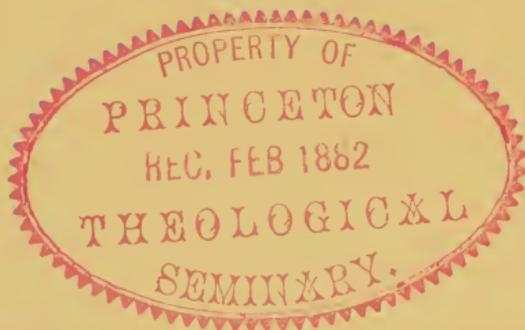


MISSION WORK
IN
BELLEVILLE
PARIS





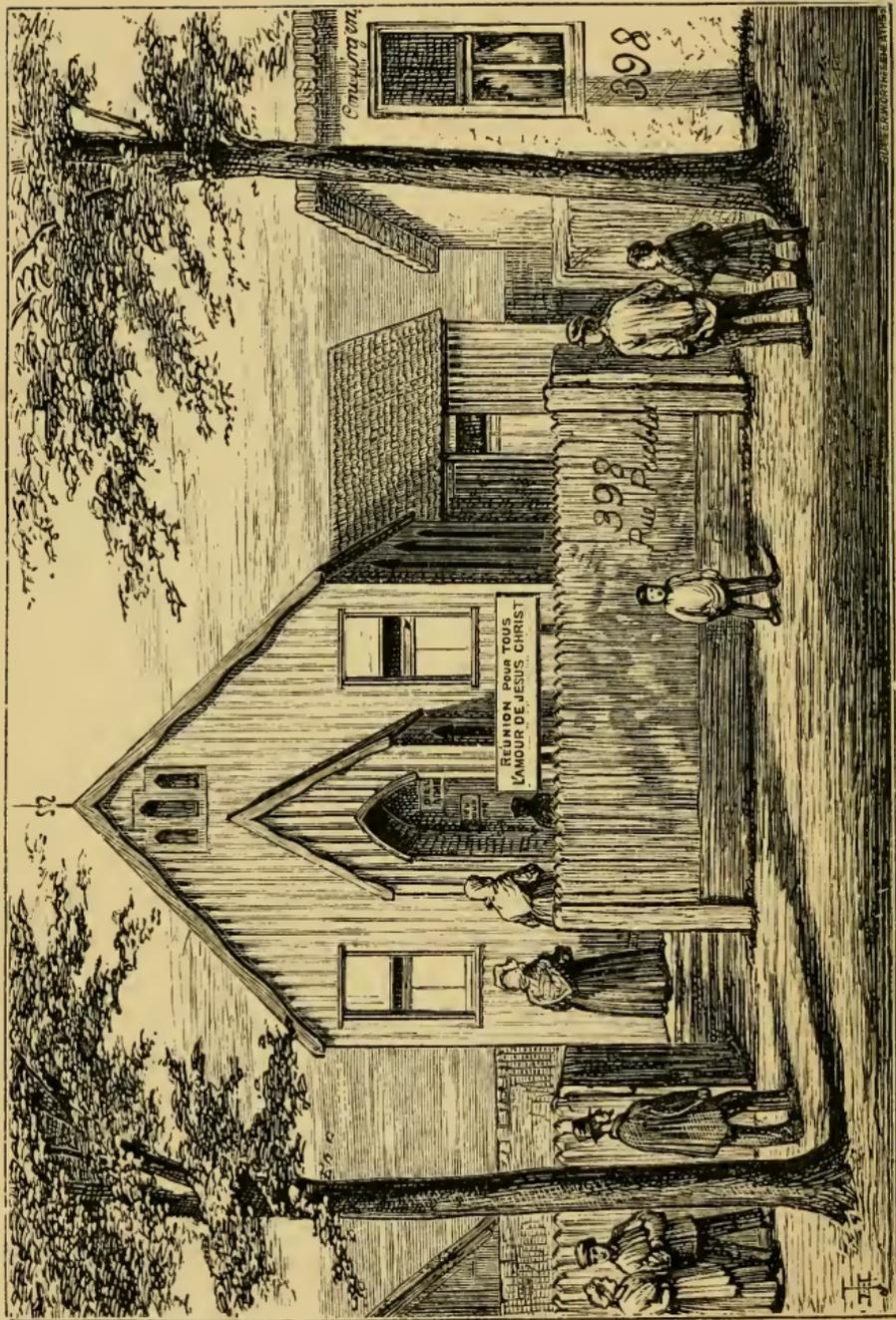
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Clayton, Louisa.

The story of mission work
among the French in

MISSION WORK AMONG THE FRENCH.

* * *The profits, if any, resulting from the sale of this book will be given to Miss de Broen, to be applied by her as she may think best, for the benefit of the Belleville Mission.*



"The Iron Building was opened in June, 1876, amidst great rejoicing."

THE STORY
OF
MISSION WORK AMONG THE FRENCH
IN
BELLEVILLE, PARIS.

*AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT I SAW AND HEARD
DURING A THREE WEEKS' VISIT TO
MISS DE BROEN IN 1877.*

BY
LOUISA CLAYTON.

WITH PREFACE BY THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.

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P R E F A C E.



THE pages, following this Preface, contain a narrative as interesting and instructive, as any yet given to the world in this age of various and multitudinous composition. And as history has often been said to be philosophy teaching by examples; so here a great part of the problem of "Woman's Mission" is shewn by the life and actions of Miss de Broen.

All the women in England may learn from these singular details (what some of them have, long ago, learned among their own people) how great is the power of the female sex over the mightiest and fiercest of the human race. "A soft answer turneth away wrath;" and so, with these outcasts, manifest affection and a gentle manner abate, nay, conciliate, opposition. A woman, ay, even a young woman, earnest, decided,

persevering, rich in piety and common sense, with the love of Christ in her heart, and with a burning desire to impart it to others, becomes all but irresistible. I speak from my own experience, and from that of others more widely extended than my own, that to penetrate the depths of ignorance and misery, to break down the barriers, and prepare the way for better things, they surpass (I say it with every feeling of respect) all the ordained and unordained preachers put together, whether in town or country; and, surely, this assertion has seldom received a better proof than in the history of Miss de Broen's aggressive movements on rage, ignorance, suffering, and despair, among the Communists of Paris.

While those furious masses were still hot with the excitement of their own unheard-of outrages, and the tremendous, though perhaps inevitable severity, with which they were put down; while they were in the midst of vengeance, blasphemy, orphanage, widowhood, and ghastly privations, this young lady, unguided, unprotected, and alone, began her marvellous and Christian career.

Miss Clayton's narrative, clear, minute, concise, and deeply touching, will set its "rise and progress" before

the reader, who will rejoice that we have, amongst us, a lady so qualified to achieve these works; and another so willing and able to record them.

We may observe, with admiration and gratitude, how a superintending Providence selects his agents for especial mercies. What so unlikely as that the heart of a young and foreign lady should be stirred to contemplate the execution of such an enterprise? and what more unlikely than that she should succeed in it? nevertheless, these unlikely things have come to pass; and the very boldness and novelty of the attempt were, in themselves, arguments with the objects of her care.

It may be asked, as it has been asked on other occasions, "Why render assistance to such guilty people?" The question is not fairly put. Were they yet in arms, spreading fire and slaughter in all directions, defying the law, outraging every defence of property and life, breathing nothing but vengeance, rage, and blasphemy, the refusal to aid would be necessary and just. But they are cast down, humbled, writhing under tremendous losses, by the sword or transportation, of husbands, fathers, brothers; they are in deep poverty, without hope, barely able to subsist for the day, and wholly unable to calculate for the morrow; Miss de

Broen has seized the hour of affliction. She went there to open a "place for repentance." She found it, by God's grace—and it is our part to aid her in the rescue of so many thousands, who may yet be brought back to maintain the peace, and promote the service, of the common country.

We may hear, too, as I have often heard, "Why so urgent and liberal to other lands, when there is so much required in your own?" First, it may be replied that England, if she do her duty, has enough and to spare for both; but secondly, let it never be forgotten that England has a deep, a vital, and, as it were, a personal interest in the real, not the blustering, honour of France,—in her tranquility, her industry, her wealth, and the moral character of her people. The poor of London will gain not a little when the poor of Paris shall have become industrious and contented, obedient to the laws, to morality, and religion.

We must speak with great forbearance of the fearful retribution that was poured out on the Communists. The authorities knew, better than we can know, their dangers and their duties. But we may venture to express an earnest prayer, that after a victory so complete, and punishments so terrible, the moment of an

amnesty may be near at hand. Thousands of affectionate hearts may be restored to each other; and past revolutions may be forgotten in social peace and public prosperity.

To this blessed aid nothing will more conduce than the exertions of Miss de Broen, who will thus prove to the ruling powers in Paris, that they may safely obey the dictates of their own generous feelings, and, in extending mercy to the vanquished, add greatly to the wealth, the honour, and security of the Republic.



December 1877.

CHAPTER I.

The Waiting Time.

O for a vision and a voice to lead me,
To shew me plainly where my work should lie !
Look where I may, fresh hindrances impede me,
Vain and unanswered seems my earnest cry.

Hush, unbelieving one ! But for thy blindness,
But for thine own impatience and self-will,
Thou wouldest see thy Master's loving-kindness,
Who by those "hindrances" is leading still.

He who of old through Phrygia and Galatia,
Led the Apostle Paul, and blessed him there,
If He forbid to "preach the Word in Asia,"
Must have prepared for thee a work elsewhere.

Wait on the Lord ! In His Right Hand be hidden,
And go not forth in haste to strive alone,
Shun like a sin the tempting work "forbidden,"
God's love for souls be sure exceeds thine own.

The Master cares ! Why feel or seem so lonely ?
Nothing can interrupt real work for God ;
Work may be changed ; it cannot cease, if only
We are resolved to cleave unto the Lord.

None are good works for thee but works appointed,
Ask to be filled with knowledge of His Will,
Cost what it may ! Why live a life disjointed ?
One work throughout ! God's pleasure to fulfil !

But if indeed some special work awaits thee,
Canst thou afford this waiting time to lose ?
By each successive task God educates thee ;
What if the iron be too blunt to use ?

—From "*Heart to Heart.*"



“Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.”—PSA. xxxvii. 5.



ÈRE la Chaise is one of the “lions” of Paris ; no visitor to the French capital who is making the round of the sights should miss seeing it. It is the resting-place of the most illustrious men that France has produced during the last two centuries. Its name takes us back to the reign of Louis XIV ; for the site being the gift of his confessor, Père la Chaise, the cemetery was called after him, thus perpetuating his name to all posterity. Numbers of visitors pass through its gates every day, some being attracted either by interest or curiosity, but not a few are drawn thither by affection for some dear one whom they have loved and lost.

Perhaps no visit to the grand old cemetery has ever been productive of such great results as that of a lady whose name will occupy a prominent place

in this narrative. It was just after the memorable siege of Paris in the year 1871, that Miss de Broen paid a visit to Père la Chaise with some friends. They little knew what a sad spectacle they would witness. Only the night before, above five hundred Communists had been shot there, and the long ditch into which they fell one after the other was their common grave. The dead were buried, and out of sight; their last struggle was over,—but the living?

A crowd of women and children surrounded the spot; some had brought a little black cross, bearing the name of the lost husband or father or son; some, wreaths of immortelles, as tokens of their loving remembrance. A few were silent in their deep grief, but the most uttered cries of rage and revenge.

One poor woman was so wild in her sorrow, that Miss de Broen ventured to speak a few words of sympathy to her, adding tenderly, “It is very sad for you to lose what you have loved.” “Ah!” but said the women, “you do not know what it is; *I have lost all.*” “You have not lost the love of God,” she replied. These simple words seemed to soothe the poor bleeding heart, and thus encouraged, Miss de Broen spoke to several others, telling them that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and pointing them to Him

as the only Comforter. She also gave them some portions of Scripture, which were gladly accepted.

But her interest in these poor outcasts did not end here. On returning to the hotel, she informed Mrs A——, with whom she was travelling, that God had put it into her heart to remain at Paris, and to devote her time to these miserable people, for she felt that though guilty, they were not too bad for the love of Christ to reach them. Her proposal was received with surprise, and many obstacles were brought forward, the chief one being the want of money to begin such a work. Besides, the *Quartier* where the Communists lived was not considered safe. Even soldiers dared not enter its haunts, excepting in large companies, and for a lady to attempt to go and work there, was pronounced quite out of the question.

But that sight in Père la Chaise could not be soon forgotten, and Miss de Broen left the room with tears in her eyes, saying, “If God has put that thought into my heart, He will send the money.”

The money was sent, and in the most singular way. Very soon after this two gentlemen came to Paris to dispose of some money remaining over from the funds provided by the Society of Friends for the victims of the war. The outbreak of the Commune had put everything into confusion, and

as the money had been given solely for the relief of Paris, they came to consult with Mrs A—— as to how to dispose of it. Miss de Broen's wish was mentioned, the money was granted, and the work was begun.

But in order to enter fully into her joy at having this desire accomplished, we must look back a little at her previous history, and thus we shall see that this resolution was not the impulse of a moment, but was the result of much prayer, and of a deep and earnest desire of long standing. It was remarkable that until now every other scheme should have been frustrated.

For example, there appeared to be an opening for Miss de Broen to work in France when she was invited by the black physician, Dr. Davis, to go and help in a soup kitchen and clothing depôt established near Sedan, for the relief of hundreds of families whose homes were burnt down by the terrible war of 1870. It was settled that she should join a married lady who was also to help in the work. Travelling being still attended with difficulties, Dr Davis went on before to make arrangements, and promised to telegraph to them. The telegram was sent, but it was to tell them not to start, as Dr Davis had smallpox, and all who came from pure air were more liable to the infection. Not long after, tidings reached them of the

death of Dr Davis, and thus the whole scheme was abandoned.

Although this door had been closed, Miss de Broen's desire to work among the French was as strong as ever, but God's time had not yet come ; it may be, the instrument was not yet "meet for the Master's use." Meanwhile she continued in the Mildmay mission under Mrs Pennefather.

During this waiting time she was learning many valuable lessons for her future sphere, lessons which can only be learnt in the school of experience.

For instance, do we not all need to find out that work for God is not so much *to do great things*, as to have our eyes on Him continually to watch for His guidance, and then to follow it? The sweet psalmist of Israel expresses it thus: "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God." It was the custom in the East for the master or mistress to indicate their wishes by the motion of the hand.

In returning home one afternoon by the Metropolitan Railway, Miss de Broen, in her hurry to catch the train, jumped into a third class carriage by mistake. Her first impulse was to change, but remembering she had prayed to

be guided in the smallest matters, she remained where she was. Looking up, she saw a lady in the seat opposite, evidently a foreigner. She was very pale and sad, so Miss de Broen said to her kindly, "Are you ill?" She seemed surprised at such a question being addressed to her by a stranger, but was re-assured by Miss de Broen's simple explanation that it was God who put it into her heart to speak to her.

Then a sad tale of suffering and want was poured into the ear of the sympathising stranger. She was an Italian, and had held a good position, but had been brought low through the intemperance of her son. She went out to do needlework, but that was not sufficient to support her. For the last three days she had had nothing but bread to eat, and now she was in debt both to the baker and landlady.

Miss de Broen was glad to have it in her power, through a kind gift received that very morning from a friend, to relieve her immediate distress, and called to see her the next day. The poor lady was then quite overcome with gratitude, and said, "You have been like an angel of the Lord to me, if He had not sent you, I really think I should have committed suicide. I have been often tempted to do it, but something kept me. I have known the truth once." In spite of her own deep need, she

had taken in a poor little French boy, a refugee, friendless and alone.

Miss de Broen was so thankful to be enabled to minister to this stranger in a strange land. Is it not one of the cases of which the Lord Jesus will say hereafter, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me"?

The desire to devote herself to the work of God in France was still uppermost in Miss de Broen's mind. One morning she received a letter from a friend, who said, "Perhaps God has some work for you among the French in London." With that letter in her pocket, she went to Tottenham, to try and obtain admission for a consumptive man in the hospital there.

Her fellow-passengers in the omnibus were a French lady and her child, who could only speak very little English. Miss de Broen kindly interpreted for her, and spoke a word of sympathy, reminding her of the love of God. She burst into tears, and said, "God has sent you to me. My husband does not even know where I am, and I have no more money left, for when I left Paris during the siege we thought it would all be over in three weeks." Miss de Broen visited her afterwards, provided her with necessaries, and they contrived through the help of a friend to communicate by the balloon-post with her husband,

and ere long received both letters and money from him. When visiting her, Miss de Broen often met other French refugees, and God's Word was blessed to them also.

It was at this time that she became acquainted with Mrs A——, a member of the Society of Friends, who helped her to give temporal relief to the French refugees. When the siege of Paris was over, she was invited by Mrs A—— to accompany her and some other friends on a missionary tour in the French provinces.

This was just after the outbreak of the Commune in June 1870, consequently when the travellers arrived in Paris there was no conveyance of any kind to take them from the station to the hotel. At last, after waiting some time, a grocer's cart appeared, but it was driven by a woman. We will not attempt to describe the state of Paris at this period; indeed words fail to picture it. Public buildings in ruins, private houses riddled with holes, doors and windows broken, nothing but desolation and misery. Indignation with the Communists for this wilful destruction was the prevailing feeling, but Miss de Broen's heart was filled with pity for them. "Ever since my childhood," she says, "I have always felt a special love for the worst."

So strongly did she feel in this matter, that she

united in prayer with one of her fellow-travellers to ask God to open a way for them to begin mission work at Paris. This was just before their eventful visit to Père la Chaise, and the way in which their prayer was heard, and the needful funds supplied, has already been related in these pages.

CHAPTER II.

The Work Begun.

Il est monté comme un vil rejeton,
Et cependant l' Eternel est son nom !
Faible et petit, méprisé, misérable,
Le Fils de l'homme aux hommes fut semblable.
Œuvre de Christ ! œuvre d'amour !
Ah ! qu'avons-nous fait en retour ?

Il s'est chargé de toutes nos langueurs ;
Il a porté nos peines, nos douleurs.
Prendre la vie ou la rendre à son Père,
Tout fut pour lui sacrifice et misère.
Œuvre de Christ ! œuvre d'amour !
Ah ! qu'avons-nous fait en retour ?

C'est sur la croix qu'il a tout accompli,
Pas un iota n'est tombé dans l'oubli.
Sur lui la mort remporta la victoire ;
Mais, ô Jèsus ! mourir devint ta gloire
Œuvre de Christ ! œuvre d'amour !
Ah ! qu'avons-nous fait en retour ?

“Be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work : for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts. My Spirit remaineth among you : fear ye not.”—HAGGAI ii. 4, 5.



It is not a matter of wonder that Miss de Broen's proposition to work at Belleville should not have been approved by her friends at that time. It is true that as regards situation, it is all that can be desired. It is the highest and most healthy part of Paris, and lovely too, as the name implies,—Belle-ville. What can sound more attractive? But in spite of its pretty and musical name, Belleville is associated with all that is bad in the mind of the French. It is the capital of the Commune, and the word “Commune” is odious ; and as to the “Communists,” men speak of them with bated breath.

When the Commune was put down, every man connected with it shared one or other of the threefold fate ; they were either shot, or transported for life, or had to fly the country. Those

five hundred shot down and buried like felons in Père la Chaise were only a small proportion, and yet think of those five hundred widows, and of the hundreds of children thus left unsupported! That was only *one* scene among many others quite as fearful. At last the streets literally streamed with human blood, and in one place in Belleville the pavement was taken up, and a hole made to receive the dead bodies!

The worst was, that in many cases the innocent shared the same fate with the guilty. Thousands of women were thus deprived of their husbands or sons, and were unable to obtain any work. Even the priests and sisters of mercy shunned them in their rounds of charity. No one cared for them; they dared not say who they were,—like rats they might die in their holes. But *one* loving heart yearned over them in their misery, and stretched out a helping hand.

A novel sight was witnessed now in the streets of Belleville. A lady was seen passing to and fro speaking to the poor women, and telling them that she knew of their distress, and that if they would come to a room lent to her in La Villette they would receive fivepence for three hours of needlework; at the same time adding that her chief object was to tell them about the Lord Jesus.

Such a kind invitation sounded strangely in their ears; the greater number wondered what it could really mean, and the first time only three made their appearance. Eight came the next time, and then the numbers steadily increased. Miss de Broen was now at work in France. God had "granted the desire of her heart."

The ignorance of the poor women whom she had thus gathered round her was surprising. One day when she asked the question, "Who wrote the Bible?" a woman looked up, and nodded, and then said readily, as if a very bright idea had struck her, "C'est vous Mademoiselle" ("You did, Ma'am").

At first these poor creatures were rough and sullen; can one wonder that they should have been embittered in spirit? Many had seen their little ones pine in the cold and hunger of the siege; others had lost all,—husbands, sons, and brothers in the war, and in those last awful days of the Commune.

All had known the patient agony of lengthened starvation, buoyed by false hopes and cruel treachery, and then some had taken the power into their own hands. Goaded on by pangs of hunger, or by feelings of patriotism (as they supposed), they unsexed themselves for a time;

concealing weapons under their clothing, they attacked the soldiers unawares; some are said to have poured pitchers of petroleum down the cellar-grids of private houses in Paris,—but enough; let those horrible facts be buried in oblivion, only let us learn from them what evil lies hidden in your heart and mine; let it be a never-to-be-forgotten picture of what man is when left to himself. And mark, not the poor ignorant savage, but the civilised educated man of the nineteenth century!

Look once again at the group of women gathered at the sewing-class. Only a few months have passed, but what a change! There is no sullenness and no fierceness now, but an earnest, nay, even a softened expression. Love has won their hearts, and, best of all, the marks of a real change, through the inward working of the Holy Spirit, are seen in some of them.

We will mention one of these cases here, as it was a matter for thankfulness. A poor woman living in a small room behind a rag-shop, sent to ask Miss de Broen to visit her. She was very ill, in rapid consumption, brought on by a shock. Before she could receive any warning, her husband had been carried home terribly mutilated by a shell; both arms and legs had been shot off. He died very shortly afterwards.

Miss de Broen went to see her frequently, and gave her a Testament. She read it carefully, and, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, she learned that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

One day she seemed low and depressed, and fearing lest the enemy of souls might be trying to take away her peace, Miss de Broen asked her what was the matter, and if Satan were troubling her. "No, it is not that," she replied; "but I feel so weak, I cannot shew my joy; *but I know that Jesus loves me very much.*"

The mission, at first only a tiny plant, soon began to grow up, and to put forth branches.

The women who came to the sewing-classes began to tell at home what they heard there; then their husbands thought how they would like to hear it too. Finding that many of them really longed for gospel teaching, Miss de Broen arranged an evening meeting for them in a room lent at La Villette. Christian gentlemen conducted it, coming from Paris in order to take it. The room being near a thoroughfare was soon filled, for passers-by came in also, until about two hundred and fifty were assembled, many of whom were obliged to stand. Upon one occasion, a visitor was so struck with the earnest look of the men and women gathered there, that he said after-

wards, "I never witnessed a more interesting sight than that meeting, for the people come solely for the sake of hearing the gospel."

CHAPTER III.

A Labour of Love.

Du rocher de Jacob toute l'œuvre est parfaite
Ce que sa bouche a dit sa main l'accomplira,
Alléluia ! Alléluia !

Car il est notre Dieu notre haute retraite.

C'est pour l'éternité que le Seigneur nous aime
Sa grâce en notre cœur jamais ne cessera,
Alléluia ! Alléluia !

Car il est notre espoir, notre bonheur suprême.

De tous nos ennemis il sait quel est le nombre
Son bras combat pour nous et nous délivrera,
Alléluia ! Alléluia !

Les méchants devant lui s'enfuiront comme une ombre.

Notre sépulture aussi connaîtra sa victoire
Sa voix au dernier jour nous ressuscitera,
Alléluia ! Alléluia !

Pour nous ses rachetés, la mort se change en gloire.

Louons donc l'Éternel, notre Dieu notre Père !
Le Seigneur est pour nous : contre nous qui sera ?
Alléluia ! Alléluia !

Triomphons en Jésus, et vivons pour lui plaire !

“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.”—Prov. xxxi. 20.



MISS de Broen lived with Madame Dugand, the wife of a French pasteur at Paris, during the greater part of the first year of her mission-work at Belleville. Every morning, even in the depth of winter when the snow was on the ground, she went by omnibus to Belleville, a distance of three miles from the Champs Elysées.

Taking some cold luncheon with her, she remained there the whole day; and even when she returned in the evening, her labours were not ended, for she would bring back a bundle of wood to prepare for the sewing-class. When telling me of her efforts at that time, Madame Dugand added, “Elle travaillait avec l'énergie de dix hommes et elle a du supporter toutes sortes de persécutions.” (“She worked with the energy of

ten men, and had to bear all kinds of persecution.”)

“ The sorrow and suffering I witnessed during the first year of my work at Belleville,” says Miss de Broen, “ are beyond all description.” Sometimes I found even aged people lying on the floor, the bedstead and other furniture having been taken and broken up for firewood during the siege.

Noticing that whenever a soldier came in sight, the women turned away, Miss de Broen asked one of them why they did so. “ *Je ne puis pas voir un soldat, cela me navre le cœur,*” was her answer. (“ I cannot bear to see a soldier ; it cuts me to the heart.”)

On one occasion Miss de Broen gave a warm red flannel petticoat to a poor woman who had been very ill in consequence of the shock she received during the horrors of the siege. One very cold day when Miss de Broen went in to see her, she found that her gift had been put away, so she asked why she did not wear it. After some hesitation she said, “ Ah, Mademoiselle, if you could only give me one of another colour ; you know it is red. I have seen so much human blood in the streets, I cannot bear the sight of red.”

A poor widow was telling me only the other day

what a joy it was to her and many others when Miss de Broen came. To use her own words, "C'était comme un ange que Dieu nous envoyait. J'en rêvais." ("It was as if God had sent an angel to help us. I dreamed about her.") Then she went on to describe her distress during the siege, and how hard it was for her, who had always earned her living, to find starvation staring her in the face.

"During four days I had no food at all, then I began to burn some of my furniture, and even then I was not warm, for you see it was only a piece of the table or the leg of a chair. I have many privations still, but there are hundreds as badly off as I am. There is no trade now, and sometimes when the grand shops find out that we live at Belleville, they decline to give us work.

"I shall never forget the first time Miss de Broen came to see me, five years ago, in my little room. She prayed with me; I had never heard any prayer like it before. 'C'était comme une conversation que l'on avait avec Dieu' ('It was like holding a conversation with God'). It touched me so much, I could not help crying; and yet it comforted me. Before, I repeated a certain number of prayers every day as a duty; but now I have learnt to speak to God as my Father.

What is the use," she added, "of praying to saints, when we can go straight to God?"

In fact, prayer is now to her "the outlet of sorrow and the inlet of comfort." She delights in her New Testament, having never had one before. She said, "We enjoy the mission services, because the gospel is so clearly explained, and the hymns are in French, and not in Latin, as in the Roman Catholic Church."

But to return to our story. During the first year Miss de Broen was labouring early and late, and yet so many begged her to visit them, that it was impossible for her to do it all single-handed; and often her heart was overwhelmed at the amount of distress which came daily before her. Then she learned to live moment by moment, simply trusting God, and not looking forward to the cares of the morrow, nor even of the next hour.

Yet among so many, her work seemed like a drop in the ocean; and when she looked at the multitude around, "who were weary, and lay down, and were like sheep having no shepherd," she longed "for more labourers," and prayed that the Lord would soon send them.

Just at this time she was present at a service held by the Rev. Baron Hart in his chapel in Rue Royale. After the service, he read a letter

which he had received from an English Independent minister, who was wishing to preach the gospel among the Paris workmen, but so many difficulties had been put in his way, he began to think that it could not be the Lord's will that he should do it. He therefore asked God's children to pray that the way might be made plain in this matter.

No one in that little company could have listened to that letter with deeper interest than Miss de Broen, for she hailed it as an answer to her prayer for "more labourers." She therefore wrote without delay to Mr M'All, for that was the name of the minister, and begged him to come, saying, "that she thought the difficulties were only a device of Satan to hinder the work, and being assured in her own mind that God was about to answer her prayer, not for her sake, but that His name may be glorified," she added, "only come, and the Lord will bless you."

A few weeks after this, Miss de Broen was requested by Mr and Mrs M'All to engage apartments for them, and she says, "I shall never forget my joy in welcoming these new workers to Paris, as I longed that other parts of this great city, equally in the dark, might hear the good news which it was such a joy to me to tell in Belleville and La Villette."

Being already established in the work herself, Miss de Broen was able to make known Mr M'All's mission services among the poor.

Since then these mission services have increased and extended, and have been much blessed to the masses ; but they are not in any way connected with Miss de Broen's agency for the poor at Belleville.

CHAPTER IV.

Willing Learners.

Je veux t'aimer toi mon Dieu toi mon Père
Mon Rédempteur mon Roi
Je veux t'aimer car la vie est amère
Pour ton enfant sans toi.

Je veux t'aimer source de toute grâce
Auteur de mon salut !
Je veux t'aimer ! Tourne vers moi ta face,
Conduis moi vers le but.

Je veux t'aimer ! Jamais celui qui t'aime
Seul ne se trouvera
Je veux t'aimer ! C'est de ton amour même
Source de toute paix !

Je veux t'aimer refuge de mon âme !
Pendant les jours mauvais
Je veux t'aimer ! C'est toi que je réclame
Source de toute paix !

Je veux t'aimer ! C'est le vœu de ma vie
Le besoin de mon cœur
Mais, pour t'aimer, que jamais je n'oublie
Le sang du Rédempteur !

“Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.”—ECCLESIASTES xi. 1.

BUT to return to our story of the first year's work at Belleville. Besides the gospel meetings in La Villette and sewing-classes already mentioned, there were night schools ; and this is the origin of them. Many were imprisoned at the time of the Commune who were liberated after a few weeks, no charge being found against them ; but though not guilty, their character was lost. One man told Miss de Broen after he came home, what a trial it was to him to be obliged to depend on the jailor both to read and write all his letters, even those to his wife.

Miss de Broen says that this occurrence made her thank God for the first time that she could read and write, and she at once offered to teach any who liked to come to the night school. She

says it was a most interesting sight to see fathers and sons sitting side by side spelling out words, or patiently learning to write.

One woman who was above sixty, was a model of perseverance. When she first came to the night school she could scarcely make her letters, but a few weeks after, she presented Miss de Broen with a packet of papers written by herself. She had torn off blank half sheets from old letters, had copied everything she could find, the result was that the whole formed an amusing variety of recipes for cooking, scraps from the newspapers, intermixed with extracts from the Bible. When Miss de Broen expressed surprise that she had been able to do so much, she said with a smile, "Ah! since I have heard about the good things from you, I no longer go to my neighbours to gossip, neither do I wish that they should come to me, so I lock my door when my work is done; thus I have learned to read and write."

But all are not such apt scholars, for there is one man who has attended the night school for nearly five years who cannot yet read or write, though a pair of boots have been promised to him as a reward as soon as he has mastered the art. Does not this shew that the Frenchman who is generally so volatile may, if well led, exercise a great deal of perseverance?

Miss de Broen often sent tracts to the men in prison through their wives, and when they were released, some of them called to thank her. One who came to express his gratitude, said, "I gave up religion altogether when I was eighteen; I was disgusted with the questions asked at confession, and then I became an infidel, but my wife has told me what she has heard at your meetings, and now that I see that your faith prompts you to comfort our wives and children, I will believe in it. Very often when I was in prison, I felt distressed at the thought that my wife and children were starving, and then something seemed to comfort me. I think this must have been because you prayed for me."

From that time he began to attend the evangelistic meetings which were then held in La Villette, and were addressed by different speakers who came from Paris at Miss de Broen's request. God's word has been blessed not only to him, but also to his wife; both are consistent Christians. He told me himself that they never go to bed without reading a portion of Scripture and having prayer with the children. If very tired after the day's work, they only read one or two verses; each child says its prayer to him separately. They all come to the services and to

the Sunday school. May not many who have enjoyed religious privileges from their childhood take a lesson from them, and follow their example in having family worship?

Some soldiers attended the services, and it was proposed to have a meeting for them specially, and this was done, but only for a time, owing to the strictness of the military regulations. We have reason to hope that the good seed took root in some hearts; at least an earnest desire to know more was awakened, as the following letter signed by two soldiers of the line will testify:—

“Mademoiselle,—Excusez je vous prie la liberté que deux soldats prennent en vous adressant ces quelques lignes c’est non seulement par respect mais aussi par devoir car depuis que nous fréquentons vos petites réunions nous avons pû, grâce à Dieu, ouvrir les yeux à la lumière. C’est vrai Mademoiselle n’ayant été élevé dans aucun sentiment religieux nous n’avons pu nous rendre compte de ce qu’était la bonté de Jésus mais aujourd’hui Christ a eu pitié de nous, c’est pourquoi Mademoiselle nous venons implorer votre secours afin de pouvoir nous instruire sur la Bible et pouvoir embrasser la vraie religion. Croyez bien Mademoiselle que si nous nous permettons cette petite liberté c’est que nous avons foi dans votre zèle et dans votre grande bonté à nous enseigner ces belles vérités qui nous ont été si longtemps cachées. Nous avons l’espérance

Mademoiselle que vous voudrez bien nous accorder la Bible dans un plus grand format afin que nous puissions prendre connaissance de ces belles vérités contenues dans l'Évangile."

TRANSLATION.

"Pray excuse the liberty which two poor soldiers take in sending you these few lines. We do it not only out of gratitude, but as a duty; for since we have attended your little meetings, our eyes have been opened, by God's grace, to see the light. It is, alas! true, Mademoiselle, that not having been brought up with any religious impressions, we have never really thought about the love of Jesus, but now Christ has had mercy upon us, this is why we beg your assistance in order that we may receive Bible teaching, and be enabled to embrace the true religion. Rest assured, Mademoiselle, that we only allow ourselves to take this liberty because we have confidence in your great kindness, and in your willingness to teach us those grand truths which have been so long hidden from us. We hope you will kindly supply us with a larger edition of the Bible, so that we may learn more about the precious truths contained in the gospel."

Other interesting details might be given of the work when the mission was as yet quite in its infancy, but we will pass on. At the end of the first year a fresh anxiety arose for the devoted labourer, the funds supplied by the Society of

Friends had come to an end, and having undertaken to support a mission at Boulogne sur Seine, they could not give further help at Paris. What was to be done? Miss de Broen felt constrained to carry on the work, and the need of money was laid before the Lord in prayer.

CHAPTER V.

Step by Step.

Seigneur Jésus ! du haut de ta demeure,
De tes enfans vois les efforts nouveaux :
En mille lieux vois-les à la même heure
Te priant tous de bénir leurs travaux.

Elle jaunit la campagne du monde ;
Mais ce beau champ manque de moissonneurs
Sur ta bonté tout nôtre espoir se fonde :
Seconde, ô Dieu ! seconde nos labeurs.

Oui, de toi seul nous attendons la vie ;
Point de succès sans ton puissant secours,
Fais donc briller, selon ta prophétie,
Sur ta Sion l' éclat des derniers jours !

Saints messagers ! qui portez la lumière,
En tons climats proclamez le Sauveur ;
Il faut planter sa céleste bannière,
Cet étendard de paix et de bonheur.

Dites aux morts : Revenez à la vie !
Aux criminels annoncez le pardon ;
Aux rachetés ouvrez la bergerie ;
Rassemblez-les dans la sainte Sion.

“He set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.”—
PSA. xl. 2.



THE answer came, but in a most unexpected way. A friend, in writing to Miss de Broen from England, mentioned that she had received a letter from a gentleman (then in America), in which he spoke of his visit to her mission at Belleville; and she added, “His impression having been that you need more money to carry it on, I am willing to give some help.”

Encouraged by this promise, as well as by the advice of some well-known and experienced Christians in London, Miss de Broen went forward step by step, always desiring that it might be a work of faith. During the waiting time, of which we spoke at the beginning of this book, she had learnt some lessons which helped to strengthen her faith. One thing which the Lord shewed her

at that time was, that He sometimes uses us as instruments in order to respond to the faith of others whom we have never seen.

One day, when passing along a small street in St Giles, Miss de Broen saw a little child crying bitterly. She went up to it, and said kindly, "Are you cold?" "No." "Are you hungry?" "Yes." She looked about for a baker's shop, but there was not one near. Just then a man passed carrying a loaf. She went up to him, and said, "Will you give me part of that loaf?" The man looked distressed. "I will pay you for it," she added quickly, and put double its worth into the man's hand. "Ah, ma'am," he said, "you don't know what you are doing. I have seven children at home, and a sick wife, but she is a godly woman. The little ones were crying for bread, and I could stand it no longer, so I determined to get it *somehow* (meaning to steal it). My wife begged me not to do it, then I got work enough to buy one loaf, and now you have given me money for two!"

Miss de Broen said, "I could only feel that God had put it into my heart to comfort the crying child, and was in this way answering the prayer of the needy woman, by making it the means of the man being able to get more bread."

But to return to our story. Miss de Broen

found that the work was increasing so rapidly, that she determined to live in Belleville in order not to have to go to and fro from Paris; so she took a house, and invited ladies to come over from England and help her. From that time she has had a little band of voluntary workers always with her, who devote their time and strength to the work. It is like one happy family, for they are all partakers of the same faith and hope, and all delight in working for their Saviour.

Are there not often one or two in a large family who, having already given their hearts to the Lord, might be spared for the work? Could not some devote three months at least during the winter, if they could not remain longer? None need plead lack of gifts, there is work for all. In a mission like this, all can do something. If they are not the head, they may be the mouth, and if they are not the mouth, yet they may be the hand or the foot. In the winter especially, when the sewing-classes are being carried on, there is work enough for willing hands, in the way of cutting out or preparing the needlework for the three hundred women who attend every week. Then there is the lending library, with its eight hundred volumes to be covered, and labelled, and mended, and kept in order. Then there are the night schools, with about sixty men and boys, and eighty

girls. Besides reading and writing, they also learn English, which they are anxious to know, in order that they may take better situations. No special gifts are required for this branch of the work, and yet it is one way of influencing them for good.

Then for those who delight in visiting the poor, in Bible-classes, or in telling again and again the old, old story, there is ample scope. The fields are white already to harvest; there are open doors on every side, not only willing, but *eager* listeners; it is almost as if every one who has once heard the gospel at the meeting were saying, "Come and teach me; it is all new to me, I have never heard it before." Every visit, every class, every meeting has its special interest; indeed, in all its branches the whole work is deeply interesting.

Sometimes parents are unwilling to give up their daughters, even for a short period. One gentleman was constrained to let his daughter go to Miss de Broen, from being struck by the verse on the leaflet about the mission, entitled, "The Gospel in Paris"—

" I gave My life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might'st ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead;
I gave my life for thee,
What hast thou given for ME?"

After reading these lines, tears came into his eyes, and he said, "This is what Jesus has done for me, and I have refused to give up my child to work for Him; she shall go." Even after she had begun the work, her relatives remonstrated, saying, "When she is disappointed in love, or when she is left a widow, and has no children, then let her come!" How ready we are to offer to the Lord our worn-out services, or the fag-end of our life, when the world ceases to attract! Some of the poor people are impressed with the sight of many of the workers being thus willing to devote their best days to doing good to others. Let us not offer to the Lord that which costs us nothing.

About two years after the work in Belleville was first begun by Miss de Broen, she engaged an evangelist to come and take the Gospel addresses, and to labour among the people, and he has been there ever since. He was a colporteur at Paris, and had been most successful in gathering the workmen together at their dinner-hour, and speaking to them. He is much respected and deeply beloved by all who know him at Belleville. His visits are appreciated, and yet he never gives relief of any kind; this is his rule, and he keeps to it. He is certainly the right man in the right place, and God has prepared him for it in

a variety of ways. He is a native of Brussels, and the early part of his life was spent there. He was a devout Roman Catholic, and used sometimes to go on a pilgrimage of fifty miles barefoot. As a youth, he had to suffer many privations. On one occasion he relates that, having had no work, he gladly picked up a potato which had been thrown to the pigs, and ate it. Then he was drawn to serve as a soldier in the Crimean war. A sermon preached by a French pasteur at Brussels was the first thing which impressed him, so he began to read the Bible, and was so anxious to know the truth, that he studied it night and day for ten years ; at the same time, he says, that it was his earnest prayer, that he might not become a Protestant. At last clear conviction of the errors of the Roman Catholic church forced him to leave it, and about twenty years ago he became a Protestant.

He is thus able to deal with the people in all their difficulties, and when needful, to enter into controversy with them. Having lived at Paris for the last thirty years, he has seen three revolutions, and thoroughly understands the character of the people.

His addresses are very striking ; he has great confidence in the power of God's Word, and does not like a string of narratives. His illustrations

are all drawn from everyday life, and are thus readily understood by the people.

He conducts two meetings on Sunday, one on Monday evening, and another on Thursday evening. There is generally an attendance of about three hundred men and women. He often speaks to the patients when assembled in the waiting-room at the dispensary. He sometimes says to them, "I do not forget that I have to do here with poor sick people," and then after reading a portion of Scripture, he talks to them so tenderly, and yet so faithfully, that often many are in tears. He can sympathise with the sick and suffering, for when young he had bad health, and was twelve times in the hospital.

I remarked to him one day that he must have a great deal to do, "Yes," he replied, "I am like some one who is in haste, for the time is short." Then he went on to say, "We must work simply as in God's sight, never forgetting that He can do it all without us, and yet on the other hand feeling it an honour to be 'fellow-workers with Him.' How little we understand of the way in which God works in the soul."

He is advanced in years, and one can only pray that he may still be spared for some time to carry on the work in which God has already blessed him so abundantly, and for which he is so well adapted.

CHAPTER VI.

Belleville in 1877.

Sur la croix quel amour ! O'divines pensées !
La justice et la paix se sont entre-baisées ;
La justice outragée et qui devait punir,
Et cette paix du ciel la soif du repentir.

Quand je vois mon péché, je suis rempli de crainte,
Et rien dans l'univers ne répond à ma plainte ;
Mais sur la croix j'entends proclamer, chagne jour,
A tout péché pardon, a toute crainte amour.

Oui toujours je t'offense et toujours tu pardones,
Ni le mal que je fais, ni les biens que tu donnes,
Ne se pourraient compter ; et tu changes Seigneur,
Ma suprême misère en suprême bonheur.

“ Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy ; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”—PSA. xxxiii. 18, 19.



THINKING that it may interest my readers, I will try and describe what came under my notice respecting the mode of life and condition of the people among whom Miss de Broen is working. During this month of September in which I am writing, the poverty and destitution all round us are simply appalling. This may be traced to two causes—

1. The unsettled state of the present government.

2. The great reduction in exportation, owing to the depression in trade in foreign countries, in Russia and America more especially.

Ever since the *Coup d'etat* on the 16th of May last and the subsequent dissolution of the Chamber, the government has been so unsettled that the

large warehouses, not wishing for an accumulation of goods in case of disturbance, have not laid in their usual stock during the summer season, and thus a number of workpeople have been thrown out of employment, and those who are retained only receive half their usual wages, but are glad to remain even on these conditions, rather than be without work like so many others.

The effects of this stagnation in the larger branches of trade are felt in the smaller ones also, and react specially on Belleville, this being the *quartier* of Paris where the workpeople of the great city are congregated. The population of Belleville, numbering some fifty thousand, is composed almost entirely of petty tradesmen, and of artisans employed either by the day or engaged in a variety of small trades at home.

Among those I visited were makers of feathers and feather trimming, artificial flowers, buttons, fringes, combs, brushes, and various *objets de luxe*.

Numbers of these articles are made for exportation, but this being also at a low ebb (as I mentioned above), there is no demand for them at present.

Even when it can be had, the payment given for needlework is not a living. One franc (tenpence) per day is all that can be earned by an active woman, whose husband is either dead or in prison

as a Communist, and who has probably little children depending on her; and this in the face of higher prices than the poor of London have to contend with, both as to food and rent, in consequence of the heavy taxation since the war.

The 14th of October, the day fixed for the elections, is looked forward to most eagerly by the people, and we trust that work will no longer be so scarce after that; but even then the struggle will not be over. For the last seven years the poor of Paris have been more or less under the crushing hand of poverty; in fact, ever since Miss de Broen began to work among them, she has found numbers of families in want and distress.

It must be clearly understood that this dire poverty is not the result of either drunkenness or idleness, as is, alas! the general rule in our populous towns in England. Drinking is not the *curse* of the people, as it is with us; cases of intoxication in Paris are the exception, though since the siege they have been on the increase, many having thus vainly tried to forget their misery. Thus the French workman has a clear head and sharp wits, his beverage, which is generally the light red wine of the country, having none of the stupefying, degrading effects of malt liquor when taken in any quantity.

Then as to the other cause of poverty,—unwillingness to work,—this is not one of their faults. As a people, they are naturally industrious; most of the women have learnt some small trade while young, and are thus able to do something towards the support of the family.

It is sad to see numbers who are unwilling to eat the bread of idleness, forced to do so through lack of employment. Many walk about for hours vainly seeking for work, which they are ready to do, but which is not to be found. Only those who go in and out among them can have any idea of the distress. Many of the more respectable ones conceal it as long as possible, and even when they speak of it they often add, “But we do not wish it known.” Meanwhile the mission-workers notice that one piece of furniture after another is disappearing, then the little home begins to look bare, and very soon another is sought where the rent is lower, because there is only one room, and even that is out of repair. Then one article of clothing after another follows the furniture to the *Mont de Piété* (pawnbrokers),* and the worst is, that

* Some of my readers may not be acquainted with the origin of the institution of the *Mont de Piété*, so I give the following quotation from an account of Bernardino of Sienna, who lived in the beginning of the fifteenth century:—“One of the attributes with which he is represented, is the *Monte di Pietà*, a little green hill composed of three mounds, and on the top

hundreds of families being reduced to these extremities, the pawnshop is now so overstocked, that in many cases fresh applications, if they be not very advantageous ones, are refused; and thus, when this last resource fails, they are well-nigh driven to despair!

Many of the people are literally starving. So fearful is the distress, that several have been on the very verge of self-destruction. Indeed, only a week ago, a man living within a few doors of the Dispensary was in such great want, that he could bear it no longer, so he put an end to his existence by suffocating himself with the fumes of charcoal, and was found dead in his room. Two days after this another man, only in the next street, committed suicide for the same reason. It is scarcely needful to add, that had we only known of these cases in time, every effort would have been made on their behalf, though the lady visitors are already quite overwhelmed with the distress which

either a cross or a standard on which is the figure of the Saviour, usually called in Italy a Pietà. He is said to have been the founder of the institution still called in France *Mont de Piété*, originally for the purpose of lending to the very poor small sums on trifling pledges, what we should now call a Loan Society, and which in their commencement were purely disinterested and beneficial. In every city which he visited as a preacher he founded a *Monte di Pietà*, and before his death these institutions had spread all over Italy and through a great part of France."

they have witnessed daily during the past year, and which it is impossible to relieve by private means.

The question will be raised at once, "Why do they not go into the Union?" There is no institution in Paris answering to our workhouse, and there are no poor-rates. The parish relief which in our country is dispensed impartially to all who need it, is chiefly in the hands of the Sisters of Mercy, who give or withhold it as it pleases them. In fact, ever since the sad days of the Commune, the poor of Belleville have seen very little either of the sisters or the priests, being looked upon as unworthy of their succour and pity.

It is a case of "give a dog a bad name, and hang him," for politically the conduct of these people during the last six years has been all that could be desired.

The police, who regard the mission merely from a social point of view, frequently say to the workers, "You are helping us: you are moralizing the people: there is improvement already: it is a good work."

Paris has its charitable organisations, but they can scarcely meet such a need as the present one. There are almshouses for the aged, but the applicants on the books waiting for admission are

so numerous, that many have but little hope of success. In some cases they wait two years, that is, if they do not die in the meantime.

Of late years the number of suicides in Paris has increased to an appalling extent. In 1873 it is computed that *five thousand* committed suicide, while in 1822 there were *two hundred*. One man told the evangelist that his wife and children were starving, because he had no work, and that he was on the point of committing suicide, "but," he added, "I happened to open the Bible, my eye fell on that passage which tells of judgment to come, and I dared not rush unprepared into the presence of the Judge."

That number, five thousand, is most startling; but let us remember their condition, "without God, and having no hope," added to this the misery of seeing their wives and children starving, and having no work, their own life has become a burden to them.

The question comes home, Would not many of these five thousand have recoiled with horror at the thought of such a deed, if they had known what the Bible says of "the life of the world to come"? The light of God's Word having always been withheld from them, many of them thought no doubt that "the future could not be *worse* than the present."

In England we too often see that poverty and wastefulness go hand in hand, but the French housewife is a good manager, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

Home-Life.

A WIFE'S PRAYER FOR HER HUSBAND.

Lord, he is weak, and cannot stand alone ;
I dread his falling 'neath a world's cold frown :
O hold him in Thy hand, Thou Mighty One.
Hold Thou him up !

Help him to work right gladly as to Thee,
And make him always good and kind to me,
And in his face may I Thy image see
Reflected bright !

Thou knowest all the toil he daily bears,
Thou knowest all his worries, griefs, and cares,
And Satan's arts to catch him, and his snares ;
Hold Thou him up !

Lest any hurt him, keep him night and day ;
Lead him in Thine own paths ; be Thou his stay,
And ever guide him, lest he go astray ;
Hold Thou him up !

And may I, Lord, his help-meet ever be,
A faithful wife while here Thou sparest me ;
Until Thou callest us to dwell with Thee,
Lord, hold us up !

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”—
ECCLESIASTES ix. 10.

OWEVER poor, the French mother of a family looks far more respectable than the English one in exactly the same circumstances, ay, and even with less to spend on her attire. Let us look at her as she goes out with a basket upon her arm either to the shop or market. Her dress, which is of some dark stout material, is made with a full plain skirt, and a loose jacket; perhaps she may wear a blue striped apron, which she will not fail to put on if her dress be shabby in front. A hole is never allowed, but she will patch and mend till the very last. The petticoat is also tidy, though in some cases it has become literally a coat of many colours, being patched with a variety of pieces. What is her head gear? Not a small pretence of a bonnet, with soiled ribbon and flowers, but a snow-white muslin cap,

with strings tied either behind or under the chin ; and oh ! how becoming it is ! In the winter (and in Paris the cold is severe), she wears a merino hood, which looks so comfortable, and it is no doubt a preventive against neuralgia and many other aches. But we must inspect her from head to foot. As she trips along, we notice her stout leather boots, and if we catch sight of her stockings (which we may easily do, as the dress is not allowed to sweep the streets), we shall see that they are knitted by her own fingers. What French hands have done, English hands may still do.

Having drawn a picture of the French mother among the working-classes, let us look at the young woman as she goes either to church on Sunday or to her place of business. Her dress, which is made without trimming of any sort, fits her beautifully ; she wears neither hat nor bonnet, but her hair is so neatly arranged that no other ornament is needed.

The children, too, look tidy, for a checked blue pinafore, with sleeves fastened at the wrist, covers the dress entirely, and is easily washed. Then instead of a straw hat, which is so soon in pieces, they wear nothing on the head, excepting in the winter, and then they appear in a hood.

The French mother understands so well the

maxim, "What can't be done by pushing or striving, may oft be done by a little contriving."

For instance, we know one woman who is very poor, and has only one set of underclothing. How does she manage? Well, she rises very early, before anyone is astir, and washes, and dries, and irons, and makes as good an appearance as if she had a stock of clothes. We must admit that the supply of water at Paris is much more plentiful than in London, and even in the poorest quarters there are public baths at a low price.

In visiting the poor at Belleville, I was surprised never to find them in the midst of washing, or to see clothes hanging out to dry.

When I went to see a *Lavoir*, or public wash-house, then the mystery was divulged. The unpleasant process of washing is not accomplished here by magic any more than in England! No,—there were the tubs and the soap-suds, and about a hundred women rubbing and beating and rinsing. The charge per hour is one halfpenny, and two-pence for six hours, and they pay a halfpenny for every tub of hot water; there is a drying place also. This is a great saving of labour and of firing, and is a special boon, when, as is often the case, one room is the abode of a whole family.

The French cookery is proverbial, and even the

very poor seem to understand the art. About two hundred years ago, when the Huguenots (French Protestants) were compelled to take refuge in England on account of religious persecutions, they gave us one good hint at least on the subject. Until then ox tails had been thrown aside as useless, but they made them into excellent soup. The poor in Paris can seldom afford meat, but when able, they buy odd pieces, which they dress so daintily as to make quite a savoury dish. Their staple dish consists of soup made from bones, with plenty of vegetables in it; and if they cannot get bones, they substitute pieces of bread soaked in hot water, with fat or grease. They use haricot beans very plentifully, and cook them in a variety of ways; they are most nourishing. In the summer, they make a small fire of wood and charcoal on a tripod, which is put out when the cooking is done. It is a popular idea that the French are not good mothers, but the workers here, who have every opportunity of seeing the state of things, tell me that this is quite a mistake. With rare exceptions, the children are well cared for and kindly treated, and in time of want the parents often deprive themselves of food, in order to give it to them.

During the last few months of extreme poverty the medical missionary has sometimes refrained

from giving tonics to the poor people, because they only create an appetite. One woman, whose husband is transported, being asked how she was, said, "I am better, but so hungry; I feel as if I could eat anything, but I must keep the bread for the children."

The sewing-classes instituted by Miss de Broen, when she began the mission in the autumn of 1871, have been carried on ever since, and there are some who tell us, with evident satisfaction, that they have attended from the first. In 1873 the numbers had increased so much that many had to be sent away, the room where they assembled being too small to accommodate all.

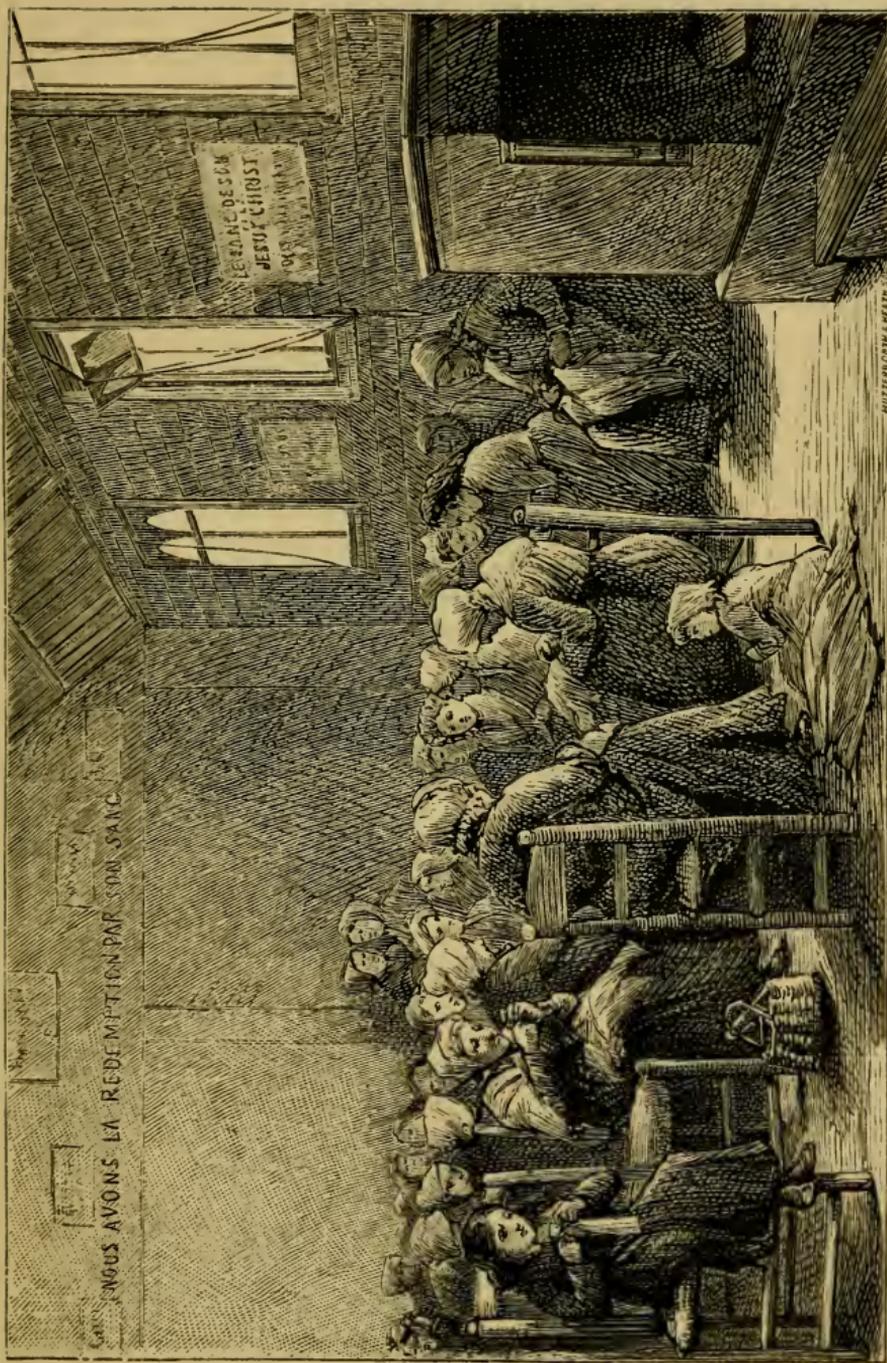
One cold wintry day when the snow was on the ground, those standing outside were squeezed in somehow or another, till a hundred and forty-five were assembled. Then the lady presiding over the meeting was so touched by the half-starved, pinched look of the poor women, that she contrived to give them each some coffee and bread before they dispersed. This was quite a surprise, and when told to put away the sewing half-an-hour before the time, they were puzzled to know the reason. It came out afterwards that some thought they were all to be searched for a reel of cotton which had been missing on the previous occasion!

The sewing-classes are now held in the Iron Room on Tuesdays and Fridays from one o'clock till four P.M. The object is to give employment to the aged and to those in real need. Material is provided, and fivepence is paid to each for the three hours' work.

Many poor widows are almost entirely supported by this means. One of them was found with literally nothing in her room, not a chair nor a table, and with only a sack to lie on, borrowed from a neighbour. Another, who was starving, was saved from death by being told of this class, and of course obtained special relief. Many wait an hour at the door before it is opened. The fivepence is given in tickets for meat or bread. Many ask for the latter, because they have no fire to cook the meat.

During the first hour the Bible is read and explained, with hymns and prayer. As there are about two hundred women each time, the expense is very great, being an outlay of about £30 per month. This is considered the most desirable way of dispensing the charity of the mission. It would be a great help if friends would buy the clothing thus made, and either give it for the poor at Belleville, or distribute it among their own people.

The sewing-class is only open during the winter



"The Sewing Classes are now held in the Iron Room."

See page 64.

months, but there is a mothers' meeting the rest of the year. On Wednesday evening Miss de Broen has a Bible-class for men and women ; and many are so anxious to know the Bible, that they are ready both to ask and answer questions, which is the best way of learning.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Effects of God's Word.

“ABSOLVO TE.”*

“Jesus said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peacc.”—

LUKE vii. 50.

One Priest alone can pardon sin,
Or bid me “Go in peace,”
Or breathe that word, “Absolvo te,”
And make these heart-throbs cease.
My soul has heard His priestly voice,
It said, “I bore thy sins : Rejoice.”

He shewed the spear-mark in His side,
The nail-prints on His palm :
Said, “Look on Me, the Crucified.
Why tremble thus ? Be calm !
All power is mine ; I set thee free,
Be not afraid ; “Absolvo te.”

In chains of sin once tied and bound,
I walk in life and light ;
Each spot I tread is hallow'd ground,
Whilst *Him* I keep in sight
Who died a victim on the tree,
That He might say “Absolvo te.”

A girded Levite here below,
I willing service bring,
And fain would tell to all I know
Of Christ the Priestly King ;
Would win all hearts from sin to flee,
And hear Him say “Absolvo te.”

“A little while,” and He shall come
Forth from the inner shrine,
To call His pardoned brethren home ;
O bliss supreme, divine !
When every blood-bought child shall see
The Priest who said “Absolvo te.”

* “Absolvo te” (I absolve thee) are the words used by the Roman Catholic priest when he assumes the divine prerogative of forgiving sin.

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”—PSA. xix. 7, 8.



IT is difficult for those who have had the Bible in their homes all their lives to enter into the feelings of those who possess it for the first time, or to realise what it is to them when they first hear it read and explained. Some describe the effect of God's Word taking hold of them as if their whole being had been stirred mightily, to others it comes like a light streaming into their dark hearts, or like good tidings of great joy. Some, like the blind man, can only say, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” There is such reality in all whose hearts are awakened, or whose interest is stirred. They can only tell what they feel in their own simple way. They know none of the set phrases of religion which have, alas!

become such current coin in England as almost to have lost their true ring. They often express it thus: "Je suis changé, tout est changé, ma vie est changée." ("I am changed, all is changed, my life is changed.") And it is a fact, for with them faith and works go hand in hand—

"So let our lips and lives express
The holy Gospel we profess."

They really love the Bible; the truth is to them like a treasure-trove. One woman said to me, "I never go to bed without reading God's Word, and I always put it under my pillow; I like to have it close, it gives me such peace and comfort." Many others do the same. Then they not only read it themselves, but they teach it to their children; family prayer becomes a regular practice in the home. They do not keep the good news to themselves, but they speak of it to the neighbours, and entreat them to attend the meeting. Their desire seems to be that others should share their happiness.

A poor woman who came to the dispensary expressed a great longing to have a Testament, but had not enough money to pay for one; however, she brought what she had, and the remainder was made up by the gift of another poor woman who, having bought a Testament for herself, left fivepence, saying, "Let it help some one else to

get one." It is touching how they try to help one another in distress, giving out of their *poverty*.

Again and again when the question is asked, "What impressed you at the meeting?" the answer is, "C'était la Parole de Dieu." ("It was God's Word.") They listen to it as a message from God himself to their souls.

One dear woman collects all the children living near, and brings them in a band of eight or ten to the Sunday-school, hearing them their verses on the way. To her great delight a class has now been given to her there. "I should like to be helping forward God's work *every* day," she said to me. She is one who has already received the Lord's Supper, and several are asking to do so.

The demand for Bibles is so great that it would be impossible to *give* them, so the people buy them at a reduced price; but some being too poor even to do this, about two dozen New Testaments have been put into the lending library, and they are always *out*. They do not read it as a duty, but they value it as the Word of God, "which is able to make them wise unto salvation." They do not keep it as a book for Sunday only, but often have it at hand when they are working. One woman declined a tract offered by the lady visitor, saying, "I do not need a tract now, for I have a Bible."

In order to help the young men who are mem-

bers of the Bible-class held every Saturday evening, reference Bibles have been lent to them, and they take pleasure in using them and comparing passages.

We must not forget that for the people here to come forward as *Evangeliques* (lit. Gospellers), as they call themselves, is no light matter. Even those who are simply readers of the Bible have to count the cost. Their path is by no means smooth or easy, but often beset with difficulties and even with persecution. It is no small sacrifice even in a temporal point of view, for they probably lose any gifts dispensed by the Sisters of Charity, and are despised by their neighbours.

One woman being told that if she went to hear the gospel any more, she would receive no more relief, replied, "Cela m'est égal, j' aime mieux venir pour l'Évangile que de recevoir leurs dons." ("I do not mind ; the gospel is dearer to me than their gifts.")

The aim of the mission is primarily to lead the people to Christ by teaching them that He is the only Saviour and the only Mediator. The work is purely evangelistic. As soon as the light of the gospel shines into a soul, the result is, that of their own accord they leave the old form of religion for the reality found in the simple gospel.

Being convinced of the error, they rejoice in the truth, and are thankful to receive bread for their souls instead of poison.

In many cases, especially during this time of poverty, we can truly say that "they have received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."

"Ah!" said one who had often been in want of food, and sometimes even in danger of starvation, "it is so different to bear hunger with Christ, and to bear hunger without Christ."

At the close of one of the meetings a woman stayed behind. She was evidently under deep impressions, and asked earnestly, "What must I do to be saved?" It was the first time she had heard the gospel, and of her own accord she knelt down and cried for mercy. Three or four weeks after this she found mercy, and became a true Christian. Some time afterwards one of the workers, not knowing her history, asked her after one of the meetings if she had understood what had been said about the gospel. "Ah!" she replied, "I see you don't know that I *found my fortune here!*" and yet she a very poor woman, and often in want of food.

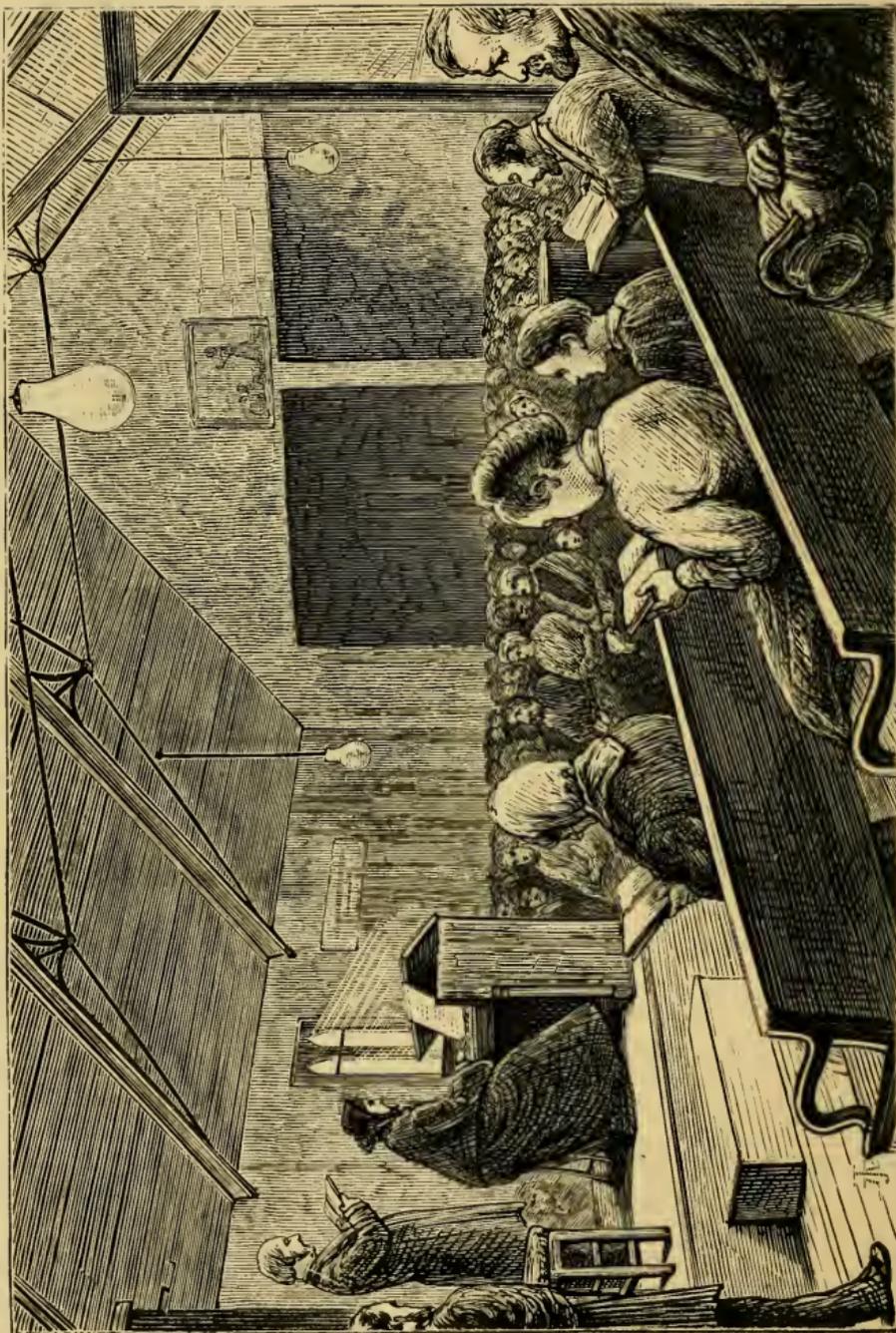
But it is not all equally encouraging. The evangelist told me that in one of his visits he went to see a cabinetmaker, and after some con-

versation, the wife having said that she was a Protestant, he asked if they had a Bible. "Oh yes," was her reply. "But where is it?" he inquired. "Somewhere up there," said the man, pointing to a pile of furniture. After some search the Bible was found, and was lifted down, wrapped in a calico covering. The scissors were then brought into use, for the fact was, the cover was sewn up! This being undone, the wife produced a beautiful Bible, with marked satisfaction. "But," said the evangelist, "this book is of no use to you unless you read it;" and then he began to speak to them solemnly about God. Whereupon the woman, laying her hand on her husband's shoulder, said, "Mon bon dieu, c'est lui." ("My husband is my god.")

"If that is the case," said the evangelist, "your god will be taken from you, for it is a god of flesh."

After saying a few solemn words, he left. Less than a month afterwards, when passing the house, he saw the woman, and was going in, when she burst out furiously, "Go away, *you* have been the cause of my loss." Then he learned the solemn fact, that since his last visit her husband had been taken from her, having died after a short illness.

The Iron Building was opened in June 1876, amidst great rejoicing, and the full meetings and large classes gathered there from that time prove



“ Filled with the poor, listening attentively to the Gospel.”

how greatly it was needed. Should my readers ask whether this be still the case, I would refer them to the summary of the mission work given at the end of this book, and they will see that week-days as well as Sunday it is fully utilised. In fact, the whole mission work is carried on there, with the exception of the medical mission, and meetings in connection with a low district, to be mentioned presently.

The money spent upon it was certainly well invested, and is bringing in high interest, as regards benefit bestowed on the poor. In fact, the whole mission is carried on with a minimum of expenditure, and a maximum of good done. In many cases, alas! we see just the reverse.

The cost of the Iron Building, not including the price of the land, was £700, to which must be added £55, the charge for the duty on iron entering France.

This sum was collected from poor as well as rich, and was the result of much real generosity and self-denial. How glad those kind helpers would be if they could look in some afternoon or evening, and see the well-lighted and comfortable room filled with the poor, listening attentively to the gospel, or singing some of the beautiful hymns.

It holds 400 in all, and is separated into girls' school, infant school, and meeting-room, by divi-

sions which are easily folded back when the whole space is required. The many visitors who have seen it have but one opinion as to its excellent arrangement and workmanship. It was constructed by Messrs Croggan & Co., of London, and they sent over their own men to erect it. In fact, the French workmen would have been fairly puzzled had they been called in, for it is the only iron building at Paris, excepting one at Passy, which was also sent over from England; and the good people there fearing that it would tumble down, have added large props outside! Thus the iron room at Belleville has been quite an object of curiosity and interest to the people of Paris.

Amidst much steady improvement and progress in the work, those engaged in it are often saddened when they see many still living without faith in Christ, although they have heard the gospel for several years.

Still, when one looks back upon what the people were only six years ago, Miss de Broen may certainly thank God and take courage. There has been more self-restraint and social order. In an address given three years ago, the President of the Social Science Congress spoke of Communism as *one of the great facts of the age which ought to be studied*, but he did not indicate any cure for that social disease. Perhaps the little band of workers

at Belleville who are quietly devoting their lives to the mission, have, after all, solved the problem which puzzled the great statesmen, not how to stamp out Communism by main force, but how to lead its agents away from a life of crime and revolt, to something higher and nobler, by giving them that Book which not only teaches self-restraint, but also shews where and how the needed grace may be obtained.

It may be asked, Why should not the French Protestants carry on the mission among their own people ?

We must acknowledge, alas ! that this is a time when the cause of vital godliness is low in France. Where once forty per cent. of the population were counted on as Protestants, now there are barely two per cent., and even in this small remnant there are divisions.

It seems, therefore, as though help must come from without. The following letter from a well-known Frenchman shews how acceptable that help has been :—

“ Je m'estime heureux de joindre mon témoignage à tous ceux qui ont déjà recommandé l'œuvre de Miss de Broen, et de payer, comme Français, ma dette de gratitude à la Chrétienne dévouée qui a osé, au lendemain même de nos désastres, sur un terrain deux fois ravagé par la guerre et par la Commune, entreprendre cette

œuvre que Dieu a bénie. Veuille le Seigneur conserver à cette chère sœur la force dont elle a besoin pour continuer cette œuvre laborieuse, et puissent les Chrétiens de France, en voyant tout ce que nos chers frères Anglais ont fait et font tous les jours pour repandre l'Évangile dans notre pays, se sentir émus à jalousie, et contribuer à leur tour aux charges d'une entreprise dont tous les frais sont pour l'Angleterre et dont tous les fruits sont pour nous.

ROSSEEUW ST HILAIRE,
De l'Institut de France."

TRANSLATION.

"I am glad to join my testimony to that of all who have already recommended Miss de Broen's work, and, as a Frenchman, to pay my debt of gratitude to the devoted Christian who, on the very morrow of our disasters, and upon a soil twice ravaged by war and by the Commune, dared to undertake this work which God has blessed. May the Lord preserve the strength required by this dear sister to continue this arduous labour, and may the Christians of France, seeing all that our dear English brothers have done and are doing daily to spread the Gospel in our country, be moved to jealousy, and contribute in their turn to the expense of an enterprise whose every cost is borne by England and every fruit is reaped by us."

The last few years many of the French, and those in large towns more especially, having lost faith in "the religion of the priests," as they call

it, have become either *libre penseurs* (free-thinkers), or totally indifferent. For example, this is the case as regards more than half of those whom the workers come in contact with at the dispensary. They say, "How can we believe in what the priests teach, when they do not believe it themselves?" or, "The questions asked at confession are disgusting."

The two points on which the priests insist, are the confession and the sacrifice of the mass, because it is in them they assert their priestly power.

It is to be regretted that confession is compulsory before the rite of marriage can be performed by the church. As there are many men and women who do not choose to confess, they can, by paying 30 francs (24s.), obtain a paper signed by the priest stating that they have confessed!

There is one other alternative; if they are willing to be married at the Chapelle des Indigènes, the above paper is supplied for one franc and-a-half, but to pursue this course is in fact to declare themselves *paupers*. As many shrink from this, and yet cannot afford thirty francs, numberless cases of immorality are the result.

Can we wonder that many should turn away from such a system, in which, for the sake of money, their so-called *religious leaders* openly lend their

hand to a written lie, for it is very evident that the paper thus signed by them is nothing else?

Miss de Broen is thankful that many, through hearing Gospel truths, have come forward to be married. A poor woman, now dying, has begged that the rite may be performed in her room, as she cannot be happy until she has been married.

It is a current saying in France, "Nous avons une religion dans laquelle l'on peut tout acheter." ("We have a religion in which everything can be had for the buying.") Many go so far as to say, "C'est une religion d'un Dieu qui s'achète." ("It is a religion about a God who can be bought.") Is it surprising that they should add almost with bitterness, "It is a religion for the rich, and not for the poor," for they know full well that absolution, indulgences, masses for the dead, may all be had by payment.

A poor little orphan boy, a member of the night school, went one day to the priest to ask that some prayers might be said for his poor mother, who had recently died.

"The charge is ten francs," said the priest; "have you the money?"

"No," replied the boy, "but I will earn it, and pay you later: *do* say the prayers;" adding, with tears in his eyes, "It was mother's last wish."

"Ah!" said the priest, "that won't do. I have

been taken in so before, and I won't be taken in again."

Before closing this chapter, we must mention the gift which has been presented to every *concièrge* in Paris. Every house, however grand it may be, is let out either in apartments or in flats; that is, one family occupies a suite of rooms on a floor. Close to the front door there is a small room where the *concièrge*, or porter, is to be found, whose business it is to inform visitors on which floor the family lives, or to receive messages and parcels for them. This system extends to every house, even to those tenanted by the poorest families, only in some cases the *concièrge* has charge not of one house, but of a whole court. These *concièrges* are expected to be always at their post, and have therefore very few opportunities of attending divine service.

No special effort had been made hitherto for their spiritual well-being, until last summer, when a Parisian lady offered to give a New Testament to every *concièrge* in Paris; and the Toulouse Society made her a grant which enabled her to buy them at half price. Thus for the sum of £1000 she procured 50,000 copies in large type and neatly bound, and presented them to the *concièrges* in memory of her brother.

On the fly-leaf of each copy there was the following inscription:—"Cet exemplaire vous est offert en don par une dame de Paris en mémoire de son frère avec le vif souhait que vous reconnaissiez, comme elle, dans ce livre précieux, le seul vrai guide de ce qu'il faut croire et faire pour être disciples du Christ et avoir part à son œuvre de salut dans cette vie et dans l'autre." ("This copy of the New Testament is offered to you by a lady of Paris as a gift in memory of her brother, with the earnest wish that in this precious book you may find, as she has done, the only true guide to what we must believe and do in order to be Christ's followers, and to be made partakers of His work of salvation, both in this life and in that which is to come.")

By this means there will be a copy of God's Word in every house in the great city. There is an old saying, "Paris is France," and if the Gospel gets something like a foothold there, it is impossible to estimate the blessings which may be in store for that unhappy country.

With very few exceptions, the gift has been received with gratitude. Miss de Broen's lady workers undertook to distribute five hundred copies. In some cases the *concièrges* expressed surprise at such a free gift being presented to them by a lady whom they had never seen.

One asked, "Is it Madame Thiers?"

Another said, "Are you quite sure that it is for me; you know I live at No. 16, perhaps there is some mistake?"

One who was out when the lady left it, could not believe that it really was for her until she had asked the *concièrge* next door, and finding that she had one, she believed that it was for her, and accepted it.

Does not this afford a simple illustration of the manner in which so many regard God's gift of salvation? How few receive it in all simplicity as a free gift to the needy sinner! How few recognise that *they are sinners*, and therefore the very characters who have a right to claim it!

CHAPTER IX.

The Little Ones.

NUL N'EST TROP PETIT.

Nul enfant est trop petit
Pour la route étroite,
Quand le Seigneur l'y conduit,
Marchant à sa droite
Même le plus jeune cœur
Pent être un temple au Seigneur

Ce sont aussi les petits
Que Jésus convie,
Et dont les noms sont inscrits
Au livre de vie.
Dans les parvis éternels,
Dieu reçoit ceux qui sont tels.

Puis dans les concerts des cieux
Les voix enfantines,
Uniront leurs sons joyeux
Aux hymnes divines :
Petits et grands, d'un seul cœur
Loueront alors le Seigneur.

“Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”—MATT. xix. 14.



AMIDST all her efforts for fathers and mothers, Miss de Broen does not forget the little ones. Almost from the beginning of the mission the children were gathered together on Sunday.

Later on, two of the lady workers noticed a number of children running about wild in a waste piece of land in the back part of Belleville, where there was an encampment of huts. Gathering these little city arabs round them, they began an out-door school, consisting of two classes, the girls in the one and the boys in the other. After a time, when the cold weather came on, the little school adjourned to the room where the sewing classes and night schools were held. Now, there is a well organised Sunday school of about one hundred and fifty children, held in the iron

building. Each child present receives a text-card, and when they have four, they are entitled to a picture tract, such as the *Ami de la Maison* (the French form of the *British Workman*), or *Le Rayon du Soleil*.*

Miss de Broen superintends the school, and one or two in each class are called upon to repeat the verses of Scripture which they have learnt, and questions are asked. In the adjoining room there is a Bible-class for women, and they come into the school for the closing hymn and prayer, and stand up and repeat the texts which they have learnt. This is a most interesting sight, and when one remembers that the Bible is quite a new book to many of them, it is delightful to think that they are storing their minds with the words of Scripture. They seem to value "the pure milk of the word" all the more, because, until now what they have heard has been adulterated with man's additions.

Another interesting feature in the Sunday school is, that among the teachers there are three working men and one poor woman, who, having themselves received the truth through the mission, have thus offered to help.

* These excellent papers are warmly recommended by Miss de Broen. They are compiled by Miss Blundell, who would be thankful if people in England would take them in for their families, as this would enable her to increase their free circulation among the French poor.

The first who came forward in this way was a man who had been attending the services regularly for more than a year. Noticing that he had a Bible, one of the ladies asked him how he came to possess it. "Oh!" he replied, "I bought it from a colporteur some time ago, because I thought the poor fellow looked as if he needed a franc. The first time I came to the meeting, finding that the book is used here, I hunted it out, and have read a good deal of it."

About two months ago he asked to be allowed to say a few words at the evening meeting, and the following is the simple testimony which he then gave to about two hundred men and women in his own rank of life :—

"I have been coming to these meetings for a long time, as several of you know, and have listened to the addresses, as many of you do, without applying the teaching to myself, without realizing that I was the sinner to whom God sent the message of salvation. But one day I asked myself the question 'What must I do to be saved?' and then I found that I must simply take Christ as my Saviour, and since then I have received pardon and joy and peace."

This man is in a good situation now, and his employer places entire confidence in him ; he is a consistent Christian in every way, and has family

prayer in his home night and morning. He teaches regularly in the night school, which is no small act of self-denial, after his day's work. His wife has also received the truth, and only a short time ago she said, "Je suis bien heureuse depuis que le Christ est venu chez nous." ("I have been so happy ever since Christ came to our home.")

Another of the volunteer Sunday-school teachers is a young man, and is one of the cases in which the night school has been a means of good.

It is always closed with singing and prayer, and a verse of Scripture is taught in every class; many of the young people are thus drawn to attend the services.

But to return to the Sunday school. One of the scholars, a boy of fourteen, has been persecuted where he worked because he came to the services. One day when he was taunted about his mother's poverty, he replied, "My mother is poor in the things of this world, but rich in the grace of God." The mother is a widow, and this is her only son. They have been in the deepest poverty, during which she had a severe illness; it was then that she first learned to know Jesus as her Saviour; and she still speaks with gratitude of the frequent and kind visits of the lady workers. She is trustful and patient now, but before, as she says, "I was very rebellious."

Sunday at Paris is the chief day for buying and selling, and unless they are holiday-making, the people work as usual. This poor widow said, "I used to work all Sunday before I was converted, and one evening I would not go with my boy to the service, on account of the work." Then he said, "Mother, don't you remember that God created the world in six days, and rested on the seventh?" I replied, "Don't worry me." "Well, I finished the work, but received no more either on Monday or Tuesday." Then my boy said, "There, mother, it is all because you worked on Sunday."

This poor woman is very needy, and was obliged to go without food for three days in order to pay her rent. "When I feel weak and weary," she said one day, "then I take my Bible and read a little, and that comforts me."

In the summer of 1876 a day school for girls was opened in the Iron Building, and the number on the books at present is about one hundred. The parents of these children had for some time expressed a wish that they could receive Protestant instruction. The schoolmistress is certificated, and an earnest Christian. At first the children were so wild, her task was by no means an easy one, but she has them in good order now, and I was pleased with the answers they gave in Scripture and other subjects.

Some were so ignorant when they first came that they hardly knew the name of God, others had been taught the Romish catechism, but they repeated it like parrots, without understanding the meaning.

The Roman Catholics omit the second commandment, so in order to make up the right number, the tenth commandment is divided into two. Now and then the children express surprise when they notice the difference, and then the schoolmistress says, "That is what *man* teaches, but this is what *God* says."

It is at present uphill work for her, but she has a few encouragements. There was one little girl who always looked so dull, that the mistress feared she had learnt nothing. The child was absent through illness, and when she went to see her, the mother said, "She is always repeating the verses and hymns she learns at school, she is so good and so easy to nurse."

The school is free, as no payment is received in France in national schools. A school for infants is to be opened next month in the Iron Building, a wooden partition separating it from the girls' school.

Another effort made for the young is the training of girls for service, as Miss de Broen hopes by this means to keep them from the bad influence

of the workshops, and to supply the demand for French nursery-maids in England.

There are twelve under training at present ; the greater number of them live at home, and go during the day to the house of the sewing-mistress, who teaches them plain work and the elements of dressmaking. They also receive instruction in the Bible, and in reading, writing, and arithmetic. They take it in turns to learn household work under Miss de Broen's servants in the morning. One of them is an orphan, and entirely under Miss de Broen's care, and is saving up her money to buy a wreath of immortelles for her mother's grave.

Little Berthe's life has been a very sad one. Her mother being a widow, and too ill to work, the child was sent out to lead an old blind man about the streets, and was thus often in low cafés and bad company.

One cold wintry day the poor woman came to the dispensary, and the doctor saw at a glance that she was in the last stage of consumption. When the lady visitors went to see her in her home, they found her in a very small room, without fire or candle, and when she could bear the cold no longer, she used to crawl across the street to warm herself by a neighbour's fire ; she said she was willing to die if only some one would care for her child.

The lady visited her frequently, telling her the simple gospel message; she also gave her a New Testament, which she read eagerly. One day the poor woman said, "Oh, that I had only known it before; I hope to be able to read it through before I die." At last she became so weak and helpless that she was sent to the Protestant Deaconess' Hospital, where she died shortly, but rejoicing in the Lord. Her little orphan girl and the evangelist followed her to the grave, and then Berthe was taken into Miss de Broen's home.

Twice a-week a dinner, consisting of a bowl of soup and bread, is given to about forty destitute children. This is a great boon, as we can see by one glance at the poor little pinched faces. Some have become so accustomed to a short allowance that, when they first come, they are quite satisfied after taking only part of the soup, but very soon the appetite returns, and the little starving one begins to improve in looks. Before the meal they each repeat the following grace:—"Père celeste, bénis notre repas, et fais nous tous devenir tes enfants, pour l'amour de Jésus Christ. Amen." ("Heavenly Father, bless this meal, and grant that we may all become Thy children, through the love of Jesus Christ. Amen.") After the meal they sing a hymn, and repeat texts.

CHAPTER X.

Twofold Healing.

THE PHYSICIAN'S HYMN.

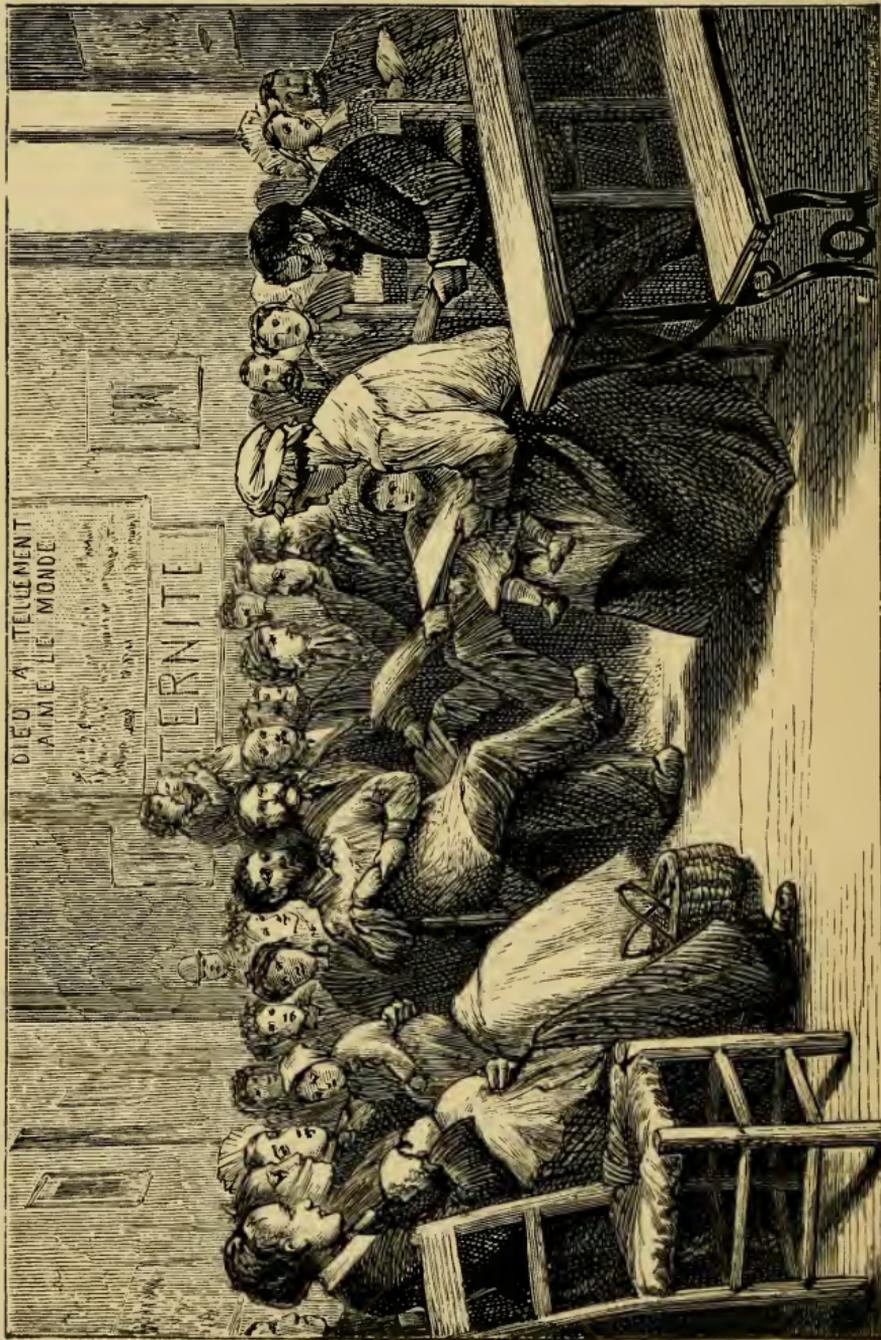
Physician, friend of human kind,
Whose pitying love is pleased to find
 A cure for every ill ;
By Thee raised up, by Thee bestowed
To do my fellow-creatures good,
 I come to serve Thy will.

The friendly properties that flow
Through nature's various works, I know
 The fountain whence they came,
And every plant, and every flower
Medicinal, derives its power
 From Jesu's balmy name.

Confiding in that name alone,
Jesus I in Thy name go on
 To tend Thy sick and poor ;
Dispenser of Thy medicines I,
But Thou the blessing must supply—
 But Thou must give the cure.

Afflicted by Thy gracious hand,
They now may justly all demand
 My instrumental care ;
Thy patients, Lord, shall still be mine,
And to my weak attempts, I join
 My strong effectual prayer.

Oh ! while Thou giv'st their bodies ease,
Convince them of their worst disease,
 The sickness of the mind ;
And let them groan by sin opprest,
Till coming unto Thee for rest,
 Rest to their souls they find.



"The patients gather together in the waiting-room for a short service."

“The people followed Him : and He received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.”—LUKE xi. 11.



THE most prominent feature in the work at Belleville is the medical mission. It is the only one in this great city of Paris ; so now, as in olden times, many of the sick and suffering “come from afar.” If you look into No. 12 Rue Piat any week-day morning, excepting Wednesday or Saturday, you will find a group of men, women, and children, gathered together at ten o'clock to hear a simple gospel address, and to join in singing hymns. It is the old, old story—man's ruin and God's redemption—told again and again in all simplicity and earnestness. Do they listen ? Yes ; and many of them lean forward with mouth and eyes open, and literally drink in the word. Tears will often flow ; it is a new story to many, for it is the first time

they have heard the gospel message. Having heard it once, many long to hear it again, and are thus drawn to the mission services.

The average attendance of patients at the dispensary during the last six months has been about three hundred and fifty every week. The waiting-room will only hold one hundred and thirty, and sometimes on Monday (when the numbers are higher than on any other day), it is literally full to *overflowing*, for some, alas! have to be sent away for want of space.

After the short service, each one goes by turn into the consulting-room, receiving advice and medicine gratis. The woman who gives the entrance-ticket also dispenses the medicine, assisted by one of the lady workers. While the patients are waiting their turn to see the doctor, two or three of the ladies go about among them, speaking to them individually and distributing tracts. The names and addresses are all taken down, and the people are visited as much as possible in their own homes.

On one occasion a lady was reading the parable of the Prodigal Son to a patient who had come for the first time. When she came to the verse, "I will arise and go to my father," the poor woman, laying her hand on the lady's arm, and looking up into her face, said eagerly, "But perhaps the

father will not receive him?" "Wait, and we will see," was the answer. She listened with the deepest interest, and tears began to flow when she heard the end of that beautiful parable which has brought conviction and peace to so many wanderers.

Since the siege, consumption has been greatly on the increase, from want of nourishment and stamina; paralysis and ulcers are also more frequent.

Many cases of spiritual blessing, as well as of bodily cure, might be recorded, but one or two will suffice.

An old man came to be treated for two burrowing ulcers in the arm; he acknowledged that he had never cared for religion, and had been most ungodly. After hearing the address at the dispensary, his interest was so much stirred that he began to attend the mission services in the iron building. He bought a New Testament, and soon afterwards his eyes were opened by the Holy Spirit, and he received the truth. There was striking evidence of a complete change in him; indeed, as he himself said, "*Je suis tout changé,*" and laying his hand on his Testament he would add, "This is all my comfort now."

He suffered acutely, and his wife being obliged to go out to work, he was often alone the whole

day, and "yet I never feel lonely," he used to say; "Jesus is with me, and when I cannot sleep at night, then I read His word." He was truly taught of God, and his rapid growth in new life was surprising. On the days when the medical mission is not open, the lady who helps in the dispensary used to go to his house and dress his arm. She told me it was quite a refreshment to her to visit him, for he had really learnt to know Jesus in all his fulness, his love, and blood, and justifying righteousness, so they communed with each other about the things of God. He was pressed to confess to the priest, but he firmly refused, because, as he said, "It is God, and not man, who can forgive sin." The lady visited him during five months, and then he died of bronchitis and dropsy. He was in great suffering towards the end, but always rejoicing, longing to be with the Saviour, whom he had learnt to love and trust.

A young couple were noticed constantly at the meetings in the Iron Room; the man always leading the wife, for she was blind. They were in great poverty, as he had been thrown out of work through the employer becoming bankrupt. The poor woman has lately been at the dispensary, and the doctor hopes that sight may be restored to the left eye.

One of the ladies spoke to her about blind

Bartimeus, and what faith he had in Jesus. "If it be the Lord's will," said the poor woman, "I shall get my sight, but if not, the light which has shone into my soul is far better than the light around." Her husband joined the men's Bible class. It is held every Sunday afternoon, and is conducted by the evangelist. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the portion which they are considering at present. The chapter is studied at home, and then read verse by verse in the class; after this the men ask for an explanation of any verse or passage which they have marked because they did not understand it. By this means they learn to think for themselves, and gain an intimate knowledge of the Bible.

The Belleville medical mission was set on foot in order to meet a pressing need. There was a great increase of illness among the poor, consequent on the siege, and Miss de Broen felt anxious to do something, if possible, to relieve the numerous cases which were daily coming under her notice. In the year 1873, when staying at Edinburgh, she spoke of it to some friends; and then one of them suggested a medical mission as the best and most effectual means of relieving the sick and suffering. He also gave her an introduction to some of the members of the medical missionary society there, and they kindly guar-

anted the salary of the medical missionary for two years, in order to give it a start. Thus Scotland had the privilege of doing for Paris what she has done for London and other towns,—sowing the medical mission seed, which, taking root, springs up and bears fruit abundantly.

After the first two years, the salary of the medical missionary, as well as the other expenses of the dispensary, fell upon Miss de Broen. These are now considerable, the medicine alone for such a large number of patients being a heavy item.

The present medical missionary, Dr Burroughs, is much liked by the people, and many speak gratefully of his skill and kindness; some bring him little presents as a token of their gratitude. They value real sympathy and consideration, and like to feel that they are neither despised nor forgotten. We cannot fully estimate the value of the many opportunities thus given to the Christian doctor of leading the suffering one, through the needs of the body, to think of the deeper needs of the soul. This is the principle of medical missions, and it is a divine principle; for it was the one adopted by our Lord himself during His earthly ministry. He was the Healer and the Teacher, and was ever recognised as such; for great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. His followers have not

only His example in thus combining the preaching and the healing, but also His express command, "Heal the sick, and say unto them, 'The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.'"

Eighteen hundred years have passed away since that command was first spoken, but it is still found that practical sympathy with human suffering is the key to unlock hearts otherwise closed to the truth; for however insensible man may be as regards the needs of the soul, he is never insensible as regards those of the body. We find in the medical mission a special mission for a special want, its object being twofold. First, to win souls to Christ; secondly, to relieve the sick and the suffering.

Should not a work so much like the Master's be dear to all God's children?

In many cases distress of mind is the cause of illness, so that one of the means of relieving the body is to seek to comfort the burdened one by telling of Him who says, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?"

The blood of Jesus whispers peace within."

Again, to lead the patients to the Good Physician of souls is to go to the root of the matter, for if they had the fear of God before their eyes, there

would not be half the amount of sin, and therefore not half the amount of sickness.

The medical mission is not a new plan or a modern idea ; it is the very oldest of all the many means which have been tried to reach the sinful and the ignorant. It is remarkable that it is only within the last half century that the old method has been revived, and during this time it has been crowned with success both at home and abroad. Perhaps no evangelistic agency has met with such hearty and universal sympathy, for those who do not value it as a means of winning souls, fully appreciate the benefit conferred in a temporal point of view.

We all know what sickness means ; we all find it very hard to bear. If this be the case with those who have soft beds and easy-chairs, and luxuries innumerable, what must it be with those who are flesh and blood like ourselves, and yet have to go through it all without any comforts—*comforts*, did I say ? ay, often without the common necessities of life.

The heart of the world will break, if no voice can tell of relief ; the sadness of the world will be unbearable, if no voice soothes its pain ; the slumber of the world will be deadly, if no voice speaks to awaken it. The medical mission is one of the many voices now telling of health and

salvation, and in its double ministry of love it seeks to confer on the poor the twofold blessing of bodily and spiritual healing. A French writer has given a true picture of it in the following lines:—

“ Partout portant un peu de baume à la souffrance,
Aux corps quelque remède, aux âmes l'espérance,
Un secret au malade, au partant un adieu,
Un sourire à chacun, à tous un mot de Dieu.”

Before leaving the Belleville medical mission, my readers may like to hear of one more case in which the twofold healing has been conferred.

About three months ago a most miserable-looking man presented himself at the dispensary. He had been very ill for some time, and the parish doctors had given him a certificate stating that they could do nothing more for him, his case being incurable. Having a wife and three young children, this was bad news for him. He heard of the medical mission, and thought he would try it, and through God's blessing, the remedies relieved him so effectually that he was soon able to resume work, and he now says with gratitude, “ Monsieur le médecin m'a rendu la vie.” (“ The doctor has saved my life.”) He is employed in a printer's shop, and is a very intelligent man. When he came to the meetings in the Iron Room, he was specially struck with the portions read out of

God's word. He asked for a Bible, and to use his own words, "I was six weeks groping after the truth before I believed; now it is a firm conviction in my heart; no arguments would alter my opinion."

One verse which arrested him forcibly was, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Then he said to himself, "Moi, je suis bien plus fou que ce fou là, car je sais qu'il y a un Dieu et pourtant je ne le sers point." ("I am much more of a fool than that fool, for I know there is a God, and yet I am not serving Him.") He is a diligent student of God's word, and sometimes reads a verse twenty times in order to grasp its full meaning; and whenever the lady visitor calls, he asks the explanation of some passage which he cannot understand. One day when I called, I found him making a collection out of a library book of all the texts quoted in it, thus shewing his tenacity for God's word.

In speaking of his former life, he said, "I was brought up as a Roman Catholic, but when I saw what the priests were, I left off going to mass, and became quite indifferent. It was, however, only three years ago that I gave up their religion altogether. We were living in the country then, and I was very ill, and the doctors gave no hope of my recovery. One day the priest came in and

said, 'I know you have no liking for religion, but if you will allow me, I will come and visit you as a friend.' He sat down and talked, and when he left, put some money on the table. Two hours after the *Sœurs de Charité* arrived, bringing gifts. For about six weeks the priest came every day, never made the slightest allusion to religion, but always left me money. The sisters visited me constantly, but never spoke of it either; they kept on showering down meat and bread and other things, until we had far more than we required. At last one day I was much worse, then the priest said, 'You must confess to me.' 'No,' I replied, 'I have been quite willing to see you as a friend, but I will not confess.' From that time we saw him no more: the priest, the sisters, the gifts, all disappeared. Then we saw clearly that all this had been done as a bribe, and we were quite disgusted when we found out that their object had only been to buy us over. It was evident that the priest did not really believe in his religion, otherwise, how could he have paid forty visits to a sick man, and despaired of by the doctors, as I then was, without making a single allusion to religion? When he did ask me to confess, I knew very well that he did it as a duty to satisfy his conscience. After that," continued the man, "my wife and I both gave up the Roman Catholic faith, and were entirely with-

out religion until we found the truth in God's Word." Their neighbours remark how happy they look now, and how changed they are.

This man has a great desire to tell others about the "good news," and in compliance with his special request, a small class in the Sunday school had been given him to teach.

CHAPTER XI.

Changed Ones.

Je suis scellé pour la gloire
J'avance vers mon pays,
Ecoutez tous mon histoire
Et l'amour de Jésus Christ.

J'étais mort dans ma misère,
Sans Dieu, sans espoir, sans foi
Un jour j'appris, ô mystère,
Que Jésus est mort pour moi.

Son amour que rien n'arrête
Brisa mon cœur endurci ;
Maintenant ce cœur souhaite
D'en guider d'autres vers lui.

J'ai passé par mainte épreuve
Depuis que je suis à Lui
Mais en tout j'ai vu la preuve
De son amour infini.

Maintenant Sauveur fidèle,
Remplis moi de ton amour ;
Qu' animé d'un nouveau zèle,
Je te suive chaque jour.

“He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God : many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.”
—PSA. xl. 3.

 ONE day I went to see a very poor home, but a very happy one, a true picture of poverty and cheerfulness. The poor man is in deep decline, and receives medicine at the dispensary. He said to me, “I think it has done me some good, but now I have peace in my soul that seems to soothe the body and relieve the suffering. My wife heard of the service in the Iron Room last year, and went one Sunday afternoon ; she came home so delighted that she persuaded me to go that very evening, and ever since Christmas day we have really believed in Jesus.”

The “good seed” had found its way into different soils ; in one case it was indifference, and in the other, ignorance. The man had been brought up in the Roman Catholic religion, but, as he

himself told me, "I did not believe in the teaching of the priests; how could I, when so many of them do not believe in it themselves? They preach about the Virgin Mary and about the saints, but not about Christ. When I saw that their religion was so much in superstitions and in miracles which are all false, then I gave it up altogether, and became totally indifferent. Before we came to the mission and read God's word, we were living like the beasts which perish."

His wife was sunk in ignorance and darkness. Having lost her parents in early childhood, she had been tossed about in the wide world like a waif on the ocean. Since she was seven, she had had no one to care for her or to give her religious teaching. She had only been to church twice in her life, once to make her first communion, and once when she was married. This "making their first communion," as they call it, is considered almost indispensable for their prospects in life. It is generally brought forward as a *sine quâ non*, in order to their being received into apprenticeship.

God's grace has wrought a marked change in this poor woman; her character being naturally impulsive, and her temper violent and unrestrained, she has had a great deal to overcome. "Before I was converted," she said, "I used to

rush all over the town for work ; if I found it, it was well, but if not, then I blasphemed ! *Now*, whatever happens, I ask God to keep me calm, and when I look to Him, it is restfulness and peace. He gives me grace to resist when the evil is very strong."

On one occasion having noticed that she was not in her usual place at the Bible class, her lady visitor called the following morning to see her. When she opened the door the poor woman exclaimed, " God has sent you, for we all went to bed without food last night." " Je ne pouvais pas venir à la réunion car j'étais méchante, bien méchante." (" I could not come to the meeting, for I was naughty, very naughty.") " We had no food all day, and in the evening I took my husband's best coat to the pawnbroker, but as he would not even give me three francs for it, I could not leave it. I came home and told my husband ; he was quite calm, but I was very rebellious, and I could not pray, and that was why I did not go to the Bible class."

The following letter written by this poor man to one of the ladies during her absence from Belleville will shew how God's Spirit has taught him " the truth as it is in Jesus " :—

" le 15 Avril 1877.

" Vous nous avez vus dans une grande détresse.

Maintenant de jour en jour nous sommes plus heureux car Jésus a eu pitié de nous. Il nous a pardonné nos péchés. Il est mort pour nous pour nous réclamer de la mort éternelle. J'étais bien malade vous m'avez fait voir le médecin de l'âme. J'étais dans la tristesse, Il m'a donné la joie. Il m'a guéri beaucoup plus que le médecin du corps quoique le médecin m'a fait du bien et m'a mis en état de travailler.

“Grâce soit à notre Seigneur qui nous a sauvés des damnations éternelles car nous étions des grands pécheurs. Je suis votre conseil, je sonde les Ecritures et je m'en trouve bien. Votre départ a laissé bien des regrets. Chaque fois que votre sœur nous visite nous faisons la prière tous ensemble et nous lisons la Bible.

“Ma femme vous remercie de tout son cœur de ce que vous lui avez fait. Elle a acheté une Bible pour que je lui lise les passages de l'Ancien Testament. Tous les dimanches les lundis et les jeudis nous allons entendre la Parole de Dieu à la réunion.”

TRANSLATION.

“When you first saw us we were in great misery, but now from day to day our happiness increases, for Jesus has had mercy upon us. He has pardoned all our sins. He died to save us from eternal death. I was very ill, but you spoke to me of the Good Physician of the soul. I was in sorrow, He gave me joy. He has healed me more completely than the earthly physician; although the latter has done me much good, so that I am able to work.

“The Lord be praised, who has saved us from eternal damnation, for we were great sinners. I follow your advice ; I search the Scriptures, and I find a blessing in reading them. We all regret your departure. Every time your sister comes to see us we all pray and read the Bible together.

“My wife thanks you heartily for all you have done for her. She has bought a Bible, in order that I may read some of the Old Testament to her. Every Sunday, Monday, and Thursday, we go to the meeting to hear the Word of God.”

One evening, seeing him at the meeting, Miss de Broen said to him, “You are so delicate, you ought not to expose yourself to the night air. You had better not attend these meetings.” “Oh,” he replied, “it is like a ray of sunshine to me to come here, and as there is no more hope of my recovery, let me come. I do not fret over my perishing body now, for I have all things in Christ, and I shall soon be with Him for ever.”

They have only one child, a delicate little boy of seven. His age is a key to one cause of that pale pinched face and dull expression, “C’est un enfant du siège.” (“He was a baby at the time of the siege.”) Alas ! this is quite a current saying now, for many little ones still bear the marks of privation suffered then. There was no food suitable for children ; wine and coffee were the only

articles not sold at famine prices. The bread, if such it could be called, consisted of small black rolls, which were often scarcely eatable, being mixed with straw and other things.

One child died of fright; the family had taken refuge in the cellar during the bombardment. One poor woman whom the ladies visit is quite deaf, owing to the noise made by a shell which burst in her house. If her mouth had not been closed at the moment, the concussion on the drum of the ear would not have been so violent.

One morning I noticed a bright little woman in the waiting-room of the dispensary, and she told me her history in her own simple way. No doubt many have passed through similar difficulties.

“I belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, and attended regularly. I seemed to get no good from the preaching; it was like a flow of words, and I forgot all that was said as soon as I left the church. For a long time I had a great fear of death. I was taught that when I confessed and went to the communion, my sins were taken away, so I used to think that if I could only die directly after that, then all would be right. I thought if I died sometime after, with sins unconfessed, I should be lost. I used to be so perplexed and troubled, I could not sleep.

“About fifteen months ago my husband bought

a Bible, and gave it to me, saying, 'There, you can read for yourself, as you are so anxious to know the truth.' I opened it in Leviticus, and read part of a chapter about leprosy. I cannot understand this, I thought to myself, so I put the book away.

"About six weeks afterwards, my husband heard of the mission services, and so he said to me, 'You had better go; you may hear something good, the priests only teach you lies, they twist and turn the Scriptures to suit their own purposes.' So I went.

"That evening the evangelist spoke on the text, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' I cannot tell you what I felt; I saw *then* what I had so long wished to know, how it is that all sin can be taken away."

She is now an earnest Christian. She said to me one day, "I want to know my Bible thoroughly, so as to give a proof from it at once if any of my neighbours ask me a question."

We find an injunction on this subject in the Epistle of St Peter: "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

Her husband is still in a sceptical state of mind, and this is a great trial, for he cannot bear to see her praying. He works all day at home, cutting

cameos ; and as they have only one room, she has to watch her opportunities to kneel down. It is remarkable that he should not only have given her the Bible, but that he should have wished her to attend the meetings. He has lately joined the men's bible class, and we trust that her prayers for his conversion will soon be answered.

One meets with a variety of characters in visiting the poor of any great city like London or Paris.

In a small attic room in a court behind a grand street of shops, we found a poor man who is one of the medical mission patients.

The story of his life is very interesting. He is a Belgian, and when only a youth he joined the order of the Monks de la Trappe, but did not take the vows for life. One of the rules peculiar to this order is absolute silence ; they are never allowed to speak, excepting to the superior. They live on vegetable food, and work in the fields. Our friend belonged to the choir, so part of his duty was to chant the mass every day ; and so, as he says, he knew all the hundred and fifty psalms by heart in Latin without at all understanding them.

When he had been there five years, a scandal arose in the monastery, and he and all the other novices were sent away. He then went to a monastery on the borders of Spain, where he

intended taking the vows for life, but finding the monks very different from the holy men which he had imagined them to be, he gave it up altogether.

He afterwards found his way to Paris, where he worked as a marble-cutter. After a long illness, being unable to pay the doctor any more, he went to the medical mission dispensary.

The first morning, while waiting his turn among the patients, one of the lady-workers spoke to him. He refused to listen, saying, "he did not believe in God," but there was such a look of melancholy and despair on his face as he said it, that she continued speaking, and before she had finished, he was listening attentively.

Soon afterwards she visited him in his home, and spoke to him again about his soul. When she offered him a Testament to read, he said, "I would rather have a Bible; I want to read the psalms, to see what they are like in French. I only understood a word or two here and there when I learned them in Latin." Another time when she was speaking of peace through the blood of Christ, he said eagerly, "Oh, if only I had it!"

Now he has found it; he reads the Bible diligently, and expresses a great wish to go to the Lord's table. In speaking of this, he said, "I find in God's word that Christ was *once offered* for

sin, but the priests want us to believe that the sacrifice is repeated at every celebration. I know now," he continued, "why the priests keep the Bible from us; it is because they do not want us to have our eyes opened, and to see for ourselves. I have learnt that it is impossible to win heaven by good works, but Jesus has bought it for us with His blood. He has paid the debt. Why should I go to the priest and confess, when I know that I have Jesus always near me, and I can talk to Him?"

His wife is still halting between two opinions. She attends the meetings, and is anxious to receive the truth. At the same time, she is so fearful lest she should be lost if she forsakes the Roman Catholic religion, that she does not know what to do.

We wonder at this blind dependence in priests and in fellow-sinners; but is it not deeply rooted in human nature? Do we not all in some form or another trust to a man-made mediator who cannot save, until the truth sets us free?

A few days ago a lady offered to take a poor paralysed man for a drive. He has been a prisoner to his room for ten long years, and so she thought it would divert his mind to see a little of the outer world. He thanked her for this kind offer, but said, "Please let my first drive be to the

dispensary ; I want to tell the patients what God has done for my soul."

His case is a most interesting one. He is only forty-two, a fine-looking man, with well-built frame and a most intelligent face, but he is as helpless as a baby ; every part of his body, excepting his head, having lost power and all sense of touch. The doctor fears that he will lose his sight, which will be a terrible affliction. His sufferings are so intense that when the pain comes on, his screams re-echo through the house.

His malady was brought on by exposure to cold during the Crimean War. One night he and two other soldiers were out in the trenches. It was a terrible awakening for him, for he found the covering frozen to the ground, and both his companions frozen to death at his side.

Owing to heavy expenses during his long illness, he is now reduced to great poverty. His wife, who has hitherto earned enough to keep body and soul together by polishing spectacle frames, is now laid low by fever, and confined to her bed. It was a pitiable sight indeed to see this worthy but helpless couple.

It is only three months since they were first visited by the mission workers. The poor man was then in such great distress, that he had been often on the point of committing suicide, the

knowledge of a Supreme Being was the only thing that kept him from doing it. He was an infidel, and his wife very ignorant about religion. A Testament was lent, and they read it diligently. The Holy Spirit has wrought powerfully in them, and they are both true believers.

One can certainly learn a lesson in seeing their patience and cheerfulness amid the greatest privations, and these must be especially trying, from the fact that they have known better days.

The man is intelligent and thoughtful, but he has received the kingdom of God "as a little child." One day he said to his lady visitor, "You know it is all new to me, you must teach me as you would teach a little child. You have known it all your life, but I am only just beginning."

After he had been reading the New Testament for some time, he said, "I see that this is a book which we cannot understand unless it is spiritually explained; it needs to be explained to us by God himself." A friend has given him a large Bible which he is reading with deep interest; he and his wife have prayer together every night.

Although he cannot move from his chair, he is a missionary in his humble home, for he has been cheering another poor man who is threatened with the same complaint. In his own simple

language he has told him the way of salvation, and it has been a blessing to him, for he, too, was so unhappy that he nearly destroyed himself. Is it not touching that these two afflicted ones should thus encourage and comfort one another?

CHAPTER XII.

Outcasts Gathered In.

“ Call them in ! ”—the poor, the wretched,
Sin-stained wanderers from the fold ;
Peace and pardon freely offer,
Can you weigh their worth with gold ?
“ Call them in ! ”—the weak, the weary,
Laden with the doom of sin ;
Bid them come and rest in Jesus,
“ He is waiting, call them in ! ”

“ Call them in ! ”—the Jew, the Gentile,
Bid the stranger to the feast ;
“ Call them in ! ”—the rich, the noble,
From the highest to the least.
Forth the Father runs to meet them,
He hath all their sorrows seen ;
Robe and ring and royal sandals
Wait the lost ones—“ Call them in ! ”

“ Call them in ! ”—the broken-hearted,
Cowering 'neath the brand of shame ;
Speak love's message, low and tender,
'Twas for sinners Jesus came.
See ! the shadows lengthen round us,
Soon the day-dawn will begin ;
Can you leave them lost and lonely ?
Christ is coming—“ Call them in ! ”

“ Call them in ! ”—the Master waiteth,
Save them from the snares of hell ;
Rest ye 'neath the blood-stained lintel,
Of the grace that seeks them, tell.
Hark ! upon the crowded highway,
And amid the city's din,
Sounds a child's voice, sweet and solemn,
“ Oh, be sure and call them in ! ”

“Then the master of the house said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.”—LUKE xiv. 21.



STANDING behind the grand streets with their gay shops and large houses, there are courts crowded with the poor, and being thus hidden away from the public eye, their existence is almost entirely ignored, for when they sally forth they manage, by keeping up a respectable appearance, to conceal their daily struggle with poverty.

But there is a *deeper depth* still, for Paris has its Seven Dials as well as London. In one part of Belleville we find low narrow dirty streets, and alleys, and wretched abodes, in fact, a nest of the worst characters! It seems that when they were ferreted out of their miserable huts in 1866 to make room for the picturesque park of the Buttes-Chaumont, they took refuge in the nearest streets,

so that the neighbourhood did not get rid of these dregs of society.

The Buttes-Chaumont were formerly vast plaster quarries, but the Emperor Napoleon wishing to give the people employment, transformed them into a public park. It is beautifully laid out, and covers an area of fifty-five acres. There is a lake with an island in the middle, on which is a representation of the celebrated Temple of the Sibyle at Tivoli. Across one part of the lake there is an elegant suspension bridge. Among other attractions we may mention a grotto ornamented with stalactites. The park being on an elevation of 240 feet above Paris, commands a splendid view of the whole of the city and its forts.

For some time past these wretched people have found their way to the dispensary, and have thus become known to, and been visited by, the mission workers.

It was only a month ago that two or three of the lady visitors resolved to make a special effort to carry the gospel into this den of iniquity,

Accordingly, one Sunday afternoon they invited a few of the people to come to one of the courts to hear about God. After hymns had been sung and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah had been read, one of the workers gave a short address on the words, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

It was a strange scene. At first only a few men and women in tattered garments gathered round them, then gradually one head after another was poked out of the windows above. Very soon a staircase outside one of the houses was filled, then a small balcony crowded with hearers began to groan under their weight, and certain ominous creaks sounded by no means agreeably in the ears of the speakers below, who were in momentary fear lest the whole should come down with a crash. However the meeting passed off quietly, and without any mishap.

Most of these people being in real want, a soup kitchen was started in that district. The keeper of a small wine shop kindly offered to lend his shop for it. The beginning being thus made, Miss de Broen now rents the shop, the proprietor having removed to another street.

The soup kitchen is open twice a-week,—on Wednesday and Saturday,—the people paying one penny per quart. Before it is given, they assemble in the shop to hear the Bible read and explained, and to sing hymns. The numbers increase every week, as it is becoming better known.

The little meeting begun in the court is now held every Sunday afternoon in the wine shop. It is indeed a rough set of men and women who are thus gathered there. Many are in rags; some

are so unkempt, that they look quite wild. There are outsiders, too, who will not yet venture in, but stand at the open door listening attentively. The shop will only hold about forty, and seats are scarce, so during the meeting no children are admitted, but they are so eager to hear that they stand patiently at the open door listening. Then their turn comes, for, when the meeting is over, the shop is rapidly transformed into a ragged school.

The children, numbering about fifty, are divided into classes. I never had a more interesting set of little girls to teach, nor more attentive scholars.* A spectator would, no doubt, have smiled at our arrangement. The other seats being all in requisition, my class sat upon a table, and I was in front of them behind the counter. Two or three men came in with their bottles to buy wine, but finding that a change had taken place, they beat a hasty retreat.

In glancing round at the group of hearers at one of the meetings, I was struck with the appearance of one man especially; he looked poor, and yet he was tidy, his black cotton blouse covering all defects. There was such a calm, earnest expression on his face, and, as he sat there with

One answer was striking. When I asked, "Qu'est ce que c'est qu'un pécheur?" ("What is a sinner?") one child looked up, and said gravely, "C'est moi." ("It's *me*.")

his eyes fixed on the speaker, he seemed to be drinking in every word. When the children came in, a class was given to him, and, gathering the little ones round him, he was overheard teaching them simply, but clearly, how Jesus died to save sinners.

During the week I went to see him; his home consists of one small back room behind one of the streets in that bad district. Opening the door, I found him seated on a low stool cobbling, with a group of children round him. The Gospel of St Luke lay open on the window-sill in front of him, and he was teaching them to repeat the verses about the Child Jesus being left behind at Jerusalem.

The scene reminded me of another cobbler, John Pounds, who first started ragged Sunday-schools, and in the same way. This was not an imitation, for our friend has never heard of him; it was only the outcome of an earnest wish that those little ones should learn to know the precious words of God's own book.

As I entered, the teaching was stopped, and two of the children,—a boy of seven and a girl of five,—were brought forward and introduced to me as his own, then, pointing to a little urchin of ten, he told me that he had rescued him from the streets, and given him a shelter out of pity, and hoped to teach him his trade. The rest were children

belonging to the neighbours. Truly, I thought, here is one bright light in this dark spot. But when I heard his history, my surprise was increased. It was as follows:—

“I lost my wife nine months ago, and since then I have been ill, and often unable to work. At last we were so poor I did not know what to do, and then I made up my mind to drown myself and my two children.

“One Sunday evening about two months ago, when the temptation was very strong, I was walking about near the Iron Room, and some one asked me to go in. I said to myself, as there is nothing to pay, I may as well go and hear. The evangelist was preaching; God’s Word took hold of me. I cannot tell you what an impression it made upon me.

“When I went home I put the children to bed, then I knelt down and prayed. I told God all. I asked Him to forgive all the sins I confessed to Him, and all those I had forgotten. The next morning I rose early and prayed again, and ever since then I have been changed. It is the Holy Spirit who has opened my eyes, and every time I go to the meeting I ask Him to open my eyes, and my ears too, so that God’s Word may be a message to my soul. Every day I ask that I may receive a little more of the Holy Spirit. Now I want all my neighbours to know the good news; how I

should like some day to go about and speak to them. You see I am only thirty, I have a whole lifetime before me."

One of his neighbours whom he has brought to the meetings is a venerable looking old man with a white beard, and his face beams with joy as he listens.

Although our friend the cobbler is still quite as poor as he was before, he and the children are clean and tidy now.*

One day he said to me, "I am so thankful to have got a little work. Many a time lately have I gone to bed without food, but God is so good he sends me help never too soon, never too late, but always just at the right time." Then, he adds brightly, "Even if I am hungry, I do not mind it so much; for now that I have the peace of God in my soul, I seem to be able to do without other things so much better. It is all so different."

In telling me about his early life, he said that he had been brought up by his aunt, who was a strict Roman Catholic, but, he added, "I gave it up, because I felt sure confession was not right; and then I had no religion at all till I found the truth in God's Word."

* A French pasteur used to say, "Aussitôt que le cœur se renouvelle le corps se nettoie." ("As soon as the heart is changed, bodily cleanliness follows.") This is not always the case, but it should be.

“ I have read the New Testament all through, and now I have begun again, there is such fulness in God’s Word.”

Although he has only been converted two months, he has already insight into many deep truths through the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

In speaking of the past, he said, “ I was like a sheep going astray, and the Good Shepherd was seeking me ; He always seeks us before we seek Him. But He did not find me, for I turned away from Him, and only listened to Satan’s voice.”

When I first visited him, he had only the New Testament, which had been lent to him, and he told me how he longed for a Bible with references to compare the passages. He asked one of the lady workers for one, and was quite downcast when he found he could not have it at present. His delight was great when I took him a reference Bible as a gift.

To shew his love for the Word of God, I must mention that whenever he reads any tracts with texts quoted in them, he carefully marks them all in his Testament, “ because then,” as he said, “ I can pass on the tracts to some one else.”

He is a great help at the meetings, and is always ready to do anything in God’s work. Would not many do well to follow the example of this happy cobbler ?

CHAPTER XIII.

“It is for God.”

“ YEA, LET HIM TAKE ALL. ”

2 SAM. xix. 20.

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and “ beautiful ” for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine ;
It shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it *is* thine own ;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.

Take myself, and I will be,
Ever, only, ALL for Thee.

F. R. HAVERGAL.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it *willingly with his heart* ye shall take my offering.”
—EXOD. xxv. 1, 2.

“ELL, I suppose I *must* give something to this mission. No-doubt Mrs So-and-so lent me the book to read for that purpose.”

My dear imaginary friend, there is no *must* in the matter; indeed, it is possible that you *ought* not to give! If that was Mrs So-and-so's object in lending you the book, allow me to say that it was not my only object in writing it. Instead of wishing that it may extract a shilling or a sovereign from your purse, I have hoped that it may go further, even to your heart, and that it may awaken your dormant sympathy, or stimulate your faith—ay, and it may be, stir you up to ask God that His work at Belleville may prosper, and that His name may be glorified.

At the same time, we tell you honestly that help is needed to carry on the mission, for in proportion as the work extends its demands are increased. Still we would *never* forget that "the silver and gold are the LORD'S," and instead of urging friends to help, we desire that He should incline hearts to give, so that it may be "a willing offering unto the LORD."

"Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." Do we not often give because we have been asked, and do not like to refuse? Is not this "giving of necessity"? We can hardly call it "a willing offering unto the LORD."

Some who have more than enough to satisfy their every desire, apologise for the smallness of their gift, by calling it "*their mite.*" If they refer to "the widow's mite," they overlook the fact that what she gave was *all her living!*

Others when declining to give, plead that "they have so many claims," &c. But if we looked at the question of giving or withholding in the right light, we should not need these and other excuses. Are they not often dictated by a secret fear lest we should be thought stingy? Why need we render an account to others in this matter, when in all other details of our expenditure we are free agents?

The fault lies in the fact, that we do not always ask God's counsel as to whether we are to give or not. If we made it a matter of prayer, we should then have a definite purpose in giving or withholding. It would not be the result of impulse or of compliance with a custom, but following God's direction.

We need not apologise for the smallness of the amount to earthly friends, for God says, “If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” And again, “He that giveth, let him do it *with simplicity*,” with a single eye to God's glory, not calculating what others will think.

If we mentally inscribe the words, “It is for God,” on every gift, would it not help us to give in a right spirit? It would make us realise the real object in giving, and it would make us shrink from offering Him a mere gift of necessity.

Let us see that there is order and method in this matter of giving. Many have found it helpful to set apart a certain sum periodically to be devoted to God's service; it will vary according as God prospers us, but we are His stewards, and to Him we must all “give an account of our stewardship.” May it never be said of any of us, “He hath laid up treasure for himself, and is *not rich toward God*.”

Let the money not only be set apart with prayer, but also dispensed with prayer, and then these gifts will bring a double blessing, for they will furnish us with errands to the throne of grace.

Beside this stated sum, we may have other opportunities of “ministering of our substance.” Let us count it an honour and a privilege to be permitted to help forward God’s kingdom.

A young servant of my acquaintance, whose wages are not high, sent half-a-sovereign, which had been given her as a Christmas-box, to a medical mission. It was a joy to her to have it to give, and she gave the whole willingly.

How little we know here on earth of the real value of things! What are our most costly treasures compared to the value of *one soul*?

It is related of the Princess Eugenie of Sweden, that she sold all her beautiful diamonds in order to build a home for incurables. Two years ago a poor woman who was there was dying. At first she had been most inaccessible and ignorant, but since then God’s spirit had wrought a change in her.

One day when the Princess was standing by her bedside, the dying woman said, the tears running down her cheeks, “I thank God that the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin, and that *He has cleansed mine.*” They were the

tears of a new-born soul stirred to its depths by the first sight of Jesus. “*In those tears,*” said the Princess, “*I saw my diamonds again.*”

It was said of a widow that though she was poor, yet she had done more for her neighbours by acts of thoughtful kindness than many who had money at their command. Two of her maxims were so excellent, that they are worth remembering :—

“Never think anything worthless till it has done all the good it can.”

“Economy and self-denial are the two great springs which feed the fountain of benevolence. Practise them for Christ’s sake, but talk very little about them.”

We could tell of several instances in which self-denial has been called forth, even in children, to help Miss de Broen’s work.

A lady was teaching a class of rough lads in one of our English seaports, and she told them about the school at Belleville, and how she longed for all the children there to hear the gospel, but that money was needed to build the Iron Room. They were only very poor lads, but still they wished to help, and not long after they brought her a sum of money in coppers which they had collected among themselves.

One day Miss de Broen received £5 for her

mission from “three children.” It was a large sum for them to send, and it was the result of no small self-denial.

For some months previously they had been begging their parents to buy them a parrot. This request was refused for a long time, because their mother objected to the screaming noise which parrots generally make. At last one morning their mother saw an advertisement of a parrot which was for sale, which could “talk well, and which did not scream—price £5.”

The children were to go in the afternoon to see the parrot, and their father promised to buy it for them if it did not swear. While they went to see the parrot, the parents attended a meeting in which Miss de Broen gave an account of her mission.

In the evening the children gave in their report of the parrot. “It was a beauty,” they said, “and did not scream nor swear.” So they were to have it.

Then the father told them of the sad tales they had been hearing that afternoon about the poor people at Belleville, and asked them if they would rather give the £5 to the mission instead of buying the parrot? They all agreed at once that they would like to do so; but the parents told them they had better think it over, and not decide till the next day.

The result was, they willingly gave up the parrot in order to help the poor.

Another gift much prized was one shilling which was given to a little boy of six on his birthday, but which he sent to Miss de Broen for her mission.

One little girl begged that she might have money instead of dessert once a-week, in order to help the mission.

“It is for God.” Not money only, but money’s worth may also bear this inscription. It may be the time and skill given freely by the Christian doctor, or the goods sold at a reduced price by the merchant, or the work of willing fingers who have not the silver and the gold, but who wish to do something “for God.”

How strikingly this is brought out in those early days when the Israelites were in the wilderness! How readily they responded to the call, “Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing mind, let him bring it.”

“And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD’s offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets,

and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the LORD.

“And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen.

“The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose hearts made them willing to bring” (Exod. xxxv.).

What made them willing to bring? Was it not that their hearts were filled with gratitude to God for their great deliverance from Egyptian bondage? And ought not our hearts to thrill with love and gratitude for that far greater deliverance which the Son of God wrought for us, in redeeming us with His precious blood from everlasting death? And now from His throne on high, where He is receiving gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, is He not saying to each one of His chosen people,

“Great gifts I brought to thee,
What hast thou brought to ME?”

A P P E N D I X.

MEDICAL MISSION.

Consultations and medicine gratis. Open four days a-week—Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday—at the Dispensary, 12 Rue Piat. The address to the patients begins at 10 A.M. Visitors are invited to attend on these occasions.

SEWING CLASSES.

These give employment, with remuneration, to the destitute, and are held at the Iron Hall, No. 32 (formerly 398) Rue Puebla, on Tuesday and Friday, from 1 till 4 P.M. during the winter months. Bible instruction is given for one hour.

DAY SCHOOLS.

For girls and infants, under certificated mistresses, in the Iron Hall.

NIGHT SCHOOLS.

For adults, on Tuesday and Friday, at 8.30 P.M. Attendance, 340 weekly.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

For children and adults, at the Iron Hall, at 5 P.M., and a Ragged School in Rue Pèchevin, at 2.30 P.M., every Sunday afternoon.

EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS.

Four times a-week in the Iron Hall. On Sunday at 3.30 and 8.30 P.M.; Monday and Thursday, 8 P.M. Attendance weekly, 900. Twice a-week in Rue Pèchevin, on Sunday and Wednesday.

BIBLE CLASSES.

For men and women, on Wednesday evening and Sunday afternoon. For young men on Saturday evening at 8.

HOUSE-TO-HOUSE VISITATION.

At present 140 visits are paid per week to old and new acquaintances.

A LENDING LIBRARY

has been given by friends in Scotland, consisting of about 800 volumes published by the Toulouse Society.

Although such a variety of agencies are at work, the annual expenditure of the mission is only about £1400. This sum is needed for the salaries of

medical missionary, dispenser, evangelist, school mistresses, *concièrge*, and also to pay for medicines, rent of dispensary and training home, taxes, gas, payment of sewing classes, &c., &c.

It is supported entirely by voluntary contributions, and Miss de Broen's household expenditure is not in any way chargeable on the mission fund. Further details may be seen in the Annual Report, which may be obtained on application to Miss de Broen, 16 Villas Ottoz, 21 Rue Piat, Belleville, Paris.

Information respecting the Mission will also be furnished by the Rev. Dr Forbes, 229 Faubourg St Honoré; the Hon. Mrs Arthur Kinnaird, 2 Pall Mall; Mrs D. Maclagan, 9 Royal Circus, Edinburgh; as well as by any on the list of Referees to be found in the Report.

Bankers: Barclay, Bevan, & Co., 54 Lombard Street, London. Monro & Co., 7 Rue Scribe, Paris.

Funds are greatly needed, and *annual subscriptions*, however small, are most acceptable. An audited statement of accounts appears in the Annual Report.

Friends would feel increased interest in the work if they could see the mission; and their visits would encourage both the workers and the people. Some omnibuses run direct from the Rue du Louvre and from the Ternes, others are

in correspondence from the chief parts of Paris, either to Rue Puebla, or to Rue Belleville, both only five minutes walk from Miss de Broen's private residence.

The cab fare from any part of Paris to Belleville is 1 franc 50 cents. for a one horse fiacre, or 2 francs per hour.

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