* Later in the period of the engagement, one of these men deserted. He was the only real navvy whom I have ever known to be a systematic beggar. He has since traded with an old letter of mine, from which he had torn off a reproof for drunkenness, retaining only the part which contained good advice. On the strength of this letter, he has "borrowed," far and wide, "money for a shovel to go to work with next day," to an amount sufficient to stock all the honest navvies on an average length of line. He is an athletic, gigantic man, possessed of great readiness of speech.

under him and knew him best, describe him as a chivalrous soldier, a dignified commander, a steadfast friend, a generous and forgiving foe—in a word, the Bayard of the camp, "Sans peur et sans reproche."

My record is of the warm heart and open hand that, amidst all the cares of his high station, and his own extensive schemes of benevolence, could yet lend aid to these distant and humble labours of ours. No sooner had he heard of the plan of inducing the men of the first detachment of the Army Works Corps to lay by a portion of their wages, than he sent over a hundred pounds to make a temporary loan-fund for the rest. A portion of this, when repaid, was to be expended upon any cases of peculiar distress amongst the sick, the widows, and the orphans; whilst the remainder was to be added to the large contribution he had already sent for the relief of wounded Crimean soldiers.

A few words of his own will reveal the spring of this world-wide benevolence. They are quoted from a letter written by him on his way to Oude, when, at the earnest entreaty of the Governor-General, he had undertaken to restore that province to order; urgently though his failing health demanded a return to England for a season:—

"The texts you have chosen, as prayers for the year, are most applicable to myself; for, *indeed*, I need to have my iniquities blotted out; to have a

clean heart and a renewed spirit. I want, also, both thankfulness and trust. Above all, I want the Holy Ghost, and more faith in Jesus. And I want to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset me, and to run with patience the race which is set before me, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my faith.

"Most gladly do I share your prayer for the year and for life; and much, very much, do I need your own and your dear and honoured father's prayers; and especially at this time, when I have a new and arduous field before me—a Sebastopol of civil life—an Augean stable of strife and contention to cleanse; and, I trust, a reign of tranquillity and good-will to substitute.

"I go," he adds, in the true spirit of an Englishman, "simply and entirely because it is my duty to go. The province of Oude contains the homes of a hundred thousand of our native soldiers, and much of the future morale of the Bengal army may depend upon the government of that province. I go thither as a peace-maker. And as I succeeded in the Punjab, I feel sure that, with the blessing of God, I shall succeed there."

"Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Of such was Henry Lawrence, whose bright example will long animate the earnest and the brave. Shall

we speak of the fame he had won, of the honours which, with prolonged life, would have awaited him? It is a light thing that he stood before kings on earth; for now he has seen "The KING in His beauty," and realised another promise, "Blessed are the Pure in heart, for they shall see GOD."

CHAPTER XX.

Gladness and Singleness of Heart.

"Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death."

WHILST the new line of railway was in process of making through the East of Kent, a few gentlemen residing in its locality felt desirous of promoting the spiritual benefit of the men who came from different quarters of the country to work there. Mr Munn of Throwley House, near Feversham, was one of the most zealous promoters of the plan of employing a Scripture reader, besides himself giving, in conjunction with other gentlemen amongst both clergy and laity, several lectures upon scientific and improving topics, blended with religious instruction. He wrote to request us to recommend to him a Scripture reader, who thoroughly knew navvy life and character, besides being well qualified for so holy a calling. It occurred to us to mention one of our first friends amongst the navvies, known to us from the early Crystal Palace days, of whose steadfast course we had continued to hear from time to time with thankful joy. When Mr Munn had heard of his character and qualifications, he requested me to write to this young man and offer the situation. His reply was to the effect that, "after taking three

days prayerfully to consider the proposal, he thought it his duty to decline it, as there must be so many men," he said, "better qualified than he for such an office. But that as the providence of God seemed to call him, by this offer, to labour for souls in that neighbourhood, he would throw up his work near Liverpool, and go across the country to the East Kent line, in order to help the Scripture reader gratis, after the hours of work each day, and between the hours for Divine service on Sunday."

On reading this letter, Mr Munn commissioned me to press upon this disinterested young man his first proposal. Again he delayed until he had taken time for consulting his God in prayer. And then he went to his work in a spirit thus described by Mr Munn, five or six months later:—"Dear William continues steadily and earnestly working for God. His humble, cheerful, earnest piety refreshes my own soul each time I commune with him; and his simple faith seems to overcome all difficulties."

Perhaps it was to engage in this blessed work that he was kept from going to Australia in 1853.

The following letter is chosen from several of equal interest, because it enters into the details of his mode of working amongst the men:—

"*Jan.* 12*th*, 1857.

"DEAR MADAM,—I received your kind letter, & was very thankful to hear your revered & dear Father

was recovering, & I join you in thanks to God for so great a blessing, & I pray God, if it shall be His blessed will, he may be long given you & the people of Beckenham. I had a beautiful tract from Mr Munn on Invitation to United Prayer, written by Dr Marsh, Jan. 1st, 1857, & I pray God it may be a means of doing much good for the honour & glory of God & the good of souls. Dear Madam, I beg the favour of your prayers for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon me, that I may be able to teach according to His holy will and word—a skilful workman, rightly dividing the word of truth—& also that I may be a means of bringing many to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. I thank God for the success I so far have had—though I have not had any meetings in any house any further than the people that live & lodge in an house. I generally go to the houses where there are men lodging at nights, & stay with them reading & talking to them, & sometimes make a prayer. I cannot do much in the day time, as the fore-men do not like the men to be any way hindered. I manage, however, at dinner-times to get a few together to read & talk to them—otherwise than that, it is altogether private, with one & another, as I can get opportunity; but I pray God to enable me to be daily growing in wisdom, that I may be more fully qualified for the setting forth of His holy will & word. I have been very well received gene-

rally amongst my fellow men. I was very much pleased this morning, as I was going along the line one of the men called for me to stop, so I asked what he wanted—he said, you never come to my lodge at night. I asked him where & how many lodged with him—so he told me 4. I promised to go to-morrow night, as I could not go to-night, & I pray God to enable me to set forth the goodness & love of God to them.

"We have had two lectures in the school-room, & they are to continue for some time weekly. Mr Munn is to give one next Friday or the Friday after. So now, dear Lady, I conclude, begging the favour of your prayers. I do not forget daily to offer up a prayer for you & your dear Father, and all the people of Beckenham. from Your ever affectionate Son in the Lord, WM. G——."

The following letter was from a man, whose honest, friendly countenance we had well remembered, even amidst the numbers of honest, friendly faces amongst the men of the Army Works Corps:—

"GARRISON HOSPITAL, PORTSEA,
Feby. 28th, 1856.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I take the present opportunity of addressing A few lines to you, to let you know that

I have been Invalided from the Crimea. But thanks to my Great Creator, I am recovering very fast. I have sufferred A great deal ever since the 20th of October, but through the mercy of God I have been able to survive it, But not without having my eyes opened to the awful state I was living in; if it had pleased God to call me into eternity I knew that I was a great sinner, and that I had a great deal to answer for. I prayed my little prayer and read my little testament, But I have never found that peace of mind, yet more I pray and more I read the word of God, and more I am convinced that I am a sinner, But I have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and through Him Cometh all good. I shall be able to leave the Hospital very soon, and I would like you to send one pound of mine if it will not put you to much trouble, as I have no money. I have had no pay this 3 months, and I will get none till I get to London. I hope these few lines will find you enjoying good Health, and I still remain your humble servant,

"THOMAS B—W—R."

Some time after this Thomas came to Beckenham, slowly regaining health and strength. He could scarcely speak for the fulness of his heart, when first he entered the house and was welcomed back. When I had left the room, he said to L——, "She has cured me of two things, drinking and swearing." After this, we had further conversation and prayer with

him, and could not doubt that there was a real work of the grace of God going on in his soul.

A Bible and a "Pilgrim's Progress" were given him at parting; and shortly after his return home, in allusion to the latter, he wrote, "I am still going backwards and forwards between the Slough of Despond and Giant Despair."

The next letter was written more hopefully: "I think I am coming up near the Cross, and my burden is loosening from my shoulders, and will fall into the Sepulchre of my Saviour. It is not quite gone yet; but I am in the way, and you was Evangelist as led me in at the Wicket Gate."

"*July* 11*th*, 1856.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I think it my Duty to write a few Lines to you to inform you that I am in good health and good spirits, at Present, thank God. I have got to work, and I am doing well at present. I am at home with my mother, and the happiest Days in my Life is now. I am a total abstainer from all intoxicating Liquors and Tobacco. When I Look back at the Life I have Led it makes me tremble to think that I was ever permitted to Live; but, O Dear friend, I have faith in Christ now, and do believe that the Lord Jesus Christ Died to save me from my sins, and Dear friend, you have been a messenger sent to snatch me from the jaws of Death; if you could only think with what pleasure I go to the house of God twice every

Sunday, you would say that the good work has begun in my heart; you would say, Thomas, DoYou believe that Christ Died to save you from your sins, and I will say that I am a Christian, and that I am able to say, Lord, Thou hast opened my lips, and my mouth shews forth thy praise. Dear friend, I have got the 51st psalm off by heart, and I say it in my prayers every night and morning, and if you will tell the navvies to get it off, and pray it, they will get a great Deal of good from it. Dear friend, I hope you are all in good health, and you must accept my heartfelt thanks for the kind instructions I have received from you—and Believe me to be yours faithfully,

"THOMAS B—W—R."

In the month of August, I wrote to tell him that we should, God willing, go to Scotland in a short time, and pass a Railway Station in the north of England, near which, I believed, he was living. I mentioned the pleasure it would give us to see him there, if he were near enough to come without inconvenience. He responded to this with great joy; and carefully omitted to mention that it was a distance of five and twenty miles from his village home.

On our arrival at the station, there was some hurry and confusion, as it was a junction, and several trains met. We looked about for Thomas, but failing to see him, occupied ourselves concerning some lost

luggage, and in parting with a friend who had travelled with us to see the English Lakes; and then our train went off. Little did we think that Thomas was watching us all the time; too unobtrusive to disturb us, although, as he afterwards wrote, "I went back with tears in my eyes, which would not have been there if I could have heard you and those good young ladies speak again, and you had said, Thomas, live for God, and keep close to Jesus Christ." I need not say this contretemps, and the simple story of his disappointment, brought tears into other eyes besides Thomas's.

We sent him a copy of the large edition of the Memorials of Captain Vicars, and had a serious contest as to his accepting a sovereign to cover the expenses of his journey and loss of time at his work—a contest which would not have ended in our favour, had not a severe illness laid him low, and he then felt that God had directed a little help to be pressed upon him, to prevent him from being any burden upon his aged mother.

"*January* 12, 1857.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I take up my pen to return my grateful thanks to you for your kind remembrance of me, and I trust in God, that these few lines will find your father much improved in Health. We are all in good Health here at present, thank God, and I am

working for a farmer here, for 14s. a week, and out of that I can save six, and I am happy and content. Do you think that I ever forget you in my prayers or Do you think that I ever forget to repeat the soldier's prayer many a time in the day. No, Dear Friend, nor do I ever neglect going to hear the Word of God preached on a Sunday, but I go amongst my neighbours and read them all my tracts and my beautiful book when I have any spare time. I have found it to be profitable in the sight of God and to myself. You were indeed the instrument in God's hand that wrought the good work in my heart. I Look back with Disgust when I scarcely had clothes to Cover myself with, but the truth of the scripture is verified in me—first seek the Kingdom of God and all its righteousness, and all other things shall be added. I can say, as St Paul said, there is But one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ. I have a lively faith in Christ that through Him I shall be saved. can you not see a change in my writing. will you be so kind as to write back to me and Let me know whether your Holy father is got better.

"May the Dew of the divine Benediction descend on all your House. that the wisdom of God may adorn you with every good and perfect Gift is the daily prayer of your Humble Friend

"Good Night. T—— B—W—R."

"*Feby.* 17*th,* 1857.

"DEAR FRIEND,—It is with pleasure that I sit Down to thank you for the Little Book that you sent me, and above all Do I thank you for that good Book the memorials of Captain Vicars. You have been so good and kind to me, that I think it my Duty to inform you that I am about to get married to a very pious young woman, on the 28th of this month, if it please God and health permit. Dear Friend, I never told you that I got £6 gratuity-money from Sir Joseph Paxton's office, for being invalided home with a good character from the Crimea. I do return my sincere thanks to God and to you: first to God for making you a instrument to spread his holy scripture abroad among the working men of England, and to you Do I return my Grateful thanks for the friendship you have shewn towards me, for oh you could not think of the pleasure that I felt in receiving that Little Book of friendship. I make it my rule to repeat the soldier's prayer the first thing on entering the Church and on leaving it. The Lord opens my lips and my mouth shews forth His praise. I trust in God you are all well as we are at present. Praise the Lord; my God to praise, my soul its utmost powers shall raise. God bless you and keep you in health and strength long to live. From yours,

"T—— B—W—R."

"*June* 22*nd,* 1857.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I thank God that I am spared to

write a few lines to you. I hope by this time, with God's Blessing, you are all in the full enjoyment of health as we are at present. You will think I have been long in answering your kind letter. Oh if you but knew the pleasure I have in receiving a letter from you, you would be sure that I would write on the first opportunity.

"But you will excuse me. I have been from home a month. I am coachman to J—— G——, Esq. of H——. I have had this situation 10 weeks. I came here on Easter Monday. I find it rather tedious, but with perseverance and God's Blessing I am getting on very well. I am well situated in my own cottage. I was married the Last day of February. Who have I to thank for this change—God and you—I feel that Jesus loves me. My faith is strong in Christ. Dear friend, if the navvies would only be induced to read all those good Books you gave them they might not find time to go to the beer-house, for since I saw you and you shewed me the road to ever-Lasting Life, I have been prosperous. Dear Friend, I received that Little Book, and I have read it many a time over since then; receive my grateful thanks; may God be pleased to restore your blessed Father and your Dear and Kind Sister to Health is the earnest prayer every Night and Morning of your humble Friends,

"T—— and E—— B—W—R."

Amongst the men who have been working on the new lines of railway in the neighbourhood of Beckenham, there are not a few who have caused us to thank our God for the change He has wrought in them.

These honest working men live just as near our hearts as our earlier friends, although no record has been kept of our intercourse together.

Four letters are selected, written by men who left the neighbourhood in January 1857. The first two are from a carpenter, employed for a few months about the Station, &c., at Beckenham, the others are from a Railroad man, whose business was chiefly in "plate-laying" on the lines.

"*Jany.* 15*th,* 1857.

"MADAM,—I have taken the liberty of writing to you to tell you how greatly sorry I am that I was not able to see you again before I left Beckenham, more especially as I had promised to do so; the reason why I did not call was, because I had been promised another week's work by Mr Chesterton, my foreman, and he only received orders to discharge me and several others about half-past three on Saturday, so that I had not time to come.

"I beg to offer my most sincere thanks to you and to Mr Chalmers for the great blessings I derived from attending your meetings, and, the greatest of all, the importance of prayer; it is true I used to pray before,

but they were cold and formal, it was one thing over and over again; I trust you have learnt me a great lesson, to be earnest in prayer. Mr Hampton, Incumbent of St Luke's district, is president of the Working man's Institute in Barnsbury park, which I intend to join, where I can go nearly every evening in the week, and where I shall receive good instruction, where I hope I shall learn to love my Saviour and serve him better. It is my earnest wish to know more of the gospel truths, and of that glorious being who died on the cross for me. I hope to come to see you again soon, if I am spared. I should have so liked to have stopped another week to have heard the lecture on chemistry, and likewise to have heard Mr Chalmers finish his story about that good man, Mr William Tindall; it always gave me great pleasure in hearing Mr Chalmers speak of those great reformers. I have great pleasure in telling you that part of my most earnest prayer every night and morning is, that the Lord will bless you and all your friends, and I am sure you will not forget me in your prayers.—believe me to be your most obedient Servant,

"WILLIAM H——."

"*Tuesday, 20th,* 1857.

"DEAR LADY,—I know not how to express my thanks to you for such a handsome present as that beautiful book of Captain Vicars, but I believe in

returning thanks I cannot give you better satisfaction than a promise that I will often read the book, and, with God's blessing, will try to live like him; there is so much, I think, to encourage the man to become religious, when he reads Captain Vicars' beautiful letters, that he cannot help wishing he might be as good a christian; my most sincere thanks, kind lady, for your kind wishes and earnest prayers, for I stand in need of many prayers, for I am A great sinner; how much valuable time have I wasted in sin and folly! Oh! I earnestly pray to my blessed Saviour to give me grace to cast away the works of darkness, and to put on the Armour of Light, and I believe he will answer my prayers, because he has said, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive, and these blessed words give me confidence. I have joined the working man's Institute, open every evening, Bible class, Tuesday and Sunday, and which I intend to join, so I hope, with God's blessing, to go on and prosper.—Believe me your most grateful and obedient Servant,

"WILLIAM H——."

"SOUTH AMERICA, *March the* 15, 1857.

"DEAR UNCLE,—I take the pleasure of writing to you hoping to find you well as it leaves me at this time, thank God for it. we arrived here on the 5 of March all safe; but there is not one that come out

but wishes he was back in England again. I know I do, it is so hot now that we are obliged to carry a umbrella with you to keep the sun from you; it seems very curious to carry a umbrella to work with you to shade you. I have made a start at work with James C—— he knows you; he says it is curious work here to work with black men and dont know how to speak to them in a word, but I shall soon pick some of their language up if God spares me to stop here long. If I live to come back again to see you again I shall tell you some thing, how glad I are that no more come with us out here. I will tell you the truth about what I think about it; I would sooner work in England for 12 shillings per week than here for 4 times twelve shillings per week; it dont suit a Englishman here, and if it is so hot in the winter time, what will it be in the summer time. There is plenty of cocoanuts here, you can see them growing here, the trees run very high here, the palm trees I mean, plenty of them here; you may buy a cocoanut here for a 1d. with a pint of milk in them, it is so nice to drink when you are dry. If this country would suit a Englishman he could do well here, but a Englishman never feels well the same as in England; the air seems different from English air: if I thought that you could stand the climate you could do well but I am sure it would not suit you, so dont you come here, stop in England on a bit of bread rather than come out here to live on

bread and meat. I wish I was back again in Beckenham with all my heart, give my love to Evans and all my brothers, and send my love to Tom, and when you write to Tom, give my love to all inquiring friends at home. Dear uncle, I think I am agoing to be foreman over a Brickfield after awhile, where I shall have a man to cook for me and to fetch victuals, a native I mean; there will be no Englishman with me at all (but Mr Price, now and then, the master over the work and he is a nice man), but I think I shall be happy there if I go, there will be no one there that I can speak to, but I know who will be there with me, my Saviour will be there with me, and He is all I want in this world. this world is nothing to what the next world is—that bright world above; and uncle, if we never meet again on earth, we shall meet again at that great day when our Saviour come in the clouds of heaven to Judge the world and Everything will be brought forward then before the Angels of God then, and if we never read our Saviour's word and believe in His word we shall be found wanting then, and then it will be too late. then seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Uncle, I will tell you the truth about myself; since I began to seek the Lord, I never was so happy in all my life as I am now, thank God; and what is this happiness to heaven! nothing; this is only the taste. by the grace of God I mean

to go to heaven to be with Jesus for ever; and if I never meet again in Earth o may we meet in heaven there to part no more. the longest time in this world is but short. give my love to gentlemen who are the Adult school masters, and tell them I will write to them by the next mail that go out, but tell them I often think about them and you as well. And one more I think of very often, and I should love to hear her readings again of Sunday and week evenings. they are all Roman Catholic church here, and if I did go to a Roman Catholic church I could not understand them, and I could not hold with them. I will tell you how they go on after service; they dance, and the band of music plays, and the shops are open the same as on another day; you would think it was a curious place if you could see them they are like heathen here. I live in hope of coming back again; if God spares me to live to come back to England once more, I shall never leave no more for South America. But we are here, and we must put up with it. They are small horses here to what they are in England, but they can travel over the ground fast with a good load upon their backs; there is hundreds of horses comes by here every day with their load of sugar upon their back, some with fruit, and some with treacle; the horses will not drink the water without some of the treacle in it, and it helps them feed. you cant walk far in a day in this country, for it is so

sandy and dusty here; we had a very nice voyage from England, it was rather rough, but we came all safe, thank God. I am your affectionate nephew,

"W——."

"SOUTH AMERICA, *September* 14*th*, 1857.

"DEAR FRIEND,—I take my pen in hand to write to you once more while I am in this country, and I hope it will find you quite well, and your Sister too, and all at home. I often think about your meetings on a Monday and Sunday night, and wish I was there with you and all the others too. I have never heard a Sermon since I left the ship, but I don't forget the words you told me, nor never shall forget them I know—by the grace of God, and the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ—it is more than words can tell; no one don't know till they have found it out by praying. I can say that I never was so happy in all my life. I can say it with a clear conscience before my God and Saviour Jesus Christ. I mean happy in my mind, and seem all different—no swearing now, thank God,—no wicked oaths. My life seems different, and it *is* different too, thank God for it. Dear friend, I must tell you that I have seen some ups and downs since I have been in this country, but thank God, He guides me by His counsel, and Afterwards He will receive me to glory, to be with Him for ever in the bright world above. I often read a

verse in the testament, in the 5 chapter of Revelation, where there is so many thousands of angels; and I often read another in the 7 chapter of Revelation, where there is that great Multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, people, and kindred, standing before the throne of God—all was in white, and palms in their hands. I look at it some times, and my thoughts are more than I can tell. I wish I could always have them thoughts. Dear Friend, I go to Dinner, and when I go, and when I come back again, it makes me think of that world above; and when the sun is out on a clear day, it shines so bright, and it is so hot, you are obliged to wipe your eyes—it fetches the tears into them. I look round, and I see hills on one side, and hills on the other, and it 's beautiful to look at: but what will that be to Heaven, where we shall shine as the Sun in glory—not for a few days, not for a few weeks or months or years, but for ever. It is Delightful to me to think about it, no one can tell but me and the Lord, which knows all things. I thank His blessed name for ever for giving me health and strength while I am in this country, and all the others have been ill with some thing, but I am well, thank God a thousand times ten thousand. There is one and another being called away from us in a few days, our turn may be the next to go, we don't know, but the Lord's will be done in Earth as in Heaven. The Lord sends us

warnings to bring us closer to Him. Mr Slaney and Mr Wilks was well, and dead and buried in less than a fortnight—and Mr Wilks has left a wife at home, and 8 children. We may soon be called away to stand before our God and Saviour—if I never see you again in this world, I trust we shall meet in heaven at last; there we shall sing His praises for ever—and hear those harps of Gold—and to see those prophets which foretold of our Saviour! And we shall see our Saviour there, and to sit down by his side in heaven, it is Delightful. I think sometimes that I shall not know how to contain myself before my Saviour, because, see what poor creatures we are as soon as we are ill, we are done for—we have not got strength of ourselves to help ourselves—but glory be to God for ever, I know He loves me, and I feel He loves me, to a inward love which I cannot tell to no man.

"Dear Friend, I must tell you a little bit about my poor mother, she lived a Christian, and died a Christian; and now she is with our Saviour in heaven. When my Mother was ill she sent for me to tell me things what concern this world, but she did not forget things of that heavenly world—she told me things which I never shall forget; but I *have* forgot them—but these words come fresh to my mind now. Bless God for that last night of the old year, when you begged of us to give ourselves to Jesus

Christ our Saviour, who had a right to us, for see He had bought us with His own blood. And I did give myself away to Him, thank God.

"Well I will tell you what my poor mother said to me the morning before she died, that our Saviour was with her all the time, and she said that our Saviour died for her; she believed that our Saviour died for her when she was well, but when she was ill she knew He was with her, our blessed Saviour who died for all the world. It was true, I know, for when I was at home I never knew her tell me a untruth in my life; and she was a good mother, used to love prayer, and so do I too. That little book which you gave to me is come right, it is the same as it says, if you begin to speak to God, He will soon give you plenty to say to Him. I have prayer in my bed-room night and morning; I don't mind who hears me; I feel when I am praying that God hears me. There is some of our men which live with me, they give me a sneer sometimes; but I love them all the same for that. I pray for them and for my little brothers which are in England; when you see my brothers, give my love to them, and I hope they go to church regular, and to your meetings. I should love to go myself. I do think about you, and most about the time of the meetings; the time here is about 2 hours and 20 minutes later than in England. On a sunday I read, and then go

in my room, and read and pray, and seems as if I was in England. Please to write to me as soon as you can, and remember me in your prayers; at all times I think of you in my prayers, and all of them which attend your meetings. We shall soon have a minister up here now, and I shall be glad when he comes up. I can't go to these churches here for to hear them, for they are all Roman Catholics here, so I can't tell you half what I am seen since I am been here. One day I was doing a small job, and when I had been at work 2 hours there came a gang of these poor slaves, and a whipper with them, with a long whip with him; they was fencing the line out with rough wood; there was 20 or 30 of them; most of them was women: I can't abear that. Well, there came a man along with a kind of a doll in a basket, and these poor slaves went and kissed this doll, and them which had a vintem in their pocket gave it to this man for kissing this doll, and then this man would go and spend it in liquor, and got fresh. Oh! if I could but have told them to have made them understand me, but I told them as well as I could, but not so well as I should like to have done, and about Jesus Christ the sinner's Saviour; but I left it to the Lord which knows all hearts. I often think what a day that will be when all must appear before our Saviour Jesus Christ, and all things will be brought forward. I must conclude

now, with my love and duty to all at the Rectory, and receive the same your self from

"WM. G——H,
"Brazils, South America."

From another.

"*April the* 24.

"DEAR MADAM,—I take the opportunity of writing these Few lines to you. I have no doubt but you thinks it very unkind of me in not writing sooner. I shall be glad to hear from you, if it is not troubling you too much. I thank for your invitation to your tea meeting, I enjoyed it very much indeed. Dear Madam, I wish to speak a word or two by the help of God's Holy Spirit, of my own experience of His love. I do feel Jesus to be precious to my soul, I can say with the Psalmist, in His Favour is life, His loving kindness is better than life, in His Presence is fulness of joy, and believe that at His Right hand there are pleasures For ever more. I do Feel to be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord pour of His Spirit upon us more abundantly, that we may live a life of Faith in the Lord Jesus who loved us and gave Himself For us. Please to remember me in your prayers, and I will remember you, so good bye for the present. God bless you For Jesus Christ's sake Amen. I am still your humble servant,

"THOMAS N——."

The following letters tell their own story, and magnify the grace of God. Once more the soldier wrote a few hurried lines, to say he was under orders for active service. The Regiment sailed for India early in the month of August 1857:—

"CURRAGH CAMP, *Novr.* 17*th* 1856.

"MADAM,—Pardon me for taking the very great liberties of writing these few imperfect lines to you with heartfelt thankfulness to you for your kind and pious Instructions that I received from you while I was at Beckenham, which is about 3 years ago, and I trust that although I am living amidst sin and wickedness around, they have not been given in vain. Many a time have I thought of you of a cold winter's night, when lying before the Enemy in the Crimea, and often would attempt to write to you but again thought myself unworthy of writing to such a kind Lady, & often did my heart beat with joy when I saw your name in a small book or tract of any kind, particular in one, 'The Victory won,' & in the account of the Death of noble Captn. Vicars of the 97th who was killed one night in a sortie before Sebastopol. I expect to come home on Furlough shortly, & then perhaps I may make it my Duty to come to Beckenham & hear once more the words of Salvation under the roof of the old parish Church. Madam, it is useless for me to mention my name, as I am a perfect stranger to you, al-

though I attended your Lectures at the Cottages, but I hope that one day I shall shine as a star in your crown for ever in Glory,

"A BRITISH CRIMEAN SOLDIER."

"CURRAGH CAMP, IRELAND, *July* 14*th* 1857.

"MADAM,—Please to pardon the very great liberties I take in addressing these few lines to you, which is a thing I am sure you would do if you was aware of the gratitude I feel I owe to you for what you have done for me, in being the cause of bringing me to that knowledge and sense as made me feel that I was a sinner & stood in need of a Saviour & that unless I repented I must perish, and blessed be God I have found a Saviour and I feel him increasingly precious to my soul, but Dear Madam I may attribute this great change to no one but you & Dear Captn. Vicars, for never shall I forget the few months that I spent in the happy village of Beckenham during the time that I was at work at the Crystal Palace & in that neighbourhood in the Summer of 1853. Oh! the happy Evenings that I spent in going to the Cottage or School Room to hear You or blessed Captn. Vicars (Oh that I may have the grace of God to walk in his footsteps and die a death like his) proclaim the word of pardon and Salvation to sinners & to me the vilest of sinners. I shudder when I think of the sinful state that I was living in before & when I first went

to Beckenham, but ever since I have felt that I was a sinner & had a soul to save, and although surrounded by all kind of sin and temptation I have strived to live to God & I trust I am walking in the road to Heaven & can say, let others do as they will, as for me I will serve the Lord.

"We have a very nice chaplain here, his name is Hayward, & he is I believe a sincere & devout servant of God, and all his aim is to win souls for Glory, he holds a Bible class every Wednesday Evening, & Divine Service on Friday Evenings & I am never so happy as when there. Kind Madam, you will I hope pardon my presumption when I tell you that it was me who wrote to you a few months ago, but did not sign my name as I thought you did not know me, I am well known in Beckenham, I used to lodge at Mr Milwards, Bricklayers Arms. Pray for me Dear Madam that I may still press forward for the prize of the high calling, & at last meet you in eternal Glory.—I am Madam Your Humble Servant,

"JAMES S. B——.

"*P.S.*—KIND MADAM,—I went on Furlough & went to Beckenham with the hopes of seeing you to declare to you what you had done for my soul; I went to Church but I could not see you there, & as I was a stranger I did not like to take the liberties to go to the Rectory, as I could not meet you coming From Church, you might have been there & I not see you,

I dare say, but you will remember perhaps if I tell you that my uniform was a white coat & red cap. God bless you, Madam."

"CURRAGH CAMP, 21*st July* 1857.

"DEAREST MADAM,—I am almost at a loss how to find words to express my gratitude to you for your very great kindness in condescending to acknowledge the receipt of my letter. I am happy to say I received your kind answer to my letter on Saturday last, & likewise the large memoir of Capt. Vicars, with that joy that I am unable to express.

"Dear Madam, I have read the book once through, and commenced it again, & oh! what a blessed ensample is there therein for a Christian soldier. I do sincerely hope that I have enlisted under the same banner that he did, & fought & died a Christian. Life is one time of continual warfare, as dear Captain Vicars found it, '& so will every Christian,' but by the grace of God he came off conqueror. Oh! that I may do likewise. Dear Madam, the first account that I read of his death was in a little book while I was in the Crimea, but little did think then that he was buried in the same ravine wherein I helped to bury so many of my poor comrades; if I had known he was buried there beside the Waranzoff Road, often would I have visited his grave, and shed a tear of affection over it, and offered up an humble

prayer. It 's a splendid likeness of his grave in his memoir. I am reading Taylor's Golden Grove, & I find it a great help to me in my daily devotion.

"Dear Madam, last Sabbath-day, for the first time in my life, I partook of the blessed & holy sacrament, but, Dear Madam, I did not presume to go to the table of the Lord trusting in my own righteousness, but in the manifold and great mercies of my God and Saviour, bewailing my sins and wickedness which I have from time to time most grievously committed by thought, word, and deed, against his Divine majesty, and I do hope that God answered my prayers and supplications. My wicked heart, which has ever before been like adamant, was ready to break with grief when I thought of Him who suffered and pleaded for me in Gethsemena, & at last died an ignominious death on the cross, that I might be saved from damnation. May the body & blood of Christ, which was given and shed for you and me, preserve us body and soul unto life everlasting. Amen.—I remain your humble servant,

"JAMES B——.

"*P.S.*—Oh! Dear Madam, do pray for me that I may not fall back upon the world again, 'for my flesh is weak, and temptations strong and great,' but that thro' all the changes and chances of this mortal life, my heart may ever be fixed on that world above where true joys are found. And, Dear Madam, it is

impossible for me to describe the value I have set on the life of dear Capt. Vicars and your letter; and it will matter not how heavy my knapsack may feel to me, my heart will be cheered when I think of two things that I have in it, and what a companion it will be to me in the hour of sickness, or stretched in bed with a wound by an enemy, &, above all the same faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour will give me dauntless courage to face death as Captain Vicars did.

"J—— B——."

CHAPTER XXI.

Work to do for God and our Brother

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

One of the subjects of regret which has occupied my mind since I have become acquainted with "Life on the Line," has been the want of sympathy, generally speaking, between the contractors and the men whom they employ. The usual manner in which contractors are spoken of by the men is as "them as don't care what happens to we, so their work gets done;" or, less mildly, "All *they* think of is how much they can squeeze out of the bones and life of the navvy!" *

Yet these contractors are Englishmen; and doubtless have the genial, generous hearts of their country-

* Here and there a noble exception may be found. In this neighbourhood, Mr Knight, jun., has not unfrequently spent from ten to twelve shillings a-week, unsolicited, in providing a meal for men whom he has employed on other lines, who have walked many a mile from the place of their last piece of work without a penny in their pockets, and, but for kindly help such as this, would go starving through a hard day's or cold night's work. And still there are numbers who do so.

If those who find their good breakfasts ready and warm every morning, to strengthen them for a day of lighter toil, if not of idleness, would remember this when they meet hungry men seeking for work, perhaps kept waiting for it for days, or disappointed altogether, and would give them a good meal of bread and meat, it would save a vast amount of distress, and positive injury to health.

men, only needing to be rightly touched to rouse them into active kindness. Here and there, too, one of them has been a navvy himself at the outset of life, and must therefore have a fellow-feeling for those who still toil with the shovel and pick, whereby he has made his own fortune.

It cannot be that these men in power are so bent upon gold-getting, as wilfully to sacrifice their fellow-creatures' health and life, and more precious things still, to heap up riches a little the faster—striking the foundations of their lines, and bridges, and tunnels, in the flesh and blood of their brothers. But,

> "Evil is wrought
> By want of thought,
> As well as want of heart."

The contract has been entered into—engaging for the railway to be completed by a fixed date. The common error seems to be, that too short a time is named, at all events inclusive of allowance for unfavourable contingencies. At the commencement, but a few men are employed. By and by some unforeseen obstacle impedes progress—more hands are called for—winter approaches, with its short days. Now comes the grievance of but half-an-hour allowed for dinner-time. Every Englishman reckons on a whole hour as his undeniable right; were this abridgement of his day's chief comfort universally made by masters in town and country, it would be enough to

risk a revolution! Several of the navvies are in the habit of going for dinner to their lodgings, if within a moderate distance of the line: so that half the time is occupied in the walk to and fro.

Then follows the night-work, often accompanied by danger, not unfrequently by serious accidents If the time is drawing on towards the close of the contract, the work now becomes extremely severe. In the winter of 1856, some of the men told me that they had not had above four nights' rest in three weeks, working day and night.

Then follows the worst grievance of all. The Sabbath can be spared to them no longer. The working man's one day of rest, after six of weary toil, is taken from him. True, no slave-driver stands over him with a whip to lash him to the unwelcome task, but, if he refuse, he is dismissed; and he may have a hundred miles or more to walk, without a penny in his pocket, to find fresh work on another line; where, on the next Sabbath, the same thing may come over again.

Many a man complains bitterly of the loss of his British birthright—his one day of peace and quiet in the seven—who has not yet learned the higher value of the Christian's privilege to spend it in the worship of his God. But the saddest thing of all is to see some of them going to work with consciences enlightened to feel the sin of it, whilst faith is not yet

strong enough to run the risk of dismissal and its penalties, by a refusal. Before you and I judge them, let us try a week's starvation, and a few nights of sleeping in a ditch under a November fog, or amidst the snows of January. It goes to one's heart when navvy boys leave word at the Sunday-school, "They can't stay, more 's the pity; because they 've got to go to work for the best part of the day. But they do wish their lady would see to it, and not let it be so any more;" making one feel one's utter helplessness to move in the matter the more painfully by their childlike confidence.

If each proprietor of land through whose ground the railway passes, would not sell it without making a stipulation that the working-man should have his seventh day's rest secured, he would bring down a blessing on both souls and bodies, and would find that the Lord of the Sabbath would repay him sevenfold into his own bosom. And if this became an integral part of railway contracts, the contractors would bestir themselves at first to secure a larger number of men, and so "take time by the forelock."

Is it right in the sight of God, to let His rational creatures be driven harder than stage-coach horses were, in the days before railroads were made, when it was found not to *answer* to their owners to deprive them of God's appointed rest for beast as well as man?

What with Sabbath-work and night-work, I have seen strong, fine young men aged in a few months, as if by years of wear and tear. And *where are the old navvies*? Are they to be found in villages or workhouses? Some few may be; but I have never yet seen or heard of them in either place. Here and there I find one on the line; but the vast majority, I believe, die in what ought to be their prime. There was a grey-haired man in Beckenham, who was honoured by the sobriquet of "Old Edward." We believed him to be at least on the shady side of sixty. On inquiry, to our astonishment, we found he was but eight-and-thirty. He had seen a quarter of a century pass by him on the line.

Another boon which humanity seems to demand for these poor men, is the construction of a shed close to their work, in which they could sit down to eat their dinner when the rain has soaked the ground into a bog. In my daily visits to the men at their dinner-time, whilst gladdened to see them run up the side of the "cutting" at sight of a friend, like bees swarming up a hive, often does my heart ache to have no plank to offer them to rest their tired limbs upon, as they seat themselves in rows, three deep, of twenty or thirty in a line, in grass almost as wet as a pond; and when concern is expressed, the usual reply is, "Well, if it 's good enow for you to stand in, it 's good enow for we to sit in, and better than

the mud in the cutting, anyhow. But a bit of a shed over our heads for when it 's a pouring of rain would save many a poor fellow from catching of the rheumatis, whilst he 's a sitting still."

That "shed" is our vision of comfort, our *château en Espagne;* and I hope we shall have it, in reality, before another winter sets in.

And here I may just mention that the navvies never seem to be disturbed by these dinner-time visits, or to eat their meal less heartily; on the contrary, polite inquiries are made, if the plan has been interrupted for a few days, "S'pose you've been to the gangs at the other end of the line, ma'am, as we haven't seen you here for a bit?"

Indian news, in a *digest* of the *Times;* now and then one of those noble and beautiful, yet heart-wringing letters which have glorified those annals of horror, as the faith of their writers hallowed even scenes of bloodshed and torture; or a fine, thrilling passage from some leading article—make the usual commencement of conversation at each daily rendezvous. This is always concluded by some passage from the Word of God—most frequently a parable, and usually it is repeated, not read, to sustain attention and interest at an hour of the day when anything like a *service* would seem ill-timed.

In this manner many can be reached who lodge too far away to attend cottage-readings, excepting

now and then on a fine Sunday night. The intelligent and sympathising interest they have expressed, both by word and look, in the present terrible history of British India, would have amply repaid, for the effort to impart it to them, any man or woman in England.*

In a word, what I now plead for, with those who are called, and not without reason, "the privileged classes" of this country, is:—When navvies, or any other labourers either in fields or factories, are within your reach, meet them with a frank and genial friendliness. Alleviate their discomforts as far as lies in your power. Provide some little innocent pleasure —a tea-party, for instance—from time to time, for their hard-worked existence. Above all, seek to secure to them their Sabbaths; and hold forth to them the Word of Life. Give them Bibles or Testaments; and if the navvy's name be written therein, with a few

* Whilst these pages were in the press, an unexpected result of those readings was communicated to me. An officer in the Royal Artillery mentioned that a deserter from his company, who had been working as a navvy on the new line of railway here, delivered himself up towards the end of the month of October "to suffer," as he requested, "any punishment short and sharp enough not to hinder him from going with the next draft to India, to fight for all them women and children that he had heard readings about in Beckenham."

His request was granted. He has sailed for India. But *was* it necessary, to preserve the discipline of the army, that such a man should carry for ever into the front of his foes the branded "D" upon that generous breast!

words of friendly dedication, he will starve rather than part with it at any price.

If the hearts of my countrymen and countrywomen have warmed towards their working-brothers, whilst reading these brief records of a few years' intercourse with them, let not the generous fire die out with the close of the book. If individual efforts, so light and easy, have resulted, by the blessing of God, in so much that is cheering and hopeful, what might not be effected if the educated and refined class of this country determined, in dependence upon Divine help, to draw out the higher and nobler feelings of the less favoured classes; setting themselves gently, patiently, steadfastly to work, to eradicate the notions of distrust, suspicion, and envy, too generally entertained by the poor towards the rich; until both should practically realise the sentiment well and wisely expressed by a gifted writer of the present day, "O ye rich, respect the poor. O ye poor, have charity for the rich."

Above all, O favoured ones, who have the knowledge of the glad tidings of the redemption of the world by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, bringing glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men, God forbid that *you* should shut up in your own hearts this message of life and peace, instead of giving it in its fulness to every fellow-creature within your reach. If you have *but once* heard of it for yourselves, you are bound to bid others wel-

come to drink of the river of the water of life. "Let him that heareth say, Come."

If you have long ago learned to love the gospel oi Jesus Christ, but the fervour of that first love has fled, speak to others of your half-forgotten Saviour, and you shall find that there is a life-giving power in the name of Jesus to restore vitality to your own chilled soul.

A traveller was crossing mountain heights alone, over almost untrodden snows. Warning had been given him that if slumber pressed down his weary eyelids, they would inevitably be sealed in death. For a time he went bravely along his dreary path. But with the deepening shade and freezing blast of night, there fell a weight upon his brain and eyes which seemed to be irresistible. In vain he tried to reason with himself; in vain he strained his utmost energies to shake off that fatal heaviness. At this crisis of his fate, his foot struck against a heap that lay across his path. No stone was that; although no stone could be colder or more lifeless. He stooped to touch it, and found a human body half buried beneath a fresh drift of snow. The next moment the traveller had taken a brother in his arms, and was chafing his chest, and hands, and brow; breathing upon the stiff cold lips the warm breath of his living soul; pressing the silent heart to the beating pulses of his own generous bosom. The effort to save

another had brought back to himself life, warmth, and energy. He was a MAN again; instead of a weak creature succumbing to a despairing helplessness, dropping down in a dreamless sleep, to die.

He saved his brother, and was saved himself.

"Go thou," in the strength of the Lord and Giver of Life, "and do likewise."

THE END.