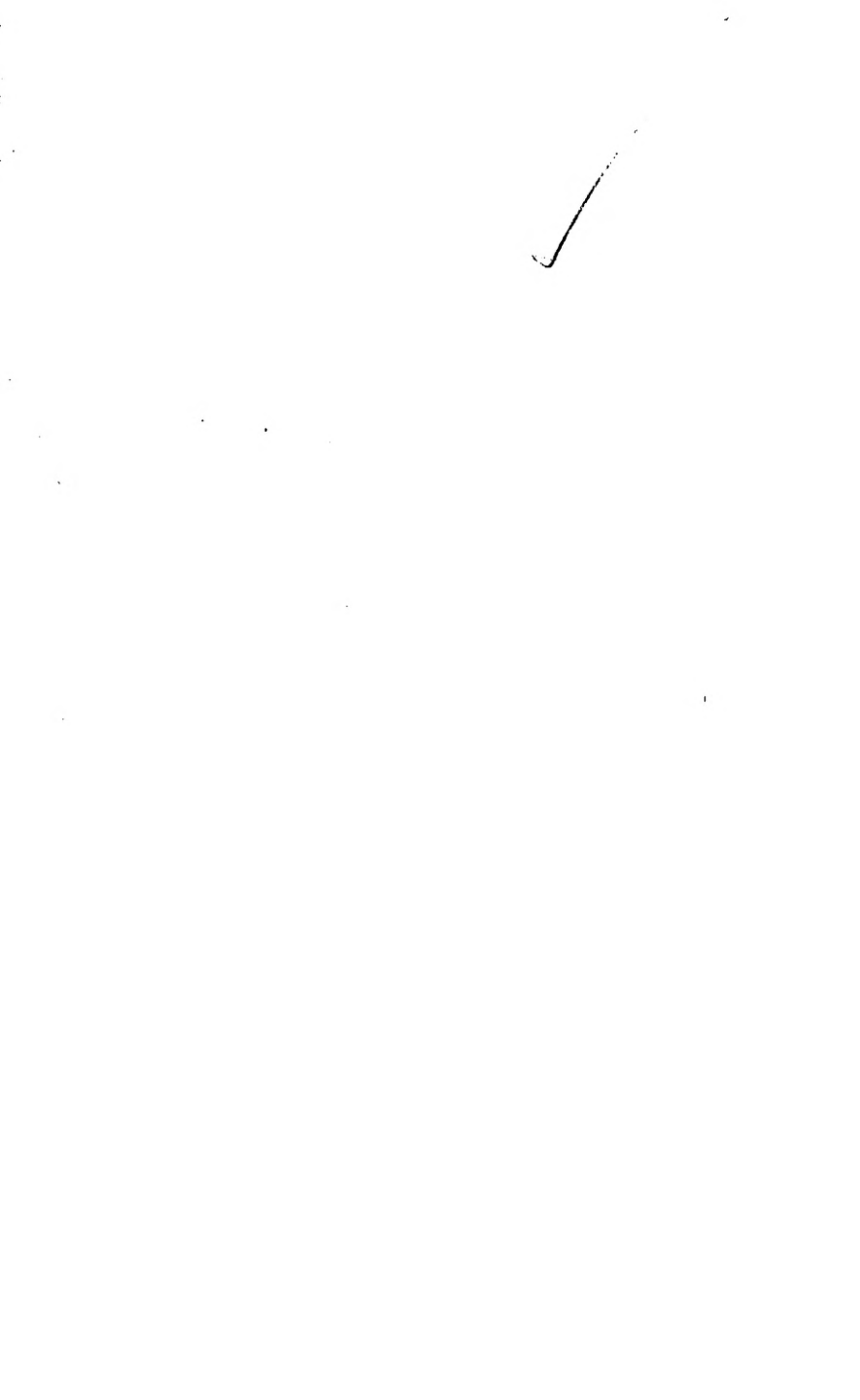


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PHŒBE THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH.



*PHEBE THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH.*

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, SOUTH KENSINGTON,

ON MAY 11, 1873,

IN AID OF

*The Parochial Mission-Women Fund.*

BY

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*PRINTED BY REQUEST.*

London :

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1873.

LONDON:  
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,  
BREAD STREET HILL.



# A SERMON.

ROM. xvi. 1, 2.

“I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church . . . that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.”

THE word rendered *Servant* in this affectionate postscript of St. Paul's greatest letter is that which in its nearest English dress appears as the term “*Deaconess*.” A few tempting analogies and half-warrantable assumptions might conduct us into the belief that within twenty-five years from our Lord's death there was an organized rank of *deaconesses* in the Church possessing more or less of a sacred and separate character.

All however that we are in historical strictness really able to conclude is, that there were a number of women devoting themselves as a principal, if not exclusive, employment to good works on behalf of the Church, generally with local ties, and certainly co-operating with the regular government of the body. More precise rules, more central direction, and more exclusiveness came later, when the general dissoluteness of society, Christian so called, and still more when the breaking up of the Empire required sterner and stronger organizations.

But if we cannot undoubtedly claim to discover as yet in the apostolic age a thoroughly regulated and extended

body of deaconesses, that is of course no argument against the free foundation of such societies within the Church in any times or places which may demand them. For us, however, the example of the institution as it existed in St. Paul's day is wholly to the point, for it is scarcely possible in our times to give a nearer portraiture of that first Apostolic model than by a society of ministering women, who know no rule but the Church's rule, who are at the absolute disposal of the clergy charged with the district in which they labour, who themselves live on the mere equivalent of what their own efforts could procure for them, (and their leaders or superintendents on their own means,) and who, as poor, devout women, seek to fill the lives of their neighbours, with health, with pureness, with frugality, with faith and truth.

Can a more Christian work be named? more answering to those ideals of the labour of love, for which—some with a fond sentiment, others with a robust admiration of power, all with an assurance of safety and sobriety—look back to the earliest days of our religion? There may be a familiarity, even an uncouthness to our ears, in the modern cumbrous names under which our workers work; the Deaconess of the Church of the Harbour of Cenchreæ is grown into a saintly Greek ideal to our far-off time, but she herself,—who wanted assistance in her much business, and was a helper of many,—she would recognize the mingling wealth and squalor, the rudeness and the vice of old, the poor mean ideas and the indifference to high motive, as claiming still her ministries and your assistance—but now upon a scale of need which to a Greek would have seemed as incredible as it is to us ordinary;—yes! ordinary and almost trivial if it were treated as a matter of business outlay; extraordinary to us, only, alas! because it is a matter of charity.

Some persons perhaps think that to carry on this

work to perfection there are needed, not merely humble women living in their own homes, and organized by ladies moving in society, with family claims on them, but congregated orders with more of discipline, more perhaps of devotion, more separateness from worldly cares.

Another school of religious thought may be disposed to look unfavourably on *this* movement, thinking it may at last be the mother or the nurse of exclusive and perilous institutions in which first family duty, and then charitable works themselves, may be sacrificed, as in former times, to over-systematic ordinances of discipline and liturgies. To the first of these two opposite objectors we should reply, that whatever advantages may be conferred on society by regular religious communities, they must first spring from society itself in answer to its needs and calls. The forms which Christian activity can take are evoked and are abolished in obedience to widely-ruling principles, not to individual aspirations. If English society, which has parted with those we once had, should ever again feel the need of them, the spirit of Christian zeal to meet felt needs is versatile, and will reproduce whatever may be wanted, provided only that to the utmost of our power we keep alive and bright that zeal, that readiness, that fervour for good work, in forms suitable to our times and without affectation. This is our part; the special shape of the work we must leave to the wider influences of any given age.

But we may surely believe that in an age like this, which lays such an exceeding stress on family life and on domestic virtues, an institution which is based on them, and aims at the cultivation of such Christian virtues in classes which almost ignore them, is working very appropriately both to the circumstances that surround it and to the aims which it has before it, and to the general wishes of Christian people, when it sends its matronly

workers out from Christian Homes, where they have first shown what the poor and busy Christian family should be.

Nor is the answer very different which meets the second difficulty. Separate communities, whether with their dangers or with their blessings, never can arise unless society itself calls for them. And if it should call they will come out of society itself, irrespective of other works which may be in progress. But meantime this is *not* a community; this is no independent or self-exalting work; this throws no power, no influence, into unknown hands. It simply helps the parish priest to penetrate the innumerable houses which are supposed to be his daily care,—makes it possible for him to be in some true sense the shepherd of such flocks, and brings in sinful listeners to hear the plain Gospel message which otherwise keeps on calling only the righteous to repentance.

Be content, we say to both classes of objectors, to work in the lines on which the friends of the Apostles worked.

The intense activity and complex movements of our time find perhaps no parallel in history so marked as that of the First Imperial Age of Rome, in either the variety of commercial intercourse, or the separation of classes by pecuniary forces: and the spontaneous up-growth (through the Church's work alone) of great, yet very simple, natural, half-domestic organizations of charitable labour, is perhaps no less characteristic of the same two periods.

It is then no mean praise of the association for which your bountiful gifts are asked, that it is unpretentious, that it is church-like, that it is primitive.

Some may wish that its work could be more grand and open than that of simple women can be who can act but on one single person at a time—whose day has

been well spent when a score of other poorer women have had just something said to them which may tend to promote cleanliness and thrift on a week-day, and church-going on a Sunday. But not only is this minute effort most like the processes by which all incipient good work is done—by which the seed grows, the child learns, and even the foundations of fortunes are laid,—we must remember, too, that the woman's work which was so potent in the early Church was wrought under narrower conditions than ours by far. A Greek woman was not free to walk any street, to knock at any door; she could but receive those who were brought to her, and visit under an etiquette we know not. All her life had to pass under strictest supervision. The protection of the widow's age and dress was the only freedom. Hence the first organized body of the women-workers was the order of *widows*: hence even the religious dress of mediæval orders was the traditional widow's weeds.

But ours work—thanks to the changes wrought by Christianity, thanks to the manacled efforts of its first believers—ours work under no such restrictions. Let the purpose be understood to be good and helpful, and the aspect that which suits such purpose, and woman's work is now whatever woman makes it.

And well has this association chosen for its work to lay the solid humble foundation on which the after-walls of the Church shall be reared. Woman, who forms the infant mind, and gives to the man, gives to life itself, its tone and bent,—she too can with unrivalled power reform the fallen, the degraded, the corrupt, into the image of that little child which can alone enter into the kingdom of heaven. To sympathise with the worst yet not to excuse them, to rebuke every part of a base life yet not to provoke resentment, to set forth the freedom of living by rule, and the pleasantness of not pleasing one-

self,—these and such like gracious sanctities are most fairly set forth in womanly ways, and these are the first practices of the Gospel of Christ.

For while their words will be unwaveringly the words of believers, (such words as to show the reality of Christian convictions, and the possibility of introducing heavenly ideals into the thoughts of hourly labour and drudgery,) while they will actually teach to some extent the rudiments of faith as Mission-Women—just as the deaconesses of old prepared the catechumen-women and girls for baptism and confirmation—while they will bid the troubled pray, or speak to the sinner of the certainty of forgiveness and restoration, assured by the arms of Christ outstretched in atoning death—while they will not hesitate to say that there are in the Communion of the Church blessings which are not to be found outside of it—still their main work will be but preparation only, the first process, for we must not forget that the great truths of Christianity were never intended for an unprepared soil. If we had failed to mark how it was in the fulness of time, after ages of preparation both with revelation and without it, that the Gospel dawned on the great earth; if we have failed to notice what Christ meant when he bade us not present pearls of pureness before unclean and violent creatures,—experience has taught our missionaries how quiet and how long, how sober and how deep, must be the preparation for truth divine. The too rapidly Christianized savage returns to his woods and to his lusts: the too rapidly Christianized heathen of the London alley would be but furnished with blasphemy. Some desire for cleanliness, some touch of thrift, some efforts at sobriety, must prepare the way for faith and hope and charity.

Could you instil doctrine into contented squalor, zeal into the sturdy beggar, what would you create but a

Christian Dervish? What was it which excited that intense feeling which no centuries obliterate against the greatest institution of the middle ages? What was it which made the name of "Friar" degenerate into a symbol of grossness and ignorance and overweening pride? Was it not the very theory which some think applicable to Protestantism without any mitigation—the theory that you may commit delicate truths, impart fervent sentiments, impress spiritual convictions, where no conformity exists of mind or morals or affections, where the *social sense*, if I may so call it, is low? We know that where even a poor degree of this social sense exists, religious energy will wonderfully mature it, but there is work to be done prior to the communication of even the simplest truths.

If therefore to-day I venture to "commend unto you Phebe our sister, a servant of the Church," it must be understood that it is because, like her prototype, she has many a "*business* in which you may assist her," that her work lies in the domain of simplest decencies of life as much as in the revival of religious ideas; in the formation of habits more than in the appeal to feelings or to beliefs; in the old-fashioned faith in the sister of godliness. She is in fact the ideal poor pious neighbour who comes in ever helpful and cheerful, and makes it plain that the poorest room may have order and self-respect and Christian trust to dignify it.

Vast as is the poverty of London—an appalling mileage of poverty—the wretchedness is tenfold of what even so much poverty ought to occasion. For this is poverty without honour, poverty that has long given up the hope of extrication, poverty with all the bitterness and none of the blessing.

Phœbe of Cenchreæ could count her miserable ones by a few hundreds, and ever there was arched over them their

sunlit blue, and before and behind them gleamed the bright promontories and the flower-tufted rocks. The beauty and the splendour of the works of God were easily appealed to (as St. Paul used to appeal to them), when he would rouse thoughts of how good, how near, the Father is, and bring men back to what they had forsaken. But Phœbe's modern sister thinks of tens of thousands as her charge, and what can she point to among leagues of grimy streets, and stifling courts, and fetid alleys, as tokens of the presence of the Father? To what lost innocence of childhood, to what ignorance of sin, can she recur? She knows that it was on the sight of sin and the hearing of baseness that these eyes and ears first opened.<sup>1</sup>

Could you see pass before you as on a stage, just one typical person of each great class she visits, it would not be sorrow so much as despair which would overpower you. It would not perhaps be those who had never prayed, those who had never heard the name of Jesus Christ (for there are those), who would seem most hopeless; *there* at any rate is something which can be suggested and supplied: but those who have not so much *contracted* evil habit, as they have spent and spend their whole life in it as if it were natural. The difficulty is even how to speak to them—to improve or alter them seems at first out of the question.

Forms and faces would go by you on which the fixed look of depression, of moodiness, of stimulated yet unfed appetite, the settled depravation, the easily-roused anger, the defiance, the carelessness—one expression or other of the most difficult growths of character—would daunt and deter you, as being beyond your power to approach.

This poverty-stricken pair who married when they were but children, who began with improvidence and

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.



have sunk into indifference—this lost woman who knows that she is “going right down” as she says, or this besotted craving creature who hour after hour sends her child for a little more and a little more of her poison—that unmarried wife with the aching heart, or this who knows not at all that she lives in sin; again, these step-children who cannot keep themselves, and on whom neither parent looks peaceably, the man fretted with the burden he has taken, the mother afraid to anger the man. You cannot alter all their circumstances, and you see them all sliding down together—not a hopeful heart, nor a bright ray anywhere. So you would say if you found yourself amid them suddenly.<sup>1</sup>

There is one who is neither helpless nor hopeless in having speech with such as these, nor yet with the more inaccessible still—the lonely unspeaking creatures whose story no one knows, or the determined people who have a horror of religious persons; and as her work proceeds in the street, the tiny congregation in the chapel-room grows from five or six to a hundred, and children of many ages are brought to baptism, and the communion table receives more and more of neat though threadbare kneelers, whose faces may still have the lines of trouble, even of passion, but yet have the light of hope and peace, as they come for the first time to kneel by the side of her who has lifted them upwards physically, morally, spiritually.<sup>2</sup>

Surely I may “commend unto you Phebe our sister, the servant of the Church . . . for she hath been a succourer of many.”

1. But is it not worth while that we should learn from her something of the art by which these changes are effected? Is it not possible that we, who as yet shrink from speaking, may learn something from the humble,

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

the humiliating story (for is it not possible that the dignity of religious occasions may sometimes be upheld at the cost of Christian work?). The first step is to get interested so far as to have a right to express interest in the poor room or the poor children. By degrees the floor is cleaned, by degrees the tatter is mended, to meet the kindly eye: by degrees it is related that a few verses have been read aloud to some bedridden neighbour—some feverish pillow changed; and then by degrees there is the committing to the new friend of the little, but the increasing, saving of the week, till it comes to a decent sum. And what, think you, is beginning to be the amount of these savings? I was startled indeed to see the figures which represent it. Of the Parochial Mission-Women there were 194 employed in 1872, and the savings committed to their keeping in the same year amounted to very nearly £12,000, and the savings in the thirteen years of their operations to nearly £76,000. Think only how that one year's £12,000 has been made up, of what *tiny* weekly sums, and from what purposes it has been rescued, and it will give a small measure of the social usefulness of these quiet labourers.

We have lately seen striking instances of the various destination of small sums in different countries. In one we have seen the small savings of the poor go far towards paying off their nation's war-debt. In another country we have seen a war-debt also paid off by, alas! the small spendings of the poor—by one year's increase of the duty paid on drink. Such a river of waste never before ran out of any land. Welcome any agency which can check and utilise such outflow.

An old traveller who reached the watershed of Peru, close to the springs (as it happened) of two great rivers, one running east, one west, says how he flung a goblet full of water from one fountain into the other, amusing

himself with the quaint thought of pouring into the Atlantic Ocean drops which had been born for the Pacific. That moment's trifling is a little parable of the agency which turns to the fertilization of fields of life rivers of waste which had long spent themselves upon deserts of sand and barrenness.

2. But again : as a "servant of the Church" mark our sister at her work. We have already spoken of the quiet changes she effects at the Font, and *even*—alas! that in these days we must say—*even* at the Table of the Lord. This surely—to increase the number of those who earnestly remember Christ's death, is the very crown of any teaching ; the seal of a true mission : so long as communion implies preparation and self-examination, strong moral forces are the immediate outflow from this rite.

But the Mission-Woman is no fanatic, no devotee ; her work is mainly to bring those who need advanced instruction within the notice of the parish clergyman. And she is no hireling shepherdess ; she receives as her wages only what she might actually be earning in her usual occupation—nay, actually is paid more or less according as she may have other means of support, or larger or less claims on her. There is nothing to be made, no gain to be got, even according to the poorest measure. She is "a servant of the Church" indeed,—and it is simply to pay these very small servants' wages—so economically and wisely assigned, so honestly earned, even according to the present standard which pays women's work so poorly—it is simply for these wages that you are entreated to contribute.

3. St. Paul was not ashamed to add the words "and of myself also"—"a helper of many, and of myself also." And while the higher, or richer, classes of society do well to commend the work of these humble women as "helpers of many," it would be simple truth, should they

add "and of ourselves also." There is a benefit which they render to those higher classes which is not surpassed by any which they render to the poor.

It is a terrible problem in this England of ours, which awaits a solution somewhere in the future—the disunion of classes. And while many talk of the problem, and judge that the collisions which have been are but the prelude to a real collision—nay, an engagement all along the line—between the every-day increasing masses who have nothing to lose, and the lessening classes into whose very laps the tide of all wealth comes sweeping, how can we enough prize all and every labour which brings the rich and the poor into harmony, which shows the rich how they can interest themselves in the real interests of the poor, which shows the poor that the rich are not all hardness, all enjoyment? Yet this is the aspect which presents itself to them.

It is come to this, that we hear how quiet steady religious poor have disclaimed the very duty of praying with the Church for those whose rank and wealth have seemed to them so remote from, so alien to, all their interests,—yet by this very association have learned for themselves what tender hearts and charitable lives had long yearned over them, and after many years had seemed to reach them.

It is less difficult to do good than many of us suppose. A great door of effectual intercourse here opens. We pray you interest yourselves in this and every other work which revives or re-creates the mutual goodwill of class to class.

That for so many years the laity of England have thought the sick and poor and dying and distressed were the province of the clergy, will (I venture to say) one day be deemed as gross a superstition as any practice of darkest ages. The real place of the clergyman is in per-

suasion of the able, in reclamation of the strong sinner, in the guidance of the young. But these great tasks the single-handed pastor has been expected to combine, as he best could, with benevolent exertions which would tax the strength of a hundred men, or oftener quite to forego them, in the vain effort to clear off some of the work which belongs to the Christian laymen and women of his parish, and which they have absolutely ignored. What wonder that classes have become disunited and antagonistic? What wonder that it is difficult to re-establish sympathy? There are no doubt those whom you can personally approach, some in whom inherited kindly feelings to the rich have not disappeared. But we must own that in some places this disappearance has been complete. "Go! thou art nought to us, nor we to thee," represents their practical judgment. But it is possible to be doing good work even where estrangement is most utter. It is possible to work in the most powerful way through an agency which shall penetrate where you cannot, which is welcome where you would at present be out of place, which is not imposed upon as you would be, which in short brings up to light and air, hearts which in sullenness and ill-will, or else in more animal recklessness, or in depressing unhelped struggles, suffer and fret, ignorant even of what they want.

We have spoken of, or rather we have glanced at, the relation of this agency to poverty and ignorance—to what is called Society—and to the Church.

But it remains that we speak of their relation to One who is over all these things—who is greater than these great interests—who is the Avenger of the poor and needy—who is the Judge of Society—who is the Founder and Lord of the Church—the Lord Jesus Christ of the Gospels.

We say then that this Society treads in His steps—and we take two points—

1. That He gathered in His followers one by one.
2. That the first note of His teachings was comfort to the miserable.

1. As our Missioners go their humble way, not “making a voice heard in the streets,” so He spoke to this man and to that. Crowds followed Him or formed about Him from time to time, but crowds He shunned. To amaze a populace by a sign from heaven, or trust to the infection of sympathy which moves a momentary mass, was not His way. A fisherman here, a tax collector there, a quiet thinker in the shade, were spoken to and convinced one by one. It is a slower method, but it is the sure one. St. Paul, whom we sometimes think of as flaming from city to city with his eloquence, tells us how his real work was done—“from house to house warning every one day and night with tears.” So the Apostles, where their organization was strongest, in Jerusalem itself, “*from house to house* ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.” In this they were strictly following the example of Him who spared every bruised reed, Who paused in His course at the blind cry of the beggar; and lifted the child into His arms of blessing—Who still regards the Mighty Temple of His Church, not merely as one vast smooth building, but as an edifice of living stones—each stone a soul living to Him,—Who has a place for every single stone where it may be fitly framed into His walls, Who regards nothing with such grief as the masses which lie strewn everywhere of precious marbles, which claim our polishing and planting, but are like Himself neglected, if not rejected, of the builders.

For (2) His mode of gathering souls to His Temple

was this which our agency aims to follow out. He went in the paths where misery and wretchedness had been before Him; and there He found spirits capable of judging between false strength and true, between perishable and imperishable comforts, between time and eternity. It was when He had healed the sick, straightened the deformed, given sight and hearing and life to the blind, the deaf, the departed, that He could say, "Sin no more lest a worse thing happen unto thee," or to the evil spirit, "Depart and enter no more into him," or give a lost one back to father and to mother.

One by one, and off a soil strewn with wrecks of sorrow, Christ gathers the precious souls, as the jewel-finder traverses the *débris* again and again where last night's rain and frost has scaled off the face of the cliff.

And so, in His spirit, and with His blessing—works this Society as the handmaid of Christ, the Phoebe of our time, whom, in the words of the text once more, "I commend unto you as a servant of the Church . . . that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many," and may yet prove to have been the *best* "succourer of ourselves also."





## A P P E N D I X.

EXTRACTS *from communications made to the* LADY MANAGERS *of the* PAROCHIAL MISSION-WOMEN FUND *by* LADY SUPERINTENDENTS *of some of the* Mission-Women.

“In an outskirt of London the Mission-Woman found a poor creature, Mrs. D., deserted by her husband, whose ill-usage had twice nearly proved fatal to his wretched wife. She was chiefly supported by the earnings of her two daughters, who live with her but work all day at a factory. Mrs. D. lost the use of her arms from washing the soiled linen of the small-pox patients, over which chloride of lime had been too freely sprinkled. The Mission-Woman used to go at the dinner hour to feed this helpless creature, who had frequently been left alone for the day before being discovered by her new friend.”

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“An old woman who keeps an apple-stall at some distance from her home, and therefore out of the parish, told the Mission-Woman that if she wanted her pence she must fetch them, for she had never been able to carry money past ‘the publics’ all her life, and it was too late now to learn. Accordingly the Mission-Woman

walks twice a week to the distant stall to receive the pence, which are thus being saved for the purchase of under-clothing.”

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“Efforts that fail in the case of drunken parents, are sometimes successful in rescuing their unfortunate children. For instance, a Parochial Mission-Woman had vainly tried to get hold of a woman who was spoken of by her neighbours as ‘a terrible tipsy creature.’ Fever broke out in the house in which she lived, and the Mission-Woman went from room to room to help its victims. On opening the door of a back cellar she was so overcome by the rush of bad air, that some seconds elapsed before she could recover herself enough to enter. A girl of fourteen lay in the corner on a heap of rags, while a boy, whose sole garment was a bit of black alpaca round his waist, crouched under the table, only popping his black head above it when he hoped to see without being seen. The father, though a respectable man, had deserted his family after years of useless struggle against the miserable vice which, by enslaving his wife, destroyed his home. The broken window was emptied of rags and paper; the floor cleaned; the sick girl nursed, and when strong enough taught by the Mission-Woman how to earn a little clothing before going to a place found for her by the indefatigable Lady-Superintendent. That girl has just gone to another situation with a year’s good character from her mistress. The boy is earning his own living, but all that can be said of the mother is that she is oftener sober than formerly.”

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“In the top room of a small house in the North of London, the Mission-Woman found a religious old woman

much crippled with rheumatism, and therefore very grateful for sundry kind offices. The first warm Sunday in spring, the Mission-Woman called and carefully helped the old lady downstairs and along the road to church. They were secretly followed by a man who was lodging in the same house, and wondered where they could be going. He had not been to church for nearly twenty years, till curiosity thus led him there, but the sight of that happy couple, and the knowledge of all the efforts made and the kindness shown to bring them there together, produced a deep impression on his mind, and he has become a regular attendant at church.”

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“A poor woman, a depositor in one of the City districts, was sentenced to three months’ imprisonment for biting the arm of another woman in a fit of violent passion. When released she re-appeared at the meeting, but told the Mission-Woman that she wondered how they would treat her there. The Lady-Superintendent spoke very gently to her, said she should not attempt to add to the good advice she had already received from the chaplain of the jail, and that if Mrs. T. could now set a good example to others, she would always be welcome at the meetings. This happened in the spring of 1872, and Mrs. T. has become a regular attendant, and gives reason to hope that the good work begun in prison is being carried on in her present life.”

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“The general testimony of the Mission-Women is, that drunkenness prevails very much among the women, but that sometimes they may be shamed out of their sin. For instance, the landlady of a low lodging-house for

street singers, beggars, &c., was 'a dreadful drinker.' The Mission-Woman used to tell her that if she could only see her own face sober and tipsy, the difference would make her take the pledge at once. After many vain intentions, she was induced to do so, and has never transgressed. The Mission-Woman calls every day for 2*d.*, the amount she used to allow herself for beer, which is now regularly put by for clothing. This 1*s.* a week is a trifle to what she used to spend on spirits, which were added to the beer.

"The habit of drinking is often formed in very early life, for when the children are sent to purchase beer or spirits for their parents they always receive their share. One Mission-Woman knew a little creature not two years old, whose first word was a cry for 'Zin, Zin.'"

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"Mrs. A. has induced a large number of poor men to deposit with her for the purchase of boots and shoes for their wives and children. At Christmas fifty-two pairs for the latter and nearly as many for the former were bought out of what the men call 'our beer money.'"

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"I could not tell you," writes a Lady-Superintendent in a seaport town, "how many adults we have had baptized, how many couples who were living together we have had married, how many who had been for years quite heathen in their habits, never going to any place of worship, and spending Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Whitsuntide as days for drunken revelry, are now regular communicants and look forward to these Holy Days with special delight, as giving them 'beautiful services.'"

“Oh, my heart overflows with gratitude, when I think what the agency of the Parochial Mission has been here.”

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“I am most thankful,” writes another Lady-Superintendent, whose Mission had been recently started, “to tell you that the Mission-Woman has already effected great good in our parish.

“There is a family here who were in a most deplorable condition. The mother (lately dead) was a shocking character, and encouraged her children in all sorts of dreadful practices. Her eldest girl (not yet sixteen) is in a reformatory for concealment of birth, and a boy is in prison for stealing. Of those left at home, the eldest is fourteen. The Mission-Woman found them in a sad state of filth, and went day after day to wash the little ones, and show the elder girl how to clean her house; then she spoke to the father, who was very grateful for her kind offices, and at once became a depositor; and now the children go to school decently clothed, in clothes bought through the Mission.

“The Mission-Woman has had them to tea several times, when the elder girls have sewn whilst she has read to them.”

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“We were interested in the case of Mrs. B., whose husband works in the gas-house and earns 36s. a week. Our Mission-Woman called often but got nothing, and finding Mrs. B. frequently asleep, she watched, and in one morning counted her sending her little girl to the public-house *nine times* for a penny-worth of beer each time. The Mission-Woman charged Mrs. B. with the folly of such drinking, and the misery it led to, and

advised her to 'allowance herself.' The poor woman was willing to try, and Mrs. A. used to go in and out four and five times a day, persuading her to give the penny to her (Mrs. A.) instead of sending the child with it. In *one week* she took 7s. 6d. in this way, which was literally saved from the beer-shop. With it Mrs. A. redeemed various articles of clothing for Mrs. B. Then she cleaned her room for her, and this so pleased the poor woman that she took to keeping it so, and, as her furniture was restored from the pawnbroker's, said she was 'getting a home again.' One evening, Mrs. A. persuaded her to spread a clean white cloth, and have a nice hot supper ready for her husband against his return. A few days afterwards the man met Mrs. A., and took her hands in his, squeezing them 'till I feared he'd crush them, he's such a big fellow,' and said, with the tears running down his cheeks, 'Mrs. A., you don't know what's my feelings to you, for my home was a hell, and now you've made it a paradise.'

"Both he and his wife begin to go to church, and Mrs. A.'s only fear is lest they should be falling off in the brickfields, where they have gone for a few weeks' work."

*Reports and further particulars may be obtained by application to the Hon. Sec. at the Office, 54, Parliament Street.*













