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Chas Richardson

THE PEASANT PREACHER :

MEMORIALS

OF

MR. CHARLES RICHARDSON,

A WESLEYAN EVANGELIST,

Commonly known as the 'Lincolnskire Thrasher.'

BY

REV. JOHN E. COULSON.

FOURTH EDITION.

'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.'—ISAIAH lii. 7.

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TO THE
LOCAL PREACHERS
OF
WESLEYAN METHODISM:

A BODY OF MEN, LONG DISTINGUISHED FOR THEIR EXTRA-ORDINARY ZEAL AND ABUNDANT LABOURS TO PROMOTE THE WORK OF GOD THROUGHOUT GREAT BRITAIN; WHOSE VERY DISINTERESTED AND INVALUABLE SERVICES IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH ENTITLE THEM TO THE AFFECTION AND CONFIDENCE OF ALL WHO LOVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:

These Memorials

OF AN EMINENTLY HOLY AND USEFUL
LOCAL PREACHER,

WHO, THOUGH HE COMMENCED HIS CAREER LATE IN LIFE, AND HAD TO STRUGGLE WITH GREAT DISCOURAGEMENTS, YET BY DINT OF PERSEVERANCE AND THE POWER OF PRAYER, 'PREVAILED WITH GOD AND WITH MEN,' WHEREVER HE LABOURED IN THE SPIRITUAL VINEYARD: ARE VERY RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED,

HOPING THAT THEY WILL SUPPLY—TO THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE BODY ESPECIALLY—A STIMULUS, GUIDE, AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO TREAD IN HIS STEPS, AND 'FOLLOW HIM AS HE ALSO FOLLOWED CHRIST.'

NOTICE FOR THE FOURTH EDITION.

THIS Fourth Edition of the 'Peasant Preacher,' now issued, is the same in all respects as the First Edition, excepting that it is less loaded with 'correspondence,' and is minus the 'Itinerary:' reductions which many will regard as no detriment to the work.

J. E. COULSON.

WORKSOP, NOTTS.
October 4th, 1877.

PREFACE.

THE gallery of Biographical Portraits possessed by the Wesleyan Church is already wealthy; and yet its treasures are continually increasing, a fact which cannot be recognised without gratitude to God, and great satisfaction on the part of all who pray for the prosperity and perpetuation of a living Christianity; for no better proof can be supplied that God is still in the midst of His people, than that 'when a standard-bearer fainteth' other holy, zealous, self-denying men are raised up to grasp the falling banner, and bear it on to further victories. Wealth of this sort is wealth indeed, and the more of it the better. And may there ever be such accessions to it as those which have been supplied during the last five and twenty years.

That the unpretending peasant-preacher of Tetford should be proposed for a place in this gallery of renown will not be objected to by those who admit the claims of great personal merit, and who earnestly desire to promote entire personal consecration to the service of God, and to witness the conversion of multitudes of sinners. The crying want of the times is men of Charles Richardson's stamp; they are wanted everywhere, in towns and villages, schools and pulpits, in philanthropic enterprises, and in all aggressive religious movements. Many things requisite for the accomplishment of a great spiritual work in the world are undoubtedly possessed by the Wesleyan and other Churches in

the present day ; and only let men of much personal sanctity and 'power with God' go forth to 'speak with the enemies in the gate,' and 'the battle is the Lord's' ! Jehovah-nissi will speedily lead His hosts to the conquest of the world for Christ. And this volume is sent forth with the hope and prayer that some may be stirred up, while they gaze upon the portraiture it contains, to emulate the piety and devotedness of the fallen soldier of the Cross, the story of whose life it tells.

The labour of preparing these Memoirs has been considerable, but it has been a means of grace ; and if those who read are only spiritually refreshed, and stimulated to the maintenance of a holy life, the toils and risks of publication will be sufficiently repaid.

Respecting the *form* in which Mr. Richardson's labours are presented to the public, it may just be said, that the *simplest* has been deemed the best, and the most likely to inspire confidence ; his own free and artless communications to her who shared so largely in all his sympathies and aspirations, furnish a more condensed and accurate representation of his achievements than could be otherwise supplied, and serve to reveal the man, his motives, manner of life, and extraordinary usefulness, better than if they had been melted down and cast into some other shape.

Many friends have afforded valuable assistance, and a few of them are respectfully mentioned in the body of the Memoirs : to these, and others whose names do not appear, and particularly to the Rev. Robert Bond, the Rev. Henry Richardson, Mr.

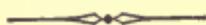
Gough, and Mr. Coates, the most sincere thanks are here presented for their kindness.

In conclusion, it is due to Mrs. Richardson and her family to say, that they have laid all who may read this book with profit under personal obligations, by the readiness with which they have co-operated with the writer, and the cheerfulness with which they have supplied everything in their possession likely to contribute to the interest and completeness of the volume.

J. E. C.

WORTLEY, NEAR LEEDS,
December 15th, 1865.

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MEMORIALS

OF

MR. CHARLES RICHARDSON.

CHAPTER I.

‘Nothing can make a man truly great but being truly good, and partaking of God’s Holiness.’—*Henry.*

WHICH is the best—Goodness or Greatness? better or worse, greatness is almost universally worshipped; and multitudes care nothing about goodness, if they may only secure greatness for themselves and their friends. The ambitious and worldly-minded mother of Zebedee’s children brought her two sons to Christ and said:—‘Grant that these may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom.’ But the Saviour sharply reproved her blind ambition, saying: ‘Ye know not what ye ask.’ Nor do they who follow her example. The people who crave after greatness, regardless of goodness, know nothing of the import of their wishes. Give them what they want, and the gift is their ruin. Which is the best? is a question we all do well to ponder

before we grasp at greatness. 'Mind not high things.' 'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.' The wings of Icarus are but the instruments of self-destruction to the simpletons who try to soar away upon them. And many a one has found, 'That better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.' Greatness is not goodness; and is too often found hostile and destructive to virtue. 'I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,' said a great man; but the saying was like the sealing of his doom. Greatness may dazzle and triumph for the hour, but goodness shall survive it, and 'shine forth as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.' True greatness is always sustained by moral goodness, and where goodness is wanting the greatness is factitious and ruinous. Great goodness is true greatness 'in the sight of the Lord.' And the more matured in moral virtue and personal holiness men become, the more they resemble the humanity of the Son of God. Charles Wesley was unquestionably right when he sung:

'The Christian he alone is wise,
The Christian he alone is great'

The men who have always been honoured by God were chiefly distinguished for their great goodness. The 'giants' in the church of the olden time were eminently holy men; and their greatness and usefulness arose altogether out of their godliness. When unfaithful to grace, they were shorn of their strength; but prevailing with God, they prevailed also with men. Their inspiration never made them

scientific ; and although innocent of the philosophies of modern times, yet being filled with great goodness and the Spirit of God, they were the mighty leaders of human thought and action ; controlled the destinies of empires, and proved themselves to be the greatest benefactors, patriots, and philanthropists the world has ever seen. Great personal goodness, nourished and sustained by a close walk with God and a living faith in Christ, is itself a sort of inspiration, giving a vigorous, healthful action to man's entire nature, repressing inward evil, stimulating wholesome activity, guiding judgment, enlarging useful information, supplying the best of motives, and 'thoroughly furnishing unto all good works.' Men of God have been raised up in modern times and in our own days, who have seemed to tread upon the heels of the noble army of prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, who laid the foundations of that glorious structure of which Jesus Christ is Himself the 'chief Corner Stone.' And both successors and forerunners have been alike distinguished in many cases, by the absence of some of those qualifications deemed most essential by men of the world. But, 'strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,' they have achieved glorious results ; conferred immortal benefits upon mankind ; and heroically won for themselves a niche and a name in the annals of the church, which will excite the admiration of posterity and their gratitude to God, when pyramids exist no more.

The subject of this Memoir was an honest, working man, born to toil, of the peasant class—a

class of which Great Britain may be justly proud. To the end of his life he bore the stamp of the class to which he belonged; and even guarded its distinctive marks with jealousy, as though he gloried in the fact that he and his were a race of British peasants. The well-merited popularity which for many years he enjoyed, and the great and growing usefulness of his life and labours, must all be attributed to the grace and blessing of God. He was emphatically a *good man*; and might have said with the ancient Hebrew peasant king:—‘Thy gentleness hath made me *great*.’ Charles Richardson was a God-made man. God found him where He found David, and Amos, and the fishermen of Galilee, and a host of others; and where He will ever find men to work with while the world stands. There is a freshness, originality, vigour and freedom from conventional restraints to be found in the peasantry of most countries which, when sanctified by the Holy Ghost, render particular individuals specially adapted to accomplish great movements for God, in the Church and the world. When the Son of God appeared upon earth He passed by the ‘upper ten thousand,’ and wrapped Himself in the form of a humble, Jewish peasant; and practically demonstrated that God employs ‘the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world; and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.’

Lincolnshire can boast as fine a peasantry as the world contains: for the most part robust, well

formed, muscular, patient, industrious, well-behaved, sensible, and we trust becoming increasingly moral and religious. The Lincolnshire of the present day is altogether a different country to what it used to be a hundred years ago. Scientific drainage, and other agricultural improvements, have converted its fens and marshes into valuable estates; and where miasma and ague formerly spread their deadly wings for hundreds of square miles, there large populations now find happy, healthful homes. Villages and well-stocked farmsteads, schools, and places of worship, show the reflecting visitor that these agricultural districts have fully kept pace in the march of improvement with the manufacturing portions of the empire. A few years ago, a stranger travelling outside the coach from Spilsby to Boston, said to his friend at the end of the journey: 'Before I go back I must see the Fens.' But when told that he had come right through them, was surprised, and unwilling to believe that the beautiful, well-fenced, fruitful fields, on both sides of the road he had travelled, were all that remained of the old Fens of Lincolnshire. The peasantry of the county are thoroughly English, and have not been marred to the same extent as in some other counties by foreign importations. They are also downright Protestant; and possess a large amount of sturdy independence and self-reliance; fostered no doubt by the local customs and manner of life peculiar to the county. Methodism has taken a firm hold upon the people of Lincolnshire. Its ministers were the first to labour amongst the dwellers in the fen country;

and not a few of them, and their wives and children, died of agues and fevers, contracted during their unacclimatized toils. And whilst the country has increased in population and gradually become more and more healthy, they have laboured with increasing success; and there is no part of the world where lovelier scenes may be witnessed every Sabbath than in many parts of Lincolnshire at the present day.

About three miles and a half from Horncastle (the ancient *Bannovallum* of Roman times) is the pleasantly situated village of *Fulletby*. The population has never been more than three hundred; and is wholly agricultural. Seventy years ago it was probably not very different in appearance to what it is at present. It is chiefly composed of low, thatched cottages; and in one of these, standing a little back from the main road, Charles Richardson was born on the 11th of December, 1791,—the year in which the Rev. John Wesley finished his course and entered his heavenly reward. Charles's father was a steady, industrious, labouring man, a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society. His mother died a few months after his birth, leaving two other sons and a daughter, all very young. Two years afterwards his father married again, and found a mother for his children who was regarded by Charles with affection and respect to the end of her days. Two of the children died very soon after the marriage; and the other, when he grew up to be a young man, in obstinate disobedience to his father's wishes, enlisted for a soldier, served and fought in foreign lands during the French war, and

ultimately ended his days in peace and comfort, not far from his birth-place, many years before his distinguished brother. Old Mr. Richardson died at the advanced age of eighty-two, in the house of his affectionate son, where he had resided for many years. He never rose higher than the station in which he was born; he was a stalwart, healthy, skilful, industrious man, and by diligence and frugality not only provided for his family, and lived in humble comfort, but managed to save a sum of money which he hoped would provide a maintenance in the decline of life. In this respect however he was painfully disappointed; an unrighteous tradesman in the village of Tetford induced him when far advanced in years to entrust him with the amount of his savings, promising interest, and giving him the security of his note of hand; but shortly afterwards became a bankrupt, leaving him in hopeless poverty, and without a friend in the world to help him, except his exemplary and only son; and but for his assistance he would probably have been driven to the necessity of seeking shelter in the parish workhouse. Previous to this calamity his second wife had died in the Lord, after maintaining a consistent Christian character for many years. Charles was married at the time and had two children of his own to provide for; he had gone to reside at Hagworthingham, a few miles from Tetford, but as soon as he heard of the calamity he hastened to comfort the old man; and proposed to come and reside with him, engaging, that as long as he was able to work his father should never want; and for the next

twelve years, Charles was a father to his father; cherished him in feebleness, and provided every comfort for him with cheerful filial tenderness to the end of his days. His own means were always very limited, and the utmost thrift and caution were necessary on his part to make ends meet. But 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.' With laudable sensitiveness he shrunk from the thought of his father becoming in any degree dependent upon public charity, and was thankful to God that he had health and opportunity to help him in his old age. A retributive providence never fails to reward filial piety; and Charles lost nothing by his kind and dutiful conduct. He had a rich recompense in his own bosom to the end of life, and special tokens of the Divine favour in his own worldly circumstances, especially as old age came on; which the writer of this narrative may be excused for regarding as another illustration of the reliability of the promise connected with the fifth commandment.

Young Charles was taught to make himself useful, and to earn something towards his maintenance at a very early age. He was never much expense to his father, healthy and strong and willing to work, he was soon worth more than his meat for the assistance he rendered in farm labour. School days he had none; his were all work days. The little education he got was obtained when the work of the day was done. During the long dark evenings of one winter he attended a night school in Fulletby, for which his father paid five shillings! And this was all the schooling and all it cost, that ever

fell to his lot during his life!—Will you mark that, young reader, and think of what it suggests! You belong to a different class of society, and are amply provided for in every respect. Schooling you have to repletion; and school bills from twenty to eighty pounds a year are cheerfully met by kind parents, anxious for your welfare and advancement. But will you ever do as well in the world as the Lincolnshire peasant boy? Great advantages ought to lead to great results; but unhappily they don't always. Indeed it altogether depends upon the stuff a boy is made of as to whether he gets on or not. There is a way, and a tolerably easy one too, to secure an honourable position in life, as you may see from this narrative, no matter how lowly people are born, or however great the difficulties they have to encounter. Only let them be *good*, and live in the 'fear of the Lord,' and steadily attend to the duties of the passing hour; and though they may never rise to wealth and distinction, they shall be happy and respected all their days: shall climb the ladder Jacob saw, and ultimately stand upon its topmost rail, and gain a station in the skies.

There are several different kinds of schools: there is one at home; another in the streets; and another in the place of business. Young people are always learning something, good or bad. All external influences which act upon the mind, are continually training and forming habits and ideas which show themselves in after-life. If knowledge is not communicated by paid preceptors, the thirsty mind satiates itself somehow. The foun-

tains where it drinks are sometimes poisoned ; but the providence of God which specially guards the children of the pious poor, leads them to 'fountains of living water,' and under most unfavourable circumstances prepares them for a life of usefulness. It is astonishing what eminence some men have attained without the help of a schoolmaster. John Bunyan was a tinker's son, and was never taught anything beyond simple reading and writing. Shakespeare's father could not write his name, and his own education, by a schoolmaster, was as limited as Bunyan's. The celebrated antiquarian William Hutton, was sent to work in a silk mill at Derby for twelve hours a day, when only seven years of age, and never had any schooling afterwards. Robert Burns the poet, was chiefly indebted to fire-side lessons given by his own poor father, when the toils of the day were done. William Stone, a celebrated mathematician, who died in 1768, when asked by the Duke of Argyle *how* he had come by his knowledge, said : 'A servant of yours taught me to read when I was eight years old ; and does any one need to know anything more than the twenty-four letters, in order to learn anything else that one wishes !' Gifford, the cobbler's boy of Ashburton, Devonshire, could get neither schooling nor books, nor a farthing candle to read by ; but he borrowed a copy of Euclid and studied it by fire-light, lying upon his back on the hearth-stone so as to catch a glimmer from the grate ; and subsequently became one of the greatest literary men of his age. Talk about the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties !

They used to pursue it that way fifty years ago; but the former difficulties are wonderfully diminished in the present day. Self-educated men are always remarkable men. Some of the best preachers the Wesleyan Methodists have ever had, have been to a great extent self-educated; and with all the valuable advantages of the excellent schools everywhere established now-a-days, self-education must still be inculcated upon old and young.

The home school in which young Richardson was trained until he was about twelve years of age, was just such as Methodist life in a Lincolnshire cottage may be supposed to supply. There was a Bible and Hymn-book in the house, and both were well read. These with the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'Wesley's Sermons,' two or three choice biographies, and a number of religious tracts composed the family bookstore. A few homely pictures on the walls suggested ideas of the great work of the world's redemption. There was daily family prayer. The Sabbath was a day of rest and worship. Early to bed and early to rise, was a rule enforced by a sort of necessity, as well as thrift and temperance. Out-of-door toil, and plain food, promoted health and hardihood. And the mind thrown upon her own resources, and acted upon by such surroundings, was educated after a fashion. And if the exterior nature was left a little rough and unconventional, habits and purposes were formed of the greatest importance for after-life. So young Charles grew up and God blessed him. He worked hard by day and slept sound by

night, loved both play and reading, was not without boyish faults ; but withal, was good and kind in a lad-like way, and so the years of his boyhood passed. When about thirteen or fourteen years of age, he was hired by a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood, and went to reside in his house ; and during the following five or six years was engaged in the service of other employers with whom he resided.

No one can tell the inestimable value of household religion ; or how abundantly beneficial it is to the inmates of courts and cottages alike. Peasants and princes are equally blessed and elevated by its hallowing influence. Children and servants become an honour and a recompense to those who maintain it. Nothing in the world is so likely to promote the welfare and improvement of the working classes as family prayer, the sanctification of the Sabbath, and the consistent observance of the duties of Christianity within the domestic circle. These things are worth all the schools in the kingdom, so far as concerns the formation of moral character, and a preparation for usefulness in after-life. Education and public Schools shall have their due. Not a word of ours shall disparage them. By all means educate the people. Let the children of the labouring poor have a sound and thorough English education : it will do good to both body and soul. No one had more to say in praise of education than Charles Richardson, when in the vigour of his days he became its popular advocate. No one could lament more than he did the loss of early school days. But whilst educa-

tion is very properly cried up, people need to be impressed with the superlative importance of household religion. Thank God! 'The schoolmaster is abroad.' But his labours are damaged and thwarted to a greater extent than can be told, by the neglect of parents to attend to religion at home. Owing to this, a first-class education is frequently thrown away upon young people; while the humble offspring of an unpretending working man, who faithfully serves God in his cottage, turn out an honour to their species and a world-wide blessing.

In the spring of the year 1811, when Charles was nearly twenty years of age, he entered the service of Mr. William Riggall, of Tetford, and to that circumstance may be attributed his conversion to God, and all the mercies and blessings which sprung out of it. Divine Providence wonderfully controls the events of human life, and very frequently brings forth stupendous issues from apparently trifling causes. And it was one of the crowning mercies of his life that God sent him to reside with the Methodist farmer of Tetford, just at this period. Had he been placed in such a godless household as that of Tennyson's 'Northern Farmer,'* the very type of which was to be found in more places than one, not far from Tetford, he

* The Poet Laureate is a native of Somersby, a small village about a mile from Tetford, and the 'Northern Farmer,' one of his very striking effusions, must have been suggested by some type of character produced in that neighbourhood. A drive through the adjoining wild-looking Wolds, shows many a lonely farm

might have been utterly undone for time and eternity. When a peasant youth enters the market place on the annual hiring day in search of an engagement for the next year, he has little else to guide him than the providence of God. And if ever that providence directed and controlled Charles Richardson, it was at the 'Horncastle Statutes,' in the month of April, 1811, at which time, the promise was remarkably fulfilled in his case: 'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not.'

The 'Statutes,' commonly so called, but more house, where it is easy to imagine the Poet might find the rude speech, ignorance, and sensual ungodliness depicted in the following lines:—

'Parson's a beän loikewise, an' sittin 'ere o' my bed.
 "The Amoighty's a-taäkin o' you to 'issen, my friend," a
 said,
 An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied
 it in hond;
 I done my duty by un, as I'a done by the lond.

'Do Godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-taäkin o' meä?
 I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
 An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad 'an all—a' dear a' dear!
 And I 'a monaged for Squoire come Michaelmas thirty
 year.

'But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o'
 steam
 Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the divil's oän
 team.
 Gin I mun doy I mun doy, an' loife they says is sweet,
 But gin I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abear to
 see it.'

properly the 'Statute Sessions,' is an annual servants' hiring and public fair, held in various places in the Northern Counties, in accordance with an Act of Parliament passed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. When held in Horncastle, the streets are filled with masters and servants the greater part of the day; and the usual accompaniments of a country fair fill the town with noise and dissipation. Not a little serious mischief is done to the morals of young people on these occasions; and it is much to be desired that other and better methods of arranging between masters and servants should be adopted, so that these annual gatherings may be superseded altogether. Within the last few years laudable efforts have been made in some parts of Lincolnshire to accomplish this object, and rescue the young servant men and women from the excitements and temptations to which they are at such times exposed. Imagine the scene if you can, and look there:—a crowd of young people dressed in Sunday clothes are chaffering and bargaining with well-to-do looking farmers. Charles Richardson is in the midst—a young rustic every inch; stout and well-proportioned, with a healthy, hearty countenance, his appearance recommends him, and it is not long before he is hired. His master that is to be, has just put the 'hiring penny' (a shilling) into his hand; and he engages to be at Tetford,* bag and baggage, and commence work within the space of a few days.

* In the year 1772, Langhorne Burton, Esq., of Bag Enderby, near Horncastle, published a small poem

The house and home of Mr. Riggall presents at this time very much the appearance it did sixty years ago. It is a comfortable, ancient-looking dwelling; stables, barn, and out-offices forming a quadrangle behind. For seventy or eighty years it has been in the occupation of the same family, and during the whole of that time it has been a house of prayer, and a place for the entertainment of Methodist ministers visiting the village, and continues so to the present day. Mr. William Riggall, the present occupier, sustains for the time being the office of circuit steward, and, with the members of his family, labours to promote the work of God. Charles resided there two years, and was not a little indebted to his excellent master for the welfare, usefulness, and happiness of his after-life. Mr. Riggall was a member of the Wesleyan Society, and well knew, Abraham-like, how to 'command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord.' The domestic entitled, 'The Tetford Club,' from which the following is an extract:—

'Far to the North, where Lindsey props the skies,
 Embosom'd in her mountains *Tetford* lies,
 Whose rustic bowers present secure retreats,
 From Winter's rigours, and from Summer heats,
 Where chaste simplicity through every part,
 Walks unattir'd, and uneduc'd by art.
 What! though no proud historic annals trace
 Statesmen or heroes from this humble place,
 What! though no legendary tales have given
 Martyrs or monk-made saints from hence to heaven,
 Full many a modern merit she displays,
 And white, as are her hills, now rise her days.'

discipline which he maintained for many years in his family had much to do with the formation of the virtuous habits and excellent characters which distinguished his children and servants. As to his worldly position and circumstances, he might have been the very person described by Robert Bloomfield in his 'Farmer's Boy,' as follows :

'An ample farm his generous master till'd,
 Who with peculiar grace his station fill'd ;
 By deeds of hospitality endear'd,
 Serv'd from affection, for his wrath rever'd :
 A happy offspring blest his plenteous board,
 His fields were fruitful, and his barns well stor'd ;
 And fourscore ewes he fed, a sturdy team,
 And lowing kine that grazed beside the stream.
 Unceasing industry he kept in view,
 And never lacked a job for Giles to do.'

Charles and his master cherished a mutual esteem for each other to the end of their lives. And his master's children who still survive, speak of him as being at this time, a kind and genial youth, a good servant, upright and obliging, with whom it was a pleasure to be connected.

At this period Charles was not yet a partaker of converting grace, though he was unquestionably under the influence of the 'fear of the Lord ;' and was thereby preserved from youthful follies, and prepared to become better acquainted with the 'Guide of his youth.' 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ;' and supplies positive proof that the Holy Spirit is at work upon the heart. And those who look and long for the salvation of young people, ought gratefully to acknowledge the

work of grace begun; and by patient care and kind encouragements—‘even as a nurse cherisheth her children,’—should seek to bring them to ‘a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.’

In the year 1808, the Rev. Zachariah Taft was appointed to the Horncastle Circuit; and from the time he entered upon his work the cause of God began to prosper to an unwonted extent. What are commonly called ‘Revivals,’ have been of frequent occurrence amongst the Wesleyans of Lincolnshire. In no part of the Connexion has there been greater vitality and success associated with the labours of Methodist ministers, than in the county where the Wesleys were born. In the present day Lincolnshire enjoys an enviable pre-eminence amongst the counties of England for morality, sobriety, intelligence, social comfort, freedom from crime and pauperism. How much the county owes to Methodism and ‘revivals,’ it would not be easy to calculate; but the Methodists of the present day may well be thankful to God for the commanding position they occupy in the towns and villages of the county; and must never be forgetful of the religious activity and earnestness of a former generation, which were the means employed by God in raising up out of the stones so many ‘children unto Abraham.’

Mr. Taft was a holy, zealous, Methodist preacher, much owned of God wherever he went. His wife was an extraordinary woman, equally zealous and devoted as her husband; wherever he ministered in holy things she was a most efficient fellow-labourer. ‘Priscilla and Aquila’ were St. Paul’s

'helpers in Christ Jesus.' And Mr. and Mrs. Taft were fellow-helpers in Gospel-work for many years, in various parts of Great Britain. 'And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.' A most blessed revival of religion commenced soon after they went to reside in Horncastle, and gradually spread throughout the circuit. The Rev. John Barrett, brother to Mrs. Taft, had been one of the ministers six years previously, and during the period of his residence there, Mrs. Taft had visited Tetford and the neighbouring villages, and had been the instrument of much good, so that when her husband was appointed to the circuit, they found a people prepared for them of the Lord.

The house of Mr. Riggall, with whom Charles resided, was at that time the head-quarters of Methodism in Tetford, and has continued such ever since. His family consisted of three sons and five daughters, with four servants, and several of them were stirred up to seek salvation 'while the showers of blessing' were falling around. Five of the sons and daughters still remain adorning their Christian profession. At this time Charles was brought to full decision and gave his heart to God. It does not appear that his conversion was to be attributed to any particular instrumentality; indeed, he used to say that so far as he could recollect, it was entirely the result of the secret work of the Holy Spirit upon his soul. An unusual religious influence pervaded the minds of the people around him. Sermons were preached Sunday and week-day calculated to alarm the careless, and recommend

the acceptance of a present salvation. The unction of the Holy Spirit attended all the services of the sanctuary, and many of the inhabitants of Tetford and other villages became 'obedient to the faith;' and it would have been somewhat strange, if, with his previous training and preparation, Charles had not yielded in this day of gracious visitation. He was not converted suddenly, although in after-life he was a firm believer in the genuineness of sudden conversions, and was the means under God of bringing hundreds to cry out with the jailor of Philippi, 'What must I do to be saved?'

He once related to his friend Mr. Carter, of Nottingham, the following circumstances connected with his conversion:—

Mr. Matthew Cunningham, a zealous, local preacher, who resided at Scartho in the Great Grimsby circuit, was in the habit of travelling about at certain seasons of the year preaching the Gospel in the villages around him, and sometimes going to a considerable distance from home. On one occasion he was made a great blessing to a Miss Fox, a young lady of property, who after a long affliction died happy in the Lord. Before her death she requested her father to settle a small annuity upon Mr. Cunningham, as an expression of her gratitude for leading her to the Saviour, and to enable him to devote his time more freely to the work in which he delighted. This was done, and ten shillings a week were secured to him for life. After this, Mr. Fox frequently went forth with the pensioner of his bounty, on his evangelical tours, taking him in his own conveyance. During one

of their rounds they visited Tetford. A very gracious influence was connected with the sermon Mr. Cunningham preached; several persons were converted; and Charles Richardson was present, a thoughtful, serious observer of all that transpired around him. After the service he was led to reflect and feel that with all his morality he needed conversion as much as any one. Light broke in upon his soul, and his sins became a burden insufferable to be borne; for many days he went about like one under sentence of death, carrying in his breast day and night an appalling sense of the wrath of God; his joyousness and natural buoyancy of spirit fled, and the light-hearted youth, who usually went about his duties whistling or singing for very glee, was bowed down with unutterable distress; and as he afterwards said, 'used to follow the plough day after day with many tears, crying to God for pardon as he walked over the furrows of the field.' During these weeks of distress he was a diligent attendant at chapel, saw many around him step into the liberty of the Gospel, and was much encouraged by the ministry of Mr. and Mrs. Taft, but was unable to lay hold upon the Saviour. His disposition was very diffident and retiring, and he concealed the secret workings of his heart; but he did that which no one does in vain—he often read his Bible and wrestled much in private prayer. Jacob-like he 'wept and made supplication' at the throne of grace. One of Mr. Riggall's daughters well remembers how he used to retire to his bedroom at night, much sooner than his fellow-servant who slept with him, that he might pour out his

soul in pleading with God. Not long before he died, speaking of those days, he said:—‘There is not a building in all Mr. Riggall’s yard but I have prayed in it again and again.’ None who seek the Lord with all the heart can fail to find, and Charles at last found ‘the pearl of great price’ in his own bedroom. Soon after his funeral the present Mrs. Riggall led one of his sorrowing daughters to the apartment he used to occupy, and said:—‘It was in this room that your father found peace with God.’ Charles Wesley’s chains fell off in his bedroom on Whit-Sunday, 1735, and a few days afterwards he gave permanent expression to the ecstasy of soul he experienced on the occasion by composing the beautiful hymn containing these lines:—

‘I rode on the sky, so happy was I,
Nor envied Elijah his seat;
My soul mounted higher in a chariot of fire,
And the moon it was under my feet.’

And the Tetford plough-boy rode in that same chariot for many weeks after he had obtained a sense of the pardoning love of God. Using the language of his well-read Bible, he could say with the Psalmist—‘Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever.’ The bed-room has been a Bethel to many a seeker of salvation. It is a good place for communion with God. When a young man, shut out from all human excitements, retires to the

seclusion of his bed-room to weep and pray for the pardon of sin, you may be sure he is 'not far from the kingdom of God.' It was soon noised abroad that Charles was set at liberty, and many of the pious people around him rejoiced, and did all they could to encourage him and 'strengthen his hand in God.'

He was about twenty-one years of age at the time when he 'obtained like precious faith,' and from that period to the end of his long pilgrimage he continued to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Like the youthful Josiah, 'he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left.' His first step was to unite himself to the Methodist Society by going to class. And in consequence of doing so, he was watched over, cared for, and instructed; formed friendships and found companions amongst persons like-minded with himself, so that his heart became 'established with grace,' and 'he went on his way rejoicing.' To confess Christ by joining His people was no cross to him. His duty was a delight; he was thoroughly in earnest, and commenced his religious course like one who intended to win 'the crown of life.' Forty new members joined class in the village at the same time, or within a week or two. Most of them stood fast, a few subsequently wearied in well doing, some have died in the Lord, and some remain until this day and bear testimony as to the decision and diligence which distinguished Charles from the first. So far as moral conduct was concerned, there was not much difference to be seen in him, he had

always been steady, upright, faithful, and obliging. One who knew him well, made the remark at the time of his conversion—‘Grace had not much to do for him.’ And when relating his early history to a friend on one occasion, he said—‘I never needed a deal doing at.’ Meaning that he had never needed much in the way of outward reformation. Inwardly he needed a great deal doing at, and felt it; and mourned greatly over his own depravity of heart; he had ‘no confidence in the flesh,’ and cast himself upon Christ as a guilty, ruined sinner, saying:—

‘Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.’

From the time he received the ‘peace of God’ into his heart, he continued diligently ‘working out his own salvation,’ daily searching the Scriptures, carefully avoiding ‘all appearance of evil,’ faithfully discharging the duties of his station, and constant in the use of public means of grace; but without any sort of pretentious display, and apparently without exciting in others any particular expectation as to future usefulness in the church. He took his place in the village Society as a good young man, whom everybody liked for his amiable and obliging manners, distinguished for strong common sense, and little beyond.

About nine months after his conversion he left the service of Mr. Riggall, and engaged himself to Mr. Mager, of Greetham, who also was a member of the Wesleyan Society, and a respectable farmer in that place. There he had the same religious

privileges as with his former employer, and was esteemed and confided in as an excellent servant, and a godly young man. Mr. Joseph Bell, of Boston, a local preacher of many years standing and great personal worth, well remembers these days; he was then a farm servant at West Ashby, and had obtained his master's permission one Sabbath-day, to attend a lovefeast in the village of Fulletby. On his way there he overtook Charles Richardson going to the same place. Young Bell was just then under deep convictions for sin, and had been seeking the Lord for some weeks, in great distress of mind. As they walked on together he freely opened his heart to his acquaintance, and told him all his doubts and fears. Charles heard him with great interest and sympathy, and told him in return his own experience, and how he had sought, and at length found a sense of the pardoning love of God, and encouraged him to persevere, and lay hold by simple faith on the atonement of the Saviour. Bell was very much relieved and strengthened by this conversation, and soon after was enabled 'with the heart to believe unto righteousness.'

Lovefeasts and class-meetings are the delight of newly-converted people. The new nature instinctively cries out, 'Come all ye that fear God and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul.' And these means of grace admirably meet the yearnings and demands of a believer in his 'first love;' and indeed, the sympathies and necessities of a believer at any stage of his Christian progress. Charles attended many lovefeasts in his youthful

days; but, strange to say, he never found courage to speak in any of them until many years had past. His young acquaintances would rise and speak with confidence, but he remained in silence, held back by his diffidence; and that, notwithstanding the urgency and remonstrances of his friends. 'It is not all gold that glitters;' and the history of this peasant youth, and others, supply striking illustrations of the correctness of the proverb.

How it came to pass that he changed the service of Mr. Riggall for that of Mr. Mager it is difficult to say; but his doing so led to results of the greatest importance; and whatever may have been the cause, the step was no doubt controlled by the providence of God for his good. In Mr. Mager's house he became acquainted with Ann Smith, one of the servants of the family; and at the end of the year was united to her in wedlock. A more suitable person to become his wife could not have been found. A man is marred or mended for life when he is married; but had any one possessing a 'prophet's ken' been sent forth, as Abraham sent his confidential steward Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac, he could not have made a more judicious selection than what Charles was led, by the providence of God, to make for himself. How easy it would have been at this time, to have given a totally different direction to his life. How many promising young ministers are crippled and spoiled by an ill-assorted marriage. Satan well knows how to extinguish a flaming zeal, and to silence a thundering eloquence. And alas! how frequently he succeeds in reducing the most gifted sons of the

church to the position of a mere '*locum tenens*.' With such a life as Charles Richardson led for a quarter of a century after he began to preach, unless he had been blessed with a wife specially prepared for him, he must have been heavily burdened, and his Gospel labours seriously cramped and curtailed. But when people pray and patiently seek Divine guidance, 'Marriages are made in heaven.' Charles did nothing without much prayer, and God heard him, and overruled his purposes and projects for the accomplishment of His own will, and His youthful servant's future welfare.

Ann Smith was awakened to feel her need of salvation, and was converted to God about the same time as Charles himself, and by the same instrumentalities, excepting that Mrs. Taft was more prominent in leading her to the Saviour. From her hands she received a 'note upon trial,' admitting her as a probationer into the Methodist Society; and from that time held on her way, with uniform steadfastness and consistency, until at length, full of years, ripe in grace and highly respected, she passed away to join her beloved companion in the skies. In her Charles Richardson ever found a loving, prudent, thrifty, pious wife; sympathising with his objects, rejoicing in his successes, and ready to endure personal privations in order to promote his usefulness in the church. They were well mated and knew each other's worth; Charles ever thought that no wife surpassed his own; and she exulted in her husband, regarding him as her greatest earthly gift from God. As they stood before the hymeneal altar on

their bridal day, they personally presented as fine a specimen of England's youthful peasantry, as is any where to be seen. They were married by the Rev. John Chislett, in the Parish Church of Hagworthingham, on the 14th June, 1814, and immediately started housekeeping on their own account in the same village.

‘I know the sum of all that makes a man—a just man—
happy,

Cousists in the well choosing of his wife ;
And then well to discharge it, does require
Equality of years, of birth, of fortune :
For beauty being poor, and not cried up
By birth or wealth, can truly mix with neither.’

Massinger.

CHAPTER II.

'By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, honour, and life.'—*Solomon.*

THE man who is the most worthy of honour and advancement is he who is faithful, contented, and diligent, whilst occupying an inferior position. The road to that kind of elevation which a good man may desire, lies through patient, persevering diligence, moral integrity, and a common-sense way of dealing with present circumstances. Look around, and you will soon see what a number of those whose names figure the foremost in the history of the past and present generation, arose from obscurity as deep as that in which Charles Richardson was born; and yet became distinguished and celebrated in connection with religion, commerce, literature, politics, arts, and arms. Dr. Chalmers, who had much to do with young men, is reported to have said:—'I have seen enough of your geniuses and I don't want them; give me a patient painstaking, plodding youth, that's the man to get on in the world.' And those who are best acquainted with human nature know well that there is much more hope of a young man, gifted with strong common sense, good health, and habits of cheerful diligence, succeeding in any line of activity into which he may be providentially led, than of one who has the reputation of being a born genius, or

who supposes himself to be such. Young men, who start life with many advantages are in no small danger from self-indulgence, want of stimulus to activity, and a disparaging estimate of their social inferiors; and it often happens that long before the race of life is finished, the most unlikely competitors at the starting, far away out-distance the more favoured runners. Besides, Divine Providence always takes the part of the humble and pious youth, 'who perseveres in well-doing.' 'God helps them who help themselves.' His providence opens out their path, assists their endeavours, and crowns their exertions with success. In a sense, it is true enough to say, that 'a man's fortune is of his own making.' Only that sense must recognize the special providence of God which 'orders the steps of a good man.' 'He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dung-hill, to set him among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.' Humble, praying, hard-working young men, like Charles Richardson at the period of his marriage, are just the sort of men to make their way in the world, and secure for themselves all that was contained and shadowed forth in the marriage dowry which Achsah craved and got from her father Caleb, as the book of Joshua thus records:—'Give me a blessing, for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.' The advancement sometimes comes slowly. A period of discipline and preparation has to intervene, during which merit is tested and character is formed; but come

it will, and in the right time too; God will 'magnify His word.' But He will do it in such a manner as to stimulate the exercise of faith and patience. The fourteen years of servitude which Jacob spent in Padan-aram were years of wholesome discipline and preparation. The years of Joseph's captivity in Egypt were the same. In both cases a noble destiny was held in reversion by Providence until the respective heirs were ripe enough, and ready for it; and as soon as the right time came they were lifted into it, and continued there to the end of their days to glorify God.

After Charles Richardson entered upon his married life, a period of seventeen years passed away before he began to manifest any particular aptitude for usefulness as a public speaker in the Christian church. Such a circumstance is of rare occurrence amongst Wesleyans; nearly all the men who have risen to distinction as preachers in Methodism began to exercise their gifts in early youth. And the remark is often made, that if a man arrives at the meridian of life without manifesting those gifts peculiarly necessary for a public speaker, not much is ever to be expected from him. And there is not a little in connection with the church polity of the denomination, and the usual mode of working it, to warrant the observation. Methodism finds a place of usefulness for all within its pale; it sets every one to work as soon as they are fit, and, in its zeal, sometimes before they are quite fit. A great number of lay-preachers are needed to supply the six or seven thousand pulpits it commands, and wherever pious and gifted young

men can be found, they are sought up and encouraged to exercise their abilities. But although Charles was a most consistent member of Society for seventeen years, and distinguished all the time for deep and intelligent piety, a successful class-leader, and useful in various ways, yet he never could be induced to attempt to preach. He once informed a friend that he was twelve years meeting in Class before ever he opened his lips in public prayer. On the brother to whom this statement was made expressing surprise, and enquiring why it was so, he quietly replied, 'Why, no one thought me fit to do so, and I was of the same opinion, so I kept still.' His natural diffidence was extreme, he was neither slothful nor reticent; but was very modest and lowly, and entertained a mean opinion of his own abilities, with a high conception of the qualifications needed by those who appear in public as exponents of the mind and will of God. He was never wanting in zeal, but was always ready 'for every good work' in a humble sphere; from the first he desired to promote the salvation of those around him, and laboured to save souls in his own way,—and not in vain. But he did not feel it his duty to begin to preach; and yet when at length he did begin, he was honoured of God in a most extraordinary manner.

From the year 1815 until 1834, Charles Richardson was in the service of one master:—Mr. Stephen Bourne, of Ashby Puerorum,* a small hamlet about

* Ashby Puerorum, so called from an estate in the parish, which was bequeathed to the singing boys in Lincol'n Cathedral.

two and a half miles from Tetford. Mr. Bourne was the occupier of a large farm, and had a large family: he was a religious man, and having found a servant quite to his mind, he retained him in his service for nineteen years. During the greater part of that time Charles resided in Tetford, and walked the distance night and morning.

His manner of life during this long period was entirely that of a sturdy, industrious, Lincolnshire peasant; in nothing different from hundreds around him, except in those respects and features of character which a deep and earnest piety stamped upon him and his family. He became the father of a son and three daughters, was blessed with very good health, worked hard, lived frugally, and sought to glorify God by a diligent discharge of the duties connected with his station in life. The years flowed on with little or no change as to external circumstances. But he was happy and contented, and proved that 'godliness is profitable unto all things;' and by being 'faithful in that which is least,' he became gradually improved in character and qualifications for the great usefulness by which he was afterwards distinguished.

On the garden gates of New College, Oxford, you may read the motto in cast-iron letters:—'Manners nakyth man.' And so they do, whether the man resides within the college gates, or elsewhere. Prince or peasant, all the world over, 'Manners nakyth man.' The manners of Charles Richardson while he was Mr. Bourne's servant, his personal behaviour, and how he conducted the affairs of his family, present an interesting picture of peasant

life. Mr. Bell, of Boston, who has been already mentioned, was present at the first missionary-meeting at which Mr. Richardson ever spoke, and states that when he arose at the call of the chairman, he apologized for his appearance, and began by relating a little of his own personal history: stating that he was a plain, working man, who wished to do good to every one, so far as he was able; that his usual mode of life for many years had been to rise about five o'clock in the morning, spend a little time in reading the Bible and family prayer, and then proceed forth to his daily toil at Ashby: that in passing the houses on the roadside, he seldom neglected to pray for the welfare of the families who resided in them, and sometimes for each individual of a particular family; that from six to six, or from daylight to dark, he thrashed corn with the hand flail for Mr. Bourne; and on his return journey at night, prayed for the people's salvation again whilst passing their dwellings, if walking alone. On arriving at his own cottage in Tetford, his wife was commonly waiting for him in the doorway with a cheerful greeting; and seldom failed to have a glowing fire with a boiling kettle, and in a few minutes a comfortable cup of tea. Attending some cottage prayer-meeting, or preaching in the chapel, filled up part of the evening; otherwise it was spent in reading—chiefly the Bible. Family prayer closed the day, and prepared for early rest.

What poets have sung about the 'Cotter's Saturday Night' it was his to realise, though probably he knew nothing of Robert Burns at the

time. Thank God, such scenes as those which the Scottish bard so well described, are no mere 'fancy sketches' or inappropriate representations of domestic life in our own country. Similar scenes may still be met with in many an English cottage all over the land. Methodism has carried 'pure and undefiled religion' into many humble homes, both in large towns and rural districts; and created under God scenes of social comfort and domestic purity and happiness, which the philanthropist may contemplate with encouragement and joy. May these be greatly multiplied. O! who that loves his country, will not join in the 'cotter' poet's prayer, and cry to God for England, that she in all her counties, may possess the blessings which he asked for Scotland, when he said :—

'O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!

For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent!

Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,

Be blest with health and peace and sweet content!

And O! may heaven their simple lives prevent

From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!

Then howe'er crown and coronets be rent,

A virtuous populace may rise the while,

And stand a wall of fire, around their much-loved Isle!

For nineteen years Charles Richardson was Mr. Bourne's principal thrasher, and worked at that laborious employment with the hand flail six days a week for six months during the year. The designation by which he was extensively known, 'The Lincolnshire Thrasher,' arose from this, and he was never ashamed of it. In public meetings in after-

life he often acknowledged the goodness of God in raising him from the thrashing floor of the Ashby barn, to employ, like the prophet of old, 'a new sharp thrashing instrument having teeth,' and work with it for a heavenly Master. In those days agricultural science was not developed as at present. Thrashing corn by machinery was very little known. That mighty revolutionizer, the steam engine, was not yet heard snorting and puffing in the farm-yard. The thrashing machine was invented by Mr. Andrew Meikle, an ingenious millwright of East Lothian, in Scotland, about the year 1785. Subsequent improvements, and the employment of steam as the working power, have made it during late years a great boon to agriculturalists; but strong prejudices delayed for a long time its general adoption, and both master and man were decidedly in favour of separating the chaff from the wheat by the use of the hand flail. A mighty change, however, has lately come over almost every one engaged in the cultivation of the soil; steam is triumphant, and floats its white banners in every hamlet in the land. There never will be another 'Lincolnshire thrasher;' Charles was one of the last of the race of thrashers. Henceforward steam will be almost omnipotent upon the farm, as elsewhere, and peasants will have to become skilled labourers to direct and control its energies.

During one half the year, the flail was resigned for labours of a general and diversified nature; and Charles was ever ready for whatever wanted doing; nothing came wrong to him; he was skilful and prudent, had a dexterous hand and a willing mind,

and his master confided in him and made him servant of all work.

‘A spade! a rake! a hoe!

A pickaxe, or a bill!

A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,

A flail, or what ye will—

The corn to thrash, or the hedge to plash.

The market-team to drive,

Or mend the fence by the cover-side,

And leave the game alive.’—*Hood*.

By turns he was thatcher, as well as thrasher, hedger and ditcher, whitewasher and woolwinder, shepherd and sheepshearer, butcher, gardener, and carpenter; he ploughed the soil, sowed the corn, mowed the grass, toiled in the harvest field; and finally was his master's counsellor and friend. For years he was chaplain to the family, and conducted household worship, morning and evening; was greatly beloved by his fellow-servants and the junior members of the family; and always conducted himself with such gentleness and propriety towards every one, equals and superiors, as to rise in their estimation the longer they were acquainted with him.

A clergyman of the Established Church, writing to a friend shortly after his death, bore the following testimony to his personal worth, and the excellency of his character; and in doing so supplies an interesting picture of this period of his life:—‘I remember him well, when more than forty years ago I used to visit as a boy of ten or eleven years of age, at Ashby Puerorum. I liked nothing better than to go into the old barn when he was thrashing and have some talk with him, for he

always seemed to have pleasure in trying to interest and profit young people. Though only a labouring and uneducated man, he had so amiable and winning a way with him, as to induce me, boy as I was, to seek his company and listen to his conversation. He used to ask me about the school I went to, and what I learned; and was anxious to obtain knowledge even from a child. He inquired whether we had prayer in the school, and when I told him that the head master prayed every morning and evening without a book, he seemed to think he was one of the right sort. These and other things in him made a lasting impression on my mind. I can remember, too, how much he seemed to be respected by his employers; and that he had an influence for good over the youthful portion of the family, for they respected him and looked up to him as they did not to any others in their employ. I also remember that nothing rejoiced him more than to hear of good going on everywhere, and in being an instrument of good to others himself.'

Mr. Barton, a well-known local preacher in the Alford circuit, now residing at Great Grimsby, lived for three years almost next door to him, during the earlier part of the time spent in Mr. Bourne's service, and writes thus of his early friend:—'His life and conversation were most exemplary and worthy of imitation. He was one of the most punctual men I have ever known. In the winter season he sometimes attended four or five prayer-meetings a week; some of them a mile distant, and was seldom ever too late. He might be

said to be a man of prayer. It was the element in which his soul delighted to live. He walked in communion with God. I once heard him say, he never met a poor sinner on the road but he lifted up his heart to God in prayer for his salvation.'

There is no reason to think that Charles had any anticipation at this time of the public usefulness and popularity as a preacher which awaited him. But whether he had or not, he was evidently preparing for the future, and was led by the grace and providence of God to maintain such habits of reading and reflection, as contributed to furnish his mind with a large amount of biblical and general knowledge. He perseveringly sought for knowledge everywhere; he was always thinking and never trifling; every one, and every thing that came in his way, were laid under contribution; and he knew how to draw from an intelligent school-boy, in a barn-door conversation, whilst sweating at his hard work, valuable information. He had that sort of intuitive perception of truth which is peculiar to minds of a certain order; and amidst the multitude of ideas and suggestions constantly passing before his mental vision, he knew how to 'retain the good and cast the bad away.' He was a great reader: his reading was without system and miscellaneous; but it was copious and permanently appropriated by a retentive memory. How much a man may learn in the space of twenty years who diligently employs his leisure hours and half-hours in the pursuit of knowledge, praying incessantly for Divine assistance and light to enable him to understand the truth, it is not for any one to say.

But it is highly probable, that if his life be spared, such a person will become, 'a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.' And though he may never shine in the paths of literature and science, he is not unlikely to appear, like another Apollos, 'mighty in the Scriptures,' and better able 'to teach the things of the Lord' than many who receive a professional training, and occupy the seat of authority in the church. The late Dr. Adam Clarke, himself of Irish peasant origin, though favoured with education in early life, placed upon record the following important statement:—'After I found the peace of God, I can safely assert that I learnt as much in one day as I had learnt in a month before. And no marvel, for my soul was now rising out of the ruins of the fall, by the power of the eternal Spirit.' Nor does the experience of Dr. Clarke stand by itself. Not a few have proved to their joy the profitableness of godliness in relation to mental culture. The highest authority has said:—'With the lowly is wisdom.' And those who sit most at Jesus' feet are of all men the most likely 'to be led into all truth' connected with the salvation of the soul. Charles Wesley expressed a fine conception of the objects and process of Christian education in the following stanza:—

' Learning's redundant part and vain,
 Be here cut off, and cast aside ;
 But let them Lord, the substance gain,
 In every solid truth abide ;
 Swiftly acquire, and ne'er forego,
 The knowledge fit for man to know.'

This was Charles Richardson's prayer and guiding

desire; he hungered after the knowledge 'fit for man to know;' and by hearing sermons, personal intercourse with ministers and others, reading, meditation, and observation, he was always obtaining accessions to his store; and becoming better prepared for a higher station in the church.

In the commencement of the year 1827 the village of Tetford was favoured with another 'time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.' May such visitations ever be continued! They are greatly needed both in large towns and villages. And if right means are employed, they shall certainly be vouchsafed. Dr. Bunting once said: 'You may have a revival of religion when you will: only use the right means, and God will fulfil His promise.' And a higher authority has said: 'Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'

The gracious quickening at Tetford in 1827 was introduced under the following circumstances. Mr. Riggall, Charles's former employer, invited a party of excellent men from Louth to assist Mr. Austin, a zealous local preacher, to hold religious services in the chapel, on Christmas day, 1826. A lovefeast was held in the afternoon, when an extraordinary outpouring of the influences of the Holy Spirit was realised. The congregation was overwhelmed with emotion. All were bathed in tears, and many present cried aloud for mercy. When the time

came to conclude, the people refused to go away; and prayer and praise were continued until the time for commencing the evening service. The sermon that evening was attended with unusual power; many 'were pricked in their hearts,' and cried 'What must we do to be saved?' It was like a little Pentecost, and the service could not be brought to a conclusion until three o'clock the next morning. Many found peace with God, and there was great joy in many a house and many a heart in Tetford. When the meeting concluded in the chapel, the praying band from Louth retired to Mr. Riggall's house, and spent the remainder of the night in prayer and praise: re-enacting the scenes in the jailor's house at Philippi, when at the hour of early morn, 'he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house,' 'and when it was day,' though sleepless, yet refreshed in body and soul, they set out on foot for home, a distance of nine miles, 'praising God for all the things they had heard and seen.

This occasion was another turning point in Charles Richardson's life. He was in the midst of all that transpired, not as an idle spectator, but as one whose whole soul was filled with desire after a greater salvation. The place was his 'Peniel,' where he 'prevailed with God.' And of him it might be said, as it was of the princely patriarch, 'And He blessed him there.' Such a baptism of the Holy Spirit was bestowed upon him as he had never received before. He firmly held the old Wesleyan doctrine of Entire Sanctification. Many about him prominent in carrying on the work of

God, and most successful in winning souls to Christ, were beautiful examples of it, and living testimonies to the power of Divine grace to cleanse from all sin and fill the soul with the perfect love of God. He had long desired this great salvation for himself, but had never been able to lay hold upon it. On this memorable Christmas-day, however, it pleased God to anoint him with power from on high. He was enabled to cast himself entirely upon the Saviour as he had never done previously, and henceforward realised a closer fellowship with God, a greater deadness to the world, and such a degree of spirituality, purity, and holy love, as far exceeded all he had ever experienced. It is much to be regretted that there is no record of his inward life forthcoming, to reveal the secret workings of his mind at this period. It must have greatly administered to the instruction and encouragement of the people of God, as it would doubtless have set forth in his own peculiarly simple, lucid style, the process through which a believer may pass into the 'wealthy place,' and attain to the higher walks of 'the life which is hid with Christ in God.' But the above brief statement is all that can be gathered respecting his reception of this great blessing. He frequently referred to it in conversation with his friends, or when speaking in public of the way in which the Lord had led him and dealt with his soul, and always seemed to regard it as the commencement of a new era in his religious progress; and he seldom or ever failed, when opportunity offered, to bear his personal testimony to the truth that 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from

all sin.' And in his case the verbal testimony was sustained by a corresponding walk with God, and a bringing forth of the rich, ripe fruits of righteousness. A zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men was kindled like fire in his soul. Courage and energy, which triumphed over his constitutional timidity and backwardness, were all at once imparted. He shook off his reserve, came forth from retirement, found a voice to speak in the church, an ability to glorify God in active service, and began to take a prominent position in leading penitents and inquirers to the Redeemer. He had been a happy, consistent, retiring Christian ; but he now felt it to be his duty to work for God, and employ his talents for the salvation of mankind. A devout and zealous man, who is now with God, used many years ago to pray—'O Lord, revive Thy work ! O Lord, revive Thy work ! Mend the old Methodists and make new ones !' And that terse and pithy prayer contains the true philosophy of church prosperity. When the members of a church are *mended*, there is sure to be progress and numerical increase. Nor is there any means of mending those who are already in the Christian fold, so effectually as to lead them into the enjoyment of holiness of heart. It has often been remarked amongst the Methodists, that when ministers or members have been stirred up to seek for that great blessing, the finding of it has almost been like life from the dead. The timid become bold ; the apathetic, full of energy ; the feeble, strong ; and the tongue of the stammerer is unloosed, when the soul is fully sanctified. So it was with Charles Richardson at this Christ-

mas Pentecost, he was 'filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with another tongue, as the spirit gave him utterance.'

The revival which commenced under the above circumstances, continued for a length of time. For ten successive nights the chapel was opened for religious worship, and crowded with people every time. Very many professed 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' Charles was always present, and took a prominent part in leading the inquirers to the Lamb of God, and remained encouraging and directing seekers of salvation until midnight, although he had to be away next morning to resume his daily task as a thrasher by the first break of day. But the Lord's work was his delight, and he had strength of body and soul to do it.

There was a considerable increase of new members in the Wesleyan Society at Tetford at this time, and additional class-leaders were wanted. The Rev. George Wilson, superintendent of the circuit, appointed Charles to take charge of a class; which very soon became one of great importance. It met in his own house every Sabbath afternoon. His wife and father both met in it. Mr. Barton, before mentioned, was one of the new converts who joined it, and states that it soon contained forty persons, and that very frequently thirty were present at one time. Charles was admirably fitted for the duties of a class-leader. He was rigidly faithful, and yet lived in the affections of his people. He had great tact, and there was a charm about his manner which made the meetings singularly inter-

esting and attractive. Class-meetings are very much what the leader makes them. When he is earnest, simple, faithful, affectionate, the class is sure to prosper. But when the leader is dull, languid, common-place in his communications, late in coming, late in ending, sometimes absent, no wonder that the class should fall to pieces in his hands. In the present day suitable class-leaders are greatly wanted. The supply does not meet the demand. And is there not a cause? In many classes there are individuals who from position and education seem just the parties to sustain the office; but they are deficient in spirituality, and have no power with God. O! for another Pentecost! like that which came down upon Tetford at Christmas, 1826! 'O that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence!' The Holy Spirit makes ministers, class-leaders, preachers, stewards, and all other officers needed in the Methodist church; and when you have to ask in doubt—'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' well may class-meetings languish, and other departments of the church look cheerless. Old Methodism cannot live without revivals. It never has done well without them yet, most certainly. And who would undertake the responsibility of trying to do without them in times to come? We must have them again; and keep them when they come.

After Mr. Richardson became a class-leader it appeared to many that he had gifts for preaching, and he was urged from time to time to make a beginning. A friend once said to him :—‘ Charles, I am sure that you can preach if you will only make the attempt ; and you ought.’ His reply showed how he regarded a preacher’s responsibility. It was—‘ Well ! if ever I do preach to the people, depend upon it I will not spare them.’ When he did at length break through his scruples, and begin to preach, it was at once plain to all that he was an ‘ able workman,’ whose great object ever was ‘ to declare all the counsel of God.’

About this time he heard a sermon from a Wesleyan minister which made a great impression upon his mind, and probably led him to think about the composition of discourses for the pulpit. It was from the text in Jeremiah xii. 5 :—‘ If thou has run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses ? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they weary thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan ?’ A few days afterwards he met with a friend who was unconverted, but who he well knew had good desires after religion, and referred in conversation to the sermon he had heard, and proceeded in his own very impressive manner to recite a good part of it, and particularly what the preacher said in commenting on the words :—‘ How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan ?’ His friend was impressed and listened with serious attention, which Charles observing, looked him hard in the face, and said solemnly :—‘ How wilt

thou do?' It pleased God to send that question like a barbed arrow, to the heart of his friend, and the effect it produced resulted in his sound conversion. 'A word spoken in due season, how good is it?' The friend referred to, is still a living member of the Wesleyan Society, and an ornament to his profession. God has greatly prospered him in business, and his house is a comfortable home for Wesleyan ministers when they visit that part of the Horncastle circuit in which he resides.

This was a great encouragement to Charles. Nothing in the world gave him anything like the same amount of satisfaction as that which he experienced, when made the means of doing good to souls. He had a passion for saving souls, and rejoiced in the salvation of his friends and neighbours more than in the increase of his own worldly goods. It is always thus with Christians who are thoroughly alive to God. Genuine Christian zeal is nothing but the love of God and man, stimulating holy and Christ-like endeavours,

'To save poor souls out of the fire,
To snatch them from the verge of hell,
And turn them to a pardoning God,
And quench the brands in Jesu's Blood.'

A close walk with God is sure to show itself in ceaseless self-denying efforts to bring about the conversion of sinners, and extend the triumphs of the cross of Christ.

After this richer baptism of the Holy Spirit which he received, Charles was indefatigable in his

endeavours to do good in every possible way; and was ready for every good work either in connection with Methodism, or wherever else a door of usefulness opened out before him. A pious clergyman of the Church of England, who was curate in one of the parishes adjacent to Tetford, held meetings for exhortation and prayer in private dwellings, about this time, and invited the co-operation of Charles. And he was only too glad to render all the assistance in his power; for he knew nothing of a narrow sectarian spirit, either at this, or any other period of his life. For a considerable time he continued to attend these meetings, and took an active part in making them interesting and profitable, until at length the curate was removed, and they were discontinued. It is stated by a friend who was present on one occasion, that whilst Charles was engaged in prayer, the influence of the Holy Spirit was remarkably experienced. The clergyman and all present seemed completely bowed down before the Lord. Charles was drawn on to plead particularly for the clergyman, that God would fill him with the Spirit, and sanctify him wholly, and so fit him for greater usefulness; and while he was doing so, the excellent man, under the influence of strong feeling, cried out—'He has, my brother, He has!' and when prayer was ended, he arose and addressed the people, declaring how the Lord had 'blessed him there.'

Wherever the Methodists have a chapel, they have a Sunday-school,—with very few exceptions. It has been so from the beginning. Mr. Wesley started a Sunday-school in the Old Orphan House

in Newcastle-upon-Tyne,—the fourth place of worship he erected in Great Britain. And from the time he did so, the Wesleyan church has derived great advantages from these invaluable institutions. There was a Sunday-school at Tetford, and Charles connected himself with it as a teacher soon after his conversion, and continued diligently to attend to his duties as such, up to the time he was called away to preach the Gospel. After he became a class-leader his Sabbaths were usually spent in the following manner:—At seven o'clock in the morning he attended a prayer-meeting in the chapel; breakfast and family prayer consumed the next hour; public worship began at nine o'clock in the chapel; and the Sunday-school filled up the time from its close until twelve; at two in the afternoon, his class-meeting was held in his own house, and after it was done he read the Scriptures with his own children; then, after the evening meal there was worship in the chapel again, and family prayer closed the day. And a Sabbath thus spent was a day of holy joy. His children reflect upon those days with pleasure, and thank God for such a father as taught them from infancy to regard His Sabbaths as 'a delight.' His own cheerful, happy tones and manners prevented anything like gloom or puritanic harshness, and gave every one near him to feel that religion's 'ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' It was chiefly to enjoy these Sabbath-days that he resided in Tetford. There was no chapel in Ashby where his employment lay, and he once said to a friend:—'I have walked five miles a day for twenty

years together, just because there was a chapel in Tetford and the means of grace!' A lesson this for professors of religion not a few, who fix their residences in the distant outskirts of towns, and rural localities, regardless of the sanctuary, and as to how the Sabbath is to be spent by their families.

Besides his activity as a class-leader, prayer-leader, and Sunday-school teacher, he was also a tract distributor, and steward of the chapel—whose business it was to manage its finances and all belonging to it; and in all these offices he was acceptable, efficient, and faithful.

The first time Charles spoke in public was in the chapel at Tetford; and he was induced to do so under the following unusual circumstances:—Every one wondered that he kept silent so long, and felt that very likely he would have to be placed in some position which would render it necessary that he should break the snare which kept him back from greater usefulness; and probably several of his friends connived at the unwarrantable contrivance which was resorted to in order to draw him forth. Mr. Appleyard, a local preacher of the Horncastle circuit, was appointed to preach in Tetford, morning and evening on the Sabbath. In the evening a large congregation assembled, and Mr. Appleyard appeared in the pulpit and commenced the service in the usual way. In due time the text was announced, but the sermon was very soon done; and the preacher called out in bold and authoritative tones:—'Brother Charles Richardson must come into the pulpit and deliver an address!' Every eye was instantly fixed upon poor Charles;

his seat was not far from the pulpit stairs, and what could he do? He had not the slightest expectation of such a summons: but to leave the chapel was out of the question. Relating the matter to a friend he said:—‘I was fairly in a fix; to flee I could not; to speak out and refuse I dared not; and therefore go into the pulpit I must.’ He did go, in the name of the Lord, though with fear and trembling; but when he began to speak his fears fled, and he lacked neither matter nor utterance: ‘Grace was poured upon his lips.’ The people were highly pleased; he spoke for a considerable time with fluency and effect; and all present seemed to know and feel that their friend and brother was ‘established to be a prophet of the Lord.’

But although he had made an effort to speak in public he had not preached a sermon. He was not allowed to rest, however, until he had done this; and at the urgent solicitations of the people, he went shortly after the above occurrence to the village of Greetham, where he had resided with Mr. Mager, and took a full service. He went with great reluctance and many misgivings, but resolved, as he said—‘Whether he broke down or not he would have a good text.’ The Scripture he spoke from on the occasion, was Ezekiel xviii. 27:—‘When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.’ The first sounds of his trumpet were those of salvation. He lived long to proclaim the grace of God, and from first to last was wondrously

successful. God gave him seals to his ministry under this first sermon ; he spoke with great power, and several of the people of the village were awakened 'and turned to the Lord.' The population was only about a hundred and seventy ; but such was the holy influence that spread amongst the people after this his first sermon, that in a short time all the adults in the village were converted to God, except three individuals !—two very aged persons, and a military pensioner, who said—'He would go no more to hear the Methodists, for if he did they would be sure to catch him !' A fortnight afterwards Mr. Richardson preached a second sermon, at Sutterby, in the Spilsby circuit, from 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ?' It was a memorable time ; he spoke with great power ; the chapel was crowded ; many of the people were much affected, and some rushed out trembling and saying—'If we remain inside any longer we shall be converted.' Felix like ; though arrested by the power of God, they determined to be rebels still !

And thus his public life began. He was a preacher of righteousness for thirty-six years, and from first to last he was successful. The people always heard him gladly. He was no novice. His reputation as a man of God went before him ; and wherever he stood up to preach 'the hand of the Lord was with him : and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.' His soul was filled with the love of God and the love of souls. He spoke with a 'tongue of fire,' 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' What was said of

Apollos might be said of him in a smaller degree:— 'This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the Spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord.' His name appeared upon the plan of the Horn-castle circuit in 1828, and he was duly accredited and authorised to exercise his gifts. Forthwith he laboured freely and successfully, almost every Sabbath-day, in villages far and near; pursuing his daily toil during the week, and chiefly employed in thrashing corn for Mr. Bourne, at Ashby.

About this time the eldest son of his master fell dangerously ill; the malady was lingering and obstinate, until at length it became apparent to all that he was 'sick unto death.' The young man, though brought up under a religious domestic discipline, had resisted the grace of God, and for a time had been somewhat gay and worldly. When this serious illness laid him prostrate, the whole family became deeply concerned about his spiritual state. Charles was requested to show him all the attention in his power, and he did so with zeal and goodwill. The sick youth regarded him with great affection, so that he had no difficulty in conversing freely with him respecting his salvation; and by the blessing of God he was enabled to make a salutary impression upon his mind. He awoke up to a clear perception of his condition as a sinner in the sight of God, and became truly penitent. Charles was in constant attendance upon him and was almost his nurse; he lost no opportunity of striving to help his patient to comprehend the plan of a sinner's reconciliation with God; and

was abundantly rewarded for his pious pains. His young master was enabled to lay hold upon Christ, found peace to his soul, and became very happy for some time before his death. He triumphed by faith over the last enemy, and departed, leaving a blessed testimony that he was going to join the blood-washed worshippers before the throne. Mr. Bourne and his family became more than ever attached to their valued servant. They requested him to preach the funeral sermon of the departed youth. And he did so in the large kitchen of the farm house where he had lived. Crowds of people were present on the occasion, and many of the relatives of the family came from a distance. The peasant preacher had great liberty on the occasion, his 'speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' Several persons were deeply convinced of sin, and from that time became earnest seekers of salvation.

About a year and a half after this, Charles retired from the service of Mr. Bourne, for the purpose of commencing business on his own account as a licensed woolwinder.* He was well qualified by knowledge and integrity for all that pertained

* Wool-winder, *i.e.*, 'a person employed to wind or make up wool into bundles, to be packed for sale.'—*Imp. Dict.* The business is confined to the sheep-shearing season of the year, and continued occupation can only be obtained by the person passing from one farm to another whilst the season lasts; and unless the winder is both careful and honourable, the tods or bundles often contain much worthless stuff.

to the occupation, and was encouraged by several influential gentlemen and friends, to make a commencement. Providence appeared to open out his way. His family circumstances rendered ampler means very desirable; and after making it a matter of prayer for some time, he decided upon the step in the name of the Lord, and never had any cause subsequently to doubt its propriety. The engagements of a woolwinder are chiefly confined to one season of the year, and that the least likely to interfere with those duties and operations, in connection with the church, for which he was particularly prepared, and soon after called to perform.

An instance of the high esteem in which he was held by Mr. Bourne, a few years after he had left his service, is mentioned by the Rev. Martin Jubb, who knew both parties well. Mr. Bourne had removed his residence to Claxby Pluckacre, and a missionary meeting was to be held in a neighbouring chapel. Mr. Richardson was one of the speakers engaged to attend. Several ministers were to be present, and Mr. Bourne invited the whole party to a sumptuous dinner on the day of the meeting, and in other ways, promoted the success of the anniversary, in order, as he said, to show his respect for his former friend and servant. When religious servants stand right with their employers, Christianity is honoured, and is acknowledged to be a living power in the earth, equally beneficial to master and man, elevating the one, sustaining the other, securing to personal merit its just reward, and operating infinitely better for

society at large, than any of the wild, political, levelling systems which have been advocated in modern times. 'Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him.'

'He was humble, kind, forgiving, meek,
Easy to be entreated, gracious, mild;
And, with all patience and affection, taught,
Rebuked, persuaded, solaced, counsell'd, warn'd,
In fervent style and manner. All
Saw in his face contentment, in his life
The path to glory and perpetual joy.'—*Pollok*.

CHAPTER III.

'It is the heart and not the brain,
That to the highest doth attain.'—*Longfellow.*

THERE was a good reason why St. Paul worked as a tent maker, with Aquila at Corinth: it was necessary. He had no other means of getting an honest living. For even he was not to subsist by miracle, and rather than that the Gospel should not be preached, he nobly sustained himself and 'wrought with labour and travail, night and day, that he might not be chargeable to any.' And neither was his apostolic office soiled, nor his ministerial efficiency diminished by his manual toil. And if similar circumstances were to press upon those who preach the Gospel in our own day, there are men to be found, who would bravely strip to their task, and earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brows, rather than be prevented, 'testifying the Gospel of the grace of God.' 'No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.' And it is not meet, that those who are 'separated unto the Gospel of God,' and bound by solemn vows to devote both soul and body, with all the powers of each, to the holy work of saving souls, should be burdened with labour for the bread that perisheth. But the Wesleyan-

Methodists have never been very squeamish, about allowing laymen to exercise their gifts and graces as auxiliary teachers in the church. And no small proportion of the vast success which their system has achieved, is attributable to this circumstance.

Local preachers have sustained a noble position in Methodist history and evangelic toils, and have greatly contributed to bring about those blessed results which have gladdened the Christian world. Thousands of village pulpits are mainly dependent upon these self-denying servants of the Saviour; who oftentimes toiling all the week in their worldly occupations, distribute the bread of life to thousands on the Sabbath-day. Methodism rejoices in such a staff of willing labourers in the vineyard of the Lord. A finer training-school for the fully ordained ministry cannot be found; nor a healthier outlet for the energies of the church; nor an easier method of carrying out the missionary principle of aggressive action upon the home heathenism of the land. Methodism will never be without its local preachers any more than its class-meetings, itinerant ministers, and other peculiarities. Altering circumstances may call for an elevation of the standard by which personal qualifications are tested, on the part of those who preach, as they do at the present time; and it is greatly to be desired, that those who have the advantages of education and worldly position, should feel it to be their duty and privilege to employ their gifts in 'calling sinners to repentance;' and that all those who are already in the harness, should be afresh baptized with the Spirit which came down upon Eldad and

Medad, and constrained them to 'prophesy in the camp.' That Spirit abundantly rested upon Charles Richardson, and like the Elders of Israel he 'prophesied and did not cease.' He was a genuine local preacher; and his well-balanced mind enabled him, accurately to grasp the meaning of his position in the church, and his fine principles sustained him in it. Once upon the circuit plan, there, he would have gladly remained, and been content, in simply doing the work appointed by his superintendent, had not other and extraordinary labours been fairly forced upon him. In the height of his subsequent popularity, he was ever most careful to abstain from every appearance of trespassing upon the functions of the regular ministers, and was so wishful that the crowds who came to hear him preach should regard him as a plain, local preacher, that for many years he refused to appear in the pulpit in a white neck-tie and to the end of his life used to dress in drab small-clothes and gaiters, in order that there might be no mistake.

In regard to remuneration for his labours, when at length he consented to visit distant places, he was exceedingly conscientious and scrupulous. His family had to be supported, whilst business was suspended; but if he received about twenty shillings per week and travelling expenses, which were always on the lowest scale, he regarded himself as sufficiently repaid. The first time he went from his own circuit to a distance, to hold protracted services, after labouring hard on the Sabbath, and five week-nights following, he was presented with a sum to which it was thought he was entitled; but finding

that it was more than he could have earned at his usual employment, he refused to accept the whole, protesting that he had no right to take it. His objections, however, were overruled, and his friends constrained him to accept their gifts. Throughout life he was exceedingly sensitive on this subject, and afraid lest any one should suspect the purity of his motives. He was one of the most unselfish of men, and never coveted any man's silver or gold. Agur's prayer was his:—'Give me neither poverty nor riches.' And God heard him. He never was rich, but he never pleaded poverty. Personal and family afflictions, on a few occasions, brought him into temporary straits, but Providence brought him out again shortly, and he went on his way full of content and cheerful hope.

He was sincerely attached to Methodist ministers, and regarded their office with great deference and respect: any one who spoke disparagingly of them in his presence was sure to be stopped and rebuked. He knew them well—no man better, and they were his joy and pride. He regarded them as the best of men, and the best of preachers: one of his greatest delights was to mix with them in the social circle; and many of them felt it to be their pleasure, to spend a friendly hour in his company. He was ever anxious to succeed in the objects which called him to various parts of the country; but whenever he found that his own operations were likely to clash with those of the regular ministers, he at once suspended action. His letters often inform his wife, that Dr. Newton, Dr. Beaumont, Dr. Waddy, Mr. Rattenbury, Dr. Punshon, or some other popular minister

was in the same neighbourhood as himself, and therefore he was silent for a day, lest he should draw off any of the people from their ministry. When visiting the poorer circuits of the connexion, as he frequently did, where the ministers to this day, have both hard work and poor fare, he seldom failed to remonstrate with the authorities, and often spoke out manfully in favour of better ministerial support and relief from excessive labours. Narrow-minded, penurious persons were sometimes ready to institute an invidious comparison between them and himself, but if present, he was sure to put a blister upon their censoriousness and expose them to shame. The position of local preachers is always associated with much influence, which may be used for good or evil. Visiting distant places and mingling freely with the people, their words are like 'sharp arrows of the mighty,' and if at all given to detraction, they may very easily scatter 'firebrands, arrows, and death.' On account of these considerations; the personal character, as well as the gifts, of those who sustain this honourable and desirable office, has much to do with their usefulness. No one could be more alive to this than Mr. Richardson, and no man could be more guarded and prudent than he, in all his communications.

After he began to preach, he remained in the service of Mr. Bourne about three years; and during that time had to work hard all the week, chiefly at thrashing corn, and when Sunday came it was commonly the hardest day of the seven. Many times he had to rise early in the morning,

have breakfast and be off soon enough to walk six or seven miles to an appointment to preach at half-past ten o'clock; then after dinner walk two or three miles more to an afternoon or evening service; and finish up by walking home, making perhaps fourteen or fifteen miles in the course of the day. Local preachers are not always provided with the means of travelling when they ought to be; and the amount of physical labour which they occasionally perform, in connection with preaching, is too much for the strength of any man. This is greatly to be deplored. Provision ought to be made somehow, to enable those who preach, to reach the place of appointment and home again, without the physical exhaustion consequent upon long walks. Mr. Richardson had a good constitution, was strong, and 'lithe of limb' in those days; his work was his delight, and he cheerfully 'laboured on at God's command, and offered all his works to Him.' One who knew him well, and understands the labour of a Lincolnshire farm servant says:—'While he was an agricultural labourer, he travelled more miles to preach the Gospel, and did more work for his earthly master, than any other man I ever knew.' When thrashing corn, he was paid by the quantity of work performed, and he frequently carried home for his family eighteen shillings per week; while another man, younger than himself, and working under the same circumstances, obtained only eleven shillings and sixpence! And yet, when working at the top of his strength, he could study sermons at the same time. He once said to a friend who called to see him at

work in the barn—‘You see I can think and thrash.’ Many of the sermons he preached were thought out whilst thus employed. The same person just referred to, went in one day when he was very hard at work, stripped and sweating away, and expressed his surprise that he should labour so hard, when he replied :—‘ You see I was thinking over a passage of Scripture, and when I do so, and it goes well, I am a little carried away, and then I work over hard as I have been doing just now.’ The ideas and plans of sermons, which his mind got hold of in this way, were almost invariably committed to writing at the first opportunity, with such additions and corrections as subsequently presented themselves from time to time.

Mr. Isaac Good, of Great Grimsby, one of his earliest friends, states, that at this period he was greatly pressed to preach on week-nights as well as Sundays, and that very frequently at the close of his day’s work, instead of returning home, he walked to a village in an opposite direction, five or six miles from Tetford, and after preaching and holding a prayer-meeting, would get home as well as he could, but frequently had to walk. On several occasions Mr. Good took a conveyance to bring him home after these evening labours, and well remembers one of his expeditions. The village was several miles away, and the only place it contained sufficient to accommodate the crowds which came together to hear him preach was a large barn. It was filled to overflowing. The sermon was founded upon the text, Matthew xxiv. 44 :—‘ Therefore be ye also ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not

the Son of man cometh.' The people were deeply affected while he spoke, weeping and sobbing prevailed all over the barn. Charles stood upon an elevation raised at one end of the building, attired in a clean *white slop*, such as is commonly worn by farm servants in that part of the country. A prayer-meeting followed, and many persons appeared to be earnestly seeking salvation. As they drove home, very late in the night, his friend made the remark—'You must be very tired;' but his reply was—'No, thank God, I seldom feel tired!'

Such labours and efforts as the above, to bring sinners to God, will no doubt, excite the admiration of many who read this record; but others of a different school will probably feel their prejudices shocked, and will strongly condemn them. Whatever apology might be offered, such persons would most likely persist in their hostility, and it would be of little use to reason with them. It is however gratifying to the admirers of the peasant preacher, to know that his homely and uncanonical costume did not prevent the Word of the Lord being glorified. He was a preacher for peasants, and well adapted for usefulness amongst the class of persons to whom he proclaimed the 'glad tidings of salvation;' and was amazingly successful in 'winning souls' where others would have failed. And besides, his *clean white slop* was not more objectionable in reality, than the fisher's coat of the Galilean preachers, or the shepherd's plaid of the old crotch covenanters. The *slop*, like a surplice, covered the coat beneath, and on the whole his use

of it, was an expedient as suitable and harmless as could be adopted.

Plain peasant as he was, Charles was not wholly indifferent as to his appearance before a public audience, even of peasants like himself; and it is not improbable that the rustic garb in which he often preached in those days was assumed as the most appropriate he could procure. A poor labouring man with four children, a wife, and an aged parent, all to maintain out of his sixteen or at most eighteen shillings a week, is under the necessity of practising a very rigid economy in the matter of clothes. Charles was not the man to go into debt. Broad cloth was not so cheap in those days as at present. He once told a friend that in his early life he had made his best coat serve him nearly twenty years! His common, working dress was humble enough; and when he had to preach in the evening, his wife provided him with a clean slop, which he carried with him when he went forth in the morning of the day, and put it on when he arrived at the place where he was to preach in the evening. The first good, black coat he ever had, was presented to him by a few friends in Tetford sometime after he began to preach. He had preached in the chapel at that place one Sunday morning, and his words fell with great sweetness and power upon his hearers, many of whom were affected to tears; he was dressed in a blue coat with covered buttons which had seen long service, and was much the worse for wear. The next morning a person who had been at the chapel, proposed to some others that they should present

him with an entire suit of new clothes as a token of regard; and thus make their own village preacher, of whom they were proud, as respectable in appearance in the pulpit as others. The money was easily raised, a tailor was sent to measure him, and he was fitted out with black coat and waistcoat, drab small clothes and gaiters, and a new hat. The outfit was well used, and taken care of; and it lasted a long time, for the old predecessors were still sometimes called into requisition on humbler occasions.

At another time, Mr. Good went with him on the Sabbath to a village about six miles away, to preach at two and six: the chapel was crowded in the evening, and the text he spoke from was 2 Cor. v. 20: 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' As he proceeded to discourse upon the subject with his usual fluency and impressiveness, the people hung upon his every utterance with breathless attention, and after a while unable to control their feelings, began to sob and weep aloud in every direction. At the prayer-meeting which followed, several were in distress and loudly called upon God for the pardon of their sins. Many found peace; and after a protracted service Mr. Richardson went to the house of a friend for a little refreshment before returning home. After supper he conducted family worship, and while doing so, an extraordinary influence rested upon every one present. A young lady who was visiting at the house, and who had come from a distance to hear him preach,

was greatly affected and afterwards professed to have received at that time the blessing of entire sanctification. A respectable young person who resided with the family, in the capacity of house-keeper, was completely broken down, and began with loud cries to call upon God for mercy. Master, servants, and visitors, were all upon their knees, pleading with the Lord in behalf of the newly-awakened penitent. After a long struggle she was enabled to lay hold upon the Saviour by faith, and was made exceedingly happy. She continued for several weeks rejoicing 'with joy unspeakable,' and was then taken with a fatal illness, and died in the full triumph of faith. Whilst the company was pleading at the midnight hour for the housekeeper, two of the men servants, who had been previously strangers to Christ, became much affected about their own salvation; and after she was set at liberty, they continued wrestling in prayer for a considerable time longer, when one of the men obtained spiritual comfort, and joined with the rest in rejoicing before God. Both of them became from that night decidedly pious, and held on their way subsequently. While all this was going on several hours passed away; and that family gathering at the throne of grace, did not break up until three o'clock in the morning. The conveyance was then brought to the door, and Charles and his friend set off for home; he having to be at his thrashing again by the break of day. A few months afterwards a lovefeast was held at Tetford, at which a number of people from the village referred to were present; several of them spoke, and thanked God

that they were permitted to hear Charles Richardson on that occasion ; and stated that his preaching that Sabbath was followed by remarkable results ; that the religious feelings of nearly all the inhabitants of the village had been so stirred up, that there was scarcely a house in the place where prayer was not heard ; nor a family where some one had not been brought under religious influence ; and that in several cases whole families had been converted and were then rejoicing in the Lord.

This one Sabbath-day may be taken as an average specimen of the manner in which most of his Sabbaths were employed, after his name was placed upon the circuit plan. He became at once 'in labours more abundant.' Before going forth into a wider circle as an evangelist, he assayed the temper of his weapons at home. 'A prophet hath no honour in his own country,' said the Jews ; but like many other proverbs, this has exceptions in its personal application. There was no place in all England where he was more sincerely beloved, and where his labours were more highly appreciated, than in his own village and in his home circuit,—and that not only at the commencement of his career, but up to the close of his long life. They who knew him best, loved him most. The people with whom he was the most intimate and familiar had the most confidence in him. His daily walk and private conduct were a recommendation of the Gospel he preached ; and a large amount of his usefulness in his own locality is to be attributed to his beautiful and practical Christian consistency. At the same time, the character of his preaching

was such as fully to account for the effects it produced. He had a natural eloquence; was exceedingly earnest and impressive in his delivery; was manifestly accompanied with the unction of the Holy Ghost; and it is not at all surprising that he was very popular and had many seals to his ministry. Very copious notes of the sermon which Mr. Good heard him preach on the occasion mentioned, exist amongst the papers he has left. They show the man, and the matter, which he produced in the pulpit at this early period of his public life; and that his marked success in winning souls was only what might be expected, especially if it be borne in mind that whatever he said in the pulpit,

‘He spoke as dying, unto dying men.’

The notes which are referred to may not be so perfect in a literary point of view, as to endure a severe criticism; but considering that they are the earliest production of a hard working Lincolnshire thrasher, they may be regarded as highly creditable, and will bear comparison with many a written discourse delivered by more pretentious preachers. Would to God that in all the village chapels and churches of the land, the pure Gospel of the Saviour might be proclaimed with the same efficiency!

From this time his popularity as a preacher rapidly increased. His services became in much demand for chapel and Sunday-school anniversaries. Everywhere he was sure of a good congregation, and his ministry seldom failed to be owned of God. He was of great service to Methodism in the Horn-

castle circuit; and his labours there were altogether unremunerated. He sought no reward but his Master's approval; and with that he was abundantly cheered in his 'work of faith and labour of love.' His friend Mr. Good, with his horse and conveyance, was a great help to him; and many a long and perilous journey they had together; frequently travelling near the noon of night in winter time, through rain and cold. On one occasion they were nearly lost; it was past midnight when they started for home; the cold wind brought the drifting snow in their faces, the road became almost impassable, and the horse was nearly knocked up; but through the kindness of Providence, they arrived safe in Tetford about three o'clock in the morning. Strong and robust as his constitution was, these exposures sometimes told upon him. After labouring hard one Sabbath, and returning home at a late hour on a severe winter's night, he took a bad cold, which ultimately ran into a low fever, and he was laid up with sickness for eighteen or nineteen weeks. His life was almost despaired of, and both friends and medical attendant thought and said that he never would preach again. On that occasion God was very gracious to him. Many years afterwards, when preaching in Nottingham from the text—'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me' (Gen. xxxii. 26), he referred in affecting terms to his personal experience of the goodness of God during this long affliction, and spoke of the wonderful manner in which Providence supplied the wants of himself and his household whilst it continued. He said he

was never permitted to want any good thing, and that at the conclusion of the affliction he was in a better financial condition than when it began. His mind was blessedly sustained in peace and confidence throughout that trying season; and his neighbours and friends observed, that his piety stood the test to which it was subjected, and that through grace he could 'rejoice in tribulation.' The medical man who attended him is said to have been an avowed sceptic, but he was most favourably impressed with the joy and resignation which he witnessed in Mr. Richardson. Another man, very ill of the fever at the same time and attended by the same doctor, was greatly terrified at the prospect of death, and made no secret of his fears. The doctor became aware of the state of his mind, and asked him one day, why he was so much afraid to die?—told him that Charles Richardson was calm and resigned, and rejoicing in the hope of heaven, and said:—'If you get better you must try to live as he does, and then you will get quit of your fears.' Yes; mark that. 'Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.' That truth stands as firm to-day as when first uttered by the prophet Moses. And God was glorified by His servant whether actively employed in His church, or laid aside upon a sick bed. Through much mercy his health was at length fully restored, and he was permitted to resume his beloved work, and again laboured with undiminished zeal and success in the vineyard of the Lord.

After commencing business on his own account as a licensed woolwinder, he was a great deal from

home. During the early part of the summer his time was chiefly spent in going from one farm to another, in the performance of the duties of his calling. Many opportunities of usefulness were thus thrown in his way, and he cheerfully availed himself of them, and sought to do business for Christ in connection with his own. Many of the farmers who employed him were religious men, and looked forward to his business visits, as to those of a Christian friend and brother, whose society was likely to be a great blessing to their families. The following instances show how well he could connect the interests of another life with the duties of the present. Mr. J. K. Riggall, of Grimsby, states:—‘From 1835 to 1844, Mr. Richardson came once a year to my father’s house at Gayton, and spent a few days with us to wind our yearly clip of wool, and I was generally his companion while he remained. The first thing we did on his arrival was to ask him to preach in our kitchen in the evening, to which he generally assented. I was then, at once, despatched upon a pony to inform the neighbours, and was always successful in obtaining a congregation, as every one thought him ‘a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.’ I afterwards spent as much time as possible in his company, and was always impressed with his cheerfulness, happiness, and even temper. He commonly went about his business humming snatches of hymns, unless talking to me about something good, and though I was then quite a boy, I greatly loved and revered him as a servant of God.’ Another friend, who knew him intimately for many years—

Mr. Fletcher, of Scamblesby, a valuable local preacher in the Horncastle circuit, says:—‘Once a year he came to my mother’s house to wind wool, and on these annual visits I was with him as much as possible. On one occasion he asked me in a very impressive manner how I was getting on in religion. I told him I feared very slowly. He said, “I thought so.” I asked why he thought so. He replied: ‘Because you are doing nothing for God;’ and he went on to admonish and exhort me to start afresh for heaven. And by the grace of God, I resolved to do so there and then. I felt that what he said was true. I knew he was my friend, and I resolved to act upon his advice, and give myself body and soul, time and talents to God, if He would graciously accept me; and I have been trying ever since to glorify Him in public and private, and to this day I feel I owe a debt of love to Mr. Richardson, for his kind reproof and exhortations.’

And what was done at Gayton-le-Wolds, and Scamblesby, was frequently repeated elsewhere. Wherever he went he was the zealous preacher of a present and full salvation, as well as the wool-winder of the annual clip; and of many of these week-evening services which he held, it will be said in the day of the Lord:—‘This man was born there.’ When he was not invited to preach, he usually requested permission to do so. And many a time the village chapel was suddenly lighted up, and the inhabitants called together by a few hours’ warning, for there was no difficulty in getting him a congregation. If the family with which he had

to spend a few days were not religious, he did his best to 'leave a blessing behind him;' and that in a manner so pleasant, and free from all sanctimonious self-assertion as to prepare almost any one to look favourably upon the things of God. In many families outside the pale of Methodism his name is fragrant to this day, and impressions were produced by his instrumentality which led to results, the value of which will never be known until the day of eternity shall dawn. On these visits it was his endeavour to make himself specially agreeable to the younger members of the household. There was a charm about his manners which seemed to fascinate the young. Like the boy at the Ashby barn door, who afterwards became a clergyman, and like young Riggall and Fletcher, intelligent, well-disposed young people were drawn to him, and felt at home in his company. And from the purest motives he encouraged their attachments. To instil religion into the heart of a boy, he knew full well, was like planting another young 'palm tree in the house of the Lord.' And there was nothing in the world in which he took such delight as to do that. Whilst talking to a child, he would lift up his heart to God, in silent prayer for grace, to enable him to say something that might be the means of leading the little one to the Saviour.

And surely no one will find fault with these endeavours to connect religion with the ordinary duties of life. It is what we are all too prone to forget, but what is particularly needed everywhere. Let your light so shine before men, that they may

see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' And how is this to be done? but by doing as Charles Richardson did. To conceal religion is to dishonour Christ, and run the risk of suffocating it to death. There is a way of obtruding it upon others, most objectionable and repulsive; but in Charles's case there was such manifest simplicity of purpose and transparent purity, that people who knew him were led to expect something about Christ and personal religion, before he left their company. When he was invited to a farmhouse as a woolwinder, it was taken for granted that while he was a visitor, there must be family prayer, and plenty of talk about religion amongst the servants; and people who could not do with prayer took good care not to invite him. When Moses was requested to exercise his authority and silence the preaching laymen, he exclaimed:— 'Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!' As much as to say that he cherished the hope that a time would come, when all who know the Lord shall show forth His praise with lip and life. And that time shall come. 'It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.' These are 'the last days;' we are in the very midst of them. The Holy Spirit is even now given to them that believe. And when the heart becomes His living temple, all Christians feel what Charles Wesley expressed when he sang:—

'My heart is full of Christ, and longs
Its glorious matter to declare!
Of Him I make my loftier songs,
I cannot from His praise forbear;
My ready tongue makes haste to sing
The glories of my heavenly King.'

Charles Richardson had received the baptism of the Spirit; and the consequence was, he carried Christ with him wherever he went; and was always on the look-out for an opportunity to offer salvation to master and man, to old and young.

The business of a woolwinder is confined, as has been said, to one season of the year, and left Mr. Richardson at liberty for other occupations from the autumn until the following spring. And the important religious service in which he was employed for the last five-and-twenty years of his life warrants the inference that the special Providence of the Great Head of the Church directed him to that worldly calling. In winter he found by far the best opportunities for gathering large congregations on week-day evenings; and his new business left him quite free to accept the numerous invitations which began to come in from various and distant places, to preach occasional sermons and hold protracted services, with a view to the revival of the work of God. Nor did this alternate employment in the work of the church and the world, operate at all injuriously upon himself or impair his usefulness. After being entirely separated from worldly business six or seven months at a time, preaching and travelling all over the country, he could return to his woolwinding and

other duties with alacrity and satisfaction; and was ready again when the season came round to set off on his long tours of Gospel toil, with renewed freshness and spirit of enterprise. The constitution of his mind was singularly elastic, and he knew how to be diligent 'in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'

Before he began going from home as an evangelist, he filled up the year, when woolwinding was over, with various agricultural labours. About an acre of land was attached to the cottage in which he lived, and was cultivated after the fashion of market gardeners. Horncastle market frequently found him present with something to sell. An instance is related connected with his marketings illustrative of his character:—He was there on one occasion standing by a heap of potatoes which he offered for sale. A buyer came up and asked, 'What sort of potatoes are these?' His honest reply was: 'None of the best!' Other salesmen standing near, said one to another: 'What sort of a man is this who won't praise his own potatoes!' But the truth is he was just that sort of man. True to his Methodist rule, 'he did not use many words in buying and selling.' His temptations to say 'Some of the best,' instead of 'None of the best,' were probably as strong to him in his small way of business, as those which are presented to the large dealer and wealthy merchant, who turns over thousands of pounds in a single transaction, and makes no scruple about a false representation. But it was of more consequence to him to 'keep a conscience void of offence,' than to make a good bargain.

And in the long run it was none the worse for him. People got to know him and could trust his word, and did business with him in preference to others. Indeed such were the connections he acquired, and such the esteem in which he was held 'in his own country,' that had he confined himself to the ordinary work of a local preacher, and pursued worldly business like others his equals,—with his natural shrewdness and well regulated habits,—it is highly probable that he would have been equally successful as the most favoured of his contemporaries, some of whom acquired considerable property. But he had nobler work to do.

'Know, that the wings

On which my soul is mounted, have long since
Borne her too high to stoop to any prey
That soars not upwards; sordid and dunghill
Minds, composed of earth, in that gross element
Fix all their happiness; but purer spirits,
Purged and refined, shake off that clog of
Human frailty.'—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

CHAPTER IV.

‘Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm ; it is the real allegory of the tale of Orpheus : it moves stones, it charms brutes. Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it.’

Bulwer.

MR. RICHARDSON commenced his labours as an itinerant evangelist in consequence of the pressing and persevering solicitations of his friends. Mr. Barton gives the following narrative of the circumstances of his first efforts in the way in which he was so long distinguished :—‘In the year 1833, I removed from Tetford to a farm at Hagnaby, a small hamlet in the Alford circuit. The Rev. Robert Bryant was at that time the superintendent minister, and laboured with much success. With his consent I sent many and urgent invitations to brother Richardson to come and help us ; feeling assured that the people were prepared of the Lord for his labours. He declined compliance however, again and again ; not seeing his way clear to come and stay a couple of weeks as I wished him. At length in the month of December, 1835, he consented to come for a week. At that time Mr. William Coates, now of Laceby, near Grimsby, resided at Hagnaby ; and invited Mr. Richardson to his house during his stay. He preached at Hagnaby on the Sunday with blessed results ; and

was engaged for five nights during the following week, at Sutton, Huttoft, Trusthorpe, and Alford : preaching and attending missionary-meetings, and witnessing the conversion of sinners in each place. A few weeks afterwards he was greatly urged by friends in other villages in the neighbourhood, where a gracious work was going on, to visit them ; and in January, 1836, he spent a fortnight amongst them, preaching three times on the Sunday and five nights during the week, holding prayer-meetings, and visiting the people in their dwellings. It pleased God to crown his labours with marked success. Very many were converted, and for long afterwards it was quite common to find persons rise up in the lovefeasts and refer to those blessed times, and all of their having received the blessing of entire sanctification in those days of grace. At the end of the fortnight he returned home, but was not long in coming back again at the earnest request of both preachers and people ; and wherever he went the chapels were crowded to overflowing, and sinners were crying for mercy on every hand. The people held meetings for prayer in each other's houses, at all hours of the day and night ; and it was no strange thing in those days to hear and see men in the fields calling upon the name of the Lord. Orby was one of the villages he visited. Previous to his going there Methodism had nearly died away ; but it pleased the Lord to bless Brother Richardson's labours in that place in a wonderful manner. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the people, and out-hearted sinners were constrained to roar aloud for the disquietness of their hearts. Many

found pardon, and were filled with 'joy and peace in believing.' One man who had been some time under deep convictions, and had sought the Lord in agonies of prayer, was so overwhelmed with joy when he laid hold upon Christ, that he walked upon his knees from one end of the chapel to the other, and back again, shouting, "Glory! glory! glory!" This man's wife and three daughters were all soundly converted at the same time, and steadfastly held on their way for a few years, when both father and daughters all died exceedingly happy in God. On the same occasion another woman was seeking the Lord in much distress of soul, with a baby in her arms. Her case greatly excited Brother Richardson's sympathy, and he encouraged her and prayed with her until she was enabled to cast her burden upon the Saviour. That woman and the daughter she was then nursing are both living and serving God at the present time. Several other places which he visited were blessed as largely as Orby, and some of the gracious results are still forthcoming. Since these visits in 1835, brother Richardson has frequently been with us, preaching for chapels, missions, or Sunday-schools, and has always had large congregations and good collections; and better than all, has always had conversions, and left the Societies benefited and revived by his visits. In the year 1854, he preached at Sutton, in Mr. Guy's granary, when the heavenly influence which came down upon the congregations was astonishing. Very many persons now living date their conversion from that time.'

The mode of labour thus commenced and signally blessed by God, is no doubt to be regarded as irregular, so far as the discipline and church order of the Wesleyan Societies are concerned. And yet who would be willing to discourage such a labourer as Charles Richardson? Rather, who would not be ready to bid him 'God speed?' Irregularities, simply affecting the methods employed by good men in order to bring the Gospel home to the hearts of sinners, are not always to be suppressed. Some of our Lord's disciples would have summarily and rashly stopped certain proceedings which were not quite to their taste; but He forbade them to interfere, and enunciated a principle to which they were strangers at the time, saying:—'For he that is not against us is on our part.' There were irregularities at Philippi on the part of some who preached Christ, but the apostle Paul would not have them suppressed. The entire economy and history of Methodism, present many points not much in harmony with ecclesiastical canons and ancient usages, but they are not considered any the worse on that account. Methodists regard the authority of the Holy Scriptures as supreme in the settlement of all disputed questions. Mr. Wesley had much difficulty in breaking loose from the trammels of the iron ecclesiasticism, in which he was trained from boyhood; but as he advanced along his shining path and yielded to the clearer light which the Holy Spirit conveyed to his mind, he gave his sanction to many things which high churchmen denounce to this day as intolerable irregularities; the plain fact that they were owned

of God, and in nothing contrary to the spirit or letter of Holy Scripture was enough for him. From the beginning, the system of Church polity which Mr. Wesley bequeathed to his successors has been administered with much wisdom and moderation. Certain irregularities or deviations from the ordinary discipline of the connexion have occasionally shown themselves, like exceptions to a rule; but if the hand of God has been visible in connection with them, they have been wisely allowed to take their course, until results have fully demonstrated their propriety and value. Mr. Wesley allowed females in a few instances to exercise their gifts in public speaking, on the assumption that they had an extraordinary call of God; and on the same ground the Conference has prudently abstained from interfering with the labours of several holy women, wives of ministers and others who have been fellow-helpers with their husbands in the work of saving souls. The late Mr. William Dawson, of blessed memory, occupied an irregular position as a preacher, but he was plainly called of God to maintain it, and every one felt that he was 'the right man in the right place;' and both ministers and people, with Conferential sanction, provided a special fund to sustain him where God had placed him, and where he rendered invaluable service up to the end of his life. Mr. Richardson's position became similar to Mr. Dawson's, and the various superintendent ministers, who were successively placed in charge of the Horncastle circuit, judged themselves at liberty to treat his as a special and peculiar case; and very properly

abstained from a rigid enforcement of the rules relating to the work and office of a local preacher. His name always appeared upon the circuit plan, and with almost every issue he was appointed to a certain amount of work in his own circuit, which he was ever careful to perform. The Methodist church polity does not contemplate such an order of preachers as itinerant evangelists, other than the regular ministers appointed by the conference to circuits. But then, ministerial orders are not difficult to obtain by properly qualified candidates. For the sake of godly order, local preachers are required to confine their labours to the circuit in which they reside, save under exceptional circumstances which are duly provided for: but in Mr. Richardson's case this rule was not put in force, and he was cheerfully allowed to labour in any circuit into which the resident authorities invited him. And he had such an honourable sense of his personal obligations to the discipline of the connexion, that he never would go into any circuit unless invited by the ministers as well as the people.

The question, no doubt, may be very properly raised, how far it is wise and safe to allow of such exceptional cases; but the precedents are so weighty, and the beneficial results of past practice are so unquestionable, that it is greatly to be desired that the action of connexional authority in relation to these cases should continue the same as hitherto. The great Head of the church has not bound Himself up by certain canon laws. The wisdom of men is sometimes 'foolishness with God.' Exceptional

cases which bear the Divine stamp upon them, may be regarded as special tokens of the continued presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the church. In the absence of plain and unmistakable indications of the will of God to the contrary, it is a solemn duty to carry out the established discipline of the Christian church in a spirit of meekness, wisdom, and love; but to say that certain regulations respecting the mode of teaching and preaching are never in any instance to be relaxed, is to say what Methodism has never yet said, and it is to be hoped never will.

Mr. Richardson's career as a Wesleyan evangelist, commenced under circumstances which marked him out as a man called of God, to a life of extensive usefulness; and he felt it laid upon his heart and conscience to preach the gospel everywhere. And yet he withstood his own impressions as long as he dared. For a time he endured much distress of mind while casting about within himself how to act, in reference to the invitations and wishes of his friends. His natural modesty led him to shrink from the position he was urged to occupy, and yet at the same time he seemed to hear voices both within and without, saying—'This is the way, walk ye in it.' He prayed much for Divine guidance; took time before he decided; and at length being fully persuaded in his own mind that he was in his providential path, felt free to act in reference to the various open doors of usefulness before him, according to the best of his judgment, exercised in the fear of the Lord. This he did, and persevered to the end in doing it; nor had he at any time

reason to suspect that he had been misled. His experience was another illustration of the promise : —‘In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.’

The personal qualifications of Mr. Richardson for the larger sphere of usefulness he now entered, were highly creditable to himself, and such as with the blessing of God were likely to ensure success. During the long period in which he held back from preaching, he had diligently sought after self-improvement, and was so far successful as to make up in a great measure for the lack of early education. He was blessed to as large an extent as most men with that enviable conception of the old classic—‘A healthy mind in a healthy body.’ He had a strong will, a retentive memory, a fair amount of imagination, a sound understanding, was capable of persevering application, and had a keen intuitive insight into the nature of things; his mind was always at work, making observations and drawing inferences, and his knowledge was continually increasing; he sought it everywhere, and like a miser greedy of treasure, the more he obtained the more he desired; he gathered scraps from school-boys, or anybody, in daily conversation; and what he gathered he knew how to store away and prepare for use. He was a diligent reader of good books: theology, history, and biography, were his delight. The Bible was his daily study, and almost everything else which he read was made to contribute to its elucidation. Mental activity, associated with constant prayer to God, is sure to be most salutary and beneficial. When a man who is diligently

pursuing useful knowledge is continually praying to God to help him, he is sure to be an apt scholar, and may be expected to become a blessing to his fellow-mortals. For a long time before Mr. Richardson began to preach he had many opportunities of personal intercourse with the ministers of the Horncastle circuit, and others who moved in a circle superior to his own; and was not a little assisted by them in his reading and the supply of books. He was too poor to purchase what he wanted to read, and there was no village library to which he had access; but his friends were always ready to lend what he wanted, and he freely availed himself of their kindness. The late Rev. George Cubitt, who for several years presided with great ability, as Editor over the Wesleyan literature published at City Road, London, once said in a large gathering of ministers:—‘When I was a young man I had not many books of my own, but wherever I could, I borrowed one, and did not care to walk a mile or two for that purpose; and when I became a preacher, I had always a book with me, whether at home or walking to a country appointment; I was always reading.’ And many of the early Methodist preachers were men of similar habits; they were hard readers, close thinkers, keen observers, praying much withal; and not a few of them persevered in the pursuit of knowledge, until they became men of extraordinary power and valuable attainments. Some of them might be wanting in ‘French polish,’ but they had an abundance of power; and, like first-rate pioneers, knew how to split the rocks, and fell the forests, and lay the foundations deep and strong, and build

up the fair walls of Zion even in troublous times. And it will be well for mankind, if their more privileged successors, who possess greater superficial refinement, retain the manly energies of those upon whose labours they have entered.

Mr. Richardson's character as a man and a preacher, was formed and fashioned very much in the same way as many of the early coadjutors of Mr. Wesley, who were sometimes designated 'round preachers,' from the extensive circuits they occupied. In many respects he resembled them, and, had he lived in their day, very likely he would have been one of them. They were the heroes of our church, whose example stimulated his admiration and ambition; he longed to be like them, prayed for their mantle, and did his best to emulate their devotedness, and achieve their success. As a preacher he was comparatively ripe at the commencement of his career. His age was ripe, so also were his religious attainments; and his gifts were not those of a novice. His labours were productive of fruit from the first. Some of the manuscripts of his earliest sermons are still forthcoming, and how he found time in those days to compose them it is difficult to say. Some of them are written out at full length, and do credit to both head and heart. He never was a memoriter preacher, but from the beginning his sermon-notes were very copious. And many of them which were prepared in after years, are so complete as to be almost fit for the press. He was a believer in the aphorism of Lord Bacon:— 'Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; writing an exact man.' Men like Mr. Rich-

ardson, have need to study correctness, especially in proclaiming the will of God to large audiences ; and he felt it, and for the sake of correctness, was laborious in the work of preparing for the pulpit. When he began to preach, all his reading and thinking converged upon this one point. This was a work which he felt that God had given him to do, and he was anxious to do it in a workman-like style, and spared neither pains nor prayer in order to succeed. The consequence was, in the estimation of the friends around him, he came forth 'to fight the good fight' like one who had been previously trained, and had learned well the heavenly sword-exercise.

Some preachers seem never to have to pass a period of professional boyhood, they are men from the first. The late Dr. Bunting is said, by some who knew him well in early life, to have preached sermons when a young man on probation in the Oldham circuit, as full of power and ability as any in after-life. There was a wide difference between Dr. Bunting and Mr. Richardson. The one was superbly gifted, rarely equalled, and qualified to sustain a first-class position in either church or state ; his name amongst Wesleyans will long stand only inferior to that of the illustrious founder himself. The other was simply an earnest, sensible, humble, energetic, successful evangelist ; and there is no intention to institute a comparison by placing their names side by side. Mr. Richardson however, was an efficient preacher from the first. As soon as he entered the harvest field he showed himself 'a workman that needed not to be ashamed,' and

brought home such burdens of 'sheaves' as have been seldom seen. His fine mellow voice, possessing considerable compass and flexibility; his earnestness, unaffected simplicity, and occasional outbursts of vehemence, his unquestionable personal piety, and his genuine Saxon countenance, all tended to throw a sort of charm over the congregations to whom he ministered in holy things, which constrained them to listen with pleasure to every sentence that dropped from his lips. He was innocent of the so-called *art* of public speaking, and had never studied the rules of rhetoric, but he had the *gifts* of a true preacher. The rules of genuine art are all founded upon nature, and come the nearest to perfection when they are the most natural, and it is easy to see how a person largely favoured with natural gifts, may approach the standard of true art without the previous study of its rules, and how certain it is that such a person will be much more effective and successful than one who is chiefly dependent upon the instructions of artists and professors. Mr. Richardson was not an artist, but he had fine natural parts 'sanctified by the word of God and prayer,' and became a preacher 'whom the king delighted to honour.'

At the same time that this excellent man commenced doing 'the work of an evangelist,' he came forth as a zealous advocate of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. The first public meeting which he attended as a speaker was at Huttoft on December 9th, 1835; and he took an active part in numberless meetings of the same kind afterwards. The Society lay very near his heart; he loved it

with a pure and strong affection which 'many waters could not quench.' The Lincolnshire Methodists have ever been staunch supporters of the Missionary Society; and the large sums of money raised every year in the hamlets and villages of the county for Foreign Missions, shame many of the large town congregations throughout the land, which put forth great pretensions and claim a very superior position. It is no uncommon thing for missionary anniversaries in Lincolnshire hamlets, where the chapel contains not more than two hundred sittings, and the whole population is not above three hundred, to produce from £30 to £50 and sometimes more. The marvellous operations and success of Methodist Missions to the Heathen, are not a little indebted to the generous manner in which they have been sustained by the rural population of several counties, and Lincolnshire in particular. The year before the Huttoft meeting, forty English districts, as arranged in the Minutes of Conference, produced £40,488; and the same year the Lincoln district contributed £1,651; while the whole of the Lincolnshire circuits put together raised £2,571. Since that period some of these circuits have raised as much as seven and eight hundred pounds a year. In Mr. Richardson the Society found an advocate who, taken altogether, was as devoted and effective as any that ever pleaded upon its platforms. It has had many more highly-gifted speakers, but few who have attended so many public meetings, or travelled so many miles in its behalf, or assisted in raising larger sums of money, during the quarter of a century which

his public life lasted. The names of many invaluable men will readily occur—men of renown, famous amongst their brethren in this and other times,—who have gone forth in the exercise of much self-denial, through the length and breadth of the land to plead for means to carry on the work of God in the ends of the earth ; and the name of the peasant-preacher is not unworthy of a place in their honourable fellowship. During many years of his public life he frequently attended three or four missionary anniversaries in one week, preaching in the afternoon, attending a tea-meeting at the close of public worship, and speaking at the meeting in the evening for three quarters of an hour. His manuscripts show with what care and diligence he sought for information suitable for these occasions. His speeches abounded with pertinent, appropriate anecdotes ; and wherever he was advertised as one of the speakers, the congregation was sure to be good, and the collection commonly better than the preceding year.

Mr. Richardson's services as a preacher, and speaker at public meetings of various kinds, became in such extensive demand in a few years, that had he accepted all the invitations which came to hand, he might have been continually from home. He felt it right however to decline many of these until about the year 1850, when he was induced to withdraw almost entirely from worldly business, in order to devote himself more fully to the work of God. For many years after he began to preach there was scarcely a single new chapel erected by the Wesleyans in Lincolnshire, but he was requested

to take part in the opening services; and there perhaps never was a man not in the regular ministry, who preached as many anniversary and occasional sermons, made as many collections for public charities, and raised as large an amount of money as he did.

The following list has been formed from jottings which his papers contain, but yet supplies only a portion, of that kind of service which he had the honour to perform:—

NEW CHAPELS OPENED AND DEDICATED BY MR.
RICHARDSON.

CIRCUIT.	PLACE.	DATE.
Wainfleet . . .	Firsby	June, 10, 1838.
Market Rasen . . .	Spridlington	August 19, 1838.
Spilsby	Keal Cotes	October 14, 1838.
Boston	Thornton-le-Fen	September 6, 1839.
Market Rasen . . .	Legsby	October 13, 1839.
Wainfleet	Friskney	December 15, 1839.
Wainfleet	{ Old Leake (New) School }	December 22, 1839.
Spalding	Holbeach Fen End	March 4, 1840.
Market Rasen . . .	Osgodby	September 13, 1840.
Horncastle	Moorby	September 27, 1840.
Boston	Stickney	October 25, 1840.
Sleaford	Leadenham	October 10, 1841.
Spalding	Dowdsdale	November 4, 1841.
Spilsby	Aswardby	March 10, 1842.
Boston	Fishtoft	September 16, 1842.
Oundle	Oundle	October 2, 1842.
Lincoln	Newport	November 16, 1842.
Spalding	{ Holbeach (re-) opening }	Christmas-day 1842
Wainfleet	Wrangle	June 25, 1843.
Louth	Ludborough	July 14, 1843.
Spalding	Moulton Wash Way	August 20, 1843.
Great Grimsby . . .	Waltham	January 11, 1844.

CIRCUIT.	PLACE.	DATE.
Downham .	Downham (School)	May 13, 1844.
Peterborough .	Yaxley . . .	October 13, 1844.
Barton-upon- Humber . }	Habrough . . .	March 2, 1845.
Grantham .	Saltby . . .	August 22, 1845.
Melton Mow- bray . }	Twyford . . .	October 17, 1845.
Coningsby .	Tattershall Bridge	August 25, 1846.
Spalding . .	Whaplode . . .	October 1, 1846.
Boston . . .	Boston . . .	September 19, 1847.
Louth . . .	Manby . . .	November 21, 1847.
Belper . . .	{ Belper Pottery } { (re-opening) . }	Christmas-day 1847
Grantham . .	Colsterworth . .	October 1, 1848.
Ilkeston . .	{ Stapleford (re- } { opening) . }	December 10, 1848.
Peterborough .	Farcet . . .	September 27, 1849.
Coningsby . .	New York . . .	February 11, 1850.
Nottingham .	{ Ruddington } { (School) . . }	April 28, 1850.
Boston . . .	{ Butterwick (re- } { opening) . }	October 3, 1850.
Boston . . .	Boston (Organ) .	December 22, 1850.

One thing specially worthy of notice, and much to the credit of Mr. Richardson, was, that when he preached on these or similar occasions and had to appeal to the people on behalf of financial objects, he never seemed to lose sight of the fact that he was Christ's ambassador, sent to preach in order to bring lost sinners to God. And whether he was opening chapels or preaching anniversary sermons on week-days or Sundays, he always looked for conversions there and then, and he was generally permitted to see them: sometimes he saw them in considerable number. The late Dr. Newton who had large experience in such matters once said:—

'The way to induce people to give their money for religious objects is to get at their hearts by preaching the pure Gospel.' Mr. Richardson many times in the course of his long life proved this opinion to be unquestionably correct; his earnest evangelical ministry seldom failed to secure encouraging financial results, and he had souls for his hire at the same time. He usually prepared sermons for these occasions suitable to the circumstances, whether connected with Sunday-schools, Foreign Missions, or ought else, but they were all full of evangelical doctrines and sentiments. Some of the subjects he prepared were the following:—

'On Loving the House of God.'—*Psalm xxvi. 8.*

'The City by a River.'—*Psalm xlvi. 4.*

'Beautiful Feet on Mountain tops.'—*Isaiah lii. 7.*

'The Virtues of Holy Waters.'—*Ezekiel xlvi. 9.*

'The Walls of Zion built.'—*Psalm cii. 16.*

'The Burning Bush.'—*Exodus iii. 2—6.*

'Peace and Security of the Church.'—*Isaiah xxxiii. 20, 21.*

'Weeping Sowers and Happy Reapers.'—*Psalm cxxvi. 6.*

'The Chief Pursuit.'—*Proverbs iv. 7.*

'The Two Sons.'—*Matthew xxi. 28.*

'The Queen of Sheba.'—*1 Kings x. 6, 7.*

A large bundle of manuscript sermons and sermon notes affords ample proof that he was very diligent in his pulpit preparations, and that he sought to obtain well beaten oil for the lamps of the sanctuary. He did not expect Divine assistance without doing all in his power to help himself. And in addition to his other preparations he always desired to go directly from his knees in secret, to

appear before the public congregation. And coming thus fresh from the presence of God, he often seemed to bring with him something of that heavenly radiance, which beamed so brightly from the prophet's countenance when he came down from communing with God on the top of Sinai. Indeed, this was 'the lock of his strength'—the secret of his power. He had never been the man he was, but for much secret intercourse with God. And O! may not all who preach 'the glorious Gospel' attain the same distinction? Why not? What hinders? O! how formal, tame, and feeble in the way of converting sinners, all preachers are who have 'no power with God!' Is it not indispensable that God's ambassadors should renew their commission each time they deliver their message? Cowper has well said:—

'When one that holds communion with the skies,
Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis even as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.'

CHAPTER V.

'Surely that preaching which comes from the soul, most works on the soul.'—*Fuller*.

'The inward sighs of humble penitence
Rise to the ear of heaven, when pealed hymns
Are scattered with the sounds of common air.'

Joanna Baillie.

IN the latter end of 1836, Mr. Richardson was urged to spend some time as an evangelist in the Great Grimsby circuit. He went in the early part of November and remained until January, 1837; preaching at the rate of four or five days a week, sometimes twice a day, and two or three times on the Sundays; besides holding many prayer-meetings, band-meetings and other religious services; often continuing them until late in the evening. The formal record of these labours is lost, and all that remains to tell of them are the cherished reminiscences of individuals who witnessed them, and were brought to God at that time. Not a few of these testify to the wonderful displays of Divine power which then took place, resulting in the conversion of many sinners and the general quickening of the Societies throughout the circuit. Wherever he went he was received as the messenger of God, the chapels were crowded, and the word he proclaimed had 'free course,' and was 'mighty through

God to the pulling down of strongholds.' Many persons of different ages and conditions were powerfully awakened and 'added to the church,' both in the Grimsby and neighbouring circuits. From this period, Methodism in that part of Lincolnshire has proceeded onwards, prospering more and more. The Grimsby circuit for several years past has occupied a most honourable position in Methodism, contributing from £600 to £800 a year to the support of Missions to the Heathen, increasing the staff and stipends of its own ministers, multiplying commodious chapels, and erecting and maintaining six day-schools now in successful operation. During three years, viz:—from 1856 to 1859, the voluntary contributions of the Wesleyan Methodists of that single circuit, for various religious objects, amounted to the noble sum of upwards of £13,000.

Of course it is not intended to attribute these results to Mr. Richardson's labours, but it does seem proper to mark the circumstance, that after 'the season of grace' which the circuit experienced during his visit in 1836-7, a steady flow of prosperity set in, which had not been known previously. For some years before this date the number of members in Society had stood a little over 1,000; but in March, 1840, they were returned at 1,230, and they have continued increasing (with small fluctuations) up to the present time. Many devoted and talented ministers have occupied the ground, and have had much success in their labours, and to their instrumentality the prosperity of the circuit is mainly to be attributed; but there is no doubt that Mr. Richardson's numerous visits largely contri-

buted to promote it. In no part of England was he more highly appreciated and beloved than in the Grimsby circuit. At any time of the year, on any day of the week, if it was only announced a few hours beforehand by the cry of the bellman or other means, that he was to preach in George Street chapel, there was sure to be a large congregation at the appointed hour. Some of the most respectable inhabitants of the borough 'glorified God in him' by becoming 'obedient to the faith' which he preached. And not a few both rich and poor, 'stand fast in the Lord' to this day, who will thank God for ever and ever for his ministry.

The following letter to his wife is an interesting memento of the time. It is dated Laceby, February 8th, 1844:—

'MY DEAR ANN.—I have good news to send you. I am very well in health and happy in soul. The Lord is with us in a very powerful manner. I have preached five times in Grimsby to large congregations, and many souls have been saved. At Laceby, on Monday night, we had a most happy time, and seven or eight found peace. At Hatcliffe, on Tuesday, we had a chapel full of people and six or seven found peace; and at Keelby, on Wednesday night, which is a village much like Tetford, we had a crowded chapel and a breaking down among the people. About twenty came forward in distress, and twelve obtained pardon; while many went home deeply wounded. Yesterday afternoon I went to Hull with Mr. and Mrs. Coates, to hear Mr. Caughey from America. We took the packet at

Grimsby and had a pleasant voyage. At six o'clock Waltham-street chapel was full of people, we had a good sermon, and a great number of mourners came forward, and many were made happy. I met with my old friend Mr. Field, who was glad to see me again, and spent a comfortable night at his house. This morning at eight o'clock we set sail for Grimsby. but the sea was very rough, the waves rolled high, and the packet tossed about so much that the people were thrown down upon the deck. I thought I should have been sick. The scene was awfully grand; I never saw the like before; but I should not like to be a sailor, and was thankful when we got safe home. We are just going to Waltham to hear the Rev. F. J. Jobson from Leeds, at two and six. It is the opening of the new chapel. I am to continue the services on Sunday afternoon and night, and shall preach again at Laceby on Monday, and hope to get home at the end of the week. I hope you are well. I do not forget you upon my knees, and have no doubt our prayers meet at the throne of grace.

‘I am, yours most faithfully,

‘CHAS. RICHARDSON.’

Mr. Charles Watmough, a respected local preacher in the Louth circuit, writes with reference to his early labours as an evangelist:—‘I first became acquainted with Mr. Richardson during his visit to the Grimsby circuit in the year 1836. He preached in the town of Caistor, where I then resided, and was the means of doing much good. My heart was just then opening itself to the Lord’s teaching, and

he was just such a preacher as suited my young and buoyant soul and rivetted my attention to the word of the Lord. He was in behaviour out of the pulpit modest, gentlemanly, sincere, kind and affable, plain in dress, as indeed he always was up to the end of his course, for I never saw any difference in him.'

From Grimsby he proceeded in January, 1837, to the Spilsby and Market-Rasen circuits, where he laboured three months with uninterrupted acceptability and success; pursuing much the same course as at Grimsby, preaching as frequently, and often able to rejoice in the triumphs of truth and grace which he was permitted to witness in connection with his visits to various places. In the Spilsby circuit he had many spiritual children, and had great satisfaction in their consistency and steadfastness. In October, 1838, he returned to that circuit and continued labouring with indefatigable zeal up to the end of January, 1839. During that visit he preached frequently on behalf of missions, chapels, and Sunday-schools, but was ever intent upon saving souls, and was almost always and everywhere successful. It was a fruitful season of gracious visitation to the whole neighbourhood. 'The windows of heaven were opened,' and 'showers of blessing' came down upon ministers and people, all worked harmoniously together, Mr. Richardson was in his element, and 'hundreds of people were gathered into the Wesleyan fold. In the March quarter of 1839, the numbers in the circuit, after making up for the usual wear and tear, shewed a clear increase of two hundred and seventy-nine members over the preceding year.

At Binbrook, in the Market-Rasen circuit, he was made a great blessing. Mr. Chapman, who for many years was the pillar of the Society in that place, and whose funeral sermon he preached in 1851, formed a strong attachment to him. For a long period afterwards, he regularly preached the annual sermons for the Sunday-school and took part in the missionary anniversary, and always had crowded audiences, and saw more or less of good done. Many persons in that neighbourhood were brought to God by his instrumentality, some of whom remain to this day.

The latter part of 1837 was spent chiefly in the Alford circuit, and in January, 1838, he went to Boston at the urgent solicitation of ministers and friends. The circuit connected with that town was at the time in question of considerable extent, embracing the whole of what is now the Wainfleet circuit, and stretching from the sea coast to a considerable distance inland. In this district Mr. Richardson had a fine field of labour, he had access to the entire population, and wherever he appeared the people flocked together to hear him preach. The writer was superintendent minister of the Boston circuit after its division, for three years, commencing about eight years after Mr. Richardson's first visit, and had ample opportunities of judging as to the value and effects of his labours, and he is free to say, that so far as his knowledge is concerned, never was any individual, lay or clerical, in any part of Methodism, held in greater regard, or more extensively useful. Never was any one's name mentioned so frequently in lovefeasts and class-

meetings with gratitude to God as was his. Many of the best members of society, class-leaders, and local preachers, attributed their conversion to his instrumentality. The Boston circuit received a spring and impulse at that period which it has never lost up to the present time. The converts gathered into the fold during that visit, and immediately afterwards, appeared as members in the annual returns of March, 1839, when there was a clear net increase of three hundred and twenty-nine on the year,—one of the largest ingatherings the circuit has ever known. This great accession was sustained the following year by a further increase of fifty-five, when the circuit, containing at the time about nineteen hundred members scattered over a wide extent of country, was divided at the Conference of 1841, and the Wainfleet circuit formed out of it, with an additional minister stationed upon the ground. After his first visit a year seldom passed but he was invited to return, and many 'times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord' he brought with him. His services were always in demand both in town and country. He took part in the opening services of the noble Centenary chapel in 1840; and the chapel at Stickney which he opened the same year becoming too small, he was honoured by preaching at the opening of its more spacious and handsome successor in 1857. During a visit in 1847 he wrote home, saying:—'I preached last Sunday night in the Centenary chapel to more than two thousand people from the text—'His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend,

O daughters of Jerusalem."—Cant. v. 16. I had a very happy time, and in the prayer-meeting eight sinners obtained pardon. On Monday night I preached again and five more found peace with God; and on Wednesday night again, when we had a very large congregation, several were in deep distress crying aloud for mercy, and a few were saved. I am to preach in Boston again next Sunday morning, and make a collection for the poor starving Irish who are dying of famine, and then go to Mount Pleasant for 'afternoon and evening.' The writer had an opportunity of hearing him preach that Sunday morning when the collection was made for the Irish. Great power attended the word. The congregation was large, and seemed to be pervaded with a sense of the presence of God. The sermon was remarkably earnest and practical, every utterance was solid, scriptural, and to the point; he spoke like one who had come from communion with God, and felt himself answerable to God for everything he advanced; and what he said was just what his hearers might call to mind with benefit upon a death-bed. As he proceeded with beautiful simplicity and fluency to enlarge upon his text and to apply the subject as he went along, the exclamation arose in the heart again and again, 'Well done Charles!' Nobly did he plead the cause of the poor Irish, and generously did the congregation respond. That Sabbath in Boston was a type of many others which he spent there.

Mr. Robert Hubbert, one of the magistrates of the borough, and the father of Methodism in the circuit, who knew him intimately from first to last,

writes thus:—‘He was a good and blessed man and very useful here, his like is seldom to be found. He was exemplary in all his movements. You were never afraid of introducing him into any society. He was constitutionally retiring, but very affable, and always ready to join in general conversation, but mostly soon gave it a religious turn. When with the sorrowful he would try to cheer and comfort them; and when with those who were happy in God he could always rejoice. He was uniformly good, was most unselfish and circumspect in his proceedings in the church, never acting without the ministers and leading friends going along with him.’

It would require a volume twice the size of the present to follow him through all the places he visited, and to mention the instances of usefulness which came to his knowledge from time to time. A large amount of interesting matter is passed over from necessity, and only the most important and authentic placed upon record. In towns and villages his ministry was equally acceptable. There was a raciness, power, and strong common-sense in his sermons, associated with much simplicity and unction, which made them attractive to the educated as well as to the illiterate; so that, like the Hebrew shepherd of old, ‘He went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.’ Preachers of his stamp are always successful. Would to God they were greatly multiplied in the land we live in. As much human learning and polish for preachers as you please, but they must have in addition, the other and nobler qualities which distinguished Charles Richardson. What a preacher ought to

oe, and what in a good degree the 'Lincolnshire Thrasher' really was, is admirably described in the following lines :—

' Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace,
His master-strokes, and draw from his design,
I would express him simple, grave, sincere ;
In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain,
And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture ; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too ; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.'—*Cowper.*

CHAPTER VI.

'He was mighty as a preacher, and he preached with the expectation of immediate and individual results. The distinct demonstrative reformation and salvation of individual souls were the only satisfactory proofs to him of the success of his ministry, and he sought for such proofs in every place he visited, and after every sermon he delivered.'—*Benj. Abbott, in Stevens' Amer. Meth.*

MR. WESLEY observes in one of his journals, after mentioning the circumstance that he had met with a plain man remarkably full of the Holy Ghost, and singularly useful—'Only give me fifty such men and I will undertake to shake the three kingdoms!' The founder of Methodism had such a knowledge of human nature and of the philosophy of Christianity, that he had strong confidence in a Divinely prepared agency. He felt what we feel, that the greatest desideratum of the church is a supply of right hearted men, clothed with apostolic zeal and spiritual power, to go forth into the world at large as the heralds of salvation. Only let these be forthcoming in sufficient numbers, and the most sanguine expectations respecting the spread of the Gospel shall be realized. Christianity was made and sent into the world in order to conquer all mankind; and it only waits until the true soldiers appear, fully to accomplish its mission. There is a certain

kind of preaching which, even in the present day, rarely fails to accomplish the ends for which the gospel was sent, and there is another kind which as seldom succeeds. 'Paul planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.' As it was, so it is. Can any one doubt that if St. Paul, or his sanctified band of fellow-labourers were to occupy our pulpits in the present day, that their ministry would be less successful than it was in their own age? Apostolic successes did not depend upon human learning, eloquence, or the peculiar circumstances distinguishing the age; no! but upon the power of the Holy Ghost—a power which blessed be God, remains in the church still, and is ever connected with ministers of great personal sanctity, who closely walk with God. Wherever such men go, the Master is with them, enabling them to testify—'Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.' O! for a host of such ministers! churches languish for want of them.

Mr. Richardson's labours as an evangelist began to extend to a greater distance from home at the commencement of the year 1840. He was invited by the ministers of Barton-upon-Humber to assist in holding various anniversaries; and was engaged in that work under the direction of the superintendent for a month or five weeks; filling up every spare evening with extra preaching and prayer-meetings. Many were awakened and converted under his ministry; and he was ever afterwards held in the greatest esteem by the Wesleyans of

that important circuit. The family of Mr. Bygott, of East Halton, in particular, formed a strong attachment to him, and in after years he frequently visited their hospitable home when his excessive labours rendered a little repose and refreshment necessary. An invalid daughter was greatly blessed and comforted by his conversation and prayers, and sometime after one of his earliest visits, wrote in the following terms; showing the estimation in which he was held, and the savour he had left behind him:—

‘DEAR MR. RICHARDSON,—I am glad to embrace another opportunity of addressing you. Since you left us we have often talked about you and asked each other where you are, without being able to answer the question. If it has been after seven o’clock in the evening, the reply has generally been—“O! preaching somewhere.” So you see we have you always employed in the great and good work of winning souls to Christ. I hope you still continue to enjoy the same liberty as when here. All who sat under your ministry agree that they never before enjoyed such blessings, for so many times together. Do you still remember the Monday evening in our room? Surely it was a time never to be forgotten. When father was at Barton he was accosted by some of the friends who were with us, who said they never before experienced such a time of heavenly influence. You will rejoice to know there are seven who have joined our Society since you left, and several others who attend the means of grace more regularly. The members of

Society also have become much more alive. Mrs. B. has not yet joined the class, but we hope soon to have both her and her husband. I will give you the names of those who have joined. Father and mother unite in kindest regards to yourself and family.'

Mr. Richardson was frequently in the Barton circuit and was always welcome. In the commencement of 1844 he spent a month there, chiefly in holding special religious services, and at the close, sent the following interesting letter to his friend the Rev. Robert Bond, describing the remarkable results which he witnessed, and which lead us to cry while we read, 'Haste again, ye days of grace.'

*'Tetford, March 28, 1844.—MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—*I have received your kind letter and am sorry to find that you are so unwell. I have just got home from a five weeks' tour in the Barton and Gainsborough circuits. I spent four weeks in four different places, preaching twice on the Sunday and four nights in the week, holding a fellowship-meeting on the fifth. We have had some of the most glorious times. In the first village we had forty persons who gave in their names to begin meeting in class, and all had found peace except two or three. In the next village we had thirty; and in the next, I never saw such an out-pouring of the Spirit of God in all my life. We began the week well, and the congregations increased night after night, until at the end, numbers could not get into the chapel. There was

a large school-room connected with it, in which we held our prayer-meetings, and you would have been delighted with the scenes which I witnessed there. Both praying men and praying women laboured with all their might, and seemed as if inspired from on high, while numbers of broken-hearted sinners were sighing and groaning and crying aloud for mercy, twenty together; and six or seven persons praying aloud at the same time. We did our best to keep order, and had three rows of benches set, the penitents on one side and the praying people on the other; but it was difficult to keep all right, and at twelve o'clock at night we had almost to force the people to go home. We had all classes of the inhabitants. There was a farmer who pleased me very much, he presented himself as a penitent on the second night, but did not find peace; he came again the third night, and during the prayer-meeting I asked him how he was getting on? He said:—"I do not get on very well, but I hope I shall do better, Satan must give way, I am sure he must; God's word is true; I am sincere, and the Lord will save me." He came again the night after, when I preached from "Noah's Ark," and when speaking about the Lord calling Noah into the ark, I shewed them how he ascended the steps to go in, and while doing so how he stopped and turned to entreat his neighbours to come in with him, and then went up another step and renewed his exhortations until his work was finished, and he entered the ark "and the Lord shut him in." I closed the Bible with a quick impressive action to suggest how it was done. And when the prayer-meeting began, I went

to the farmer and said:—"Well, have you found the Lord?" he replied, "O yes! just as Noah entered the ark, I entered with him and ventured on Christ." A respectable widow woman was there whose husband died happy four years since. She enjoyed religion and one of her children also, but she had three others who did not, two sons and a daughter. All three came forward as penitents seeking mercy. The two sons were fine young farmers and were in deep distress of soul. The mother's feelings overwhelmed her, but they all found peace; and then to have seen the mother and her four children all rejoicing in God together, was most affecting and delightful. The people crowded the penitent bench till we were obliged to tell them they must wait, and when some found pardon, we took them away to make room for others; and when their names were taken down, there were more than a hundred, besides others who came from surrounding villages of whom we took no account. I left the place all on fire. In several families little business was done all the week. Religion was the great topic of conversation. Meetings for prayer were held in private houses, where several found peace, and then went to tell their neighbours what the Lord had done for them. They would have done anything for me to have stayed longer; and if I could have remained a month, it looked as if the whole village would have been converted, but I was obliged to leave. I have also been at Barton, the circuit town, and numbers were brought to God there. I could not get to know how many; we had twenty the first night. The blessed influence

seemed to spread from place to place in various ways. I was told of a labouring gardener, a praying man, who was sent for to a neighbouring village to do up the garden of a farm-house. There were nine persons in the family, all of them ungodly; the mistress of the house said:—"The gardener is coming to-day and he is a Methodist, we shall have some fine fun with him to-night." So when the good man came in to supper, she began to rally and banter him about his Methodism, and said:—"You must preach to us to-night." He saw that they were all trifling and making sport of him, but replied:—"Well, I am no preacher, but I can pray with you," and down he went upon his knees immediately, and they all knelt down with him. He began to pour out his soul in powerful prayer, and after he had pleaded with God in behalf of the family for some time, the servant girl, who was a backslider, began to weep and sob aloud, and the others became very serious. The gardener, who was full of the Holy Ghost, talked to her and prayed with her until she was comforted; and such was the effect produced upon the others, that one of them cried aloud for mercy, and then another and another, until the whole nine were all praying together, with all their might, for the salvation of their souls; and every one of them that night became decided for religion, and set out for heaven.

'I must now conclude. I often think of you when upon my knees. I hope your souls prosper. May God bless you with health of body to labour, and much peace and joy in your soul. My wife joins in kind love to Mrs. Bond and yourself.'

In the year 1841 he laboured extensively in Cambridgeshire, visiting nearly all the circuits in that county and others elsewhere. He preached on behalf of public objects almost every Sabbath and frequently on week-days besides. His fame as a speaker on the missionary platform had gone forth, and he often had to attend several meetings in the same week, and preach or speak in public some ten or twelve times in seven days. But while doing this, and working at full stretch, wherever it was possible he held a prayer-meeting at the close of the service with a view to bring waverers to decision, and restore lost sheep 'to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls.' His work was exceedingly laborious; but he was in the prime of manhood, and delighted in having fully as much employment in the work of God as his bodily strength could sustain. It was the saying of a fine old Methodist preacher* of a former day, 'That he never felt so happy as when on a Sunday night he was worn out with work, and had just enough strength left to tumble into bed and exclaim "Praise the Lord!"' Mr. Richardson was a workman of the same stamp. He often speaks of his exhausting toils in his letters home, but rarely complains, and usually seems to have been quite recruited by a good night's rest; and was as ready as ever the next day to employ his limbs and lungs in his beloved employment.

Mr. Richardson was now pressed almost out of measure, to visit many circuits, and had to refuse more invitations than those he was able to accept. His earliest and latest friend, Mr. William Coates,

* The Rev. Hodgson Casson.

of the Manor-house, near Grimsby, was very wishful that he should visit that circuit again, but previous engagements prevented him. A letter from a member of the family, dated Laceby, Oct. 28th, 1842, is worthy of record:—

‘At the request of Mr. Coates, I beg to acknowledge your last, and to say that we really must have you for two or three weeks at least. Mr. Stephenson, our kind superintendent, was anxious for you to come some time ago to assist in holding missionary-meetings, but Mr. Coates persuaded him to leave you to hold revival services as soon as you can come. We often think and speak of your last prayer amongst us—that our house at Laceby might be sanctified, walls, floor, and all about it. I suppose you have heard that the house was said to be haunted; and many have enquired if we have ever seen the ghost. But praise the Lord we have seen nothing beyond what is human. It is true however that about a fortnight ago, just after twelve o’clock at night, we were aroused from slumber by strange and startling cries in one part of the house. We arose to see what was the matter, and found that the noise proceeded from the room occupied by the groom. For some time previously he had been under deep convictions for sin, and that night upon retiring to his room had resolved not to sleep until he could cast himself upon the Saviour. He had been upon his knees four hours in succession and in silence all the time, and when at length God spoke peace to his heart, he was so overwhelmed with joy, that he gave a loud expression to his

happy feelings, and cried out with all his might. He is still happy and meets with us in class. Praise God for this haunted home ! We care not how often we are thus aroused at midnight. The prayer of our hearts is,—O ! that God would visit us from on high, and sanctify us wholly to Himself.'

Such were Mr. Richardson's friends, such their sympathies and joys, and such the domestic episodes which occasionally transpired in their dwellings.

Part of the months of November and December was spent in labouring in the Lincoln circuit, and during that time he preached in the city and most of the villages surrounding it. The Newport chapel was opened,—he assisted in preaching at the dedicatory services, and the blessing of God came down upon the people wherever he proclaimed the word of life. On the second of December, 1842, he wrote home as follows :—

'I have been out in the circuit all the week, and have just come into Lincoln, or I would have written sooner. I have been preaching and holding prayer-meetings every night, and the Lord has been with us, and good has been done in every place. I was at Bassingham last night, and about ten persons found peace with God. My coming has produced much excitement, and the people run after me from place to place and many souls are saved. All being well, I preach in Lincoln on Sunday morning, and at Fiskerton at two and six ; at Branston on Monday, at Eagle on Tuesday, at Newton on Wednesday, and at Thorp on Thursday.'

An interesting circumstance took place in connection with his visit to Harby, at which place he preached on the 30th November. He had not much comfort in the service, and saw but little fruit. Seven years passed away, and Harby had nearly gone from his recollection. He was at Southwell in Nottinghamshire, and was attending a tea-meeting, when a young man came and sat down beside him, and asked if he had any remembrance of him: conversation ensued, in which it turned out that the young man was from Harby; that he had gone with many more to hear Mr. R. preach that night in November, 1842, and was deeply convinced of sin, together with several other young men, under the same sermon; that they all became decided immediately; joined the Society, and that a revival followed which spread through the village. Here was another illustration of the instruction given to those who labour in the Lord's vineyard:—'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.'

Mr. Richardson laboured in the Lincoln circuit frequently in after-years, and was there permitted to gather much fruit. The people of that fine circuit knew how to appreciate his sterling worth, and rejoiced in his success.

The number of members in Society at the Conference of 1842 was 1,967, but the following March they rose to 2,137, and continued subsequently to increase: shewing that wherever proper means are employed, and a vigorous, enterprising spirit is

manifested in aggressive action upon the surrounding home heathenism ; the Lord is never behindhand with His people, but invariably works with them and vouchsafes abundant encouragement. We have no right to expect the diffusion of religion without the employment of suitable human agency. Christian people need to be much more impressed with the value and necessity of chosen instruments for God to work with, for He does not work without them ; and before the land we live in can be evangelized, there must be raised up a supply of Evangelists, baptized with fire, carrying the glad tidings of salvation into rural retreats, and the back slums of large cities, and making the regions of spiritual darkness and death to reverberate with their cries, 'Repent ye and believe the Gospel.' Only let the chosen, divinely-ordained Evangelists go forth—call them laymen, clerics, or what you please—and an army of regenerated men and women shall arise out of 'the valley of dry bones,' to make the land resound with the Redeemer's praise.

Success and encouragement await the men who labour for God, in the spirit of the Lincolnshire Thrasher. They are the great want of the times : 'The Lord of the harvest' waits to hire as many as offer. The whitening fields are almost withering for want of them. The supply does not meet the demand ; and it will not be until the Church produces a greater number of like-minded men, that the extension and conquest so much desired can be realized.

In 1843 Mr. Richardson's labours were of much the same character and results as previously. He visited many circuits in Cambridgeshire and Lincoln-

shire, opening new chapels, preaching anniversary Sunday-school sermons, holding missionary meetings, and making collections for various religious objects; but always taking care to cast his net 'on the right side of the ship,' and as a skilful fisher of men to bring sinners to the Saviour. Monetary objects with him were always subservient to higher and nobler aims. He took it for granted that wherever he was wanted it was to assist in saving souls and in promoting the spiritual work of God, and while he laboured chiefly to accomplish these objects, the other and inferior ends which were desired, were secured, and indeed were all the more encouragingly realized.

In the latter part of the year he was very hard at work, and was continually passing from place to place for about three months, not having an opportunity of looking in upon his family for an hour, but he managed to secure Christmas-day for the sweets of home. He had a keen relish for social and domestic enjoyments, and dearly loved to be in the midst of his children at Christmastide. On this occasion he had only a few days' rest, and as these passed he preached some three or four times at Tetford, and then with the first days of January, 1844, he was on the wing again, and went into the Market-Rasen circuit, where he continued labouring and gathering fruit for a fortnight. Then he went to Grimsby for a month, and thence to other places. About six weeks after he left home some one originated a most mischievous report, to the effect that he had suddenly dropped down dead. And true to the old adage, 'Rumour is both false and fleet,' it flew fast

and far. Many of his friends were in much concern, and Mrs. Richardson and his children were in great distress for some days. As soon, however, as he became aware of their anxiety he wrote home and put all to rights by the following letter:—

*‘Ulceby, near Barton, March 11th, 1844. Monday afternoon, 5 o’clock.—*I have just got the letter you sent me, and am sorry to find you have heard the report that I dropped down dead. The same is circulated here. How it arose I do not know; perhaps it originated with some wicked man. However, I have been very well, except a little cold. The Lord is carrying on a glorious work in this circuit. I think there has not been one night since I left home but the Lord has saved souls. I preached here for the first time last night, and many were saved and testified to the power of God to pardon sin; and there appear to be many more under conviction. I am to be at Gainsborough next Sunday, and spend the whole week with them, but hope to be at home on Saturday week. I have been a long time away, but the Lord is very good to me, and helps me in my labours. I never forget you at the throne of grace, and hope Christ is very precious to you. I shall be happy to see you all again, and spend a week at home.’

The above is all that remains to report the results of a ten weeks’ tour, which appears to have been exceedingly successful. Incidents and circumstances of the deepest interest must have transpired in connection with the many conversions, and

seasons of gracious power to which he refers in saying, 'there has not been one night since I left home but the Lord has saved souls.' How many families were made happy—how many hearts were comforted—how many Societies were refreshed and strengthened, will never be known until 'the day shall declare it.' It is much to be regretted that no memorial is left, and that he kept no regular journal of what transpired. 'But his record is on high,' and many already do, and hereafter shall arise to 'call him blessed.'

The greatest part of this year was spent upon the same ground he had visited the year before, but he everywhere gathered fruit. At Sutton-on-Trent, six persons 'found peace with God.' At Tuxford, 'twenty people were in the penitents' pew and many of them obtained pardon.' There also, 'a pious farmer's wife wept for joy over two of her daughters who were earnestly seeking salvation.' At Wisbeach 'there were five or six penitents, and better collections than for seventeen years previously.' At Huntingdon, 'six persons professed to find salvation, where such a thing had not been heard of for a long time.' At St. Neots, 'there was a mighty shaking amongst the "dry bones," and one of the circuit Ministers with his wife were bathed in tears while their daughter, a fine young lady of eighteen years, was directed to the "Lamb of God" for pardon; and many brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, were weeping over each other and rejoicing in God.'

The latter part of the year found this zealous man in a very different sphere of labour to any he

had previously occupied. He had many friends in London, who for some time had been very wishful to introduce him to the Societies and congregations of the 'great city.' But he instinctively shrank from the formidable task of appearing before a metropolitan audience. A plain, simple countryman, as he knew himself to be, of rustic manners and provincial speech, he felt afraid that he would be out of his place in such a sphere, and that it was not to be expected, he could be made as useful in London, as in the villages and small towns to which his labours had as yet been chiefly confined. His friends, however, thought otherwise. They knew what we know, that there are hosts of people living in heathenish darkness and depravity within a very short distance of the places where the gospel is proclaimed; and that many who attend these sanctuaries, belong to the same classes of persons as those to whom his ministry had been such an abundant blessing in the country. Ultimately, he was induced to overcome his scruples, and after much prayer for Divine guidance, he ventured in the name of the Lord to go and spend a fortnight in holding special religious services. The spiritual results, however, were not such as to satisfy his own mind. Had fame and popularity been the object of his ambition, he might have been well enough pleased with his visit; but it was otherwise; his insatiable desire was for the salvation of sinners, and unless this object was accomplished every time he preached, he retired to his closet, to weep and examine himself, as to whether he was doing the will of God, and in his right place. He was permitted

to gather some fruit in London, but the quantity did not satisfy him. In after years, however, he frequently visited the metropolis, laboured with great joy and returned home counting his spoils with gratitude to God. In the latter part of his life, he was commonly in London once or twice every year, for three or four weeks at a time, and on these occasions many were brought to God by his instrumentality. At Walworth, Vauxhall, Spitalfields, and other places, he was of great service to Sunday-schools and chapels in embarrassed circumstances; and was held in the greatest esteem by many of the ministers and leading friends; while several of the Societies were greatly refreshed from time to time by his thoroughly evangelical preaching and the heavenly influence which attended all his labours.

To a person brought up in the plain and homely life of a Lincolnshire village, a first visit to the 'great metropolis' is to this day an event of some importance, and was much more so thirty or forty years ago. Mr. Richardson was no stoic, and he evidently felt the excitement of the novel circumstances in which he was placed during his first visit. The following communications to Mrs. Richardson tell their own tale:—

London, Oct. 28th, 1844.—When I got to Mr. Harrison's, on Saturday, they gave me a hearty welcome. Yesterday, I preached two Sunday-school sermons to very good congregations. We had an excellent prayer-meeting at night, and an awakening influence among some of the slumberers.

There are some smart people here, and plenty of fine bonnets and ribbons and flowers, and they almost made me tremble, but I was enabled to cast myself with all my helplessness upon Christ, and we had a blessed day.

'Mr. Harrison is going to take me to see the Queen's procession, from her palace to the Royal Exchange. Her majesty will appear in all her glory, attended with dukes and lords and tens of thousands of people. In one street through which the procession will pass, they are letting a chamber window for twenty pounds to sight-seers. I expect the pocket-pickers will be very busy, but I shall leave my watch and money at home.'

'*London, Oct. 31st.*—I think you will be more concerned about me now that I am here than if I were in any other place, so I write again to tell you that I am comfortable and happy. I have been preaching every night to respectable congregations, but not very large. Here are not many poor people who come to chapel, but still the Lord has given me a few souls in London. We saw the Queen's procession on Monday; it was a grand sight. We saw the state carriages, the Queen and Prince Albert; a regiment of horse soldiers went before, and the Life Guards followed after. They went very slow, no faster than we could walk. The Queen kept bowing to the people as she went on, and the multitude, with hats off and hands up, saluted her with loud huzzas. I am to preach in Vauxhall chapel to-night, Friday night, and twice on Sunday for the schools, and next week shall turn homewards.'

“London, Nov. 6th.—I have now finished my work. in London, and am in the house of Mr. James Gill, thinking and talking about the providence of God. We have been saying, “Who could ever have thought twenty years since that I should have to come to London to preach, and that James Gill and Eliza Bray would be here to entertain me, so many miles away from our native place.” But so it is. They got better collections on Sunday than they have had before. They say the chapel will hold about seven hundred, but it was packed full, and hundreds went away that could not get in. We have had a few souls saved. I was preaching on Saturday night, and a woman fell down, and cried aloud for mercy and continued in distress until I was done. We then prayed with her, and she was made happy. She said she was at the chapel the night before, and went home so miserable she could not sleep. I must leave London on Friday morning, and come to Huntingdon, if all be well ready for Sunday.’

Thus in London as elsewhere, the peasant preacher was owned of God and made an abundant blessing to His church. He had one all-absorbing end and aim before his mind, whether walking the London streets, or the quiet lanes of his native village, and that was,—the glory of God and the salvation of men. Neither the attractions nor the distractions of London life made much difference with him. He had one thing to do; and he did it with earnestness and prayer for Divine help; and the help he sought was forthcoming when wanted, enabling him to accomplish what some of the brilliant and ten-talented men fail to do.

'If, therefore, thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light.' Mark that! There is a promise of spiritual power given to a 'heart right in the sight of God.' And with that promised power, a rustic shepherd-youth, with simple sling and stone, brings down a trained Goliath, and leads the hosts of Israel on to conquest. The unction of the Holy Ghost invests an unlettered countryman with an influence, which, notwithstanding his broad provincial speech and homely manners, draws the educated and polished citizen to his feet, and makes him the messenger of salvation to thousands of his social superiors.

'The wise man, says the Bible, walks with God,
Surveys far on the endless line of life;
Values his soul, thinks of eternity;
Both worlds considers, and provides for both;
With reason's eye his passions guards; abstains
From evil, lives on hope: on hope the fruit
Of faith; looks upwards, purifies his soul,
Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky;
Passes the sun, and gains his Father's house,
And drinks with angels from the fount of bliss.'

Pollok.

CHAPTER VII.

'The Gospel comes to the sinner at once with nothing short of complete forgiveness, as the starting point of all his efforts to be holy; it does not say: "Go and sin no more and I will not condemn thee." It says at once: "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more."'—*Horatius Bonar*.

MR. RICHARDSON'S ministry was full of Christ and the offers of a present salvation; wherever he went, and to whomsoever he preached he had little else to speak about; he gloried in the Cross, and held it forth with the boldness and confidence of an enthusiast, to the rich and the poor, to the learned and the unlearned, and expected immediate manifestations of the power of God. He cherished a strong and undoubting conviction that the Gospel is equally able to produce direct and visible results when offered to mankind in our own day, as in apostolic times, and was always ready to direct enquirers after salvation, in the language of St. Paul and to say: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' His earnest cry, in the pulpit and the prayer meeting, at the family altar and in the social circle was: 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' He offered to every penitent sinner he could find, present pardon through faith in Christ; and to

every believer groaning for full salvation, present sanctification through the influences of the Holy Ghost. All his arguments, illustrations, exhortations converged upon the necessity of at once closing in with Christ and His offers; and the dangers of delay,—and hence his success. A Christless ministry is never successful; it may be accomplished, eloquent, attractive, but it is not productive of conversions. On the other hand, though the preacher may be homely and uneducated, yet if he goes forth set on fire with the love of God and the souls of men, to offer a present salvation in the name of Christ crucified, he is sure to leave his mark behind him; a spiritual progeny will be raised up by his instrumentality; and the people 'shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.'

From January to October, 1845, Mr. Richardson laboured at Boston, Terrington, Laceby, Wrangle, Holbeach, Bourne, Biggleswade, Chatteris, Tetford, Melton Mowbray, etc. He was never unemployed. When not in harness as a preacher, he was visiting from house to house, making new sermons, or attending to his extensive correspondence. In one way or other he was continually scattering seeds of truth and living for the glory of God. He was inured to hardness, he never claimed seasons of relaxation or self-indulgence, his excellent constitution enabled him to endure toil without much fatigue, and he gave himself no rest. It was not so much from a sense of duty that he lived so, as from the pleasure he found in holy toil, that his daily life

seemed to say: 'I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.' He had the spirit of a true minister of Jesus Christ, and gave full proof that although no ordaining hands ever touched his head, he held a ministerial vocation from God. Men may talk and dictate as they please about 'Apostolical Succession,' and 'Episcopal Ordination,' but God will show from time to time as the years roll on, as He ever has done in time past, that He is not to be bound up by human inventions, and that when gifted and sanctified messengers of righteousness are wanted He will not hesitate to bring them forth from the vineyards of Tekoa, the fishing boats of Gennesareth, or the sheep-folds of Lincolnshire, or somewhere else.

Towards the close of the year Mr. Richardson entered upon a still wider sphere of labour than previously. He was strongly urged to visit circuits in Somersetshire and Devonshire. The distance was great, and to a person like himself, who had never travelled at all, until the middle period of life had set in, long journeys must have seemed very formidable. In the old coaching days of the four-wheeled 'High-flyers' and 'Telegraphs' from the north up to London, it was not at all uncommon for prudent men to make their wills before starting from home. But railways were by this time rapidly bringing about a wonderful change in people's ideas about travelling. The 'Great Western,' had made the counties of Devon and Somerset so easy of access, that northern peasants, brought up in places as sequestered as Tetford, could look upon very long

journeys without alarm. Mr. Richardson had seldom been farther from home than Horncastle, until he was turned forty years of age ; and as he passed to and fro between his home and Ashby, day by day for nineteen long years, the high hills around him, not a mile distant, shut out the busy world, and probably suggested thoughts about travelling very different to those with which everybody is so familiar in these days of 'cheap trips' and 'excursion trains.' And it was not without much concern that he brought himself to adventure forth upon such a formidable undertaking as a journey to Tiverton. However, as his way seemed clear, he made up his mind to go, and set off on the last day of October for a two months' tour. He visited Wisbeach, Upwell, Wimbotsham, and other places on the way, and at the end of a fortnight wrote home for the second time as follows :—

'Bedford, Nov. 14th, 1845.—I left Stow last Friday, and stayed in Cambridge all night. On Saturday I arrived at Bedford about one o'clock, after travelling seventy miles, and found a very kind respectable people. I preached three times last Sunday, and have held four missionary meetings during the week, the congregations have been large and the collections good ; three times as much in one place, and in another doubled. This afternoon I preach again, and hold a missionary-meeting at night about three miles out of Bedford. I am to preach next Sunday twice, about three miles away on another side of the town, and shall leave on Monday morning for Bow-Brickhill, in

Buckinghamshire, about eighteen miles from Bedford; and on Tuesday morning they will carry me to a railway station about forty-six miles from London. I think of staying a day or two in London, and shall then go on to Tiverton. I hope the Lord will preserve both you and me, and that souls will be saved, and then if so, when all our labours and troubles are over, great will be "our rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus!" Thank God I have almost always some good to record. When I was at Wereham in Norfolk last week, they told me of a young man that found peace with God when I was there four years ago, who has since died happy in the Lord and is gone to glory. I came here by railway from Ely to Cambridge, about sixteen miles, and see no danger. I think there are great improvements in the railways, and that they act with much more caution than they did at first. I got into the train at Ely, and we seemed only to have been going a few minutes when we came to a station; I said to a gentleman:—"How far have we got?" he said "Nearly nine miles!" I was astonished, for we did not appear to go very fast.'

'*Tiverton, Nov. 22nd.*—It is with pleasure I write to say I am very well; praise the Lord! I have got safe to my journey's end, and have never seen any danger all the way. On Friday morning I left London by the Great Western Railway, and got here at night. We were travelling all day, for the train stopped several times on the way. Tiverton is a larger town than Louth; the chapel will seat about eight hundred people. I am to preach

in it twice to-morrow, and once in the country. I have not yet seen more than two or three of the friends, but they seem strange and peculiar. Well, I must look to the Lord for help; He has been with me in every place yet, and I am not afraid that He will forsake me here if I trust in Him. I hope I shall soon have the privilege of telling you, from here as from other places, of the conversion of sinners to God. And you also must trust in the Lord, and remember that I am as safe here as though I were but twenty miles from home.'

'*Tiverton, Nov. 28th, 1845.*—I am thankful to say that though labouring very hard, I am as well as I ever was in my life. I preached at Tiverton twice on Sunday, the congregations were good, and we had a blessed prayer-meeting; there were about eight came to the altar-rail, and three found peace. During the week I have been out into the circuit. The chapels are small, religion low, and the members few. In one town where I was on Monday there are four thousand inhabitants, but we have only eighty members; on Tuesday I was at another town with eighteen hundred inhabitants, and we have only a little chapel and five members. I had a small company, but small as it was a poor woman got salvation, and as I have since been told, when she went home her husband began to beat her because she had been at the chapel. I preached in Tiverton last night to a good congregation, there were twelve penitents at the prayer-meeting, and seven obtained pardon. I am to preach again to-night and believe we shall have a gracious work, there is a good prospect. The part of the country

I have seen is very beautiful and pleasant. It is almost all hills and dales, small pastures, woods and groves, fine springs and rivers running amongst the hills. In summer the scenery must be most beautiful. The people talk very different to the people of Tetford; and it would amuse you not a little to hear some of them pray, their manner is so singular, and not being used to revivals they cannot enter into the prayer-meetings, so that we want help very much. I never was in so large a place with so little praying talent. I should like to have half a dozen of my neighbours at Tetford here to assist me for a few nights.'

His plans and operations during the remainder of his visit to Devonshire were very much deranged by the sudden and fatal illness of the wife of the Rev. Robert Bond, who was at that time the superintendent minister of the Tiverton circuit. Both Mrs. Bond and her husband were much attached to Mr. Richardson, and were the means of introducing him to the Societies in that part of the kingdom. They rejoiced in his success, and promoted his usefulness in various ways. It had been arranged for them to go with him on a visit to the Dunster circuit, and they were upon the eve of starting when Mrs. Bond was seized with a serious illness, which in the space of a fortnight terminated in death. Mr. Bond was almost overwhelmed for a time by the painful visitation, and the Society in Tiverton was greatly distressed. She was a deeply pious and useful lady, in the prime of life, and greatly beloved. Her death was beautifully triumphant,

and during the whole of her affliction she was sustained in an extraordinary manner with 'the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' Mr. Richardson was much affected with the dispensation which took away at a stroke the wife of his friend; and his letters home were filled with accounts of the painful details arising out of it, and with expressions of his own deep sorrow and sympathy. But little information can be gathered from his correspondence at this time respecting the results of his labours, excepting the simple fact, that they were 'not in vain in the Lord.' On the 9th of December he preached in the Dunster circuit, and continued labouring there until the 20th; and then returned home in order to be ready for the Christmas and the new-year's services at Tetford and Horncastle, at which he was always expected to be present, and which for many years in succession were greatly promoted by his assistance.

In the early part of January, 1846, he addressed a letter to Mr. Bond, which is too characteristic and interesting to be omitted. He was assisting the Rev. J. H. Norton at the time, having commenced the new year as he had ended the old one, diligently working in the vineyard of the Lord:—

Coningsby, January 15th.—MY DEAR BROTHER, Again I take up my pen to address you, but I no sooner begin to write than my tears begin to flow, and the whole scene of your dear companion's affliction crowds upon my mind; and yet, although I feel deep sorrow, and sympathize with you in your loss, how blessedly your cup is mingled with

the best of consolations. You have no pangs of grief arising from the thought of a soul lost. No! You have the consolations arising from the recollection that supporting grace was given, that a triumphant victory crowned the final conflict, that another saint has gone to glory, that another gem is added to the Redeemer's crown, and another soul added to the shining ranks before the heavenly throne to swell the songs of the redeemed, who like herself, were saved by grace. I shall never forget the morning I left your house, and the last look of your dear wife which I caught when coming out of her chamber. To my astonishment, she was singing with uplifted hands and eyes, and a countenance lighted up with heavenly love, "Part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now." The scene has frequently been the subject of my conversation and remark, in the places which I have lately visited. In the great meeting at Horncastle at the new year, I spoke of my visit to Tiverton and Mrs. Bond's death, and the whole congregation was in tears while I spoke. I can assure you that I pray for you, that God may bless and give you health and long life to labour in His good cause and win many souls to Christ. You will please to give my kind regards to all the friends at Tiverton. I should like to hear how the Lord's work prospers, and whether you have many souls saved. I have preached to my neighbours at Tetford five times this Christmas and have seen twelve souls saved, and many more powerfully convicted. I have not forgotten the exhortation which Mrs. Bond gave me along with Mr. West,

when she looked at us both for the last time and said—"Live to God and labour for souls, it will only be for a moment." Through grace I intend to remember and do that.'

Mr. Richardson did remember 'to do that.' He survived Mrs. Bond eighteen years, and throughout the whole of that period, his earthly business was to 'live to God and labour for souls.' And well and wisely did he labour. An American writer has observed, 'that most religious people awake up to a perception of how they ought to live, just when they come to die;' and the remark is too true; not a few of those who might otherwise pass the bounds of time with songs of joy like Mrs. B., have to 'mourn at the last,' on account of time and opportunities misspent and lost for ever. Mr. Richardson learnt the necessary lesson betimes, and cheerfully presented himself as 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' It is good to see a genuine Christian die. Invaluablé impressions are often made by death-bed scenes. Ministers of the Gospel do well to themselves to witness as many as they can. The holy purposes of their youth and the convictions of their maturer years are wonderfully refreshed by standing awhile 'at the passages of Jordan.'

The extracts supplied from Mr. Richardson's correspondence are not intended to represent the aggregate of his labours and success, but simply to serve as a sample. A large portion of his letters have been unfortunately lost or destroyed; and it is known by the members of his family that the

portion which has perished was equally interesting with what remains. Other extracts, as numerous and copious, might easily be given, but are purposely withheld to avoid undue extension; whilst it is hoped that those placed upon record will give a fair average representation of the manner in which his labours redounded to the glory of God. During the year 1846 he was almost continually from home. No man living was more attached to home, wife, and children than Mr. Richardson: and although he was in obedience to a sense of duty 'in journeyings often,' his home yearnings were always strong, and when the time came for his return, he could always sing:—

'And like a bounding hart, fly home.'

The year opened out with sermons at Tetford, and assisting at the great New-year's meeting at Horn-castle, of which more shall be said by-and-bye. He visited the Spilsby, Boston, Market-Rasen, Wainfleet, and Spalding circuits during the first three months, and went to London in April, from whence he proceeded into Kent, and went on into various parts of Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire.

Late in the year he visited the village of Hessle Priory, in the Hull West circuit. Mr. Smith, a Wesleyan gentleman from the Market-Rasen circuit, who had seen much of his usefulness in that part of the country, had gone to reside near Hessle, and was very wishful to bring him to labour amongst the inhabitants. The Rev. Thomas Stead, then the superintendent minister residing in Hull, also sent pressing invitations to him; and so he went, and

preached on Friday, the 9th November, on Saturday, the 10th, and every night the following week. The results are stated in the following extracts:—

'Hessle Priory, November 15th, 1846.—I have been preaching every night during the week, and a good work is begun in Hessle. It is a fine village with about twelve hundred inhabitants, and a good chapel. We have had excellent congregations, and already a number of persons have found peace with God and others are seeking salvation. There was a woman who went home on Friday night, the first time I preached, and said to her husband: "It will never do for us to live in the way we have been doing. I am determined to turn to God, and if you will go to hell you shall go by yourself." He was a very wicked man, a blacksmith by trade. He came to hear me on Sunday along with his wife, and on Monday she was there again. When she went home it was late and she expected him to be very angry with her, but he said nothing. When they had retired to bed she said to him: "What would you say if I were to go and join the Methodists?" "O," said he, "I should say nothing at all; for I have been thinking to-night while you were at chapel that I would go and join them myself." She came forward as a penitent seeker the following night, and obtained a very clear sense of the pardoning love of God. He was with her, and appears to be sincerely seeking the Lord. I am to preach again to-night, and on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, and then go to East Halton, near Barton, for three days to assist at missionary-meetings.'

Hessle Priory, Nov. 18th.—We have a very good work indeed going on here, praise the Lord! The congregations have seemed to grow larger every time I have preached. Such a movement has never been known in this place before. On Monday night last there was a great breaking down; poor sinners were crying for mercy on every side. One friend took down twenty names of persons willing to begin meeting in class. I cannot tell how many have been saved, and there is likely to be many more.'

The work which was commenced at this time at Hessle was genuine, and produced permanent results of the most blessed kind. It is sometimes intimated that the conversions which result from such efforts as those of Mr. Richardson's are not reliable, and that after the temporary excitements of the occasion have subsided, the parties return to their former habits. But such was not the case in this instance, and in many others, as the facts supplied by this narrative show. Mr. Richardson did not rely upon excitement. He did not strive to produce it. His object was ever to bring the ungodly to a knowledge of themselves and the Saviour, and to lead the inquiring sinner to the throne of grace, there to cast himself in faith and penitence upon the mercy of God as offered to all men in Christ Jesus. He was neither a fanatic nor an enthusiast, but an earnest, pure-minded believer in the Saviour, burning with love for the souls of his fellow-men, and fully persuaded that free and full salvation is offered in the Gospel, without money or price to all the world: and therefore wherever he

went, he pressed and exhorted the people to accept a present salvation. And the Lord greatly honoured his faith and zeal.

A fortnight after he left Hessle, Mr. Smith wrote to inform him that meetings for prayer were continued daily, and that the number of conversions increased: that he had commenced a new class, and the second time it met twenty-three persons were present who had recently obtained a sense of pardon. On the following New-year's day he wrote again stating that the class had swelled to thirty-seven, all professing personal justification by faith, and all new members. In the following month of March Mr. Richardson returned and preached several times. He then found that seventy persons had been brought to God during his previous visit, and that nearly all held on their way. In March, 1849, he visited them again and preached several times, and found that the seventy saved three years before, were still standing fast in the Lord with few exceptions; some had gone to reside elsewhere, but had joined the Society and retained their religion. The blacksmith had become a steady, useful member, and his brother who had been as wicked a man as himself, and had continued in sin up to this time, was brought under deep convictions, and three different nights had been amongst the penitents, along with his wife, groaning for redemption. These are facts which speak for themselves, and ought to intimidate those who discourage and seek to suppress such evangelizing efforts as those which the peasant preacher so successfully put forth for many years.

During 1847 Mr. Richardson continued his labours with unremitting zeal, his health was good, and his soul abundantly sustained with grace. 'He was strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.' Preaching a present salvation was his daily delight. A rich and powerful unction was upon his spirit and wherever he went he was recognized as 'the messenger of the Lord,' and seemed as though he had come direct from His presence. His gifts for public speaking improved as he continued to exercise himself therein; and in other respects he became more and more a 'man of God thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' In the course of the year he visited the Market-Rasen, Wisbeach, Boston, Louth, Hull West, Oakham, Norwich, Redditch, Peterborough, Spalding, Spilsby, Southwark, Nottingham, Bingham, and Belper circuits. Writing home he said:—

*'Boston, Jan. 23rd, 1847.—*I have just arrived here from Long Sutton, where I have had a very happy week; such congregations as the people never saw at any previous anniversary. We had a large tea-meeting and the people crowded in so as to eat up all the provisions, and they had to run to the shops to get more tea, bread, and butter. At night the chapel contained not less than six hundred people. On Sunday night we had only two penitents, but on Monday four obtained pardon; and on Tuesday about sixteen were made happy. On Wednesday night about twelve rejoiced in God after long seeking His mercy, and on Thursday night about fourteen were saved. My labours at

Sutton closed with so much shaking of hands, weeping good byes, with "you must come again," as were quite affecting. On the Thursday night there was a farmer present who lives in Gedney, he had been with us all the week, along with his wife, but that night she had stayed at home, and their daughter and a servant-girl came with him. After the sermon he wished to go home, and got the horse put into the trap and started, but the two girls had been deeply wounded by the Spirit of the Lord, and as soon as they got as far as the toll bar just outside the town, both of them burst out into a loud and bitter cry on account of the state of mind they were in; and begged of him to turn back and let them stay at the prayer-meeting. He did so, and when they came into the chapel they came straight up to the penitent's pew, where one of the servant-men of the same farmer was crying aloud for mercy at the very moment, so they all fell down upon their knees together, and after a long struggle they all found peace, and went home together, rejoicing and giving glory to God. On Friday night I preached at Holbeach, and it was good to be there.'

'*Leicester, April 1st.*—I left Redditch yesterday, and am only waiting here until a friend comes to fetch me into the Oakham circuit, where I have to preach at Knossington to-morrow for the chapel. It is the place where the woman set her back against the door, when I was there last year, and would not let me leave the house until I promised to come again this year. We have had a blessed work going on at Redditch, many have got salvation, and many more are seeking the Lord. The last night I was

there, two old men were saved. The grace of God is working powerfully amongst the needle makers; there are large establishments in which religion is the great subject of conversation, some persecute and blaspheme, and others weep and pray. One man very ignorant and wicked, who has a wife and two children, was persuaded to come to chapel; after he had heard me preach once he would come every time while I stayed, but never remained at the prayer-meeting, till the last night, when he was truly in deep distress of soul, but did not find peace; he said his parents were very wicked, that he could not read, and in his own way of talking said—"Us never has known, us never has cared onything 'bout religion in my life." There are many people in the place much alarmed, and many of the young women in the factories have got saved: the young people earn good wages at the needle trade, but they are very fond of fine clothes. Some of them have sent you some needles, and I suppose I have as many as will serve you all your life. I stood at the chapel door the last night to shake hands with the people, and it was so affecting to see those who had got good with tears in their eyes thanking God, and praying for me. I am very well and thankful to say that the Lord is with me saving souls.'

The following was addressed to a pious lady, who had suggested to him that his friends thought he ought to retire from the wool-winding business altogether, in order to have the whole of his time for labouring in the vineyard of the Lord:—

Tetford, June 7th.—I must beg pardon for not writing sooner. I have been much from home, and am now very busy preaching and winding wool, and if the Lord spare me, so it must be. Well, praise the Lord! I am very well, and all my family are well. We have had a wedding this week, another of my daughters has got married to a pious young man. I promised friend Allison that if I gave up my wool-winding business I would preach the Keelby school sermons; but some of my friends say I must not give it up; others say do. But if I were to give it up and then be stopped from preaching, it would be a serious thing for my family, so I am still doing a little. Well, praise the Lord! I am very happy. My cause is in the hands of the Lord, and all will be right. My dear sister, let us sink into all the will of God, and plunge afresh into the purple flood. O! what a blessed privilege it is to have the victory over all sin, and have Christ in the heart making it more and more like Himself, and filling it with all the graces of the Spirit, adorning it with these, like as the temple of old was adorned with gold and tapestry, and cherubim and glory! O! then what visits from heaven. What a sight for angels! For with what delight do they view the new man rising and improving, and conquering, and labouring, and going forward! Glory be to God! This is something of my experience. But O! for a greater degree of holiness. Well, let us try again, pray again, believe again.'

In the month of August Mr. Richardson preached in the town of Nottingham for the first time. On

that occasion he occupied the New Radford pulpit, and made collections for the chapel trust. His visit was a decided success. Many conversions filled him with gladness, fanned the fire of his zeal, and established him in the affections and confidence of many of the best and worthiest of the Wesleyans of that town. One incident transpired especially deserving of a record. A medical gentleman who had formerly resided in Boston, and taken an active part in the Society in that town for a length of time; but who from some cause or other took offence and withdrew, and after ceasing to be a member, became actively hostile and sought to injure the Connexion, and the influence of the ministers of the body, by means of the public press and in other ways; but at length removed out of Lincolnshire and settled in Nottingham. He had frequently heard Mr. Richardson preach in former years, and still retained his regard for him as an earnest, pure-minded man, sincerely labouring for the good of others; and finding that he was to preach, went to the chapel on the Sunday evening where he had never been previously. As he listened to the sermon his heart melted, reminiscences of former days crowded into his mind, a deep and painful consciousness of having departed from God filled him with sorrow and alarm, and he went home wounded by the Spirit's sword to mourn over his backslidings and seek forgiveness. On the Monday evening he went to chapel again, and was in deep distress the whole of the service, and as if totally indifferent to the opinions which might be formed by spectators, he professed, in company with several

other penitents, to be anxiously seeking the mercy of God. His old acquaintance knew him well, and knew all about the mischief he had formerly done ; but rejoiced over him exceedingly when he saw him humbled and brought to the feet of Jesus. He prayed with him, and encouraged him to come to the Saviour, who alone could heal his broken heart, and urged him to come at once, just as he was, there and then ; and before leaving the chapel he had the joy to see him a believer restored to the favour of God, and once more enabled to realize his personal interest in Christ.

Mr. Carter, of Nottingham, whose exact and educated mind well qualifies him to judge, and whose estimate of Mr. Richardson is entitled to most respectful consideration, furnishes the following remarks, extracted from a manuscript journal which he has kept for many years. They are given just as they were entered at the time :—

'*October, Sunday 17th, 1847.*—In the evening I went up to New Radford and heard a sermon for our trust funds, on Isaiah liv. 6, 7, by Charles Richardson, the Lincolnshire thrasher. I was exceedingly delighted. He is a plain and unpretending countryman, using a strongly vernacular speech, or rather, the good old Saxon-English of two or three centuries ago, pronouncing the word *beam*, and all of a similar formation in two syllables, by separating the vowels *e* and *a* ; and the word *day*, as if written *da-á*, and *go, go-á*, &c. Some few of his words were uttered in what seemed to the ear a slovenly style ; but generally his utterance was clear, distinct, euphoni-

ous, and with a rising inflection of the voice, such as wonderfully enlivens a man's delivery, and keeps up the attention of an audience. He abounds in figurative language, and striking illustrations, all of which are distinguished by appropriateness and vividness. He has moreover, a rare combination of ingenuity and good sense; a well disciplined imagination and fine taste. His good sense charmed me however beyond anything else. I know not that I ever met with a person who so impressed me with that valuable and scarce commodity.'

'1847, *October 19th, Tuesday.*—This evening I attended a tea-meeting held in the school-room of New Radford chapel. The room was crowdingly full of guests. I and a large number more had to wait for a second course. After tea a large audience entered the chapel, where several addresses were delivered. Mr. Charles Richardson stated his own interesting history at considerable length. I am struck with several things about this excellent man: his finely-constituted and well-balanced mind: his long connection with the Wesleyan body (seventeen years) before attempting anything in the way of public usefulness: his apparent freedom from self-esteem, and from everything resembling sophistication; notwithstanding his great popularity, and the applause that everywhere greets him.'

Mr. Carter and many other leading Wesleyans of the two Nottingham circuits, became very much attached to 'the unpretending countryman,' and he was frequently invited to that town afterwards; for many years in succession he preached in behalf of

the Town Mission either in Wesley Chapel or Halifax-place, some of his ablest and most powerful sermons; several of these were taken down verbatim as they fell from his lips, and one of them has been kindly transcribed by Mr. Carter, for the use of the writer. It is a production of considerable merit, and deserves to be printed as a specimen of his style. Notices of subsequent visits to Nottingham will be found in the following pages. It was one of the latest places he visited; and the beautiful testimonial and tribute of respect which was sent to his widow by the managers and teachers of the De Ligne Street Sunday-school, as soon as they heard of his death, shows the affectionate regard in which he was there held to the last.

‘His preaching much, but more his practice wrought
(A living sermon of the truths he taught);
For this by rules severe his life he squared,
That all might see the doctrine which they heard.
For priests, he said, are patterns for the rest
(The gold of heaven, who bear the God impress’d);
But when the precious coin is kept unclean,
The Sovereign’s image is no longer seen.
If they be foul, in whom the people trust,
Well may the baser coins contract a rust.’—*Dryden*.

CHAPTER VIII.

‘Be anxious then for success; to this be all your efforts and prayers directed,—so to run in this race, that you may bear away the prize of many a rescued soul;—so to preach Christ, that men may look unto Him and be saved.’—*Rev. R. Watson’s Charge.*

THE year 1848 will ever be memorable in European history. In the early part of it, a great political earthquake overthrew mighty kingdoms and ancient dynasties; and in the space of a few short weeks the Pope and his confederate princes were fugitives, and driven into exile. In this country, which alone stood firm, men’s minds were all excitement, ‘wondering whereunto these things would grow.’ But the ‘peasant preacher’ went on his way undisturbed, labouring with all his might to establish ‘a kingdom which cannot be moved,’ and singing as he travelled to and fro, in Wesley’s cheerful strains:—

‘Whatever ills the world befall,
A pledge of endless good we call;
A sign of Jesus near,
His chariot will not long delay,
We hear the rumbling wheels, and pray,
Triumphant Lord, appear!’

On the day after New-year’s day Mr. Richardson

was present at the far-famed Horncastle meeting and preached in the evening. For a great number of years that day has been held as a high holiday, or 'day of holy convocation' by the Wesleyans of the Horncastle circuit; and up to the present time continues to be very popular, and attended by great numbers of people from the adjacent parts. No monetary object whatever is connected with it; the gathering is purely for spiritual purposes. A love-feast is held in the afternoon; and in the evening some minister of distinction occupies the pulpit, and the service runs into the form of a watch-night; at which addresses are delivered by several speakers, lay and ministerial, bearing upon a personal and present salvation. Remarkable effusions of the Holy Spirit have often taken place at these services. The village churches have frequently been greatly refreshed by them; and hundreds of people have dated their conversion from such times. A well-written history of these 'solemn assemblies,' would be a record of thrilling interest; but the materials are not to be had. The memories however of many still living, cherish impressions of the glorious scenes they have witnessed at these annual Pentecosts, which often constrain them to say: 'O God, Thou art my God: early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary.' Were similar meetings held in other parts of the country it would probably be to the great advantage of the work of God. Ancient Methodism had its quarterly watch-nights, and

glorious love-feasts, and fully recognised the propriety and desirableness of now and then holding special religious services; and modern Methodism needs them. The bustling and distracting times in which we live need special correctives; and it would surely be for the advancement of the spirituality and the holy power of the church, if occasional gatherings could be secured, like those at Horncastle; where financial and economical objects are lost sight of, and where everyone is directed exclusively to considerations connected with personal salvation. The Church of Scotland has her effective and impressive quarterly or half-yearly sacramental services, and derives not a little power and refreshment from them. The dignity which properly belongs to religion need not be in the least impaired by such special gatherings; ordinary public worship would be greatly invigorated by them; and both ministers and people would be strengthened and rendered much better able to act upon the home heathenism by which they are surrounded. After 1848, Mr. Richardson was seldom absent from the Horncastle New-year's meeting; the regular ministers of the circuit were usually careful to secure his services, and he was nothing loath to travel any distance in order to be present; his ministry was exactly what was wanted for such occasions, and he rarely appeared upon the scene without being able to count his spoils. Not a few will appear in the day of the Lord as stars in his crown, who were first brought to the knowledge of the truth at these holy reunions.

In the course of this year the unwearying evan-

gelist visited twenty-five circuits, and in every one of them was more or less successful. In nearly every case he went by invitation to preach anniversary sermons for some public object, and usually remained to preach or hold meetings for promoting the work of God. He felt no difficulty about making collections when requested, and found them no hindrance in his way of saving souls. The records of the year resemble those already given. He was specially successful in winning souls, and had to rejoice over scores of conversions at Market-Rasen, Boston, Caistor, Spilsby, Ilkeston, Tetford, London, Southville, Nottingham, Spalding, Warrington, Derby, Belper, Filey, Grimsby, and Rotherham.

Mr. Richardson was not in good health during this first visit to Rotherham. A bad cold had fastened upon him, but he was unwilling to yield and thought to work it off. In this however he failed, and on the 27th of March he was obliged to return home, where he arrived late at night very unwell. A serious indisposition followed, by which he was laid up for seven or eight weeks. This was a somewhat new and painful ordeal for him to pass through. He had known little of sickness previously; his constitution was robust, and he had performed labours and endured physical hardships which would have prostrated most men; but he was now fifty-seven years of age, and it is not improbable that his previous exertions began to tell upon him. After this attack he was frequently crippled with catarrhal affections of the chest, until at length he became subject to chronic asthma.

with which he had to struggle at repeated intervals during many years before his death.

During this affliction, much kind sympathy was excited amongst his friends, and prayer was offered in his behalf in many places. He was not a little comforted by the affectionate letters he received from places far and near. One of them stated: 'Thousands of prayers have been offered in your behalf. You were not forgotten in our chapel. In every meeting we held might be heard the prayers of the people for your recovery.' The state of his mind and the manner in which he endured 'the chastening of the Lord' may be gathered from the following letter to a friend:—

'Tetford, April 21st. For more than three weeks I have been confined to my bed and house; quite new experience with me. But Christ and religion have been my refuge and comfort in this the day of affliction. It has been a severe attack. The doctor says he is astonished that I am so far restored, but I know that thousands of prayers have been offered up to God by faith, from hearts most sincere, for my recovery; and the Lord has heard and answered. I never experienced religion to be so sweet and so sufficient to make me happy, as now. I feel so safe; the rock so firm; my confidence so strong; Christ and heaven and the crown of glory, so surely mine. I took a bad cold, fever set in, with inflammation of my chest and lungs. I coughed a deal of blood; but when suffering the most, I thought it was nothing when compared with what my Saviour suffered for me. My chest and lungs

are still so weak, that I feel unstrung from head to foot; and I am afraid it will be a long time before I shall be able to preach again. This is no small part of the trial. I am disappointing the people in different places almost every day, and I want to be at my work again. O! what a happy day it will be if I am spared to preach again.'

As soon as he was convalescent he prepared to gird on the armour for another campaign, and wrote to a friend in the following terms:—

'Tetford, May 11th.—I am happy to inform you that after I have been the prisoner of the Lord for seven weeks, I am so much improved that I am going again to labour in my old, but delightful work of calling sinners into the fold of Christ. I hope the good Lord will give me strength and enable me to preach more successfully than ever, and to see many more sinners brought from the 'pit to be enlightened with the light of the living.' Just before I was taken ill I had made many engagements, and so have had to disappoint many of my friends; and as many of them were to preach for chapels and schools and missions, I had hoped that other preachers would have taken the places I was to occupy; but it has not been so, I suppose they thought they would wait to see whether I should live or die; and now they are writing to say:—'We have put off, and we hope you will be able to fulfil your engagement.' So I am going to make a trial. I shall feel more for the afflicted than I have ever done. My own experience in the

furnace has taught me more than I ever knew before of the nature of affliction.'

On the 13th of May he preached at Ashby-de-la-Zouch on behalf of the Missionary Society, and after labouring three or four days in the neighbourhood, went to Long Sutton, and from thence to Nottingham, returning home to preach at Horn-castle and Wragby on the 10th and 17th of June. From that time to the end of July he was busy during the week at his wool-winding, on the Sundays he was preaching and making collections in various places in his own and neighbouring circuits, and in the commencement of August started upon his annual visit to London.

The summer of 1849 was a sickly season, Asiatic cholera spread in ravages like a plague in many parts of the kingdom. In Hull five hundred persons died in one week of that fearful malady, and nearly two thousand a week perished in London for several weeks in succession. In the month of August the pestilence was at the height of its ravages; and knowing the anxieties of his family, he wrote home as follows:—

'London, Aug. 6th.—I know you will be glad to hear from me as the cholera is so bad, but I do not hear much of it in the part of London where I am staying, and I am thankful to say that I am very well. It is the general opinion that Mr. H. and family were poisoned with bad water; the overflowing of a filthy tank into their cistern corrupted the water they used, so that the servants could not

drink it at times, and they told master and mistress but they would not hear it. After their death the cistern was examined, and found to contain mud and dirt some feet deep. There have been six deaths, Mr. and Mrs. H., their aunt, two servants and the nurse. I had a long and tedious ride on Saturday, but we had a good day yesterday. We have a tea-meeting to-night and preaching. Barnet to-morrow, Norwood on Wednesday, on Thursday I start for Spalding.'

After leaving London he was incessantly at work in various parts of the country, making collections for various objects almost every Sabbath, and often on week days also. These were commonly satisfactory, but in his notes and memoranda he often complains of the desolation which the spirit of strife and discord had produced in various parts of the connexion. The year 1849 will ever be as memorable in the history of Methodism, as will 1848 in the political history of Europe. Towards the close of the eighteenth century—soon after those political convulsions broke out, which shook every throne in Europe—a period of lamentable agitation and division distracted the Methodist Societies. And a similar but full more distressing and widespread devastation speedily followed the political agitations of 1848. The Missionary Society was recklessly assailed; the ministers generally were calumniated; the people were exhorted to withhold their contributions; and some of the worst passions of fallen human nature were invoked in order to sustain the cause of the leaders of the

secession. The consequences were most deplorable; families were divided, brethren estranged, lovely and prosperous Societies rent in pieces, thousands and tens of thousands of members were scattered and sent into the world; and not a few both amongst the laity and the ministers were brought to a premature grave. God grant that a similar period of distress and desolation may never return to blight the Christian church! In the latter part of 1849 this great mischief began to be developed, and the progress of the work of God, for the time, was effectually arrested; many of the most devoted servants of the Redeemer were sent 'to weep between the porch and the altar,' and cry—'Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach.' Mr. Richardson was one of these weepers. 'The Reform agitation' was a great affliction to him; he had no sympathy with those who 'are given to change.' Had he not been a Christian, he would most likely have been a quiet and peaceful man, for he was constitutionally inclined to 'the things which make for peace;' and as a servant of the great Peace-maker, he thoroughly comprehended the intimate connection subsisting between the peace and prosperity of a Christian church. Moreover, wherever he went he found his usefulness more or less prevented by the existing state of the Societies. Parties who had previously co-operated with him became hostile; friends were turned into foes; houses where he had often been hospitably entertained were closed against him; and the minds of many were so prejudiced, by the calumnies and misrepresentations which were in-

dustriously and impudently circulated, that they were no longer accessible and open to the truth. So far as his personal sentiments and feelings were concerned, he was as loyal and devoted to the old Methodist banner as any disciple of John Wesley could be. His confidence in it was never shaken for a moment. He knew the Methodist ministers too well to doubt their sincerity and devotedness to the cause of the Redeemer; and wherever he went he avowed his convictions, not in the spirit of a partizan, but with a simplicity and earnestness which carried conviction to the heart. Some of the seceders expected to gain him over to their views and proceedings. Had they succeeded no doubt his name and influence would have rendered them great service. Some tempting offers were made to him. A popular preacher was their great want. But they little knew their man, who thought to turn Charles Richardson aside from old Methodism. He was intensely attached to the church of his choice, and was just the sort of man to have become a martyr in her defence if called thereto.

In the latter end of 1848 he visited the Derby circuit as has been seen, with much success; he returned by invitation in December 1849, but found a sad change: the blight was there; the congregations were as large as before, but he found what he called 'a lowness and a coldness' in the state of the Society, which operated as a 'damper' to his own spirit, and greatly prevented the success of his labours. What he found at Derby he found elsewhere; for wherever the agitators appeared upon the scene they left a blight behind them. From

Derby he was strongly urged to proceed to Leicester, by the superintendent of that circuit. The expelled ministers had been there, and serious mischief was apprehended as the result; and it was hoped that he might act the part of a Christian Caleb, and be able to still and tranquillize the people. He was engaged at the time as in former years to preach in his own circuit at Christmas, but a correspondence between the two superintendents arranged his release for the service of Leicester; and there he was on Christmas-day and for a few days after, attending important gatherings of the Society in that town, by whom he was recognised as a consistent peace-maker. The words of peace were on his lips; the 'peace of God' was in his heart; he avoided all hard words, and sought to allay the spirit of strife by leading to a closer union with Christ; he declined public discussion on the points at issue; endeavouring wherever he was to promote gentleness and brotherly love, and a higher tone of spirituality of mind. Nor did he labour in vain. How much Methodism is indebted to him for the effective service he rendered at this period as a pacificator will never be told. Very many village Societies were mercifully preserved from the venom and distraction which were everywhere so rife, by the happy influence of his example and exhortations; and not a few of the large towns, which he began to visit more frequently about this time, derived great benefit in this respect from his labours.

What special wisdom is needed by a Wesleyan evangelist at such times as those in question. His

random words fly like sparks from an anvil among unprotected kegs of gunpowder. When men's minds are all excitement and suspicion, he has need to be guarded and prudent in his communications, private as well as public. Alas! how often the Christian church has been rent with disputes about disciplinary questions; and yet there is no denying that 'a godly discipline' belongs to Christianity as much as either doctrinal, experimental, or practical truth; and they are no real friends to Christ, who seek to disparage either the one or the other, directly or indirectly. 'Wise master-builders,' labouring for God, must be careful to keep up the fences while they raise the 'precious stones' upon the true foundation; and with the meekness, gentleness, and purity of their Master, stand up 'valiant for the truth upon the earth,'—'the truth as it is in Jesus.' The local preachers of Methodism have peculiar and frequent opportunities to still the waters of strife, and promote the wholesome operation of godly discipline; and when irritation has been produced by the use of the pruning knife, a few prudent words from their lips have a special power to soothe a fretful resistance into healthy submission and acquiescence. And whilst thus labouring and, may be, suffering, for the conservation of 'the faith which was once delivered unto the saints;' all such ministers are entitled to the sympathy of all good men? O! how desirable it is that those, who with laudable zeal demand immediate and visible results from the preaching of the Gospel, should rightly estimate the value and importance of 'Church order,' and seek to

accomplish their legitimate objects in a way which shall secure their stability and perpetuation; and also, how necessary that those who defend the ramparts of Christianity should possess the qualifications set forth in the following lines—

‘Great Ruler of the various hearts of men!
Since Thou hast raised me to build up Thy church
Beyond my wish, my thought; give me the lights,
The virtues, which that sacred trust requires:
A loving, loved, unterrifying power,
Such as becomes a father; humble wisdom;
Plain, primitive sincerity; kind zeal
For truth and virtue rather than opinions;
And, above all, the charitable soul
Of healing peace and Christian moderation.’

Thomson.

CHAPTER IX.

‘Great multitudes crowded to hear him, and a vast number in different places owned him for their spiritual father. His ministry was plain but remarkably powerful; he was truly a Boanerges, and often made the stout-hearted tremble.’—CAPTAIN WEBB, in *Atmore's Memorial*.

IN the commencement of 1851 Mr. Richardson visited Cornwall, at the pressing solicitations of many friends; and after staying six weeks, and labouring with his usual diligence, zeal, and much success, he returned home; but was induced to pay a second visit at the end of the year,—employing in both journeys nearly four months. Cornwall, the land of revivals and Methodist triumphs, had special charms and attractions for him. He had long heard and read of the glorious outpourings of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed in that far away country; and when he was invited to exercise his ministry there, all the better feelings and sympathies of his nature prompted him to go at once; though at the same time a deep sense of his own insufficiency led him to hesitate.

The period was not the most favourable. An extraordinary ingathering and accession of members to the Cornish Societies had taken place during the preceding year. Asiatic cholera had extended its

desolations far and wide, and under the excitements of the visitation multitudes of people 'moved by fear' flocked to places of worship; and in that single year four thousand new members in the Wesleyan churches were reported from Cornwall. Unhappily, however, as is too often the case after seasons of religious awakening, there followed a serious 'falling away.' And it was just when the reaction had commenced and like a strong ebb tide began to flow outwards that Mr. R. entered upon his labours. Moreover, the Reform agitation was passing through its most virulent phase at the same time, and many hundreds of the young and inexperienced were turned aside from the paths of peace, by the misrepresentations of the leaders of that unhallowed movement. But notwithstanding these opposing forces, his ministry was both popular and extensively useful. How far he was instrumental in stemming the out-flowing stream cannot be estimated; but in addition to this negative service, which he certainly rendered, he was known to be the means of awakening to many sinners, and of restoration to backsliders not a few. And by the grace of God he was able in Cornwall, as in other parts of the kingdom, to take up the words of Charles Wesley, and sing:—

'Our conquering Lord,
 Hath prospered His Word,
 Hath made it prevail,
 And mightily shaken the kingdom of hell.
 His arm He hath bared,
 And a people prepared
 His glory to show,
 And witness the power of His passion below.'

The superintendent minister of one of the largest circuits in Cornwall at this time, who saw much of him, writes thus :—

‘On his first visit to Redruth in 1851, he was received by the people as “an angel of God ;” and it was remarked by some of the older Methodists, that no preacher had drawn together such crowds to hear him in that neighbourhood since the days of the venerable Joseph Benson ; whose extraordinary power and success in ministering the truth during his occasional visits to Cornwall will live in the pages of Methodist history. One remarkable instance of his usefulness, amongst numerous others which might be given, came under my own notice ; an aged woman who for many years had led an immoral life was attracted by the fame of his preaching, and came to hear him in the chapel at Redruth. His text on the occasion was John xi. 43, “Lazarus, come forth.” During the sermon the aged sinner was seized with the most agonizing convictions for sin, and fell into such deep distress as to be constrained to cry aloud for the disquietude of her soul. Several of the pious men in the chapel prayed with her after service, during the greater part of the following night. She seemed like one in despair while the terrors of the Lord were upon her. At length she obtained a ray of comfort, and went home to lead a new life. It was not, however, until several days had passed that she obtained a sense of the pardoning love of God, but when she was enabled to lay hold upon Christ, her joy was in proportion to her previous distress ; she was

filled with ecstasy and proclaimed the goodness of God to every one around her. She lived only a few months in this state, and was then removed beyond the possibility of relapsing into her former habits. She survived long enough, however, to prove the reality of the change wrought in her by the Holy Spirit. Having had "much forgiven" she "loved much," and received rich accessions of grace and consolation; and her conversion led to that of several members of her family, who were up to this time living in ignorance and vice, and who subsequently exemplified the power of Divine grace in life and in death. She anticipated Mr. R.'s second visit in the latter part of the year with great pleasure, but was taken shortly before his arrival, to join the great multitude before the throne, who have 'washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' Her death was one of extraordinary exultation and triumph. Not a cloud dimmed her prospects; her confidence was unshaken, and she walked through "the valley of the shadow of death;" rejoicing "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Another superintendent minister, in Cornwall at the same time, states:—'He drew very large congregations, thousands night after night hung upon his lips for weeks together, and very much good was done.' Writing home he gave his own account of what he thought and saw in the following terms:—

'Redruth, Jan. 20th.—I am very well, thank God. We had more than two thousand people in the

chapel last night (Sunday), and a powerful time we had. I left at half-past ten, but the praying people stayed till after one o'clock in the morning. There were many crying aloud for mercy, in great distress of soul, at the time I retired—for I was worn out,—and many had obtained mercy. The agitators are going to hold a meeting here, but say they cannot till I am gone.'

'*Redruth, Jan. 29th.*—I never saw such a mass of people as we had on Sunday night. The chapel on the ground-floor contains nothing but benches, very narrow, and the people were packed so close that there was not much to be seen but men's faces; and I wondered at myself, for though they were all strangers, I felt as calm and composed as if I had been by my own fireside; and a most blessed night it was while I exhorted them to "buy the truth and sell it not." "The tanners" here get but small wages, yet the men were all clothed in broad-cloth. There is not a person to be seen who is not well or decently dressed. The morals of the people generally I am told, are pretty good, and certainly they attend chapel well. But there are many backsliders. In the great revival they were frightened out of their sins by the cholera, but when the fright was over, and the agitation came, and spread so wide, many of them went back. Still there are a good number who remain and stand fast, and many young men who are promising for future usefulness. I preached on Monday night, and it was a precious time, but the people made over much noise. This they commonly do in Cornwall. When a sinner is convicted, the

people around him begin to shout ; and it is no use talking to them, for they seem to take no notice of what you say ; but appear to think that a penitent is not soundly converted unless they make a great noise.'

He laboured three weeks in the Redruth circuit, visiting Lanner, Skinners-Bottom, Bridge, Wheal-Rose, Highway, Blackwater, Voguebeloth, Porth Towan, Carnkie, and occupied the pulpit of the large chapel in the town of Redruth nine times, preaching in all one and twenty times, besides taking part in four public meetings, and making eleven collections for missions and chapels. After visiting other circuits in the district, and toiling with the same amount of zeal and success, he returned home, rejoicing in spirit, and on the 26th of February wrote to a friend from Spilsby to the following effect :—

'I arrived safe at home last Friday night, but have been away every day since, except Sunday. When I left Hayle and got out to sea, I thought I should have enjoyed the voyage ; but the sea began to swell, and the ship to roll, and I soon became very sick. I never more perfectly imitated a drunkard than when I went reeling to the ship's side to vomit. After a while I called a council between myself, the vessel, and the foaming ocean. I wanted to shew that it was both unnecessary and unreasonable to handle me so roughly ; but the majority was against me, and I lost the trial. I soon found that the best friends I had on board

were a conscience void of offence, a smiling Saviour, and a prospect of heaven. It was a stormy night, and will be long remembered, but I comforted myself by thinking that every stroke of the paddles brought me nearer to Bristol; and that I had been doing my Master's work as faithfully as I could for thirty-eight nights altogether; my conscience bearing witness that I had preached the Gospel and declared the whole counsel of God to the people. I thought I was not like Jonah, running away from his Master's work; and so committed myself to Him whom the winds and seas obey.'

After his return from Cornwall, he was much encouraged by the good news which followed him, to the effect, that the quickening in the Societies which he was permitted to witness, was continued, and that in Redruth, especially, a most blessed work of God was carried on for some time. But there is no doubt that his health was seriously affected by his excessive toils. For six weeks he preached two or three times every Sabbath, five nights a week, and held band-meetings on the Saturdays, and very frequently meetings for prayer during the day. He worked beyond his strength and complained of exhaustion when he returned home. Had he allowed himself to rest awhile, probably he would have rallied, but pressing engagements were before him, and he hoped to work himself well again. On the second of March, he preached at Binbrook, a funeral sermon for his friend Mr. Chapman,—a good and useful man,—from the text, Josh. i. 2:—'Moses, my servant, is

dead.' Every night the next week he held services at Laceby and Grimsby, though far from being well, until Saturday when he went to Mirfield, in Yorkshire, in order to preach on the following day, the anniversary sermons for the chapel; but soon after his arrival he was taken exceedingly ill, and when the Sabbath dawned, he was unable to leave his bed, stricken down with bilious sickness, bad cough, and spitting of blood. He had never been in Mirfield before, but the friends in whose care he was placed, nursed him with tenderness and affection. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, whose guest he was, shewed him every attention in their power, and cared for him as much as though they had been his own children. After his recovery and return home, he related to his family the following singular account:—He stated that when first taken ill, he felt much anxiety, in consequence of being so far from home, and in the midst of strangers, and because the friends who had been looking forward to his visit were grievously disappointed; but that while in this state of mind he was completely relieved by a strange occurrence. During the evening of the first or second day, whilst lying in bed, no one having been in the room for some time, all at once he became conscious that some one was in the apartment. A little man whom he had never seen before, with a most benign and pleasant countenance, and most graceful manners, approached his bed-side, and begged him to consider himself quite at home, and not to think that he was any burden to the family of the house, for that the gentleman and lady, whose guest he was, were

most benevolent and kind people, and would feel a pleasure in attending to him, and that his sickness would not last very long. The person appeared to walk up and down the floor several times, repeating the same things with great kindness of tone and look, and then disappeared as suddenly as he had entered. Mr. R. was questioned as to whether this was not a dream, but his own persuasion was, that it was not; and he concluded his statement by saying:—‘Well! whether dream or vision, it had the effect of supplying instant relief, for all my fears fled, and all through the sickness I found the kind family to be just as was described.’ He was confined to bed by this illness eleven days, and had to be nursed a week longer after he came down stairs; but through the good and kind care of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and the mercy of God, he was quite restored and then returned home for a few weeks’ repose.

During this attack his soul was filled with comfort; and though cast down at the first, he soon rose above all depression and was able to ‘rejoice in tribulation,’ and sing with the psalmist:—‘I shall not die, but live; and declare the works of the Lord.’ Writing home before he got down stairs he said:—‘I feel that Christ is precious. O! it is a blessed thing to have religion in time of affliction. I feel I am on the rock; lodged in the city of refuge; at home in Zion; my title-deeds made out for the inheritance above. The Bible is my heavenly Father’s will, and all its promises are mine. All is peace within. Looking back, I have been doing the will of God, and work-

ing out my own salvation; future prospects are clear, with sweet foretastes of joys to come. My Saviour said:—‘I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.’ And his promise stands good—“My grace is sufficient,” and it is so. And these promises are for my wife and children also, yea for all who will accept salvation through Christ. O! be sure and make Christ your Saviour, and religion your chief good; rest on the atonement and live to God, and all will be right in the end. I hope our prayers will unite at the throne of grace, until we meet on earth again.’

He did not remain long at Tetford. He had many outstanding engagements and was pressed in spirit with the claims of some of them; at the end of April he started for Bedfordshire before he was quite well; and after the first Sabbath reported as follows:—

‘*Bedford, April 28th, 1851.*—I got safe to Bedford, but not on Saturday night as I expected. When I arrived at St. Neots there was no conveyance forward, so I had to go to Mr. Dennis’ for the night; they were glad to see me and sent for the two preachers to supper—Mr. Julian and Mr. Sugden—but the worst of it was they kept me out of bed till twelve o’clock. On Sunday morning Mr. D. brought me to Bedford, which is twelve miles. I had then seven miles more to go to Luddington, for my appointment, in the afternoon and evening. I felt very feeble in the pulpit for the first twenty minutes, but grew stronger afterwards; preaching seemed quite new work. The chapel was very full

and warm ; but I got through the day pretty well. We had a good number of penitents at night, and some of them found peace. I did not do much in the prayer-meeting ; there were plenty to labour, for the people are in a good state. One of the agitators was here last week, but did not make much out.'

'*Bedford, May 2nd.*—I am glad to say that I get on with my work in a middling way. I preached twice each of the last two days, and yesterday I felt stronger and better than I have done before. We have had some encouraging times ; indeed good has been done in every place where I have been. I am now going eight or ten miles into the country, and Mr. Samuel Bennett takes me home with him after preaching.'

'*Hardwick (Lincoln), May 6th.*—I am happy to say that I am very well, as well as ever I was in my life, my chest and lungs have been getting stronger ever since I began to work. We have had a good anniversary ; have had the tea-meeting and preaching in a barn as the chapel is small, and the congregations have been very good. We have had one soul saved and others deeply wounded. I am now going to Retford.'

'*Hagworthingham, Sept. 11th.*—(To a friend) I have been spending the last fortnight at Leeds and Uttoxeter. The week at Leeds was one of the happiest I have had for a long time. We had a fair congregation on Sunday, with collections for Wesley chapel Sunday-school, and five or six penitents found peace at night ; a very gracious influence rested upon the people all the day and they

were much encouraged. We had services all the next week. I preached seven times in the chapel and once in the open air in the midst of a feast. We had scores brought to God, for preachers and people all worked well together. Mr. John Smith, of Briggate, wrote me last Monday to say that they had a blessed Sabbath after I left them. In the Sunday-school they held a prayer-meeting in the afternoon, and between thirty and forty of the teachers and elder scholars were seeking salvation, the friends continued praying with them until twenty-three found peace with God. This is good news. I have had two or three letters from Dr. Smith, of Camborne, asking me to spend a fortnight there, and though it is such a long way, and I have so much work nearer home, yet if it is the Lord's will, I must go, and do His work and hope that He will give me many souls.'

'*Camborne, Oct. 20th, 1851.*—I got here on Wednesday, but did not preach till yesterday. It was the Sunday-school anniversary and we had overflowing congregations. I very much wish you could have seen them, the chapel is large and they were packed like bees in a hive, and yet there was deep attention. The collections were nearly £4 better than last year. I am to address the parents and children to-night, and we shall have a great gathering. I have to attend three missionary-meetings and preach several times in the town while I am here.'

'*Redruth, Nov. 7th.*—I have been all round Redruth holding missionary-meetings and making collections for chapels, and we have had some very good times. The people here are very different to

any I have ever seen elsewhere; when penitents are in distress they seem to take no notice of what you say to them when pointing them to the Saviour; they toss about and scream and thump and make a great noise, so that I am sometimes almost distracted. Still a few are getting salvation in every place, and I am greatly encouraged. I preached here on Monday night and we had a good time. You will see from the bill I send that I am to preach again to-night and on Sunday, when I expect we shall have not less than two thousand people in the chapel, and many are looking for a day of "power from on high."

'*St. Just, Nov. 25th.*—I am very well and happy in God, labouring in His cause with some success. Several sinners are getting salvation. It is almost fearful to see the distress which penitents are thrown into, they seem in such an agony of mind, that you never saw the like of it. They make themselves ill, and some of them even after they are made happy are poorly for several days. When they obtain peace they seem as if they were in an ecstasy. The other day at Redruth, there were a mother and daughter both seeking the Lord; the daughter was about twenty years of age, and when they found salvation I think I never saw such heavenly countenances. O how they did rejoice together. I came here on Saturday night, and though the weather was very stormy we had good congregations on Sunday, and a more happy time I think I never had in the pulpit. I am to stay here and preach for ten or twelve days longer, and expect to see the 'arm of the Lord made bare.'

There are tin and copper mines all around here; some of these give work to three hundred people, many of whom don't get more than £2 10s. a month, but they are remarkably fond of dress. Some of the girls that get only a shilling a day, turn out on the Sundays almost like ladies. I am told that they will pine themselves to get fine clothes. Many of these poor girls are the most handsome young creatures I ever saw, and I suppose they know it. There are very many excellent people in Cornwall, and some of the cleverest men I ever came near anywhere, and truly pious as well. The miners frequently die young, their underground work injures their health; so that there are a great number of widows in the country. Not a few of the men are slain by accidents, and many die of consumption of the lungs. I am wonderfully pleased with the scenery. Here are the finest granite rocks, noble hills and beautiful valleys, and the great wide sea all around, which looks so pure and beautifully green near the shore, that I am never tired with looking at it.'

'*St. Just, Dec. 2nd, 1851.*—Last Sunday was another wet day. The rain began at eleven o'clock on Saturday night and never ceased till Monday morning; and you have no idea how the wind blows and the rain comes down here,—it seems to come in sheets. The congregations were much affected in consequence, but we had a few souls saved. Several entered into liberty on Saturday night, and many more were seeking mercy. I preached for the last time last night (Monday), to a very large and attentive congregation; and when

the prayer-meeting began, in a little time there were numbers groaning and crying for mercy. In one part of the chapel the cries of distress were almost frightful, and then as they got saved and were made happy, O ! what shouts of joy went up to heaven. In the gallery of the chapel sinners were weeping, and friends praying around them, and encouraging them to believe ; and down stairs on the men's side of the floor the same thing was going on. Such a noise of mingled mourning, singing, and rejoicing, I have never heard before ; about fourteen or fifteen found rest and peace to their souls in Christ, and the meeting concluded about twelve o'clock. Great numbers went away in distress, and the next day the preachers and leaders had plenty of work to do in visiting the people at their houses. While I have been here they have had some meetings in the tin mines through the day, and some have got saved in the bowels of the earth. Several times people have become so much affected while at their work that they could not go on with it, and have sent for preachers and leaders to pray with them. The friends very much wish me to stay longer, but my time is fixed and I cannot.'

' *Bodmin, Dec. 8th.*—I left the St. Just people all in a blaze. Monday night was a wonderful time. On Tuesday I went to one of the villages to hold a missionary-meeting, and six people were saved at St. Just, the same night. I never was amongst such a people. Whilst I have been preaching to them, some would break out in loud expressions of joy, and others in distressing cries, exclaiming:—

“Lord save me.” And I have often had to start singing till the noise has abated, and then begin to preach again. I have greatly enjoyed my visit, and the scenes I have witnessed will never be forgotten. I preached here yesterday for the day-school. There is great peace, but the people are not prepared for a revival. Mr. Coleman from Holt in Norfolk, has just been holding an agitation meeting, and said all he could against the Methodist preachers, and told the people that all they want is to get their children into their corrupt church to uphold their corrupt system ; but the people who heard him were disgusted.’

The peculiar religious susceptibility of the people of West Cornwall has been often observed, and was noticed by Mr. Richardson. During the extraordinary visitation of grace in the year 1814,* known to this day as the ‘Great Revival,’ the circuits west and north-west of Truro were chiefly affected. This susceptibility may be, possibly, partly accounted for by the density of the population and the comparative simplicity of their habits. In Wales, Yorkshire, the Black Country, and amongst the colliers of Northumberland and Durham, it is much the same. And in the arrangements of an itinerant ministry like the Wesleyans, the fact ought never to be ignored, but should be gratefully acknowledged and provided for.

Mr. Richardson attended a public meeting on the Monday evening at Bodmin, and was mercifully preserved from the consequences of a serious acci-

* See ‘Methodist Magazine’ for 1814.

dent. He had to ascend an elevated platform by a ladder, and just as he reached the top, it gave way and he fell with it to the ground, but beyond the shock which he sustained, he was uninjured, and was able to take his part in the meeting as though nothing had happened.

Full of gratitude to God for preservation from danger by sea and land, he returned home laden with the spoils of his Cornish campaign, to enjoy another happy Christmas in the bosom of his family.

'And therefore my daily employ is to draw, 'mid confusion and strife,
From wells of salvation, with joy, the beautiful waters of life;
And filled with the spirit of peace, in harmony's sweetest accord,
My raptures shall daily increase, ineffably one with my Lord.
O Zion! in anthems unite, to Jesus thy glory and crown,
Who reigns in Omnipotent might, and dwells in the midst of His own.
Thy Holy One, Israel, is great; and all who in Jesus abide
Are safe, while they patiently wait, till the Bridegroom shall come for the Bride.'—*Gough*.

CHAPTER X.

‘In oratory, affectation must be avoided; it is better for a man by a native and clear eloquence to express himself, than by those words which may smell either of the lamp or the inkhorn.’—*Lord Herbert.*

As these records are perused, it will be seen how abundantly fruitful Mr. Richardson’s labours were everywhere; from one end of the kingdom to the other he could refer to many sinners saved by grace, and say in the words of St. Paul—‘The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.’ And the question forces itself into attention: How may his success be accounted for? To this there is only one reply to be given,—the same which the prophet supplies when he declares: ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts!’ Neither friends nor foes will say it was the result of either human learning, art, or artifice. He went forth from his village home, from time to time, into the busy, crowded haunts of men, to wage a glorious war with the powers of darkness, armed only with ‘the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left:’ armour, thank God, which all good men may both have and use—and it was sufficient. He rescued the prey from the hands of the mighty; the redeemed among men were multiplied; churches were strengthened, and God was

glorified. Do not the facts which his life and labours supply throw light upon the question as to which is the best and most successful mode of preaching Christ? Let men 'speak as the Spirit gives them utterance;' in a simple, earnest, natural elocution, and God will not fail to cheer them with indubitable tokens of His presence and power to save. It is encouraging to think, that public sentiment amongst Christians generally is coming more and more to this, and that 'the church of the future' will insist upon having a practical ministry, productive of visible and tangible results.

The places visited by Mr. R. in 1852 for the first time were, Leek, Stafford, Epworth, Wigan, Liverpool, some of the circuits in South Wales, and the Staffordshire Potteries. It was one of the most laborious years he ever spent. He preached more frequently and visited a greater number of places than he had done before.

He continued labouring in South Wales until the end of December, preaching in various places, and blessed with his usual success. At the quarterly meeting of the Merthyr Tydvil circuit, held about the time he left, the superintendent returned twenty new members and forty on trial, besides which, many others were meeting in class, who had been brought to God during his visit. Mrs. Bakewell, the wife of one of the resident ministers, writing to him the following month, said—'You will be pleased to hear that the good work which commenced during your never-to-be-forgotten visit into Wales is still going on. Numbers have joined the Society since you left and many more have pro-

mised. The congregations throughout the circuit are much larger, and our prospects are altogether encouraging. Our people, in Tredegar especially, love to talk of your visit to them, and often say they shall never forget you.'

Mr. Richardson's reputation as a preacher continued to extend; and invitations poured in from all parts of the kingdom, through the quiet little post-office of Tetford, giving his humble cottage an unwonted importance in the estimation of the villagers, as day by day the postman left a whole handful of letters at the door. About this time a large octavo volume entitled, 'The Post-Office Directory for the County of Lincoln,' was published in London; in it his name appears in the list of 'the clergy and gentry of Tetford,' and is printed thus—'*The Reverend Charles Richardson, Wesleyan Minister,*' and is placed next in order to the resident clergyman. This was not done with his knowledge; he is not known ever to have referred to it; and most probably he was never aware of the honourable distinction to which he had attained. Probably he was indebted to some of his kindhearted neighbours who were not a little proud of his popularity; and thought to honour the place of his residence, as well as his name, by the style and status which they assigned him. Nothing could be farther from his inclinations than to ape the gentleman. He had the nature, generosity, high sense of honour, and true refinement of a real gentleman, under the plain unsophisticated aspect of an unassuming English peasant, and was more likely to repudiate than to assert, the slightest pretension

to the clerical distinction which his neighbours attached to his name.

His widening field of operations in 1853, embraced Stockton-upon-Tees, Howden, Dover, Ashford, Mansfield, Bridlington, Bury, Chester, and Ashton-under-Lyne, in addition to some other circuits which he had previously visited.

His visit to Lancashire was greatly blessed, and not a few, 'in the day of the Lord,' will doubtless appear as the results of his labours. Already the fruits are springing up on the other side of the Atlantic; and in how many other distant parts of the earth Mr. Richardson's converts are to be found, making known the glad tidings of salvation, no one can tell. The class of persons to whom he was most generally useful furnishes a large number of emigrants to all parts of the earth; and parties who were brought to God by his instrumentality are known to be now in Australia,* New Zealand, the United States of America, and Canada.

* The Rev. Thomas Williams, a Wesleyan Minister in Australia, who in early life was a brother Local-preacher in the Horncastle Circuit with Mr. Richardson, and intimately acquainted with him, writing to the author a spontaneous and gratifying testimony of approbation of the *first edition* of this Memoir, observes:—

“ You say (page 211), his converts are to be found in Australia, &c., &c.” I read that paragraph at noon, on Friday, June 22nd, and at night having to pass through a part of the Bullarook Forest on my return home after preaching, I was unwilling to trust myself alone in its untracked depths in the dark, and requested the guidance of two trusty members of our Society who are

The following extract from a letter, which was sent unsolicited across the Atlantic, while these Memoirs were in course of preparation, from Mr. Joseph Buckley, now an accredited class leader and exhorter in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the state of Ohio, will supply another instance illustrative of the fact just stated :—

‘It was with feelings of sadness and regret I read of the death of that truly great and good man, Mr. Richardson, who could say of me, as St. Paul said of the Corinthians—“For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.” By his death the Church and the world have sustained a great loss. It was on Sunday the 11th of September, 1853, that I first heard him preach at Staleybridge, on the occasion of the Sunday-school anniversary. In the afternoon he preached a most powerful sermon from Numbers xiii. 30 : “And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” The whole sermon was remarkable for its spirituality and vigour of thought. But his sermon in the evening—who that was present will ever forget it?

well acquainted with the path. As we travelled along, I spoke of the book I had read that day, and related portions in which I had felt particularly interested; not naming Mr. Richardson nor anything by which he could be identified. After a time, one of my guides interrupted me by asking—“Who is it that you are speaking about?” And no sooner had I mentioned his name, than he exclaimed, with much deep feeling—“Thank God, that I ever heard that man! It was through him that I was brought to God, and led to join the Methodists.” ’

The text was Ezekiel xxxiii. 11. I had previously heard some of the most distinguished and powerful preachers in England; but I thought I had never heard anything like that. Never before had I seen an audience so taken captive and excited. The chapel was densely crowded, but sometimes during that sermon you might have heard a pin drop. Some of his appeals to the conscience were overwhelming; his eloquence was at times like thunder and earthquake, and produced commotion and alarm in the congregation. Never shall I forget his description of a sinner in his downward course of ruin. "Sinner," cried he, "you are going down to hell! Yes, you are going to hell over the cross of Jesus! You are going to hell over mountains of prayers, and through floods of tears! You are going to hell loaded with sermons, and your memories crowded with texts!" And then with great vehemence and impressiveness of voice and manner he cried out—"Lord, stop the sinner! Lord, stop the sinner!" I shall carry the impression of that sermon with me to the grave. He preached every night during the following week, and a great many were truly converted to God. I heard a man say he would walk twenty miles to hear Mr. Richardson preach again. After his first visit to Staleybridge, he became very popular all through that part of the country, and was frequently called upon afterwards to preach anniversary sermons. I remember his coming again the following year. He preached two telling sermons on the Sabbath, to crowded congregations. His texts were Hebrews xi. 10, and Isaiah xxvii. 13. Again he preached every night during

the following week, the same as the year before, and many were the slain of the Lord.'

The year 1854 was undoubtedly one of the best and most successful in Mr. Richardson's life. His health was good, and his labours were incessant. Wherever he went the people received him with warm affection. He was at the height of his popularity. The chapels were crowded whenever he preached, and everywhere he could say—'The best of all is, God is with us.' With the opening of the new year he took part in the annual services at Horncastle, which were to him as 'a feast of fat things, full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined!' He dedicated himself afresh to the service of God at the holy solemnity of the annual covenant-renewing on the first Sabbath of the year; and on Saturday the 7th of January set off again from home for long and distant travel; and saw very little of his family during the whole of the year, excepting just a day or two at a time. The snow was deep upon the ground when he started in an open cart; the cold north wind blew fiercely, and before long brought heavy showers of sleet and rain. His road lay from Tetford to Louth, a distance of nine miles across the Wolds; and must be actually travelled in order to know what such a journey means in bad weather. In the best season of the year to drive up and down the long steep hills, which the road traverses, is all but impracticable; and with deep snow upon the ground, long distances must of necessity be passed over on foot. At Louth he took the carrier's cart on to Goulceby,

seven miles farther, a journey of three hours, during which the winter's storm grew worse and worse. Such a conveyance on such a day affords but small comfort: a tilt overhead, open in front, and a curtain behind; the passengers have no want of ventilation; but the 'peasant preacher' knew how to rough it, and make the best of such matters without much personal annoyance. The cart was crowded with country people returning from market; bags and baskets filling almost every inch of intervening space; but Charles was familiar with such things, and the hours were not tedious to him. Glad of an opportunity to do good, his wont was under such circumstances to speak a word for God, and kindly converse with those around him upon such topics as were likely to lead them to love religion, and identify themselves with it. He gave himself no airs of superiority; was pleasant and agreeable to every one, and generally left impressions upon those who were thus casually thrown in his way, which prepared them to receive greater good from his preaching at the journey's end. Wherever he travelled in Lincolnshire he was well known. Many a time he was obliged to ride in these carriers' carts; and not a few of those who rode with him felt it to be a privilege so to do, and talked of it with gratification in their families afterwards. On Sunday the 8th of January he preached at Goulceby and had the happiness to see several persons in deep distress of soul; and 'three stout men,' placed like little children at the feet of the Saviour, testifying 'that He has power on earth to forgive sins.' The following week he spent in labouring at South

Willingham, Kelstren, and Grainthorpe; and at the end of the week wrote home, saying—‘ We have had a pretty good week, about fourteen souls have been saved.’ He then proceeded to the Grimsby circuit, to assist the ministers in holding missionary meetings, and afterwards went forwards into Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, Kent, Nottinghamshire, Manchester, and Burton-upon-Trent. After labouring in the last place for a week, he proceeded to Laceby Manor-house, to fulfil an engagement at Humberstone, where he was expected to preach the annual Missionary sermons on the 21st January, 1855.

A large barn had been fitted up for the accommodation of the crowds of people who were expected; the Rev. Dr. Beaumont was engaged to preach in the same place, and assist at the public meeting on the following Tuesday, and many were looking forward with great interest to the occasion. But all these arrangements were overturned by the providence of God: for when Sunday morning came Mr. Richardson was ill and unable to leave his bed. Medical aid had to be called in, and he was detained for a fortnight a prisoner of the Lord. And on the same day the noble-minded and eloquent Dr. Beaumont was suddenly called to his eternal reward. At half-past ten o’clock he took his place in the pulpit of Waltham Street chapel, Hull, apparently in his usual health, in the presence of a large congregation; and commenced public worship by giving out with his wonted emphasis and impressiveness, the beautiful lines of the 316th hymn:—

‘ Thee, while the first Archangel sings,
He hides his face behind his wings.’

And just as the words were passing from his lips, he fell back upon the pulpit-seat, and shortly afterwards expired ! Humberstone held its missionary-anniversary that year in sackcloth ; but the excellent people connected with the Wesleyan Society in that village did not permit the collections to suffer any damage. The proceeds of that anniversary were more than had ever been raised before !* and amounted altogether to the noble sum of £50 !

At Laceby Manor-house, where Mr. Richardson was a visitor, he was taken good care of, nor was he allowed to depart until quite fit for the journey home. Once more at Tetford however, he was obliged to remain there for nearly two months ; his chest was very much affected ; his illness having left a bad cough and great difficulty in breathing. At one period it was considered doubtful whether he would ever be restored so far as to resume his labours. But when the severe weather of the winter had passed away, he rallied with surprising rapidity, and on the 13th of April was again upon the wheels, for another tour in Kent, including visits to Tunbridge, Sandhurst, and Elham ; and took Nottingham and several places in Derbyshire during the summer.

* The entire population of the Parish of Humberstone, in 1851, was only 259 ; so that the sum raised at the anniversary of 1855, for the Wesleyan Foreign Missionary Society was nearly four shillings per head ! Similar amounts are raised in other localities in the same neighbourhood. In the almost adjoining parishes of Hatcliffe and Beelsby, the united population of which, the same year, was only 323, the sum contributed at the missionary anniversary was £61, averaging very nearly four shillings for each person, great and small !'

At Ferry he preached for the day-schools on the 19th August, and was cheered with the usual results—good collections and souls saved. The people were very busy getting in the harvest, the weather being fickle; he therefore took a day to visit Epworth, and gratified himself with a sight of the places so very interesting to the followers of John Wesley. He stood upon the tombstone from which the modern apostle preached his father's funeral sermon, when forbidden the use of the church. And as he stood upon that memorable spot, he exulted in the thought that God had permitted him to go up and down the land, treading in the footsteps of the illustrious dead, and with them to sing:—

‘In a rapture of joy My life I employ,
The God of my life to proclaim;
’Tis worth living for this, To administer bliss
And salvation in Jesus’s name.’

His engagements led him again into Derbyshire, Nottingham, Manchester, and Doncaster, where he continued a fortnight, during which the following ‘notice’ appeared in the *Doncaster Gazette*, of Dec. 8th, 1855, and supplies a fair representation of the impressions which his public labours produced at this period of his life, and of the manner in which he was regarded outside Wesleyan circles:—
‘During the present week, a series of religious services have been held in Priory Place chapel, in this town, conducted by Mr. Charles Richardson. The opening service commenced on Sunday morning last, when he preached to a large and attentive congregation in his usual powerful and

effective manner ; so much so that the attendance in the evening was immense, there being not less than two thousand persons present. The chapel was filled to overflowing, and for one hour and a quarter he rivetted the attention of his hearers with an almost breathless interest. On Monday another large congregation assembled. Mr. Richardson selected for the basis of his discourse Acts xvi. 25 to 32, from which he made a most convincing appeal as to the necessity of leading a holy and virtuous life ; and depicted, with much originality of thought and expression, Paul's imprisonment, the earthquake, the conversion of the keeper, and the glorious example to sinners given in the words of his text. Mr. Richardson is evidently a man of no mean order ; and though, we believe, self-educated, whilst following his humble avocation as a thrasher in Lincolnshire, and listening to the great truths of the Gospel as enforced by his parents ; he possesses a mind and capabilities of the first-class. His graphic pictures of human life, related with such simplicity and artlessness, and his thorough knowledge of the ups and downs of mankind, their foibles and failings, show that his deep penetration and remarkable quickness have not been misapplied. His apt illustrations remind the hearer of the celebrated William Dawson. It is true that he has not his brilliancy of language ; but he possesses in a wonderful degree the same gift of forcible expression, which rendered his name so distinguished amongst the Wesleyan community. Services were held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, and attended by crowded congregations.

Prayer-meetings were held at the close of each, and from what we can hear, there is every reason to believe that the visit of Mr. Richardson has been eminently successful.'

From Doncaster he proceeded to Burslem 'where a few precious souls tasted for the first time the peace and joy of salvation.' And then instead of going home to spend Christmas-day with his family, yielded to the urgent solicitations of friends, and went to East Bridgeford in the Bingham circuit to preach for the Sunday-school on the 23rd Dec., and attend a public meeting on the 26th. Several penitents found peace with God, during his sojourn, and he sought to soften the annoyance of his absence from the Christmas gathering, by writing to tell his children how the Lord had made bare his holy arm. by his instrumentality. He then went on to Worksop, where he found 'some famous praying men,' and where, 'an old man sixty-five years of age was saved,' and then went home. He was not there more than a day or two, and at the end of the first week in January, 1856, was at work at Binbrook which was one of the first scenes of his success; many had been converted there by his ministry: but the Society had since been almost torn to pieces by secession, and was in a very depressed state at this time; many of his converts had been led away, yet he had reason to know that they still retained a measure of their old affection for him, and he visited the place in the hope that he might gather fruit unto eternal life in a field which had formerly been so productive; nor was he disappointed. He recorded: 'We had a most gracious effusion of the Holy Spirit, and during

the week there were about twenty souls saved.' He was at Burton-upon-Trent the next Sabbath, where there were seven penitents knocking at the door of mercy with all their might, and most of them were comforted. The following Sunday he was at Riddings, where at the prayer-meeting, 'a man and his wife found peace with God,' 'and another young man and his wife were under deep convictions seeking the Lord; she had a baby which she put into the arms of its grandmother who nursed it while the mother was upon her knees. They were all made happy, and went away praising God, and many others with them.' At Boston, in February, he was surrounded 'with thirty penitents, and remained with them pointing them to Jesus until half-past ten o'clock at night. Two thousand people were in chapel on the Sunday evening.' He preached in St. Peter's chapel, Leeds, in the month of March, and spent the following fortnight in Cumberland. At Haltwistle, on Sunday, the chapel was crowded, and there were twenty 'whose hearts the Lord had touched.' He spent a week amongst the lead miners at Nenthead, and could make no satisfactory impression until the last night, 'when ten persons were completely broken down,' and a great movement followed which affected the whole town to some extent. After he had returned home sometime, he received the gratifying intelligence, that the blessed work which commenced during his visit to Cumberland still continued to make progress; and that after his departure a considerable number of persons were added to the Societies. At the June quarterly meeting of the Alston circuit, the superintendent minister reported

an increase of one hundred and thirteen new members, and ninety-nine on trial; and of the number on trial fifty-six resided at Nenthead—the place where he preached four nights in succession without seeing a single conversion, and was not a little discouraged in consequence. The following public notice of his labours appeared at the time in one of the local newspapers, and supplies another gratifying instance of the friendliness of the public press, to the cause of pure and earnest Christianity:—‘The Wesleyan Methodists of Nenthead and Garragill have recently been favoured with a lengthened visit from Mr. Charles Richardson, of Horncastle, popularly known by the name of the “Lincolnshire Thrasher,” a Wesleyan local preacher, whose labours in this locality have been signally owned of God; so that through the Divine blessing, both the Church and the world have been greatly benefitted by him. His correct expositions of Divine truth; his simple and beautiful illustrations; his urgent entreaties addressed to sinners; his alarming appeals to their consciences; his holy zeal; his solemn and pathetic eloquence—kindled occasionally into vehemence—all conspire to make him a startling, an attractive, and an edifying preacher. Crowded audiences attended every night to listen to him, and towards the close of his labours, chapel accommodation could not be afforded to hundreds, who were obliged to return to their homes greatly disappointed at being unable to gain admittance.’

Mr. Richardson spent the last week of April resting at home; and on the 3rd of May set off for the Grantham circuit; subsequently visiting Tipton,

Nottingham, and other places; and although his health was only indifferent; he bravely struggled with his infirmities. Writing to a friend about this time, he said:—‘I have been often very poorly; when I have been well, I have preached myself ill; and when I have been ill, I have preached myself well again; and so have never stopped.’

The following letter from the Rev. Thos. Owen Keysell, a man of kindred spirit, supplies a further illustration of the demands made upon him for labour which he could not supply, and of the precious and abiding fruits of his ministry:—

‘*London, St. George’s East, May 23rd.*—MY DEAR BROTHER,—During the last few months we have had a good work in this circuit, and between one and two hundred have been converted to God. We have been low, but things are rising. Praise the Lord! The trustees of St. George’s chapel wish to have their anniversary sermons preached; and desire me (as I happen to be acquainted with you) to write and ask you to help them. Can you give us a Sunday any time before Conference? If you can and will oblige us we shall be glad, and no doubt your visit will be a blessing. The Lord honoured you when you visited us last in Wesley circuit, Leeds; and one very touching case of a sweet young lady, who is since gone to heaven, who obtained salvation through your labours, I always remember with thanksgiving. If you can come, do.—I remain, my dear brother, yours affectionately,

‘THOS. O. KEYSSELL.’

The above is a specimen of a vast number of

applications which were made to him month after month, from all parts of the connexion; many of which he was utterly unable to comply with, like this from Mr. Keysell, simply because of the pressure of pre-engagements. On the first of June he started from home for a three months' tour, during which he laboured in various places, and reported progress from time to time as follows:—

*'Market-Rasen, June 5th, 1856.—*I am very well, and the weather is most beautiful. We have the Lord's blessing and good encouragement here. Every night we see many in distress on account of their souls, and many of them find salvation. We have a meeting for prayer every morning at seven o'clock, which is well attended and made a great blessing to the people. I have much liberty in preaching, and feel that God is with me. I meet with several persons who got good to their souls when I was here before. There is a druggist and his wife, who are members of Society; he was brought in under my preaching when he was a lad; his wife was saved when I was here eight years since. One young man who used to call me his father in Christ, is gone out to Canada as a minister; and several others are here still on their way to heaven, and are very glad to see me. On Friday next I leave for the neighbourhood of Manchester.'

*'Ringley, June 12th.—*Mine is blessed work, and I am happy in it. Last night there were seven people under deep convictions—the word went with power to their hearts. The night before there were twelve who became decided for God. A good number of

young men are getting saved. Mr. and Mrs. Lawn are excellent people. Mrs. Lawn leads three classes. I am going to meet one for her this afternoon.'

'*Lawton (Congleton), June 19th.*—We have had a wonderful work here. I have not seen such effects produced by preaching for a long time as I did last night. The Lord's arm was indeed made bare. The chapel is about the size of Tetford, and it was packed full. At the prayer-meeting we almost trod one upon another. All the week sinners have been saved every night, but last night surpassed all. There were ten seeking the Lord on Sunday night, twenty on Monday, and nearly as many on Tuesday and Wednesday. Last night every one in the chapel seemed arrested, and were either already saved or seeking to be so. Thirty or forty people at one time were asking "What must I do to be saved?" and it was just as much as ever I could do to keep them in order. We have invited all who have got good to come to the band-meeting to-night, and I expect a great crowd. Here are large silk factories, and many hundreds of young people work in them. They dress very neatly, and sing most beautifully. If the old members of Society are only careful and diligent there will be a mighty work in this place. It has been hard service for me. Last night my linen was as wet as if it had just come out of the wash-tub. The collections for the school were £18.

'*Redditch, July 18th.*—I have not been here for several years, but had I known how sorely they have wanted me I would not have stayed away. On Sunday and every day during the week we have seen sinners saved by grace, and some of them are

like brands plucked out of the fire. A very respectable man, who has been a blackslider, is restored; and a man and his wife, who have also been backsliders for a long time, are brought again to the fold of Christ. Another man and his wife are amongst the number of the saved, whose history is most interesting. He was converted about a year since, but his wife was a Roman Catholic, and persecuted him most dreadfully; and so also did her mother and sister. Week after week they tried to provoke him in all sorts of ways, and seemed as if they wanted to make him swear or sin in any way, so that he might live as he had done before. At last he could no longer endure their conduct, and one day he struck his wife a blow with his hand; but did not hurt her very much. She went, however, to a justice and got a warrant, and had him taken to prison. When he was brought up for trial she made such representations as led the magistrates to send him to confinement for six months, with hard labour. He has not been out of jail very long; when he first came out he would not go near his wife; but just before I came here they had got together again, and she came with him to chapel on Sunday night; when both of them were deeply wounded with convictions for sin. On Monday night they came again, and both together came up to the penitent bench, and after some time were saved and made happy in the pardoning love of God. I spoke to him last night, he said they were both happy now, and were going to class together. A very many more have been saved, but how many I don't know. It has been a very busy week, for they

have had their bazaar open three nights, and have raised £206.

'Whitchurch, Aug. 20th, 1856.—There is a considerable stir in this town about my being here. On Monday night there was such a congregation as astonished everybody, and four fine young men sought and found the salvation of God. I preached at Market Drayton last night after attending a tea-meeting. I preach here again to-night, and to-morrow go to a village near Crewe, and then on Saturday go from thence to Leeds.'

'Jerusalem the holy, in light and peace behold;
 Her glowing altars flaming, her candlesticks of gold.
 The Heavenly Bridegroom's dwelling, the place of
 David's thrones;
 Her solemn anthems swelling, her pavement precious
 stones.
 Awake! Awake! O Zion! Thy bridal day draws nigh,
 The day of signs and wonders, and marvels from on
 high;
 Thy sun uprises slowly, but keep thou watch and
 ward;
 Fair Bride, all pure and lowly, go forth to meet thy
 Lord.'—*Gough.*

CHAPTER XI.

'The extraordinary manner in which some persons were frequently affected under Mr. Wesley's preaching, as well as that of his coadjutors, created much discussion and gave great offence. Some were seized with trembling, others sank down and uttered loud and piercing cries; others fell into a kind of agony. In some instances, whilst prayer was offered for them, they rose up with a sudden change of feeling, testifying that they had redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.'—*Watson's Life of Wesley.*

MR. RICHARDSON was fully employed the remainder of the year, in visiting Manchester, Birmingham, Halifax, Nottingham, and other places; but no records are forthcoming. His health was not good in December, and at the time he came home to spend Christmas with his family, he complained much of being 'worn down' and wanting 'rest for his lungs.' Notwithstanding this, however, in the early part of the January following, he was induced to undertake very important service in the town of Hull. He was importuned to preach the annual Sunday-school Sermons in Kingston chapel, and nothing loath, he girded himself for the task; and his visit was made a great blessing in that old and most important centre of Methodism. His engagement was to terminate at the end of the first week,

but such a state of excitement was produced by his ministry, and such desires were manifested to hear him preach, that, at the request of the superintendent of the circuit, two gentlemen went over to Grimsby to obtain his release from engagements in that town, so that he might remain in Hull over another Sabbath. The following is his own account of the visit:—

*‘Hull, Jan. 11th, 1857.—*Here I am safely over the great water without being drowned! Mr. Crookes was very kind and glad to see me. He announced my name from the pulpit, as that of an old friend of his, whom he should be happy to see and hear again. Sunday was a rainy day, but we had large congregations. It is a beautiful chapel, and was well filled, and I had a good time. To look upon such a congregation was enough to intimidate any one, and if you had seen it, you would have wondered how I did to stand before them. At the close of the service there were from twelve to fourteen earnestly seeking the kingdom of God, and most of them obtained peace, and were filled with joy through believing. There is a fine set of praying men here, and I have not such hard work in the after meetings as in most places. We are expecting great things this week.’

*‘Hull, Jan. 17th.—*Mr. Field has been to Grimsby, and they have consented to give me up, so that I am to stay here another Sunday. The congregations have increased all the week. The chapel will hold two thousand, and on Thursday night it was full. The people come running before the time, as if

afraid of being too late to get in. Every night this week the Lord has been in the midst. I suppose six hundred stayed the prayer-meeting last night; and there were twenty penitents. I do not know how many have got saved, but the number will amount to several scores. Amongst the rest a captain of a ship found mercy on Tuesday night, and on Wednesday morning he came to see me. His eyes were filled with tears, and he gave me the following account of himself:—He has been a captain eighteen years; has been shipwrecked twice, and with a rope round his body was dragged through the raging waves to land; has been in many a storm and scene of danger, and seen many lost around him. When he was rescued from drowning, he said, “These were great deliverances, but not to be compared to the deliverance I have now obtained.” He said, “I have been an awful blasphemer, and one of the wickedest of men, and when I came down the aisle of the chapel to go to the communion-rail I felt like a condemned criminal under sentence of death; but after I had been there awhile I felt the burden lifted from my soul, and I could say ‘my God is reconciled,’ and I went back to my seat with a glad heart, and seemed to walk in carpet slippers, scarcely feeling the ground I trod upon.” His wife and daughter have got saved also. I saw them all in the same pew the other night, and they looked so happy. Mr. Field’s son and daughter, and two of his servants, have found salvation, and two of the girls and a man-servant at his house in the town. Praise the Lord! I am very well in the midst of all the stir and work.’

*'Laceby, Jan. 21st, 1857.—*We had a wonderful work in Hull last Sunday. That great chapel was crowded all over, every aisle and corner and the pulpit stairs were packed; and it was the same on Monday and Tuesday. A great number of souls were saved each night, and are now living witnesses of the power of Gospel grace and truth. I left the circuit all on a stir. A gentleman desired Mr. Field to take me to a hatter's shop, and buy one of the best hats he could get, so I am now wearing a better than I ever had in my life. I am to stay here and preach at Laceby, Hatcliffe, and Grimsby all the week.'

*'Laceby, Jan. 29th.—*We had a large congregation at Laceby on Sunday night, and one soul saved. Last night three strong young men came to the communion-rail, and threw themselves down, and began to pray with all their might; others followed, and I think there were ten of them struggling together in the pangs of the new birth. It was a gracious time. They are going to have gas put into the Caistor chapel, and I am to make collections there for that object next Sunday.'

From the above date until July very little information is forthcoming respecting his labours. During the interval he visited several circuits, travelled much, preached often, and 'saw the grace of God' in many places, as Barnabas saw it at Antioch. It is much to be regretted that his letters during this period have not been preserved, as there is reason to believe it was one of the happiest and most fruitful of his life. Writing to his friend Mrs.

Shillito, of Prestonfield, in September, 1857, he remarks:—‘This has been a very successful year, After I saw you at Grimsby (the end of February), I was out six weeks in one round, and we had souls saved every night. In three months, where I was labouring, we had not less than six hundred persons saved, and started in the way to heaven! I was nearly worn out every night, and often thought I should have broken down; but the Lord held me up, and I was never more happy in my Master’s work. O what rich seasons we have had! My cough is not cured, and I expect it never will be. If I live to see another winter, very likely it will be bad again; but “my heart is fixed” to do the will of God, work away for Him, and finally get to heaven.’

Six hundred persons saved in three months! Well might he say, ‘O what rich seasons we have had!’ Would to God such seasons came often everywhere! What honour does God confer upon his chosen instruments! A simple-minded man, sixty-five years of age, goes forth from his humble cottage, into the great and busy world, governed by the one idea expressed in Wesley’s formula, ‘You have nothing to do but to save souls,’ and in three months’ time six hundred sinners are gathered into the fold of Christ by his instrumentality! During these three months he laboured in the Birmingham, Sheffield, Rotherham, Bolton, Manchester, Sleaford, Alston, and Bingham circuits. Thank God for what He has done, and for what He will do; for His promise makes it certain that He will yet raise up other equally successful harvestmen, to ‘gather the wheat into His

garner,' O ! that 'the Lord's remembrancers' may never keep silence, but fervently and ceaselessly 'pray the Lord of the harvest that He may send forth *labourers* into His harvest.'

In the month of July he visited the town of Redditch, where he recorded : 'We had no need to ask whether the Lord was with us, His voice was heard in the sanctuary, and we saw "the lighting down of His arm." Nearly twenty souls were saved and gave glory to God.' He went to Ratcliffe Bridge, near Manchester in August, 'where a young woman had the Word applied to her heart and determined to become a follower of Jesus. She persuaded her parents to allow her to begin family prayer at once, and both father and mother were converted and soon after died a very happy death.' At Northampton he rejoiced over 'five sinners who confessed themselves on the Lord's side,' and at North Cave, near Patrington, 'between thirty and forty professed to find an interest in Christ.' At Dunstable 'twenty-two persons professed to obtain forgiveness and a sense of acceptance with God, one night ; and another, there were from thirty to forty seekers of salvation.'

A letter which was written to him by Mr. Bennett, of Dunstable, January 5th, 1858, states: 'The good work is still going on with us. We have had more conversions since you left us. Several of the older scholars in the school have become decided. You will remember one who broke down on the Wednesday night, and spoke at the band-meeting very beautifully, about the way in which the Holy Spirit led her to yield to His grace. It would please you to see the three men at the station walking abreast up

to the class they have joined on the Sunday mornings. We have not been able to count up correctly yet, but I hope we shall find fifty meeting in class in Dunstable alone ; and I have heard of several at Toddington, and some at Leegrave.'

In the course of the year a proposal originated with some of the friends of this most excellent man in the Grimsby circuit, to raise a sum of money sufficient to provide a small annuity, for himself and his wife during the remainder of their lives. It was apparent to those who knew him, that his physical strength was failing, and that he would not be able much longer to pursue the evangelistic labours which he had now maintained with unabated vigour for more than twenty years ; and it was also well known that his pecuniary circumstances were such, that unless an effort of this kind was made, he would certainly be placed in difficulties, in case he should be laid aside by illness. Mr. Richardson never sought to make money by his religious zeal and abundant labours to do good. A man more pure and disinterested in his motives cannot easily be found. Throughout his career he sensitively shrank from the appearance of being at all concerned about money. The consequence was, that to make provision for old age was utterly beyond his ability. He had brought up his family in modest comfort, and respectability ; and they were satisfied, and so was he, with such a decent condition in life, as might be maintained by thrift and prudence—whilst the future he left with confidence to the providence of God. Under these circumstances his friends felt that he had claims upon the public, and that it was

most proper to afford an opportunity to his numerous admirers and spiritual children, to give a practical expression of their gratitude and affection.

A meeting was accordingly convened, by circular, in the town of Grimsby, and was well attended by influential gentlemen from the Barton, Hull East, Market-Rasen, Alford, Louth, and Horncastle circuits. A committee was formed; William Coates, Esq., of Laceby, was appointed treasurer, and Messrs. John Coatsworth and J. K. Riggall, secretaries. At that meeting the writer was requested to preside, and can never forget the abundant kindness, profound esteem, and sense of personal obligation, expressed by several of the leading Wesleyan gentlemen of Lincolnshire; and their great readiness to contribute to the proposed annuity fund. A little diversity of opinion was entertained as to the ultimate appropriation of the principal sum to be raised; a few giving the preference to the Missionary Society, and others considering the Methodist Preachers' Annuitant Fund the most suitable to have the benefit of the appropriation. This latter view was finally adopted; a subscription was commenced at the meeting, and after the lapse of sufficient time to allow for private applications, the following circular was sent out to different parts of the country:—

‘Dear Sir,—On the 5th of March last, a meeting of the friends of Mr. Charles Richardson, of Tetford, was held in Grimsby, at which a committee was appointed, and it was unanimously resolved—

“Forthwith to create a fund for the purpose of

providing a moderate annuity for the benefit of Mr. Richardson, and of Mrs. R., should she be his survivor, and to make an appeal to his numerous friends in various parts of the connexion in behalf of the same."

'The considerations which suggest and sustain this proposal are the following—

'1. Mr. Richardson's long and valuable services to Methodism; his tried loyalty and devotedness to the institutions and discipline of the body; and his laborious and successful endeavours to promote the spiritual prosperity of the connexion.

'2. The fact that he and Mrs. Richardson are now sixty-five and sixty-two years of age, and almost entirely unprovided for; the occupation of his time for many years past in preaching, and the very limited remuneration he has generally received, having precluded a self-made provision for old age.

'3. The manifest impropriety of allowing one who deserves so well of his Christian brethren, to be in danger of becoming subject to poverty and want in his declining years, after he has been worn out with excessive labours in the Church of God; and the equal impropriety of permitting his excellent wife, in case of his removal by death, being thrown upon the aids of a precarious charity.

'It was also resolved—"That the capital of the fund shall be presented, upon the decease of Mr. and Mrs. Richardson, to the Wesleyan Ministers' Annuitant Society, for the benefit of the worn-out ministers and widows of the connexion."

'The total amount at present subscribed is

£291 5s., which is much below the amount required for a moderate annuity—say £40 or £50 per annum.

‘We commend this project to your kind consideration and aid, that the committee may be able to prove that the church appreciates the labours and successful services rendered by Mr. Richardson to the cause of Christ for a long series of years.

‘The committee propose to invest the fund, immediately after the close of the year.

‘Signed,

‘W. COATES, *Treasurer.*

‘JOHN COATSWORTH, } *Secretaries.*
‘JAMES K. RIGGALL, }

This benevolent proposal had made considerable progress before it came to the knowledge of the party most interested in it. He had not entertained the slightest expectation of any thing of the kind; and when he got to know what his friends were doing, his gratitude was intense. He took their kindness as another proof of his Heavenly Father's love and care for him and his, and devoted himself to his work with renewed assiduity and delight.

The sum of £400 was ultimately contributed and vested in trustees, and a deed of settlement was drawn out, securing to himself and his wife the amount of £20 a year for life, and at their decease the appropriation of the *principal* to the ‘Methodist Preachers’ Annuitant Society.’ This small annuity was further supplemented by a resolution, on the part of its promoters, to procure annual subscriptions, if possible, to double the amount during Mr. Richardson's own life;—a resolution which was

generously carried into effect in a quiet and effectual manner, and so as not in the least to annoy the sensitiveness of the recipient.

To return to the narrative of his labours. These were continued as indefatigably as before, and were as earnest and successful as ever. His physical infirmities were plainly upon the increase; his throat and chest were more frequently out of order; decided symptoms of asthma began to show themselves, a disease to which his father was most distressingly subject during several years before his death; but he was carried onwards in his course of usefulness by the love of souls, and the delight which he experienced in publishing the glad tidings of salvation. Had he been careful to economise his remaining strength, his life might have been probably prolonged beyond the age at which he died; but forgetful of himself, he went on 'to fight the good fight,' and fulfil the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus; anxious to live well, rather than to live long. And certainly, as he advanced along his path he had everything to encourage him to proceed. If the 'outward man' failed the 'inward man was renewed day by day.' He walked in the clear sunshine of the divine favour, and was 'filled with all joy and peace in believing.' His prospects became better and brighter, and with increasing confidence he could set to his seal, and testify that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. He never was better qualified, both spiritually and intellectually, to feed the Church of God, or exhort with careless sinners, and lead them to the fountain of salvation; nor did he

ever witness more success attending his ministry. Everywhere the best of the Methodist people received him with a hearty welcome, and zealous co-operation. Open doors of usefulness stood before him in every direction, and some of them presented to him peculiar attractions; and better than all, he saw that God was with him making him increasingly the means of turning many from 'darkness to light' wherever he went. In his case there was another beautiful illustration of that precious word, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' No wonder that he went on, ambitious of further achievements.

Soon after the turn of the year he repeated his visit to Hull. His great success in the previous January induced the friends to press him to preach in behalf of the Sunday-schools again; and it was plainly most agreeable to himself to comply with their request. He reported his success in the following terms:—

'Hull, Jan. 11th, 1858.—I am happy to say that I am pretty well after my labours yesterday. Kingston chapel was full in the morning, but at night the congregation was overwhelming. They say there were three thousand people within the sound of my voice. It was awfully grand to look upon the mass of people assembled. There was a good number of penitents seeking mercy; how many I don't know—perhaps thirty. It was a good beginning. The friends are expecting a fine week, and the chapel full every night.'

'Hull, Jan. 21st.—My work here is now done, and I leave to-morrow for Grainthorp. Last night we had an extraordinary congregation; every part of the chapel was crowded—within the communion rail, the aisles, and all about the doors, and not a seat was to be had by many who stood all the time. I left about ten o'clock, and at that time the penitents were crowding the communion. Preachers and friends were delighted, and I left them all hard at work.'

'Rotherham, Jan. 25th.—Yesterday was a precious day; a very large congregation at night, and fourteen people seeking salvation as earnestly as any I have ever seen. Nearly all of them obtained the blessing of pardon, and went to their homes rejoicing in the Lord. There were eight very fine young men in the number. Praise the Lord! But I expect something better before I am done here. I slept well last night, and think I shall be better here than in Hull. The house where I lodge is right upon a hill, and we have plenty of good air. I am very comfortable; but the people tease me with invitations to go out to dinner and tea, and this keeps me talking all day. Well, I must make the best of it.'

'Rotherham, Jan. 29th, 1858.—I preached last night to a chapel full of people with great ease and comfort. A very blessed work is going on, and a good many are saved every night. We have a band-meeting to-night, and to-morrow I go to Sheffield.'

He preached five times in Rotherham; and then at Wickersley, on behalf of the erection of a new

school-room. On Saturday, January 30th, the following notice of his labours appeared in the *Rotherham and Masborough Advertiser* :—

‘Mr. Richardson is a distinguished and useful preacher of the Wesleyan denomination, who is almost ceaselessly employed in conducting special religious services. These are not confined to rural districts, or comparatively small congregations, but are extended to the Metropolis, Liverpool, Hull, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, &c. The illustrious revivalist is advanced in years, but not worn out or infirm. His grey head, fine open countenance, bright eyes, stout compact figure, and somewhat antiquated costume, all conspire to make his appearance in the pulpit venerable, striking, and interesting. As far as we can learn, he has had but few scholastic advantages in early life, and he has evidently struggled through difficulties ; but though uneducated, he is well informed, and evidently a person of considerable mental power and vigorous thought. But what is far better still, “He is a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.” He loves the Saviour with supreme and intense love, which he demonstrates, by his deep and anxious solicitude for the spiritual welfare and security of his fellow men. As a preacher, he stands high ; his discourses are lucid, well arranged, practical, interwoven with Scriptural incidents and anecdotes, and to crown and seal the whole, his sermons are brought home to the reason and consciences of his audience, sometimes applied with terrific power and point. He is a natural orator, full of action, but

perhaps occasionally in danger of being rather too gesticulative and exciting; but it is perfectly natural, and there is apparent, a solemn sense of the divine presence, reliance upon supernatural aid, and a predominant desire to do good. He was invited to this town by the ministers and officers of the Wesleyan Church, and has preached every evening this week. The congregations have been large and attentive; last Sunday night especially, the chapel was crowded to excess. The devotional meetings have also been well attended, and we are given to understand that a cheering degree of good has been accomplished. From the bottom of our heart we wish the faithful veteran of the cross God-speed.'

Such laudatory remarks in a public newspaper made him blush in the presence of his friends; and feel afraid and ashamed before God, lest he should yield to vain and sinful thoughts. In one of his letters to her who was the most likely to be highly gratified, and who gloried in the honour conferred upon him, he said—'You see how they have set off your poor old husband; but they do not know him as well as he knows himself, or they never would have said such things.'

It must be admitted that such flattering and eulogistic statements made in public journals, are not unlikely to have a baneful influence upon the minds of public men. Had 'the faithful veteran' at Rotherham been a younger man, or a Christian less established with grace, such excessive laudation might have been perilous to him. Even good and

holy men are not insensible to the charms of popular admiration; and some of his best friends were at times concerned to know how he was affected by all the honours and respect which were shown him wherever he went. Mrs. Coates, of Laceby, once said to him, when he was seated in the midst of the family circle, conversing freely about the success which God was pleased to vouchsafe to his labours, and telling of the numerous conversions he had witnessed—‘Now Charles, do you never feel tempted to pride, in the midst of all this?’ His reply was—‘Well! to be frank, I confess that I have;’ and proceeded to say: ‘I was preaching at Boston once, and that large and beautiful chapel was filled all over with people. The Lord gave me great liberty in preaching, and every eye seemed fixed upon me; when it came into my mind while I was preaching, “You are doing well! what a pitch of excitement you have brought the people to!” ‘But,’ said he, with a sad countenance and a melancholy shake of the head, ‘O what tears, and sighs, and groans that cost me; as soon as I got into my closet, no one knows what distress and shame I felt.’

Mr. Carter, of Nottingham, mentions a similar circumstance, and states that he once asked Charles, as they sat at the tea-table, whether he had ever heard the celebrated Mr. William Dawson preach. He said: ‘Yes, I have heard him a few times;’ and went on to mention the texts of Scripture from which he had heard him preach; and stated, that many years previously, he was himself engaged to preach in George-yard Chapel, Hull, for several

evenings in succession, except one, when Mr. Dawson was to occupy the pulpit. On that occasion he had the great pleasure of hearing him, and was very much charmed with both his manner and discourse. On the following evening it fell to him to take the pulpit; and as he was on his way to it from the vestry, the chapel-keeper, who was walking by his side, whispered to him: 'The people say they would just as soon hear you preach as Mr. Dawson.' He said he felt greatly annoyed with the obtrusive remark; and went up the pulpit stairs saying in an energetic undertone, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' for he added, 'I knew from whence it came.' Would it not be well always to make similar short work with Satan's suggestions? Mr. Richardson was never equal to Mr. Dawson as a preacher, and he knew it, and was all the more grieved with the fulsomeness of the chapel-keeper's observations. Honour and usefulness in the church expose ministers to peculiar temptations. The higher their elevation, the more are they exposed to Satan's deadliest shafts. The great Apostle to the Gentiles had to carry to the grave his 'thorn in the flesh,' lest the distinctions conferred upon him by God should 'exalt him above measure.' And the best and most useful men have need to walk circumspectly and humbly with God, 'lest that by any means when they have preached to others they themselves should become castaways.' When the celebrated French preacher, Massillon, Bishop of Clermont—of whom Louis XIV. used to say, 'When I hear other preachers, I go away much pleased with them; but when I hear him I go away much

displeased with myself'—had delivered one of his most brilliant and impressive discourses in the hearing of the court; the monarch, who was present, was so charmed with the bishop's eloquence, that he met him at the foot of the pulpit steps, when the service was over, and shook him by the hand, saying, 'You have given us an admirable discourse to-day.' 'Sire!' said the preacher very gravely in reply, 'the devil has told me that, before your Majesty.'

The following extracts show, in Mr. Richardson's own language, the results of his continued labours—

Sheffield, Feb. 2nd, 1858.—We are doing pretty well in the Lord's work; but I had expected to find the Society in Sheffield in a much better state. On Sunday night the chapel was well filled; and it was nearly full last night. We had a good influence on both occasions, and about ten persons were in distress, who had been wounded by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of the Lord. Last Friday night we had a band-meeting at Rotherham, when we had all the new converts present who professed to have got good during the week. There were forty-eight at Rotherham and five at Wickersley. We had them all together in the front pews, and addressed them on the obligations they were under, to walk, "as becometh the Gospel of Christ." I hope a good impression was made upon the minds of all of them. Two new class-leaders were appointed; and each of the converts was asked which they preferred to meet with; their names were taken down, and everyone seemed fixed and pleased.

It was an interesting meeting, and all of us who were present were constrained to thank God and take courage.'

'Stockport, Feb. 9th.—My cough is better than it has been for weeks past. I left them at Sheffield all alive, and sorry that I was obliged to leave them so soon. I have promised to return as early as I can. Apparently they had not made much effort to get the people together before I went; but we had better and better congregations every night, and it was a very blessed week. I do not know how many were brought in, but there was a good number. A powerful work of God commenced at Hollingsend just after last harvest, and they have begun to build a new chapel: they say I am to open it. A woman came to me and said: "You were the means under God, of saving my soul when you preached at Hollingsend, and a good many more." "Glory be to God!" We had a good beginning here on Sunday; I preached in a large school-room about half-a-mile from the chapel. The collection was £28. The place was as hot as an oven. About twenty-three penitents were seeking the Lord, and the day closed well. Last night I preached in the chapel to a good congregation, and we had the communion-rail crowded with earnest seekers of salvation. Amongst them was the daughter of a medical gentleman in the town, who is a religious man. I believe before the week is over we shall have something very remarkable. You must pray for me. I never forget to pray for all of you.'

'Manchester, Feb. 16th.—We had extraordinary times at Stockport last week. Towards the end,

the chapel was crowded in all parts. Thursday night was the most remarkable. I continued with them till ten o'clock, but when I left, both vestries were full of penitents, with whom the praying men were at work, encouraging them to lay hold on the Saviour. The communion-rail in the chapel was filled again and again; for those who got liberty retired to their seats and other seekers took their places. The people came from all parts of the town and from many of the villages round about. I have not seen such a work for a long time. Since I got here a letter has followed me to say that the son of the Rev. W. Allen, the superintendent, and Mr. Foley's niece and servant-maid, all found peace. Bless the Lord! The people here are not in so good a state as they were, but we had plenty to preach to on Sunday. The collections for the tracts were £14. The person who takes down the names of those who get good, told me last night that he had already twenty-five names. May they all endure unto eternal life. I intended to come home next Saturday, but they press me so much to stay that I shall be like to preach another Sunday before I leave.'

He was at work in March at Prestonfield, near Hull, and again in Manchester, Stockport, and Sheffield in April. Large crowds attended his ministry in these towns on week days as well as Sundays. At Stockport he preached two evenings and estimated 'that about forty persons each time were deeply awakened and seeking the Lord with all the heart.'

In the beginning of June he was taken very un-

well at the Manor House, Laceby; and was confined to bed for more than a week. Mrs. Richardson was sent for, and remained with him until he was able to return home. The writer had an opportunity of visiting him a few times in this sickness, and always found him sweetly submissive to the Divine will, and joyously resting upon the merits of the Saviour. It was a means of grace to sit at his bed-side, and listen to him speaking of the goodness of God. He was much in the spirit of prayer, and spent the greater part of his time in reading the Holy Scriptures and pleading with God. The following extract from a letter to his friend Mr. Wild, of Armley, supplies his own account of this affliction.

*'Tetford, Aug. 2nd, 1858.—*I am the Lord's prisoner again, and have been very ill for nearly nine weeks. About a month since I was getting better, but I suppose I got a little cold and broke down again, and was as ill as before. The doctor says it has been an attack of bronchitis, attended with ague and fever, and other complaints. I am brought down very low and weak, and am afraid it will be a long time before I shall be able to preach again. I have given up all my summer's engagements, except one place where I have been once a year for seven years, but I am ready to fear I shall not be able to go. Many friends are waiting to see if I can serve them, so that if I am spared I shall have plenty of work. I doubt whether I shall be able to come and see the Armley friends so early as the beginning of October, but I shall see how I get on and will let you know. I am happy to say the

Lord is with me. I have felt Christ precious, and His word sweet. The Gospel I have preached to others has been my support in this time of affliction. My dear wife has been very unwell also. But writing is too much for me, I must conclude.'

His beloved Tansley was the place where he had been for seven years in succession, and by the end of September he was so far recovered as to be able to go and preach in behalf of the chapel again. He was greatly refreshed by the sympathy of the kind people and the success of his Sabbath labours, and remained a week for the benefit of repose, under the hospitable roof of his friends the Hacketts. Other places, far and near, were visited during the next two months, and in December the ubiquitous evangelist went into the Dunstable circuit. God had given him the hearts of the people in that neighbourhood, and there was no one more able than himself to assist in raising funds, and promoting the spiritual interests of the circuit at the same time. The friends in the town of Dunstable had just expended £1,600 upon the enlargement of the chapel. The Rev. W. M. Punshon, the Rev. R. Roberts, and other ministers had preached at the re-opening, and very liberal sums had been collected; and Mr. Richardson was invited to gather up the gleanings. It so happened however that these, when they came to be appraised, turned out better than the gleanings of some of the regular harvest-men. On the first Sabbath morning that he preached, a deeply-interesting scene was presented. Previous to the hour for commencing the

service, several hundreds of people assembled in the chapel; and as soon as he entered the pulpit the whole congregation arose as if by previous concert; and struck up without the aid of the orchestra, a beautiful hymn, known to be one of his favourites, and sung the whole six verses it contains to a sweet and plaintive melody. The first and last of the six are these—

‘In seasons of grief to my God I’ll repair,
 When my heart is o’erwhelmed with trouble and care;
 I’ll cry to the Saviour, who for me did die,—
 Lead me to the *Rock* that is higher than I.

* * * * *

‘And when I behold Thee arrayed on Thy throne,
 I’ll fall at Thy feet, and there cast my crown;
 The malice of Satan and hell I’ll defy,
 When safe on the *Rock* that is higher than I.’

Before the singing was finished Mr. Richardson was so deeply affected that he burst into tears, which he could not conceal; and the sight of his emotion only intensified that which already existed on the part of the audience; and it was not until a few minutes had passed that he was in a fit state to commence the service. He preached again in the evening of the same day with great power, to an overflowing congregation; and several young men,—amongst others the son of a Wesleyan minister,—were given to him as seals to his ministry; who subsequently honoured his instrumentality by their Christian consistency. He remained a fortnight preaching or attending missionary meetings every day; held two services amongst the work-people in large bonnet establishments; and stated at the end

of the time, 'I don't know the number of those who have professed to find salvation, but I believe hundreds have been brought to God.'

'He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart;
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes the arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect!
Are all such teachers?—would to Heaven all were!'
Cowper.

CHAPTER XII.

'The most effectual way of preaching Christ is to preach Him in all His offices, and to declare His law as well as His gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness in all its branches.'—*John Wesley*.

THE year 1859 was as laborious and successful as any of Mr. Richardson's life. His popularity continued to increase; and the letters of invitation he received from some of the most eminent ministers of the connexion must have been highly gratifying and encouraging. In January he visited the Grimsby circuit and the town of Hull, where his labours were followed with the same blessed results as on former occasions. Night after night for a whole week, the large and beautiful Kingston chapel was crowded with hearers; and a great number of people of all ages and conditions—some of them previously outcasts and reprobates—were born for a better life; washed from their sins in the cleansing blood of Christ; took their place amongst His people, and remain in church fellowship until the present day. In the beginning of February he returned to Stockport, where he had been so successful the previous year; and was made to rejoice by finding that many of those who had been brought to God at that time, were still in

the way to heaven, and had begun to make themselves useful in connection with the church. Mr. Richardson rejoiced very much in his Stockport labours; for just as a fisherman delights to cast his net in the midst of the passing shoal, so he went to work in that populous town with a special zest and assurance of success; and every time he went there, as one of Christ's fishers for men, he seemed to bring a larger draught ashore without injury to the net. His health was generally in good working order in that neighbourhood; and his ministry was well adapted to the multitudes of young people who crowded to hear him. He thus writes about his labours:—

*'Stockport, Feb. 9th, 1859.—*We have a very blessed work going on here again. On Sunday we collected £38, which is more by £14 than last year. The chapel was crowded out on Sunday, and well filled the last two nights. I left them a little before ten o'clock, and at that hour the communion-rail was filled with penitent seekers of the mercy of God, and many were praying in the vestry at the same time. The prayers of the friends, mingled with the groans and cries of the penitents, and the rejoicings of those who were made happy, were most delightful to hear. Thank God, there is a great number of those who were saved when I was here last year still standing. There are fifty of them meeting in class connected with this chapel; and the work which then began has spread and a great deal of good has been done in the large union Sunday-school where there are

nearly five thousand children and young people. The Lord's work and Holy Spirit got into that school when I was here, and I am told that there are perhaps hundreds of the young people who have been since that time, converted to God. I have had a deputation of gentlemen to request me to preach in it next Friday night, and have consented. They tell me that I shall have a congregation of from three to four thousand people. The friends are pleased that I have had the invitation, as it is uncommon for a local preacher to officiate there.'

'*Stockport, February 15th.*—I am staying now at Mr. Nightingale's. We had a glorious day on Sunday—crowds upon crowds of people; and crowds of penitent seekers of salvation. There has not been one night since I have been in Stockport but we have had the altar-rail filled with people anxiously seeking the kingdom of God. The leading men are much alive, and very useful. All sorts of sinners are getting converted. We had a man the other night who, some months ago, stole a horse, and has not been out of prison very long; he has been a very bad man; but the Lord has broken his hard heart, and he was in deep distress on account of his sins; he wept and prayed and struggled long, and at last was made a partaker of pardoning mercy. A great number of fine young men are getting salvation; and indeed there is a general movement amongst the people old and young. A churchman and his wife, a respectable cotton spinner, came to hear me several times last year, and they have come again this. Last night they

sent a carriage to take me to their house to tea, and then sent me to chapel. We had a very happy afternoon together. I have just got a letter from a friend saying that a leading infidel was at chapel last night—a man who has been very actively instilling his wicked principles into the minds of the young men of the neighbourhood. His little daughter was with him, and she begged him to allow her to stay at the prayer-meeting, which he did, and it is thought the Lord has touched his heart. The friends tell me that a great number of those saved last year stand fast: and that some of the young men have begun to preach, and others to be very useful in various ways. Praise the Lord for His goodness!

Stockport, Feb. 18th.—Last week was all good, but this has been better. Brunswick chapel is very large, and yet was more crowded last night, than I ever saw Kingston at Hull on a Sunday; and for all the people were so packed, there was deep and solemn attention, and a powerful influence seemed to pervade the whole mass. One man was enabled to believe in Christ to the saving of his soul while I was preaching. Many big, stout men were weeping and sighing all the time. The altar-rail was filled with penitents all the night; as soon as some found peace they retired, and others took their places; and so we went on till ten o'clock, when I left them, but a great number stayed much longer. It has been a wonderful week for the manifestation of the power of God, indeed I might say a fortnight, for we have not had one failing time, they have been all blessed seasons of grace. I cannot

enter into particulars, or I could write all day on the subject of this visit to Stockport.'

It is very much to be desired that he had written 'all day' on such a subject. The paper would have contained many fine illustrations of the living power of Christianity: illustrations which cannot be too largely multiplied. Men want to see in the midst of them what a living faith in Christ is able to accomplish, and the more we can produce striking instances of conversion, the more swiftly will the Gospel spread and prevail in the world. There is no want of ecclesiastical æsthetics, or intellectual achievements, in connection with the church of the present day; and if these were sufficient to secure vigour and progress to the Christian religion, then might we expect it to triumph as it never has done. But it is an undeniable fact, that as a mighty soul-renewing system, calculated to elevate the condition of mankind, and extirpate their vices, the Gospel works but feebly, and advances slowly. The grand desideratum of the church of Christ, just now, undoubtedly is, more of that 'power from on high,' which brings about immediate and visible results, and a vastly augmented number of genuine conversions. What deeply interesting details must have been connected with the numerous conversions which took place at Stockport and elsewhere, by Mr. Richardson's instrumentality. As we count their number we naturally wish to know something more about them. How many happy homes were thereby created; how many parents mourning over erring

children, were effectually consoled; how many vices were destroyed, virtues engrafted, sorrows solaced, and new joys implanted; how many young people were rescued from impending ruin; how many backsliders, were reclaimed; how many men and women were raised up to be a life-long blessing to their families; how many benefits such as these sprang out of the conversions here set down, as taking place from three to thirty in a day, and that sometimes for several days in the same month, will never be told upon earth, for their memorial has perished; but a forthcoming day will reveal all about them; and the honoured instrument by whom they were effected, will have the whole to gem the crown of his rejoicing for ever and ever.

In the early part of the year Mr. Richardson visited the Metropolis again, and spent a few weeks in the Southwark circuit, where his labours were productive of such decidedly good results, and redounded so much to the advancement of Methodism, in regard to numbers and finances, as well as a revived spiritual life, that a deep impression in his favour was produced upon the ministers and principal friends. The circuit quarterly-meeting was held shortly after he left, over which the Rev. James Grose presided; when a resolution of thanks and approbation, was unanimously passed, and forwarded to him in the following respectful terms:—

London, May 23rd.—MY DEAR SIR.—At the last quarterly-meeting of the Wesleyan ministers, trustees, and other officers of the Fourth London

circuit, held in the vestry of Southwark chapel, it was unanimously resolved—‘That a vote of thanks be presented to Mr. Charles Richardson, for his most useful and acceptable special services in this circuit, and that the same be communicated to him by the secretary.’

‘I have great pleasure in conveying to you this expression of our friendship, and remain, dear Sir, yours, sincerely,

‘JOHN RILEY, *Hon. Sec.*’

Nothing could have been more gratifying to Mr. R. than the above; it was a seasonable communication, and very proper on the part of the quarterly-meeting. Before leaving the neighbourhood of London, he visited Croydon, for the purpose of calling upon his beloved friend, the Rev. Thomas Dove, formerly a most successful missionary of the cross in Western Africa, but who was then fast sinking into the grave, in premature decay. He found him very weak but very happy, and patiently waiting on the banks of the river for his Master’s summons to a glorious immortality. The last house he left in town, before setting out for Croydon, was Mr. Haughton’s. Mrs. H. had been taken alarmingly ill a day or two previously, and appeared at the time almost beyond hope of recovery. For years he had been strongly attached to them both, and his heart was deeply affected with their suffering condition. From the bedside of sickness he went straight to Mr. Dove’s, and found him, contrary to his expectation, upon the bed of death; from which he was shortly afterwards released, by

'an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom' of Christ. His sympathies were greatly excited ; he wept and prayed for his friends, and remained with Mr. Dove over the Sabbath, to comfort him, and to take his place in the pulpit ; where he was comforted himself with great liberty in preaching, and by witnessing several persons awakened under the sermon, and induced to unite themselves to God and His Church. On his way into Lincolnshire, after leaving Croydon, he called at Kensworth, near Dunstable, to preach the anniversary sermons for the Sunday-school in that place. There he lodged in a large old house, and was informed, just as he was about to retire for the night, that the chamber he was to occupy was said to be haunted. Such a piece of information might have been troublesome to some people, but to him it mattered very little. Ghosts seldom show themselves to men of his mould and mettle. He found a comfortable bed, and enjoyed a good night's rest, and at the close of his Sunday's toil tempted the reputed spectre, by a second night's occupation of his domain ; and had to tell his hospitable friends next morning, that he thought they had nothing to dread, for that he had neither seen nor heard anything to disturb him. From Kensworth he proceeded to Sleaford, in order to render similar service to the Sunday-school in that town ; and got to Mr. West's, of Miningsby, on Good Friday, where he had preached on that day for many years in succession.

After resting a day or two at home he proceeded to Manchester, to preach in Gravel-lane chapel ;

and from thence to Sheffield, to make collections for a Sunday-school ; where a gentleman was so greatly pleased with the morning sermon, that he came to him in the vestry, shook him warmly by the hand, and expressed a wish ' that he might live till he was a hundred years old, to preach salvation in the way he had done that day.' At Tansley, where he had preached and made collections for the chapel, for several years in succession, he found that the clergyman of the parish had greatly increased the excitement connected with his annual visit, by publicly advising the people not to hear him. The consequence was, he had larger congregations than ever before, and several sinners were brought to God. On the 24th of July he was in the Metropolis again. A new chapel was opened in the Southwark circuit on the 13th, and the dedicatory services were continued over the two following Sundays. After he had taken his part, he wrote home in triumph to his wife informing her, that though two popular ministers had preceded him, £32 were collected when he preached, and only £33 at the services of the other two put together, and added, ' It was a hard day ; I preached morning and evening, and led a lovefeast in the afternoon, but they were blessed times. I felt very happy in preaching, and was so strong, and my voice so clear, that I thought I was returning to the days of my youth.' He preached the chapel sermons at Bromley, in Kent, on the 26th ; and after staying a day or two with his friend, Mr. Whelpton, went to Redditch, where he had another hard day on the following Sabbath, and collected

£19 for the chapel ; and reached Tetford at the end of the same week, in good health.

In the early part of August he was at Brigg, preaching for schools and missions ; then went to Bourne, where, at the request of the Baptist minister, he occupied his pulpit one night, and the Wesleyan the next ; and on the following Sunday, preached the annual Sunday-school sermons in Brunswick-chapel, Sheffield. He then spent a week in the Boston circuit, another in Bingham and the surrounding villages, a third at Armley, a fourth at Northampton ; preaching and making collections for various public objects on Sundays and week-days, and gathering seals to his ministry in every place. On the 22nd of October, he travelled a hundred miles, and reached Sheffield again, to preach at Attercliffe on the following day. There he was greatly encouraged. On both the Sunday and Monday evenings a large number of persons were in distress, and he laboured hard and late to lead them to the Redeemer, and was made glad by seeing many of them introduced into the kingdom of God. The next Sunday and the week after he spent at Buxton, preaching six times, and holding five or six other services ; in which he saw a young widow, who had just buried her husband, cast her broken heart at the Saviour's feet ; and two brothers, fine full grown young men, embrace the yoke and burden of the cross ; and a number of 'great big fellows, who were employed at the lime pits, two or three miles out of the town, completely broken down, and weeping like women, on account of

their sins.' On the 6th of November he preached the annual sermons for the Sunday-school at Barton-upon-Humber, and rejoiced over ten conversions in the evening. He continued assisting the ministers of that circuit up to the 30th, taking part in ten missionary-meetings, generally preaching in the afternoon of the day, and labouring hard all up and down in the circuit until he had to say 'they have laid out too much work for me ;' an unusual admission for him to make, for work in the church was his greatest earthly delight. But the weather was severely cold ; snow lay deep upon the ground, and he had often to return to Barton at ten or eleven o'clock at night, in an open gig, travelling six, eight, or ten miles ; and this was too much for him, with a chest and throat so tender and susceptible of cold. Nevertheless, he determined to fulfil a long-standing engagement to preach at Rochdale and there he continued during the first half of December, preaching for the day-school and missions, and labouring with the zeal and energy of a young man to bring sinners to the Saviour. He had never been in Rochdale before, but his fame had preceded him, and large congregations filled the Union-street chapel several times to hear him. The keen frost which prevailed seriously aggravated his cough, and he was plainly insufficient in a physical sense, for the work he had to do. But still the Lord was with him ; a very gracious and hallowing influence accompanied the Word ; and many persons were deeply impressed with eternal things. Several clear conversions took place ; and when the time of his departure arrived, he left

ever to return, but followed by the blessings and sympathies of a people, who greatly admired his abilities as a preacher, and his zeal for the Lord of Hosts; leaving behind him spiritual children, who will cherish his memory to the end of their lives,—and so the labours of 1859 were brought to a close.

After his return to Tetford the weather continued very trying, cold and changeable, and he was under the necessity of shutting himself up until the beginning of February. The friends at Stockport were wishful to see him in their midst once more, and he was as wishful to go; and though doubtful as to the propriety of the venture, so soon as the weather became a little milder he sallied forth in the name of the Lord, taking his life in his hand, and had to spend and to be spent in 'publishing the inner's friend.' The state of his health and the condition of his mind during this period of winter retirement, is well set forth in the following communication to a friend:—

'Tetford, Jan. 21st, 1860.—Your kind letter found me at home, where I have been a full month very unwell. I was quite broken down in the sharp frosts of December, and my asthma became so bad that I could hold up no longer. My cough has been very distressing, my breathing bad, and at times I have scarcely had strength to walk. I often think my preaching days are almost done; and yet I hope that if the weather becomes milder I shall improve again. O! I do hope and pray, that the Lord may strengthen and bless me with

power to labour a little longer in His vineyard. I have a fine field of usefulness before me, and I have a mind to work in it. I love my Master; and I love His service. No man in the world has a finer sphere, or a better prospect of doing great good than I have. May the Lord bless and help me to be faithful to the last. My heart does burn with love to God my Saviour, and the precious souls of men, even while I write. Mr. McKenney has written to say they want me to preach at the opening of the new chapel at Sutton, and to make a collection for it in Hull, but I have not given him a promise. For I must see how I can stand work when I begin again, before I make engagements. I have had letters from two London circuits also, but I am afraid to promise any one. I hope to be able to go to Stockport in February, and after that I will see what I can do for you. I am thankful to say my wife and children are all well, praise the Lord!

On the first of February he was so far restored as to preach to his Tetford friends; on the third, he left home and preached at West Ashby, where, after the service, a woman came to him with tears of gratitude and several small presents. She had formerly resided in the Gainsbro' circuit; and many years previously, her daughter had been converted to God under his ministry, but had since died happy in the Lord. In February he spent two Sundays in Stockport, preaching for Sunday-schools, and one night between, saw twenty persons thoroughly convinced of sin, and another night he said how

many got saved I know not, but there were 'scores!'

Of the numbers who were awakened and brought to the Saviour by Mr. Richardson's ministry, some, as may be expected, 'wearied in well-doing,' and after a season 'fell away;' but it would imply a denial of facts to assume that the greater part disappeared. Abundant proof to the contrary has already been supplied, and ought to furnish a sufficient answer, to those who object to such methods and proceedings as what he usually adopted; as some do, on the ground that the results are only temporary, and the good done is more in appearance than in reality. Such objections are frequently heard; but most certainly they are groundless, as far as the results of his labours were concerned. In the following July, a friend wrote to him from Stockport, stating, that at a lovefeast held in one of the large chapels the day before, several persons had spoken, and testified to the good they had derived from his ministry; and that at the same time, one of the class-leaders had said, that out of the twenty-three young persons meeting with him, nearly all had been brought in under Mr. Richardson. Similar testimonies might easily be multiplied. There are many Wesleyan ministers now living, who have had ample opportunities of observing and testing the fruits and consequences of his labours in various parts of the kingdom, and would cheerfully bear witness to the genuineness and permanence of the effects he produced.

After leaving Stockport, he visited Manchester, Grantham, Worksop, Sleaford, Dunstable, Melton-

Mowbray, Tansley, and some other places during the next five months ; but was plainly in feeble and variable health, and unequal to the exertions he had previously put forth. He was now in his 70th year, and his physical strength was evidently abated. Writing to a friend he said :—

*'Tetford, Aug. 28th, 1860.—*I am thankful to say that I am a great deal better than I was in the winter ; but I have not done much work this year. I have not laboured half the time ; and am now going to rest three weeks, in order to get as strong as I can, and be ready for work at the latter end of the year, which is the best time.'

Still however, in the smaller amount of labour which he performed during the period he refers to, he was cheered with unmistakable tokens of the favour and blessing of his Master. In the month of March he visited Prestonfield, near Hull, and was permitted to rejoice over several conversions—five in one day—and while thankful to God for these, was somewhat discouraged because there were no more. In April he was at Sleaford, preaching and making collections, and for three nights in succession was directing penitents to the Lamb of God, several of whom on each occasion were made partakers of the joy of saving faith. In May he preached at Luton, Dunstable, and Kensworth, to large congregations, and the power of God was present both to wound and to heal. On Sunday the 6th of the month, the Rev. W. J. Tweddle was expected to preach anniversary sermons at Leegrave,

but was prevented by a serious accident which he met with in travelling by railway ; Mr. Richardson, however, cheerfully took the vacant place—several persons were awakened under the sermons he preached ; and he was greatly refreshed by the stability and spiritual progress which he observed in some who had been brought to the Saviour, during previous visits to that neighbourhood. In June he visited Tansley, for the tenth time, preaching the annual sermons for the chapel to larger congregations than ever before—and Wysall also, where ‘the power of God came down upon the people and many were weeping and crying for mercy.’ On the 6th of August, he conducted three services at Redditch, where ‘the people gave their money as he had never seen them do before ; and eight or nine poor penitents were seeking the gate of life, like those who seek for hidden treasures, and most of them found peace.’ On the 24th of September he opened a new chapel at Stannington, near Sheffield, in conjunction with the Rev. John Eglinton ; and in the early part of October, spent a fortnight at Armley, where he recorded, ‘We have not had a barren time, the power of the Holy Ghost is present to save, and many are seeking and finding salvation.’ In the latter part of the month he went to Northampton, from whence he wrote home, under the date of October 29th, 1860, as follows :—

‘Yesterday the house of God was so crowded at night that many could not get in. I have not heard the amount of the collections ; but seven

earnest seekers got on board the life-boat, and were very happy. We have a speaking-meeting to night. Dr. Waddy is coming to morrow to open a chapel in the neighbourhood, and I am going into the country in an opposite direction, to be out of the way. On Wednesday and Thursday I hope to preach again. I praise the Lord that I stand my work so well, and hope to see a great deal more good done before I leave.'

This visit to Northampton was productive of results far beyond what might be inferred from the above brief and modest account; and the same remark may be made respecting many of the foregoing notices. They are simple jottings and bare outlines, originally designed for the perusal of none but the members of his own family, and intended to be supplemented by oral communications. Mr. Berry of Faversham, well remembers this visit to Northampton, where he resided at the time, and states that Mr. Richardson preached with great effect on the morning of the 28th of October, from 1 Peter ii. 6: 'Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.' In discoursing from this passage, he sought to illustrate how both Jews and Gentiles find in Christ a common bond, by which they become united into a holy, spiritual temple for God to dwell in. Closing the Bible upon the pulpit cushion, with the back towards his left hand, and running his fingers along the upper edge, from the left to the right corner, he said:—'Here we shall suppose the blessed Jesus stands as 'the chief

corner-stone.' The Jew comes to Him this road,—passing his hand along the top-edge,—and the Gentile this—pointing to the fore-edge; and thus both meet in Him, and become cemented together by the influence that binds them to the Saviour; and thus notwithstanding national prejudices and peculiarities, they are made into one spiritual house, beautiful and radiant with the divine presence.' The whole service was richly evangelical and most impressive. In the evening his discourse was founded upon Acts viii. 5—8. The chapel was tremendously crowded, and the singing was grand. The volume of sound was so powerful that it burst a large square of glass in one of the windows, with a noise like the report of a gun, which for a few moments threw some of the audience into a state of alarm. On the following evening a large tea-meeting was held, succeeded by addresses in the chapel, from various ministers and friends. Mr. Richardson delivered a highly characteristic and telling speech, in which he made a beautiful use of Ezekiel's vision of the river flowing from the temple, ever deepening, widening, and vitalizing as it flows. He particularly addressed himself to the young, calling upon them to become decided for God, and united to His church. He introduced several appropriate and well-told anecdotes; and amongst others recited an account of the ancient Spartans, who at one of their annual festivals, are said to have walked in public procession in the presence of their chief magistrates—the old men, bending beneath the burden of years, leading the way, and chanting as they passed, the following words set to martial music:—

'We have been in days of old,
Wise and strong, and brave and bold.'

Then came the middle-aged men, who took up the strain and sung :—

'As ye were in days of yore,
We at present are, and more.'

And last of all came the youth, in the flower of their age shouting as they passed :—

'Hereafter, at our country's call,
We promise to excel you all.'

Mr. Richardson gave the piece with dramatic power, and was enthusiastically cheered by the audience. On the 30th he preached at Moulton—about four miles out in the country—afternoon and evening. One of the texts was Isaiah lxi. 1: 'To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.' Impressions were produced under that sermon which will never be forgotten. On the Wednesday and Thursday he preached again to large congregations in Northampton. All the evening sermons were followed by prayer-meetings, remarkable for the blessed influences by which they were pervaded, and the good accomplished. During the week many souls entered into Gospel liberty. One very remarkable case came to his knowledge: a man who had formerly been a member of Society, but had become a backslider, and continued in that state for a considerable time, was awakened to a perception of his sin and danger, and was in extreme distress of soul. He was employed upon one of the railways, and was in

such a state of mental wretchedness while at work, that he was sorely tempted, as he afterwards said, to lay himself down before a passing train; but he saw the open pit into which he was tempted to rush, and was afraid to do it. He came again and again to hear Mr. Richardson, and the last evening he preached in the town, after long and agonizing prayer, he found peace to his soul, and was made exceedingly happy.

From Northampton the venerable evangelist went home for a few days' rest, and to prepare for another visit to the Metropolis, where he was again urgently requested to preach and make collections. His earnest and successful labours had made him to be greatly valued in several of the London circuits; both ministers and laymen bid him welcome in the name of the Lord, and cheerfully co-operated with him. The more he was known, the more he was loved and confided in; and he was found to be quite as able to act upon the population of London as of the provinces. The seething masses of the great city needed a Jonah or a Boanerges to arouse them; and if his trumpet tongue could alarm sinners, and bring them to Christ, he was free to do his best anywhere. During this visit, which lasted nearly five weeks, he laboured in the Southwark, Spitalfields, and City-road circuits. On the first Sabbath he preached the anniversary-sermons for the chapel in Long-lane; and after conducting various services in the circuit for a fortnight preached for the Spitalfields Trust Estate; and then went to Radnor-street school, in connection

with City-road chapel; where for several days in succession he preached and held meetings with most encouraging success. On one of the Sundays spent at Radnor-street, he was invited by the superintendent of the circuit to occupy City-road pulpit in the forenoon; an invitation with which he felt himself to be greatly honoured, and which it is pleasant to reflect upon now that he has finished his course. Peasant preacher that he was—and notwithstanding the friction of many years' intercourse with all classes of people, he was still peasant-like, both in dress and address—yet there was nothing to prevent him standing as an ambassador of Christ, in the honoured place where so many of the illustrious dead have stood. He gloried in the Methodism of the last century, and in the noble men whose names are so closely identified with the history of City-road; and it was a profound gratification to him to be invited to occupy a pulpit which had so many venerable associations connected with it. The following was addressed to his children, whom he was ever anxious to inspire with the love of Methodism:—

'London, City-road, Dec. 12th, 1860.—I am thankful to say that I am very well. Praise the Lord! I have been here a month, and I am better than when I left home, for the air of London always seems good for my health. I began by preaching in Southwark, and they say we had nearly two thousand people in the chapel the first night. The collections were near £25. A few souls were saved and brought to God at the same time. I remained

a fortnight preaching there and at Silver-street, and good was done every time. Two young men were converted at Silver-street—one of them the son of a local-preacher—and they both began immediately to pray and work for the conversion of sinners. The following Sunday night we had twenty persons in deep distress on account of their souls ; before we left the chapel eight of them were filled with peace and joy, and went home to tell their friends ‘ what great things Jesus had done for them.’ I then went to Spitalfields—a large old chapel built by French refugees, all silk weavers, who were obliged by religious persecution, to fly to this country to save their lives ; they settled here, and built this chapel—there I spent a week. On Sunday the place was crowded, and they got good collections. The influence of the Holy Spirit was present both to awaken and convert, for there were many saved that night. All the week the congregations were good, and many sinners were brought to God. On Sunday last I began my labours here, by preaching in the large school-room belonging to the City-road congregation. On the Saturday night Mr. Lomas sent to offer me City-road pulpit the next morning ; and your poor old father, having a little of the old Adam left in him, or a little innocent vanity, thought he would climb to the top of the tree just once in his life. Mr. Wesley built the chapel and often filled the pulpit. All our great men have preached in it, and many of them lie buried around Mr. Wesley in the grave-yard behind. Well, I accepted the offer ; there was a capital congregation, and praise the Lord ! He was with me ; and while I

was preaching a woman found peace with God. She had been groaning some time under the burden of her sin; and while I pointed out the way to Christ, she was enabled to lay hold upon Him as her Saviour. When the service was over, she got another person to come with her into the vestry to thank me for the sermon, and tell me what the Lord had done for her soul. She is a fine woman, and has been an actress on the stage. The Lord establish the work He has begun. The same night I commenced in the school-room, which was crowded; and the place seemed full of sympathy, and solemn, tender feeling. A woman cried out aloud for mercy while I was preaching; and as soon as I came down from the desk, she came at once to the penitents' bench, and was soon followed by others, until we had about twenty persons kneeling and praying with all their might for God to reveal Himself as their Saviour; and most of them obtained a sense of His pardoning love. It was a blessed night. Monday and Tuesday have been similar occasions; the people are very attentive, and the Lord is in our midst. I have two more nights to spend with them, and I doubt not they will be glorious. Last night they held the "Strangers' Friend" annual meeting in the Morning chapel a large room adjoining the great chapel, in which Mr. Wesley used to preach at five o'clock in the morning. Mr. Lomas sent me a ticket and a pressing invitation. When I got there I was very kindly greeted by the preachers and friends, and had a long conversation with Mr. L. He inquired how long I had been labouring in this way, and asked if I kept a diary,

and said, "You ought to do so." When tea was over they requested me to speak; but as I had to preach at half-past seven, I spoke only about twenty minutes, and then posted off to the school-room. It was full of people, and we had not less than twenty penitents. There is a great deal of good in London; but oh! the wickedness which also prevails. In Spitalfields alone, there are thousands of thieves, pocket-pickers, and prostitutes. One whole street is full of them, and the policemen dare not go up singly, but go two and two together; and yet the city-missionary goes by himself and they never touch him. Not long since he had his pocket handkerchief stolen, but before he left the street it was brought back to him by some one who said the person who took it was a new comer and did not know him. On Sunday morning, as we went to chapel, we had to go through a public market, and it was shocking to behold the butchers' and green-grocers' shops, surrounded with crowds of people all in their work-day clothes, with baskets in their hands, just as on market days; and at night when we left the chapel the large gin-palaces were blazing with light, and were full of people with crowds all about the outsides, so that we could hardly pass on. The place seems to me to be a real Sodom. Only, thank God, there are Abrahams to pray for it, and many a Moses to stand in the gap. Amidst all I see and do, I do not forget you, and often bring you to a throne of grace with a father's feelings. My comfort depends upon your happiness. I want you to be pious and upright and useful members of society, serving God and

preparing for heaven. It is only one o'clock, but I can hardly see to write, the day is so dark and thick. I hope to get home some time next week.'

'Who shall the will and work divine oppose?
His strength with his increasing labours grows:
Workman and work the' Almighty hath prepared,
And, sent of God, the servant must be heard,
Rush through the opening door, on sinners call,
Proclaim the truth, and offer Christ to all,
Roused from the sleep of death, a countless crowd
(Whose hearts like trees before the wind are bow'd)
Press to the hallow'd courts with eager strife,
Catch the convincing word, and hear for life,
Parties and sects their endless feuds forget,
And fall and tremble at the Preacher's feet;
Pricked at the heart, with one consent inquire,
What must we do to escape the never-dying fire.'

C. Wesley.

CHAPTER XIII.

‘From the beginning they had been taught both the law and the Gospel. “God loves you; therefore love and obey Him. Christ died for you; therefore die to sin. Christ is risen; therefore rise in the image of God. Christ liveth evermore; therefore live to God till you live with Him in glory.” So we preached and so you believed. This is the *scriptural way*; the *Methodist way*; the *true way*. God grant we may never turn therefrom to the right hand or to the left.’—*John Wesley*. Works, vol. ii., p. 486.

MR. RICHARDSON got home according to his expectation a week before Christmas, and was obliged to remain there until the commencement of the following March. The severe weather of mid-winter was more than his impaired constitution could endure, and a great part of that time he was shut up a close prisoner in his cottage home. When able to go forth, however, he was always intent upon doing some good, and was practically mindful of the instruction of St. James, that—‘Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.’ Not a few aged and afflicted persons were comforted by his visits, and encouraged in the midst of their afflictions and poverty to trust in the Saviour. Nor did he visit them empty-handed.

He had not much to give away ; but the little that he had was freely bestowed, and made his words of consolation all the sweeter. During these constrained hibernations of the last few years of his life, the members of his own family greatly enjoyed his society. He was a devoted father, and was dearly loved by his children. His ripe experience and varied information made his conversation peculiarly attractive ; and he sought every opportunity to influence the minds of those about him, in favour of entire devotedness to the service of God. His private manners and conversation were a beautiful exemplification of a mature Christian, and led many who came near him not only to admire the Christian character, but also to glorify God on his account. After being shut up within doors for several weeks, he wrote to one of his friends as follows :—

*‘Tetford, Jan. 22nd, 1861.—*I am sorry to say that I am in a poor state of health. I came here the week before Christmas, quite broken down ; and I have never been out of the house since until yesterday, when I went just to the post-office. The weather has been very severe, and my cough and chest have been so very bad I could neither lie in bed nor sit up with any ease. The weather, however, is finer and milder at present, and I hope I shall be better again. In looking over my list of labours for last year, I see that I was twenty-eight weeks at home out of the fifty-two. If I do go out to labour for two or three weeks, I come home almost worn out. I could wish myself young

again if it were the Lord's will, I have such a fine field of usefulness before me, but He knows what is best. Praise the Lord! though confined at home, I am very happy and my dear wife and I have blessed seasons at the family altar.'

With the first breath of spring he was again obedient to his marching orders, and went to Stockport to preach on behalf of the Sunday-school, and gather more spiritual fruit in that field which had been so abundantly productive before. And after joyfully gathering a large measure, including the conversion of a minister's son, he started on another visit to Kent.

Mr. Richardson was greatly pleased with the county of Kent, and very much admired its soft and beautiful scenery. He had a keen relish for nature; and very frequently enriched his discourses with metaphors and comparisons suggested by objects which he met with in his travels. He had a marvellous facility in adapting himself as a public speaker to the circumstances by which he was surrounded, and seldom failed to avail himself of what was most familiar to the minds of his hearers, in order to make the truths of the Gospel more impressive. In Kent whilst surrounded with orchards and gardeners, he selected for his subject, the first time he preached during this visit, 'The Parable of the Barren Fig-tree;' and in expounding it, gave illustrations so very natural and graphic as to captivate his hearers and seal the truth of God upon many a heart. A gentleman who was present on the occasion states, that after giving a

description of the fig-tree of Palestine, he remarked :—‘But fig-trees are not common in this country; let us therefore take the apple-tree to illustrate the text. No doubt I have many gardeners here who can judge of the correctness of what I say. You take an apple-tree of some choice and valuable kind, and plant it in a favoured spot; you tend it carefully and patiently and wait until it is well grown, and don’t force it to bear fruit too soon. But after years of patient toil all your expectations are blighted. The tree makes plenty of wood and looks healthy to the eye, but there is no fruit forthcoming—or very little, and that of an inferior sort. You study the case, and are at a loss for some time to tell what is the matter. At last you resolve to cut it down; but before you do so, some one interferes and advises a little longer patience, and you try it another season. But it is all in vain; you find little or no fruit, and are grieved, and say—“What is the use of waiting any longer; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground!” But before you employ the axe, the thought strikes you that you had better examine the roots; and upon removing the soil you find a large *tap-root* running right away down into the earth, draining off the nourishment and sap from the tree quite in the wrong direction; and what ought to be diffused through the branches, and developed in fruit, is drained down into the ground. You now find out the cause of barrenness, and proceed at once to remove it. You cut the tap-root unsparingly, and make the tree sit loose to the earth. Then you begin again afresh to apply manure and

fill in the soil, and wait to see the result ; and very soon find a wonderful change for the better. The tree rapidly improves, and ultimately becomes as fruitful and valuable as what you at first expected.'

The preacher was quite at home upon such a subject ; he had considerable knowledge of gardening, and well knew not only how to illustrate a truth, but also how to apply it to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. Having excited a deep interest by the foregoing remarks, he proceeded to show 'that the earthly affections of the human soul are tap-roots which drain away its life and energies, and prevent spiritual fruitfulness ; and that all the means of grace—the influences of truth, the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and the dispensations of Providence, frequently produce little or no good impression, and seem to be all in vain, because of a pernicious tap-root which counter-works the operations employed by God to bring mankind to Himself ; and that He has oftentimes to use the pruning knife, and somewhat roughly cut away the objects upon which men place their affections ; and even to lacerate their tenderest feelings, in order to secure their salvation.

A very deep impression, as may be expected, was produced by this sermon upon the Kentish gardeners and others who were present ; sighs and tears and audible amens prevailed throughout the chapel ; and several careless, worldly-minded persons were deeply convinced of sin and aroused to think about their eternal interests.

On the following Sunday, May 26th, he preached from Numbers xiii. 20, in the morning ; and in the

evening from 'The Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon.' Both sermons were very powerful and awakening; and a glorious prayer-meeting, at which several persons found the mercy of God, closed the day. On Monday, the 27th, he preached again in the afternoon from 'This man receiveth sinners.' A large tea-meeting followed, in which he took part; and preached in the evening from Prov. v. 11:—'And thou mourn at the last'—a very solemn sermon. On Tuesday he was a hearer of the Rev. E. Lightwood; on Wednesday preached once more at Boughton; and on Thursday delivered a telling sermon at Faversham on 'The Parable of the Two Sons.' From thence he went to Sittingbourne, where he had never been before, to preach on Sunday, June 2nd, when he conducted three services in connection with the Sunday-school anniversary, with great efficiency and good success. This was the last place which he added to that extensive circle of labour, which had now been enlarging for many years; but he rendered good service to Methodism by the three or four visits which he subsequently paid; and helped not a little to promote the erection of the commodious new chapel in that town, which was the last of the many Christian sanctuaries he assisted to open and dedicate to the worship of Almighty God.

During this visit into Kent an incident occurred of special and permanent interest, which well deserves being placed upon record. It has been stated more than once, that Mr. Richardson was a man of prayer, and had, Jacob-like power with God. Throughout his whole career he steadily sustained that high characteristic, and it gloriously sustained

him in his life of usefulness, and persevering endeavours to promote religion amongst men. Answers to prayer very many, and very marked, encouraged him to 'come boldly to the throne of grace'—as is always the case with those who go there frequently and earnestly. Instances illustrative of his 'prevailing power with God' were often observed during his life, and the following is given on the testimony of reliable parties, who were personally acquainted with the particulars:—A farmer and hop-planter in the neighbourhood of Faversham, who was in straitened circumstances, and had a large family and an invalid daughter to maintain, was wishful to see him; and was visited on Friday, May 31st. The fly-blight, which sometimes destroys whole crops of the hop plant, had that year settled upon the farmer's plantation, and there was every prospect of ruin before him. After some conversation on the subject, Mr. Richardson went over the grounds, and saw the ravages already effected, and which were every day becoming worse and worse. He proposed to return to the farm-house, and lay the matter before God in prayer; and this was done. The whole family were gathered together; and he prayed long and earnestly that God would be pleased to interfere, and in pity rescue the man and his children from the impending calamity; and especially requested, 'that the curious insects which were destroying the dear man's crops, and with them, the means of supporting his family, might be destroyed. He then bid them an affectionate farewell, leaving them all encouraged and hopeful; and strange to say—let the fact be accounted for as it may—'the

curious insects' shortly afterwards disappeared: the hops recovered from the blight, and that year the farmer had an unusually plentiful crop, while in every direction all around the country, the plantations suffered severely from the blighting 'curious insects.'

Yes, prayer has lost none of its power! It is reported that Dr. Bunting said upon his death-bed, 'All right prayers are answered.' Do you doubt it? Then just make the trial. Kneel down at the throne of grace with a contrite heart, and call upon God, in the Saviour's name, and see if He will not answer you. It is not fair to doubt, at least until you have been disappointed. First and last, prayer has done many remarkable things, besides destroying 'curious insects' devouring a good man's crops. 'The locust, the cankerworm, the caterpillar, the palmer-worm,' are but squadrons of God's 'great army;' and He who sends them forth, can either recall them, or limit their commission to destroy. Holy and devout Christians often receive *direct* answers to prayer. Blessed be God! many, yea very many of His people, can say with the Psalmist, 'I love the Lord, because He hath *heard* my voice, and my supplications. Because He *hath* inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.'

From Kent, Mr. Richardson proceeded to Sheffield, to preach anniversary sermons in the Park chapel, and from thence addressed the following to his children:—

'June 11th, 1861.—I preached last Sunday for a

school of seven hundred children; the collections were between four and five pounds better than last year, with which the people are well pleased, as they say trade is so bad. We had very large congregations, and a few souls were saved. The next day I preached again to a Sunday night's congregation, and a most gracious time we had. The altar-rail was almost full of penitents, many of whom went home rejoicing in the Lord. I preached last night; and shall be at work again to-night and to-morrow, and hope to see sweet home on Saturday. When I was at Sittingbourne last Sunday week, I believe there were in that one day, *scores* of people wounded in their hearts, by the word of the Lord. There were three in the house where I stayed. In another family a woman, who had been a backslider for several years, went home from chapel with a broken heart. She has a pious son; and when the father came home he found both the mother and son down upon their knees pleading with God for His mercy. They wished me to visit them again shortly! Praise the Lord! O! what a blessing it is to enjoy the favour of God, and be successful in winning souls for Christ.'

On the 5th of July, he preached and made collections for the benefit of the chapel at Great Terrington, in the Lynn circuit. After labouring hard in the forenoon, and retiring from the dinner-table to repose a little, and get refreshed for the evening service, a messenger came on horseback, hot haste, to say that he must come and take the pulpit again in the afternoon, for that the preacher whose name

was announced on the bills had not made his appearance. - He was thrown into momentary annoyance, but immediately returned with the messenger, and having about half-a-mile to drive, fixed upon a subject on the road, and had one of his best times. In the evening he preached to an overflowing congregation, and was made to rejoice before he left the chapel, over the awakening and conversion of several individuals.

About the end of the month he visited Luton and Dunstable, and Redditch, and Armley and Bramley, and then went on to Northampton and London and Sittingbourne. His spirit was as strong as ever, and the sickle with which he reaped in the harvest-field was as keen as ever, and the Lord of the harvest stood by him as closely as ever, and like a 'Palm tree planted in the house of the Lord, he still brought forth fruit in old age.' In the following plain words he tells the story of his London visit:—

'London, Nov. 11th.—I commenced my labours yesterday under somewhat unfavourable circumstances. When I awoke in the morning, the wind was blowing, and the rain pattering against the windows so as to make me quite sad. I thought the day would be a failure, but we had a good congregation in Southwark chapel in the morning, and it cleared up at night, and the place was crowded. I preached with great comfort, and the collections were £21. The prayer-meeting was very good, and three penitent seekers found their way in at the "strait gate." There was a gracious influence amongst the people; but I thought the prayer-

leaders backward, so that I had more to do myself. To-morrow night I preach at Brentford, and on Wednesday at Southwark again. Praise the Lord for a good beginning.'

'*Sittingbourne, Nov. 21st.*—Since I last wrote, another blessed Sabbath is gone into eternity, and it was a happy day. The chapel was crowded both times, and several precious souls entered into Gospel liberty. One of them was the landlady of one of the hotels in the town. We had near two hundred to the tea-meeting last night, and I preached after it to a crowded congregation. There was a regular breaking down. Twelve came forward in deep distress of mind crying for mercy; and there were many others in the same state in various parts of the chapel; but the crowd was so great, we could scarcely move about. I concluded near ten o'clock; but some of them who were in distress would not go away, and stayed in prayer and praise till near twelve. I am to preach again to-night. Praise the Lord! a great many are getting saved; and He is very good to me in strengthening my body and blessing my own soul. I have some very happy times in the pulpit.'

'*London, Nov. 28th.*—I was at Peckham on Sunday, and attended a large tea-meeting at Southwark on Monday to pay off the circuit debt of £60. They got it all, and have something to spare to go on with. I preached in Albion-street chapel on Tuesday, and last night at Silver-street. I think there were not fewer than fifty lads and young men in deep concern for their salvation, and very many professed to find peace with God. The Society at Silver-street

is in a good state; I preach there again to-night. They have had an anniversary at Spitalfields on a week-day and Sunday, which has been a failure; and they wished me to preach on a Sunday before I leave to help to make up; and I suppose I must try, for thank God I am very well.'

'*London, Dec. 4th.*—On Sunday I heard Dr. Jobson in the morning at City-road, and a very good time it was; everything in the service was good. He has a good voice; showed great energy and zeal, and an ardent desire to do us all good. I preached at night in Radnor-street schools, and the large room was crowded out and out. I do not know how many penitents were seeking the Lord, there were so many. Eight or ten came forward as soon as the prayer-meeting began. We set apart two long benches for them to kneel down at, and both were shortly filled; and others were earnestly seeking the Lord, for whom there was no room. Many were comforted, and testified that the Lord is very gracious. Monday and Tuesday nights were very much the same. I spent a week in these schools last year, and much good was done; and I am very thankful to find that many of those who were brought in then, still stand their ground. The friends have told me of two or three who have died very happy during the year; one of them had been a very wicked man; he came to the school one night, and the Lord laid hold upon him; he was brought into deep distress, and found peace with God; but within three weeks after, he was accidentally caught in the wheels of some machinery while at his work, and was so crushed that he died soon after: but he died very happy,

and shouting the praises of the Lord. There are about one thousand children in the schools, and many of their parents go to no place of worship. These services I am holding night after night are for their good, and thank God we do not toil in vain; for here in the heart of London, as elsewhere, the Lord owns His word.'

'*London, Dec. 9th, 1861.*—I left Mr. Gabriel's house on Saturday after tea, for they would not let me leave sooner. Scores were saved last week at Radnor-street school. There were five in one family—an aged mother and three daughters, all grown up to womanhood, and the husband of one of the daughters. I left them loaded with blessings and prayers for my wife and family, as well as myself. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gabriel have shown me great kindness. We had a blessed day in Spitalfields chapel yesterday. One old member said he could not recollect when the chapel was so full as it was at night. It was a glorious time: there was a powerful influence at work amongst the people: some of them shouted out aloud whilst I was preaching: "Glory! glory be to God!" again and again. Vast numbers stayed to the prayer-meeting, and a great many came up to the communion-rail seeking the Lord. I remained with them till between nine and ten o'clock. They then went into the vestry, and when they broke up I do not know. I am to preach again to-night and to-morrow; and shall then go to my old friend Mr. Bell, to rest a little before going to Barking for next Sunday.'

'*London, Dec. 11th.*—My dear children,—I am this

day seventy years of age. The Lord has spared me, and given me to see the full age of man. And taking a view of the past, I see that the Lord has been very good to me; my life has been made up of kind and gracious providences. Thankful I am to say that I am very well this morning, and feel it in my heart to praise my God for all His mercies. I have been very much blessed in London, particularly at Radnor-street, in the City-road circuit; and also here at Spitalfields. This is one of the worst parts of London; all sorts of bad people abound here; but praise the Lord! in this den of thieves, we have a good number of precious souls saved every night, and the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." I hope you are all well, and striving for heaven. Religion is always the one thing needful. You must "labour for that bread which endureth unto everlasting life," and prepare to meet God.'

Mr. Richardson was now a sturdy veteran of the cross; in some respects like 'Caleb the son of Jephunneh,' who 'wholly followed the Lord.' Like him he could say, 'Forty years old was I when the servant of the Lord sent me to espy out the land.' And like him, after the toils of thirty years' warfare, his spirit still panted after further triumphs, for his inner man had all the freshness and vigour of youth; and his seventieth birthday found him amidst the dens of Spitalfields, labouring with all his might to spread the triumphs of the cross, and proclaiming with the prophet—'Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken

away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.' Before leaving the neighbourhood of London, he visited Barking in Essex; and on Sunday, Dec. 15th, preached twice and made collections for the chapel. His usual success attended him, and the results were similar to those recorded elsewhere. The word went with power; 'several poor sinners,' as he expressed it, 'were broken down; and many of them professed to find the mercy of God.' The same was the case again the next evening; and he left the place with his face set towards Lincolnshire on Tuesday morning, leaving the Society grateful for the pecuniary assistance he had obtained for them, and praising God for the spiritual results which had been accomplished by his instrumentality. He arrived at home on the following evening, to rest a few days; and occupied the Tetford pulpit, according to his custom on Christmas Day.

In the year 1770 when the Rev. George Whitefield finished his glorious career; a beautiful elegy on his death was written by the Rev. Charles Wesley, containing lines which admirably set forth the results of Mr. Richardson's ministry in London and elsewhere. For God has been pleased to demonstrate in every age and place, that a preacher's success does not depend upon his personal gifts and accomplishments, so much as upon the influence and operations of the Holy Spirit: and that whether it is a plain 'peasant preacher,' or a finished and powerful orator, who proclaims the wondrous 'story of the cross'—either amongst the citizens of the world's metropolis, or the dwellers in sequestered

villages;—it is always and everywhere the same power of God, ‘To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith;’ if the breath divine is only present to infuse vitality and energy into the words spoken. Whitefield himself would have failed, but for the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and Charles Richardson was successful, just because God was with him.

‘What multitudes repent, and then believe,
When God doth utterance to the Preacher give!
Whether he speaks the words of sober sense,
Or pours a flood of artless eloquence,
Ransacks the foul apostate creature’s breast,
And shows the man half-devil, and half-beast;
Or warmly pleads his dear Redeemer’s cause;
Or pity on the poor and needy draws;
“The Deist scarce from offering can withhold,
And misers wonder they should part with gold:”
Opposers struck, the powerful word admire,
In speechless awe, the hammer and the fire.’

CHAPTER XIV.

‘Though old, he still retained
His manly sense and energy of mind.
Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe ;
He still remembered that he once was young ;
His easy presence checked no decent joy.
Him even the dissolute admired ; for he
A graceful looseness when he pleased put on,
And, laughing, could instruct.’—*Armstrong*.

THE venerable man went on his way abundantly comforted with heavenly consolations ; ripening and mellowing like rich autumnal fruit ; practically exhibiting the beauty of holiness, and presenting to every observer the charms and attractions of consistent piety. His old age had nothing of querulousness, impatience, or severity to disfigure it ; ‘the former times’ he valued and venerated, but he knew how to appreciate ‘the advantages of the present day,’ and no one ever heard him complain and say, that the good days were all gone. He had lived with the times ; had taken the benefit of their increased facilities and opportunities for getting and doing good ; and cherished the hope of a bright and blessed future for humanity in this world, and for himself in the paradise of God. His radiant countenance, cheerful tones, and kind encouraging discourse, frequently led those who had been in his company to exclaim : ‘What a fine old man !’ His ‘hoary

head' was 'a crown of glory;' and the wisdom and benevolence which dropped from his lips, were just what entitled him to the deference and honour due to 'an Old Disciple,' and a 'Father in Christ.' As age increased, the members of his own family clung to him with stronger love and a deeper sense of his worth, while the circle of friends in which he had moved so long—pointing to heaven and leading the way—were more anxious than ever to enjoy his personal ministrations in the sanctuary, and sit at his feet. But the earthly tabernacle was increasingly frail: the new-year of 1862, found him in a feeble and variable state of health, yet in the absence of any serious attack, and constrained by ardent zeal for God and the love of souls, he went on during the weeks of mid-winter preaching in his own circuit and also visiting others. After labouring at Bardney, in the early part of January he left home for another visit to Rotherham, where he was permitted to rejoice over between forty and fifty conversions, and then went on to Stockport, to Shipley, to Doncaster, to Sittingbourne, to Nottingham, to Manchester, to Rochester, and London, and he went on singing to the last, 'Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.' For this was literally and truly the case.

During the greatest part of the year 1862, Mr. Richardson had to bear a grief, the like of which he had never known before. It was of such a nature as a tender and disappointed father alone can know. More than this need not be stated.

The veil which hangs over it was not lifted during his life-time; and it need not be raised now that he is far beyond the reach of earthly sorrows. He bore the trial like a man of God, and took it to a throne of grace; casting his burden upon that mighty and unchanging Friend, whose sympathy never fails; and who, amid all the fluctuations of time, 'sticketh closer than a brother.' A good conscience was one of his comforts; and though often bending beneath the burden upon his thoughts and feelings, he was able to say, 'Thy will be done.' Temporary financial embarrassment, was one consequence of this great grief; but that all-seeing Providence which guarded and guided his life, raised up kind friends, by whose assistance he was enabled to meet unmerited and unexpected obligations; and to pass through this ordeal of character with augmented reputation. Never man was more upright than he in all pecuniary transactions. He never got into debt. 'When we could not pay for what we wanted, we went without it,' was what he used to say to his friends;—an admirable rule; would that all Christians observed it!—and had he avoided 'suretyship,' he probably never would have known the difficulty referred to. But 'the trial of faith is precious;' and the Master, whom he had served so long and so well, saw it proper to try his faith as by fire; and the trial redounded to the praise and honour of that blessed and holy religion, to the service of which he was wholly consecrated. His correspondence during the year contains many affecting references, to 'this heavy blow and great discouragement,' showing that the distress it pro-

duced, followed him by night and by day for a long time; and that while suffering most acutely himself, he was most anxious to comfort the sharer of all his joys and sorrows, who was not less painfully concerned with this great grief than himself.

In the commencement of 1863, he was under the necessity of using the greatest caution in reference to his health. He preached several times in his own circuit, where he was popular to the last, but did not venture forth upon any of his old rounds until the middle of March; and indeed during the whole year he was obliged to place himself under considerable restraint, both as to the amount of effort he put forth in the pulpit, and the frequency of his labours. His natural force was now considerably abated, though the old fire within, was plainly burning as purely and intensely as ever. The following, which was sent to the Rev. R. Bond, will show the state of his mind at this period, and the maturity and mellowness of his piety as he neared the goal of life's pilgrimage:—

'Tetford, Jan. 8th, 1863.—I got home better than a week since, but had to rest a few days in London before I could come on. I am quite broken down, and feel as if I must give it up altogether. I cough and raise so much, it makes me very ill at times. I am now in my 72nd year, and old men take a deal to raise them when brought so low. I should very much like to see you before I die, for there is not one of our ministers with whom I have been so intimate as yourself; but there is no place like home when so poorly; so I see no chance of

coming this winter, and I must submit. I have great cause for gratitude; and I do praise the Lord for all His mercies. He has blessed me with long life, and I have seen many happy days. And now, O! how precious is His Word, and what blessed times we have in our own little dwelling-place. It is to us "the house of God, and the gate of heaven." The last has been a year of great family trials; but the cup has been mixed with many sweets, and whatever is my future lot, I am devoting myself to God, and I hope through grace to be able at all times to say, "good is the will of the Lord."

On the 15th of March, he preached the annual sermons for the day-schools, in one of the Wednesbury circuits, and wrote home thus:—

'*Wednesbury, March 20th.*—The Society here seems very much united, and, is in a good state. On Sunday, I preached twice to crowds of people, and they collected £40. Three or four seekers of salvation found their way to Christ. On Monday night there were five persons in deep distress, who obtained comfort before we left the chapel; the other three nights the congregations have kept increasing, and the tone of feeling to improve, and I should think that last night there were thirty penitents thoroughly in earnest; and many of them obtained a sense of the pardoning love of God. During the week a great number have been added to the Lord.'

The following week he laboured at Bradley in the same circuit, but had to complain of much

bodily weakness. From the 12th to the 16th of April, he preached for various charities in the Dunstable circuit: and at the end of the month he spent several days in the vicinity of Boston. These visits are referred to in the following letter:—

'Tetford, May 20th.—I have been away from home a few times; at Wednesbury and Bradley I spent a successful fortnight in March, where very many were saved; and suppose I shall have to go back again in August, to preach for the Sunday-schools in the other circuit. I have also been to Dunstable where I preached eight times in a week; but it was too much for me—though, thank God, it was not in vain—it was a good week, and souls were saved. A few weeks ago I was at Boston, and had to preach at a place ten or twelve miles from the town, and they sent an open gig for me at nine o'clock on the Saturday night; a cold east wind was blowing very strong at the time. We got there about eleven, but I took a bad cold and have been unwell ever since. I have made only a few promises this summer, for I am not able to do much. I am thankful to say, however, that my dear wife and I have happy times at the family altar. We feel Christ precious, and know that heaven is our home. Glory be to God! All His promises are solid truths to rest upon.

He visited Wédnesbury again in August, and then took two Sabbaths in Manchester, and went on to Brigg, where for the twentieth time in succession he preached the annual sermons for the Sunday-school; in the following month he paid his last

visit to Kent, for the purpose of concluding the opening services of the new chapel at Sittingbourne. Few laymen have assisted at the dedication of so many places of worship as Mr. Richardson, but this was the last service of that kind in which he engaged. He was one of the first to promote the proposal to build, and the last to gather up the fragments of free-will offerings presented at the consecration of this beautiful house of prayer. On Sunday, October 18th, he preached morning and evening, from Matt. xxi. 28, and 1 Kings x. 6, 7, and whilst doing so 'the Word of the Lord had free course, and was glorified.' The old fire and energy of the 'Lincolnshire Thrasher,' came out as strong as ever, and under his powerful appeals sinners were pierced to the heart, and gave glory to God. After visiting the Rochester circuit, and preaching there a few times, he returned to the North, and went to Armley, and from thence to the Barton-upon-Humber and Grimsby circuits; preaching for various public charities, and returned to Tetford, on the 2nd of December, for repose and shelter during the winter.

An accident happened upon this journey home, somewhat remarkable, from being the only one of the kind which he ever sustained in travelling to and fro, during the long period of his labours as an itinerant evangelist. On this occasion he was conveyed, as usual, in the common carriers' cart, in company with several country people, who were returning from Louth market. The night was dark and stormy, and the cold rain fell in torrents. A dreary drag it is at the best, over those rough hills,

which lie between Louth and Tetford, and on a dismal December night, with no other shelter than a canvas tilt, and going at the rate of four miles an hour, it must have been a cheerless ride. Half the distance however, was passed, when all of a sudden, as the labouring wheels ploughed the deep ruts, the axletree snapped in twain, and the cart could go no farther. Neither house nor help was near at hand, and the poor disconsolate carrier requested all to alight, and each make their way home as best they could. The passengers however, were not prepared for this, and suggested that the better plan would be, for them all to remain in shelter under the tilt of the cart, while the carrier took his horse and sought help from the nearest farmstead. This was promptly done ; and after the hapless wayfarers had crouched under their canvas canopy for more than an hour, the man returned with an open cart, to convey them and their marketings to their destination. Some time was spent in transporting what was movable from one vehicle to the other ; and at last they got started again, under 'the pelting of the pitiless storm,' for another stage of four miles, and arrived at Tetford two hours behind the usual time. No one was injured, nor, strange to say, was Mr. Richardson's health affected by the exposure. A day or two after, writing to a friend, he said : 'When we arrived safely at Tetford, it seemed to make home all the sweeter, and furnished matter for prayer and praise ; for in all my travelling, through all my life, this is the worst accident that ever befel me. To the blessed Saviour be all the praise.' It was not a serious accident ; and if this

was the worst he ever had, he was singularly favoured indeed; considering the thousands of miles which he passed over, in all kinds of conveyances, at all hours of the day and night, during the thirty years of his evangelistic toils. But it is written, 'He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' And to him the promise was fulfilled, and to many others as well, who have often proved that 'the path of duty is the path of safety.' Timidly or effeminately to seek another path than that which Providence points out, because of some difficulty or danger connected with it, is to risk the loss of protection by that Almighty Power, which stands pledged to guide a good man's steps; and to provoke His displeasure, who can easily send a sparrow or an insect to inflict the death we dread. Just about the time referred to, another accident occurred in the neighbourhood of Tetford, which Mr. Richardson mentioned to his friend, and piously contrasted it with his own. A young man in the vernal prime of life, whose father had died suddenly, and as was feared, unprepared, just nine months previously, and left him sole heir to an ample and valuable estate, was returning some one night from Horncastle market, under the influence of strong drink, when he fell from his horse, and sustained such fatal injuries that he died next morning: illustrating the declaration of scripture, that 'wicked men shall not live out half their days.'

Once at home again, Mr. Richardson was obliged

to shut himself up for most of the winter, and to decline numerous and pressing invitations, which were brought him by almost every post. He was thus however, preserved from the distressing attacks of his asthma, by which he had frequently suffered so severely at this season of the year, and was also enabled to do a little work in the way of preaching and visiting at home. He was never unemployed when at all fit for duty. Preaching was his greatest pleasure ; and to be obliged to abstain from it, was one of his greatest trials. He had no desire to retire from the field of honourable exertion, in order to flaunt the laurels he had already won. His heart was in his blessed work, and to the last he panted after ability to do more damage to the kingdom of darkness, and to offer a larger tribute of glory to God.

On Christmas Day he preached and led the love-feast at Tetford ; then took a farewell part in the Horncastle New Year's services, much to his own gratification, and the benefit of those present. At the end of January he ventured to visit Louth, and took part in the annual gathering known in that town as the 'aggregate meeting ;' from which he returned much refreshed by what he had seen of the grace of God, and the sympathy of friends, both old and young. The weather however, became more severe, deep snow covered the ground, and he was obliged to keep close quarters till February was out ; but still he was able to take the Tetford pulpit once a day—the three last Sundays of the month. On the 3rd of March the Rev. Charles Garrett was engaged to re-open the chapel at Legbourne, near Louth,

but was prevented. Mr. Richardson was requested to supply his lack of service, and did so with much efficiency, and without inconvenience to himself. From thence he proceeded to Laceby, to pay his last visit to Mr. and Mrs. Coates. He had found a friend like Gaius in Mr. Coates, at Hagnaby in 1835, when his itinerant life commenced, and from that time through following years, a warm and sincere friendship had been mutually cherished; and it was meet that one who had watched his entire progress with growing interest, should be one of the last to comfort him, and be himself refreshed by the rich and saintly piety of his friend ere he finished his course.

During this period of comparative repose he frequently corresponded with distant friends, and in doing so, often expressed the cheerful hope and joyous submission to the will of God, which sustained him. Time never hung heavily upon his hands; reading had always been one of his delights, and good books were companions in whose society he rejoiced to the last. He never lost his thirst for knowledge; and in these leisure hours of old age, he continued to drink in the supplies which he found in the Word of God, and various other volumes, with as much avidity as when a younger man. To a friend he observed: 'I am thankful to say I am happy in my own home. I have abundant time for reading, and family and secret prayer are such and blessed means of grace. I never go down upon my knees but I am blessed. I feel I have so very much to be thankful for that my heart is filled with love to God, and my tongue with His praise.'

To another he said: 'You do not know what a poor old man I have become. I am now in my seventy-third year, and often feel that I must give up preaching altogether. But praise the Lord for all His mercies. I have a little, comfortable, and happy home. My dear wife is more active than I am, and we quite enjoy the time we have for conversation, reading, and prayer.'

The jubilee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society was celebrated at Louth, in a public-meeting on the 27th of April, 1864, and in its success Mr. Richardson was more deeply interested than it is easy to express. For more than half the period of the Society's existence, he had been one of its most efficient and laborious advocates; had contributed to the success of a greater number of public meetings, had delivered a greater number of speeches, and had travelled more miles in its behalf, than any other layman within the pale of Methodism. And the handsome and spontaneous contributions with which the friends of the Society throughout the world were at this time responding to the appeals of the jubilee trumpet, delighted him beyond expression, and would have drawn forth his utmost energies had he been in the days of his strength. As it was, he cheerfully responded to an invitation to assist at the Louth meeting, and when it was held preached a sermon on the occasion with great effect, which contributed not a little to the interest and success of the celebration. The public meeting was a memorable time; many were present who had previously proved their Methodist loyalty and de-

votedness by great personal sacrifices; and they most honourably sustained their reputation by contributing the sum of £300. Mr. Richardson was present, rejoicing in what he heard and saw, and retired from the meeting to give expression to his gladness and gratitude to God, in a letter conveying the good news to his family the next morning. Not long afterwards he attended another meeting at Saltfleetby, in the same circuit, where he spoke for the last time in the interest of missions. He commenced his course as a public speaker at the missionary-meeting held at Huttoft, in the year 1835; but of the thousands of addresses he delivered during his life, none are now known, or can be identified, except the last. Possibly some of them may have been recorded by the public press, or may lie concealed in personal reminiscences; but they are unknown; and the only sample of his efforts on these occasions which can be produced, is the following, which has been supplied by one who was present at the Saltfleetby meeting, and thus records his recollections:—‘As a public speaker, Mr. Richardson abounded in metaphor and anecdote; and occasionally charmed and captivated his audience, by the admirable tact and ingenuity he displayed, in bringing an allegory or simile to bear upon the point in hand. In the last address which he delivered, he instituted a comparison between the condition of the heathen world, and what he called a “blind island.” With graphic power he described an island in the midst of ocean’s depths; girt with horrid cliffs, and frightful precipices, and yawning caverns, in-

habited by a people who were all born blind ; without a guide, and unable to assist each other, they pass from day to day in darkness and dread of danger ; and every day some one or more, unconsciously wandering to the island's brink, step too far and plunge headlong into the dark abyss, and sink for ever ;—none of the survivors ever knowing anything of the fate of those who perish. This he applied to the case of the heathen, and represented the missionary as one who has the means of opening the eyes of the blind ; and then enforced the urgent duty of sending him forth immediately to rescue the dying from death. The enlargement and application of the metaphor rivetted the attention of the audience, and as they hung upon the lips of "the old man eloquent," they were evidently in that state of mental susceptibility which makes it easy work for the orator to lead in whatever direction he prefers.' The speech at Saltfleetby had been no doubt delivered previously in other places ; but the ability by which it was distinguished sufficiently accounts for the fame and popularity of the speaker ; and for the unusual collections which commonly attended his platform efforts.

On the 19th of June, he preached the annual sermons for the chapel at Tansley for the thirteenth time.

From Tansley he went to Nottingham, to preach for the Sunday-school at De Ligne-street chapel ; and on the 27th of June wrote, saying, 'I am thankful that I am pretty well after a hard day. I had three services yesterday, and the chapel was crowded every time. They say hundreds went away unable

to get in. A very gracious sense of the presence of God seemed to sanctify all we did, and the collections amounted to £22. I am to lead the band-meeting to-night, and Mr. Haydon has sent to request me to take his place, and preach on Wednesday night. There are so many kind friends here who press me to stay, that I shall not get away before Saturday.'

On the 3rd of July he preached for the school at Scamblesby, in his own circuit. It was one of the first places where he had exercised his gifts, and he had visited the village almost times out of number; but the people were always eager to listen to him, and on this occasion hundreds flocked from far and near, little thinking 'that they should see his face no more.' Many of them were persons of middle age, who had been converted when young under his instrumentality; and were now heads of families themselves. The affection and respect which they manifested were most pleasant to witness, and the anniversary was one of the happiest ever held. On Sunday, the 10th, he rendered similar service at Theddlethorp, near Louth, where he preached on 'The advantages of early religious training,' as seen in the lessons to be gathered from the history of Moses; and the Rev. Henry Richardson, superintendent minister of the circuit at the time, speaks of that sermon as 'very remarkable for its sagacity and the beneficial impression it produced upon the congregation.'

The final public service which he conducted, was at Hatton near Wragby, on the 17th of July, only a fortnight before his death. He felt a special interest in the little Society of that village, owing

to the circumstance that one of his daughters was settled there, and belonged to it. For several years he had preached the anniversary sermons of the chapel and it so happened that his last pulpit efforts were devoted to that object. The morning service was one never to be forgotten by those who were present. When he appeared in the pulpit, there was such an air of sweetness and sanctity about his whole bearing, as seemed to mark him out as one who was walking on the heights of the land of Beulah, with the heavenly country in full and clear prospect. The hymns which he gave out were singularly appropriate and affecting; the first was the 272nd of the Wesleyan Collection, strongly expressive of entire confidence in God, and finishing with these lines:—

‘ Though in affliction’s furnace tried,
Unhurt on snares and death I’ll tread,’ &c.

The second was the 497th, which like a grand triumphal song, fit for pilgrims to sing just as they quit the wilderness, and approach the gates of the city above, runs thus:—

‘ The ransom’d sons of God, all earthly things we scorn;
And to our high abode with songs of praise return
From strength to strength we still proceed,
With crowns of joy upon our head.’

The service closed with the 730th which exhibits the Christian in the act of looking across the river, and holding communion with the blessed before the throne, and exclaiming:—

'I ask them whence their victory came,
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.'

Surely, he was guided in the selection of the sermon, for it was singularly suited to his own position, whether viewed in relation to the past or the future. It was founded upon Numbers xiii. 30: 'And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it.' Those who were present that morning were truly made partakers of 'spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,' whilst they listened to him discoursing about the 'better country,' like one who had actually been there and seen it, and had come back with samples of its fruit; for the pulpit seemed his Pisgah, from whence with an enraptured soul, he overlooked and described the inheritance of the saints, which he was just about to enter. He preached again at night a most solemn and awakening sermon from Ezekiel xxxiii. 11, and spoke at a tea-meeting on the following evening; and then his earthly work was done. He returned to Tetford at the end of the week, and in a day or two wrote the following letter to Mr. Wild, of Armley, the last he is known to have written:—

'*July 27th, 1864.*—My very dear friend I am glad, to hear from you again; to know that you are all pretty well increases my pleasure. I am thankful to say that I am not confined to the house, but I am

very poorly. I did hope that warm and fine weather would do me good, but I think I am as poorly now as I was when the weather was cold and sharp. I have been round into Derbyshire, Nottingham, two places in our own circuit, and a week in Louth, only preaching twice on Sunday, and once in the week ; but I have come home quite broken down, and feel now as if I was quite done. I have made only one promise of work, and that is to Brigg, for the end of September, and I do not intend to make any more. I hope you will do well in your circuit. We have but a poor account to give this year—no increase, alas ! Well, I do hope the preachers will have a good Conference, and get well baptised with the Holy Ghost, and that the good seed already sown will quickly grow, and yield a plentiful harvest.'

It is very plain from the above that when the last stroke fell, though it came unexpectedly on the part of his friends, it did not find him unprepared, or taken by surprise. He evidently heard his Master's footsteps, and his lamp was trimmed. Several eminent ministers amongst the Methodists have finished their course with startling suddenness. Whitefield, Coke, Bramwell, Nelson, Beaumont, Dawson, both the Entwistles, and many others 'did not see death' until they were already 'more than conquerors.' Saved from the agony of conflict with the final foe, they simply ceased to live and gained the victor's crown. To this 'translated' band, the name of Charles Richardson must be added. Like them he lived and laboured, and like them he died,

and passed over the shallows of Jordan, to join them in the heavenly land. During the eighteen days which intervened between his last sermons at Hatton, and the fatal seizure, he was able to mingle freely with his friends, without any apprehension of what was so soon to happen ; but in doing so, his conversation was full of Christ, and his whole demeanour beautifully in keeping with the character of 'a saint indeed.' He lost no opportunity of speaking a word for his Master, and of doing good to those around him ; and up to the fifth of August he continued much in the same state of health as for some time previously. On the evening of that day, after conducting family worship, he retired to rest at the usual hour. The greater part of the night was spent in tranquil sleep, but 'in the morning watch' the final messenger came. He was taken with a violent fit of coughing, by which Mrs. Richardson was awoke, and receiving no reply to her inquiries, she became alarmed, and arose, and found him unconscious. Medical aid was immediately called in, but his case was hopeless—the last enemy had plainly thrown his fatal shaft. A complete paralysis of the whole system had deprived him at once of sight, speech, and consciousness. In this condition he continued to breathe, for the space of four or five days and nights, watched by his sorrowing family. Further medical aid was obtained, but without result. Two or three times it was thought that a gleam of consciousness returned for a moment or two, and that he attempted to articulate, but could not be understood. On the following Thursday, another seizure

supervened, and he began rapidly to sink, and the ensuing morning at six o'clock he ceased to breathe, and yielded up his soul to God. A little before he expired, as his son-in-law stood by the bed side watching, a momentary interval of consciousness occurred, like a burst of sunshine through the reft clouds; he raised his arm, waving it overhead, and distinctly pronounced in soft tones, 'All is well!'

So ended the beautiful and glorious career of one of the finest soldiers of the cross which the present generation has seen; and who has left behind him multitudes of spiritual children all over the land, who will venerate his memory and embalm his name in their hearts, until they go to join him in the skies. When the tidings went forth that Charles Richardson was dead, many wept, and many in effect exclaimed, 'My father! my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!' He was honoured in death as well as in life by God and good men. And in closing the story of his life and labours, there need be no hesitation in applying to him the declaration of St. John:—'I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.'

When the immortal dreamer of Bedford prison saw the pilgrims he had watched across the river ascend the hills of Zion on the other side, he said, 'Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the gate, and lo! as they entered, they were transfigured, and they had raiment put on that

shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them—the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and it was said unto them, “Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.” I also heard the men themselves that they sang with a loud voice, saying, “Blessing and honour, and glory, and power be to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.” Now, just as the gates were opened to let the men in, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps, to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord!” And after that they shut up the gates, which when I had seen I wished myself among them.’ Charles Richardson is ‘among them,’ assuredly. And God grant that the hundreds who were converted by his instrumentality, and are pilgrims Sion-ward at present, may hold on their way, and be ultimately admitted ‘through the gates into the city,’ and also safely get in ‘among them.’

Mr. Richardson’s funeral took place on Monday, the 15th of August, when he was interred in the burial-ground connected with the parish church of Tetford, in the midst of a large and sorrowing concourse of friends. It was at the time of wheat-harvest, and the people were busily employed in the fields; but notwithstanding this, a large gather-

ing from far and near took place, to pay the last tribute of respect ; for had he been lord of the soil, greater honour could not have been paid to his memory than what was spontaneously offered by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

Many expressions of sympathy and affection were forwarded to the bereaved family from distant parts of the country, alike honourable to the departed and the parties from whom they came. Sunday-school teachers, and others connected with various charitable institutions, hastened to acknowledge their obligations, and the benefits which had resulted from his labours. On the 27th of September, 1864, the quarterly-meeting of the Horn-castle circuit was held, when the following resolution was unanimously passed at the local preachers' meeting, and forwarded to his widow, by the Rev. James Spensley, one of the circuit ministers :—

'Sensible of the loss which has been sustained by the death of our respected and beloved fellow-labourer, the late Mr. Charles Richardson, who during thirty-six years occupied an honourable position among the local preachers of our connexion ; this meeting takes occasion to express its sorrow. As a Christian, he was most exemplary ; and in this and many other circuits he was known as a laborious, acceptable, and most successful preacher of the Gospel. Many were brought to God by his instrumentality ; and will doubtless be "the crown of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord." This meeting also records its deep sympathy with the bereaved and sorrowing family.'

A few days after his death, a lady of great personal excellence and promise, residing in Liverpool, who owned him as her father in Christ, and who within three months afterwards unexpectedly finished her course, and followed him to heaven, comforted his widow and expressed her own emotion thus:—

‘The thought that fills my mind in reference to dear Mr. Richardson is, his full preparation for his heavenly home. O! how his loving spirit will rejoice in the society he finds there, and in beholding, and being changed into the image of the blessed Saviour, whom he loved so much upon earth. His removal was like Enoch’s translation, for he would know little or nothing of pain, from the moment he was seized until he joined the hosts above. O! how his life speaks for him! For my part I mourn for him as for my dearly-beloved spiritual father; and feel how sadly I shall miss his prayers and wise counsels; but look forward with joy to a happy reunion in the skies.’

Many hearts will sympathise with these sentiments, and will be glad to know that they were so seasonably and suitably expressed. Many similar communications were received by the bereaved family, and it is but due to the gracious results of a holy life, to supply a sample of the thoughts and feelings which were extensively called forth by his death. Good men glorify God, and serve their generation long after they have passed the grave; and the name of the ‘Lincolnshire Thrasher,’ will not soon cease to be a sign of present salvation for

all men, and an encouragement to those who proclaim it, and to others who will 'glorify God in him,' and 'testify ' that he being dead yet speaketh.'

'His soul to Him who gave it rose;
God led it to its long repose,
 Its glorious rest.
And though the warrior's sun has set;
Its light shall linger round us yet
 Bright, radiant, blest.'—*Longfellow.*

CHAPTER XV.

‘Thy day without a cloud hath passed,
And thou wert lovely to the last ;
 Extinguished, not decayed !
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.’

Byron

MR. RICHARDSON was a *local-preacher*, but he was dearly beloved, and highly valued by very many of the regular ministers of the Wesleyan Church. They greatly admired his character, rejoiced in his successful labours, and will henceforth emulate his bright example, hopefully anticipating a reunion with his spirit in those ‘everlasting habitations,’ where faithful soldiers of the Cross ‘lay hold on eternal life.’ Many of them gave expression to their love and admiration by spontaneously preaching funeral sermons in various parts of the country, shortly after his death; and not a few have contributed the materials for a chaplet of honour, wherewith to crown his memory. So that, in summarizing his character, it is unnecessary to attempt anything beyond placing in order the able and interesting communications which have been supplied by some of the ministers to whom he was most intimately known. Writing without concert, or any view to publication as they did, their various

contributions are the more valuable and confirmatory of the substance of the previous memoirs. The testimonies of a few eminent laymen are added to enrich the garland, which is here woven for the purpose of being placed at the Saviour's feet.

The Rev. Robert Bond, one of his earliest friends, writes as follows:—

‘My acquaintance with Mr. Richardson commenced in March, 1840—on the occasion of the opening of a new chapel in the Spalding circuit, in which we both took part—and was kept up to the close of his valuable life. He visited me in most of the circuits where I have been subsequently stationed; and on every occasion he sustained the high estimate, which, from the first, I had formed of his character and usefulness. I always found him the same cheerful, intelligent Christian, and the same diligent, zealous, and successful labourer in the Lord's vineyard. No one seemed to me more fully to exemplify the lines,

“Freely to all ourselves we give,
Constrained by Jesu's love to live,
The servants of mankind.”

He was a man of fervent and transparent piety, whose lofty aim and hallowed motives, in all his public and private actions, were seen “and read of all men.” Like Stephen, the proto-martyr, he was “full of faith and power” because he was “full of the Holy Ghost.” And rarely, if ever, did he preach without leading sinners to Christ, or piercing the hearts of some with the arrows of divine truth.

During the whole period of his evangelistic life he laboured with uncommon earnestness and diligence. Always in time for his work, no toil, however arduous, seemed to weary or daunt him; he began and ended everything he did with, "Praise the Lord!" His sermons were usually an hour in length, and were delivered with much energy and unction, yet he entered upon the prayer-meeting, which always followed in the evening, with as much freshness, alacrity, and fervour as if he were but just commencing the service. Here, as it has often struck me, lay, to a considerable extent, his principal strength, and the lever of his marked success. It is not too much to say that many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of souls were brought to religious decision and found acceptance with God in these meetings. I never knew one who excelled him in conducting such services, or who was so successful, either in inducing persons under concern for salvation to kneel at the communion-rail, or in assisting them to lay hold upon Christ as the Saviour of their souls. In these exercises, as well as in preaching, his whole soul was engaged, for this was the element in which he delighted to live. Like the celebrated Mr. Cecil, he appeared constantly to feel: "Hell is before me, and thousands of souls are shut up there in everlasting agonies. Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into this bottomless abyss. He sends me to proclaim His ability and love. I want no fourth idea, every fourth idea is contemptible." He was accustomed to watch with deep solicitude those whom he thought had obtained good under the sermon, and if they remained to the prayer-

meeting he sought to converse with them and, if possible, conduct them to the "penitent's pew" or the communion-rail. Sometimes he went out of the ordinary way in order to produce attention and impression in preaching. When the feelings of his auditors were prepared for it, he would suddenly commence singing a verse of a hymn, appropriate to the subject on which he was speaking, and the people, though taken by surprise, would usually unite; he would then resume the thread of his discourse with admirable tact, amidst expressions of holy emotion and devout praise. I very well recollect one instance which occurred when he was visiting me. He was preaching on "The kingdom of God," and in describing the excellency and glory of Christ as a king, his audience became very much impressed, and many voices gave loud expression to adoring joy and exultation, when Mr. R. suddenly exclaimed: "Let us crown Him!" and immediately sang out in his own rich and ringing tones:—

"All hail the power of Jesu's name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!"

The whole of the congregation arose upon their feet, and with deep emotion and grand effect joined in the hymnal coronation of their Lord, swelling the chorus, "Crown Him! Crown Him! Lord of all!"

'It must not be supposed that the matter of his sermons was common-place, or that he relied upon excitement, or low, whimsical methods, to produce effect. His discourses were in general carefully

studied, and well arranged, and well sustained with Holy Scripture, for he "loved to give God's children plenty of their own bread." He also took care, whenever it was possible, to go direct from the closet to the pulpit, and in consequence often appeared there, like Moses when he came down from the mount, with the lustre of devotion on his countenance; and coming fresh from the presence of God, his word "went forth in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Sinners trembled, mourners in Zion were comforted, waverers were established, backsliders were restored, believers were edified, "the shout of a king was among them," and signs and wonders were wrought in the name of Jesus.

'Nor must I omit to mention that his preaching was as *faithful* as it was *energetic* and *impressive*. Like his divine Master, "faithfulness was the girdle of his reins," and "by manifestation of the truth he commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. On one occasion he was discoursing against "conformity to the world," in a place where females were dressed in apparel much too gay and fashionable for "women professing godliness;" and such was the force of his remarks, that several of his hearers confessed afterwards that they wished they could have torn off their finery and flowers upon the spot; and some of them on returning home at once put away their gay trimmings, and ever afterwards appeared in the house of God more in keeping with their profession as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

'The paramount object of Mr. Richardson's life,

was evidently the diffusion of the glory of God in the salvation of sinners and the enlargement of the church. He possessed in an eminent degree what a distinguished infidel once styled "a heroic passion for saving souls." The late Rev. John Smith once said, "If souls are not saved, I am a heart-broken man;" and he might have said the same. His firm resolve was that of the holy prophet's: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." This holy passion was the mainspring of his soul, and the pulse of his inner life, which was always beating morning, noon, and night; so that he was ever ready to seize every opportunity, employ every talent, and strain every nerve to save souls. Wherever you saw him he was the same man, and evinced the same high aim. In the pulpit, in the prayer-meeting, in the family circle, amongst persons of all ages, in the company of the rich and the poor, in the church, and in the world, there was ever the same simple, glowing, intelligent zeal for the salvation of souls and the honour of his Lord and Master. There were no ebbings and flowings observable in his devotedness to God. His was the persistent habit of a holy life, which had one end in view, and from which it never deviated. Everything he said or did seemed to say, "I want to glorify Jesus, and to win souls for Him. I am His, His only—wholly His, and His for ever." God had put into his hand the key of the kingdom, the knowledge of His word, and he was anxious to open the gate of life to every

one. He saw sinners dropping by thousands into perdition, and he strove, and even agonized, to pluck them as brands from the burning.

'There was something peculiarly *striking* and *appropriate* in the prayers he offered in public, and very frequently a remarkable unction and power attended them. What has been said of another devoted servant of Christ may be said of him: "To pray appeared as natural as to breathe;" the exercise was not so much one of duty, as of delightful enjoyment. Whilst within the precincts of the throne he inhaled such a sweet and heavenly influence, that he seemed reluctant to retire from the spot where he held communion with God. He loved to live in uninterrupted fellowship with Him who is the fountain of all joy, and felt with the holy Dr. Payson "that the battle is either lost or won at the throne of the heavenly grace."

'Mr. Richardson was distinguished for the *meekness* and *gentleness of his spirit*, which increased as he advanced in years. He possessed in no common degree the charity that "thinketh no evil," and the wisdom "which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated." With whom was he ever known to quarrel? or who could quarrel with him? He "walked in love," and his peace with all men was as entire as that which he enjoyed with God; he followed after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." His character was beautifully *sincere*; there was no double dealing in him, nothing pretentious, no self-seeking. He was adorned with "the beauty of holiness;" and was a happy man, because he was

holy, and the peace of his heart "shone through the veil of the flesh, and became the light of his countenance." He always appeared to me as faultless as any one I ever knew, and few men have been more highly prized by their intimate acquaintances. There have doubtless been many *greater men*, but as I think, few *lovelier* or *more useful* than he. Nature made him amiable, religion made him good, duty made him laborious, Providence made him useful, and God plainly accepted his services, granted many a token of His favour, stamped him with the character divine, and made him a man of renown.

'But he is gone; his consistent and exemplary course has at length terminated in a better world; and his luminous track still shines in our sight, animating the efforts of all who knew him, and stimulating them to devotedness and perseverance in the path that leads to "glory, honour, and immortality."

"By the throne-blaze of Godhead he stands,
The ministering spirits have crowned him,
Eternity's harp in his hand,
And a halo of glory around him."'

The Rev. Philip Fowler, states:—

'I have known Mr. Richardson for more than twenty years, and have often been with him in public meetings and in the social circle. From the first I have ever regarded him as a God-made man in an eminent sense. When blessed with the saving

grace of God in early life, that grace not only renewed his heart, but also gave expansiveness to his naturally sound and vigorous mind, and led him in a docile, prayerful spirit to the "Father of lights" for instruction; and he was "taught of God." To him the promise was strikingly fulfilled, "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way."

'It is well known that he was "in labours more abundant;" and in all of them his object was to glorify God by winning souls to Christ. He was not satisfied with gathering crowds of people to hear him preach, or with collecting large sums of money for public charities, for these were always secondary objects with him. His great aim was to save souls; for this he studied, prayed, wept, and toiled; in a word, for this he lived. He had what thousands of good people need,—a great and well defined object to live for; and the end at which he aimed was to a great extent accomplished. Few preachers have been so successful as he. I have witnessed the most marvellous effects produced by his labours. In many of the counties and principal towns of the kingdom he has left numerous seals to his ministry.

'To Wesleyan Methodism he was most sincerely and intelligently attached. He believed it to be of God; and defended and served it to the best of his ability. In troublous times his testimony and appeals did much to settle the minds of many; and the blessedness of the Peace-maker rested upon him. He was one of the most transparent men I ever knew, and often made me think of Nathaniel,

“an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.” His face was the index of his heart, and on it you could read at once honesty, frankness, purity. I never heard of his forfeiting the confidence of a friend, or betraying any trust committed to him. “He belonged to the generation of the upright, and was blessed.” Humility was one of the leading and most beautiful traits of his character. Many men with less than half his popularity have become vain and puffed up; but he remained lowly and unassuming to the end, and was ever the same man, whether in the merchant’s drawing-room or the labourer’s cottage,—pleased enough with the attentions of his numerous friends, but devoutly grateful to God for any influence he acquired, and careful to use it only for His glory. Many of his spiritual children have already welcomed him to heaven, and a great number are following him there. He is dead, “but yet speaketh.” He rests from his labours, and his works follow him. His family has lost one of the best of fathers, Methodism one of her most serviceable sons, the Church of Christ one of her brightest ornaments, and the world one of its truest benefactors.’

The Rev. Martin Jubb, expresses his estimate of Mr. Richardson thus:—

‘I became acquainted with him in the year 1838, and from that time have witnessed with pleasure his increasing usefulness and knowledge of divine things. He became “mighty in the Scriptures,” and was guided by the Word of God in everything

he did. His great concern always was to do good, and save the souls of his fellow-men. I never knew one who did so much good, and so little harm; indeed, I do not know that he ever did harm at all. Some men in their earnest zeal run into offensive and dangerous extravagancies, but it was not so with my invaluable friend. On all occasions he appeared to wear his honours with saintly meekness, and never assumed any self-important or dictatorial airs. His name will long continue to be a "household word," as it has been for many years past, among our pious people wherever he laboured. To hundreds, and I may say thousands, he has been made a blessing. We want hosts of such men. My heart yearns after him, and cries: "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

The Rev. James Grose, who saw much of him both in Boston and London, writes thus:—

'Mr. Richardson's life deserves to be held forth for imitation. He was a *revivalist* of the right stamp, and one of whom I could entirely approve. His preaching was perfectly free from all rant, was instructive, legitimate, and very earnest; it had the marks of true genius, and was free from all eccentricity. In these days of clap-trap, of picture painting, of pulpit fireworks, which startle and please, and yet are useless, it is refreshing to have such a specimen of preaching as Wesley, Benson, Watson, and Bunting would approve, and yet to find that preaching popular, because of its usefulness. He

had a very genial spirit, and was greatly beloved by every family that entertained him. He was, moreover, a sound Methodist, and the means of adding permanently many to the Church of Christ.'

The Rev. Thomas Harrison Walker, who was superintendent of the Horncastle circuit from 1849 to 1852, and had the means of knowing him thoroughly, says :—

'I always regarded him as a sincere, consistent, and earnest Christian. As a preacher, for an uneducated man, he displayed considerable talent and refinement. He was, in the legitimate sense of the word, a *revivalist*. He was earnest without extravagance, and many are the souls he has been the means of bringing to Christ. His doctrinal views I believe to have been strictly Methodist; his judgment was sound, and his spirit gentle, kind, and winning. He worked hard, and he worked well. It would be a blessed thing for Methodism had we many more men of the same spirit.'

The Rev. Joseph Midgeley says :—

'He was a thorough Christian and a sound Methodist in principle and practice. I have often heard him preach, and have frequently witnessed the conversion of sinners under his word. He was an able preacher, and a safe, wise, and prudent counsellor. He never made mischief. Of the dead and the absent, he never would speak anything but good. He made no enemies, but friends everywhere. He was greatly valued and esteemed by us and our people.'

The Rev. James Findlay, superintendent of the Horncastle circuit at the time of Mr. Richardson's death, testifies to his character thus:—

'He was an artless, gentle, genial, happy Christian, yet withal a shrewd and keen observer of life and manners. He studied well in the book of human nature, ever open before him; but "the lock of his strength" was his entire consecration of heart and life to God. A more single-minded, guileless, stainless character never was found in this circuit. He was beloved and venerated the most by those who knew him most intimately and had known him the longest. He was a ripe saint; a fine old Methodist preacher, reminding us of the "Great Hearts" of the old time, of whose simple character and mighty pulpit power our fathers have told us. When shall we look upon his like again?'

The late lamented Edward Corderoy, Esq., of London, one of the most able and eloquent men that have ever graced the Wesleyan community, said, in writing to a friend:—

'All I have heard of Charles Richardson assures me that he was a godly, self-denying, and most useful man,—one honoured of God in life and death.'

Dr. Smith, of Camborne, the historian of Methodism, referring to one of Mr. Richardson's visits to Cornwall, said:—

'We all admired his piety, self-denial, zeal, and single-minded devotedness to the service of the

Saviour. He was very useful, and I believe many souls were brought to God during his stay here.'

Benjamin Gough, Esq., of Mountfield, Faversham, who has expressed his admiration of the devoted evangelist in the beautiful Spenserian stanzas which conclude these pages, describes the man and his labours in the following paragraphs:—

'It is about twenty years since I first made acquaintance with the late Mr. C. Richardson, when he came to preach at Vauxhall, in the Lambeth circuit. During his stay in London on this and some succeeding occasions, he resided under my roof; and the remembrance of those visits is still fragrant and cherished. He always brought a blessing with him, and always left a blessing behind him. His conversation in private was invariably serious, but at the same time cheerful, and never degenerated into frivolity or gossip; it was seasoned with the salt of true, heartfelt religion, and "so ministered grace to the hearers." His character may be justly and accurately described as exhibiting uniform and consistent piety,—piety not only seen, but *felt*, and surrounding him with a *halo of goodness* wherever he went. He was entirely devoted to his great work; preaching for the salvation of souls was his business and his delight; and all his energies of body and soul, in the pulpit and out of it, were bent towards the accomplishment of the one all-important object for which he lived. He was pre-eminently a man of *one Book*. The Bible was the book of his constant study and the joy of his heart;

he loved it dearly, and he read it incessantly, and prayed over it, and dug in it, as in an inexhaustible mine of wealth. Here he found his spiritual weapons and his invulnerable shield. From this hallowed book he rose to ascend the pulpit, and wield the Spirit's two-edged sword with amazing power and success. He had the Bible, as the phrase is, "at his fingers' ends," so that the deficiencies of his early education were made up by his more than ordinary acquaintance with the divine book. God called him to be His workman, and with little aid of human learning God fitted him to do His work.

'As a preacher, he was truly evangelical; and the great and all-absorbing theme of his ministry was "Christ crucified." He did not merely round his periods or polish his paragraphs by mentioning his Master's name, but Christ was the *staple* of his sermons; Christ in His glorious Godhead, as able to save to the uttermost; Christ in His true manhood, sympathizing and suffering with us; Christ with His precious blood, atoning for all the sins of all mankind; and Christ as our high priest and intercessor in heaven. There was a dignity and majesty in the simplicity of his style which carried conviction to the hearts of his hearers, and with it an assurance that the preacher was awfully sincere. He was always earnest, but his earnestness was associated with power—"power from on high," "for while he yet spake the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word;" and saints were edified, whilst sinners were quickened and saved. His service in the church may safely be pronounced a "successful ministry;" and I doubt not that thou-

sands of souls will hail him as their "father in Christ," in the day of their Lord. It may be true that he had not, as some have, "*five talents*" (which they seldom use), but he improved the "two" which God gave him, and used them well for His glory; and the depth of his piety, the glowing ardour of his unquenchable zeal, and the intense fervour of his love for Christ and the souls of men, made him "a burning and a shining light," an honour to Methodism, a lasting blessing to the Church and the world.

'He was one of those old-fashioned Methodists who rejoiced in prayer-meetings, in opposition to the modern distaste for those invaluable means of grace, which is unhappily too manifest in some quarters. The preaching of the Word, followed by the prayer-meeting, was to him a complete service; and it was after his powerful sermons that the Word was thus "harroved in;" and I can testify, from my own knowledge, that these meetings were, under God, the means of bringing many convinced sinners to exercise saving faith, and enter into the liberty of Christ. This was the *success* for which Mr. Richardson laboured, and nothing short of saving souls satisfied the longings of his ardent nature. His whole ministry was exercised with a single eye to God's glory, and he ever strove with unfaltering purpose to save souls and build up and sanctify the Church of Christ. For this he lived, and doing this work he died.

'He was a staunch Methodist, whether in sunshine or storm, and ever stood firmly to his principles, maintaining his integrity, amidst many

temptations to turn aside; nor did he ever swerve from either our doctrines or our discipline. He mourned over signs of declension, and ever held that our stability and progress as a Church depend upon the maintenance of primitive simplicity and continued spirituality. He deprecated worldly Methodism—the neglect of the class-meeting, absence from week-night services, and a loose and careless walk and conversation—as the great peril of our times. In one word, all his interests for both worlds were identified with Methodism; and to promote these he lived and laboured with an energy which never tired, and a love which never grew cold.

‘Like a valorous soldier, he fell upon the field of conflict, sword in hand, and wearing the whole armour of God! The last blow he struck was for Christ, and his wounds were scars of honour, received in fighting for his Lord and King! His last words were expressions of exultation and triumph. He followed his Captain, and was led to victory, and his latest utterance, “*All is well,*” told his present joy and foreshadowed his future glory. His end was peace. And having fought the good fight and finished his earthly course, like John, reclining on his Master’s breast, he calmly exchanged mortality for life, and arose from the toils of the Church militant on earth to the rest and rewards of the Church triumphant in heaven—a companion of that honoured warrior-band, who form the inner circle round the throne, and are written in the book of life as “called, and chosen, and faithful.”

‘The spirit and zeal and simplicity of Charles

Richardson, I venture to say, are just what is now wanted by Methodist preachers and people. May we all receive a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost, and speedily see the work of God revive throughout the world,

“Till the earth is overflowed,
And the universe filled with the glory of God.”’

APPENDIX A.



Notes of one of the earliest sermons which Mr. Richardson preached, and referred to on page 86.

Text.—2 COR. v. 20: ‘Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.’

The subject was introduced by pertinent and telling observations on the relations subsisting between St. Paul and the Corinthians,—the instrument of their conversion, and their spiritual overseer in the Lord,—clothed, as he was, with authority for the work of the ministry, and supplied with suitable gifts by the Holy Ghost—gifts and authority which are still communicated to those whom God Himself appoints to preach the Gospel. The plan of the discourse was the following:—

I. The commission with which Gospel ministers are entrusted.

II. The message which they are commanded to communicate.

III. The astonishing grace of God displayed in thus dealing with men.

I. THE COMMISSION, &c. This was illustrated and explained by enlarging upon:—

1.—The authority with which royal ambassadors are clothed.

2.—Their appointment to represent the monarch or government in whose name they appear.

3.—Their responsibility to the sovereign who sends them, for the whole of their conduct.

II. THE MESSAGE, &c.

1.—It is one of *reconciliation and peace*, pre-supposing and assuming that man is a rebel,—an unquestionable fact, which is stated again and again in the Word of God, and is proved by the sinful conduct of mankind all over the world. Yet God follows His sinful creatures with grace and the promises of pardon, and *entreats* them to accept His offers.

2.—The message assumes and declares man's rebellion to be most *unnatural*. It is that of a child fighting against a kind father. And O! the goodness of that Father! He has given His only begotten Son to demonstrate His love, and by His providence wraps you up in mercy every day! but still He has to complain: 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.' Oh! this is very unnatural!

3.—The message from God assumes that man's conduct towards Him is very *unreasonable*. You who rebel have turned your back upon your best friend, and gone over to your greatest enemy. The master you serve is a hard task-master; he is a tyrant, and shows no mercy. You are slaves, doing the basest and meanest work. You are sinning against God, and grieving His spirit, under the lashings of conscience, the fear of death, and are in the road to hell. Oh! how unreasonable!

4.—The message pronounces the rebellion to be base *ingratitude*. The Lord has done you good all your days, preserved you in infancy, guarded in youth, brought you to maturity, and oh! how He has preserved you from enemies and dangers, from death and hell! When sick, how often He has healed you; weak, He has strengthened you; hungry, He fed you; thirsty, He gave you drink; your bread has been given, and water made sure. A thousand providences are at work for you every day to supply your wants—sun, wind, fire, clouds, dews, seasons, winter snows, and rains of spring—all are kept in motion for you. Besides, oh! how precious, how wonderful His mercy, how long-suffering and kind His Spirit! To rebel against Him, is like a dying man fighting his physician; or a starving man ill-treating the friend who brings him bread. How ungrateful!

5.—The rebellion is *dangerous* and *foolish*. The sinner has overmatched himself. It is the creature against the Creator; a feeble worm against Omnipotence; man against God: how foolish! Absalom fought against his father, but see his end! He hangs in the oak! Pharaoh fought against God, but was drowned in the sea! Saul turned his back upon God, but look, he falls upon his own sword! And dost thou refuse to be reconciled!

III. THE ASTONISHING GRACE OF GOD, &c. What is the conduct of God towards you after all your rebellion and continued wickedness? Oh! be astonished, ye heavens, ye angels, and behold! God sends His ambassadors to lift the flag of peace, and

offer men the blessings of the Gospel. The Son of God lays open His bosom, and shows to sinners His wounded side, and prays them to be reconciled to God! And look at the *manner* in which we are commanded to tender His mercy to sinners.

1.—*With the highest authority*—‘As though God did beseech you by us.’ What we say to you, we say in God’s name. Our entreaties are his entreaties. Our love to you is a faint reflection of His infinite love to you. We pray you to return to God. It is His will that you should do so. In His name we promise you pardon for all your sins. Now, consider the love of God. Was ever such conduct known? No! It is unparalleled. Oh! what tender mercy is displayed in this verse! Did ever a judge, after passing sentence upon a poor criminal, come down from his high seat, and beseech the offender to accept a free pardon? Was it ever known that a creditor came to the prison to his ruined debtor to beseech him to receive an acquittance in full? Yet such is the wonderful condescension of the God of glory, and thy Creator; ‘As though God did beseech you,’ &c. But we are also to speak:—

2.—*With melting compassion.* The ambassador not only comes in God’s name, but in Christ’s stead. Now, with great fear and solemnity, let me impress St. Paul’s wonderful ideas upon you. Suppose that Christ appears in person, and stands before you; every eye would be fixed. O! see the Man of Sorrows; He left the courts above to suffer for you sinners. Remember what you have read of His sufferings and death in the Gospels. Now,

He takes off the hatches and uncovers the pit; you may smell the stench and smoke, hear the heart-rending cries and groans coming from the burning gulf, and as you see lost souls agonizing in horrible distress, you perhaps feel just ready to drop into it. But the loving Saviour speaks to thee, and pointing to His head crowned with thorns, He speaks again, and says, I suffered this to save thee from hell. He points again to His head, and wounded side, and back, and says, If thou wilt forsake thy sins, and love and serve Me, thou shalt never go into the pit. Then He opens heaven, and shows all the glory of the place, and pointing to His hands and feet, He says, Only forsake thy sins, and saints and angels shall be thy companions, crowns and glory shall be thine. Then He brings eternity before you as far as you can comprehend it, and pointing to the crown of thorns upon His head, with tears and entreaties beseeches you to be reconciled to God. Oh! who can bear it? Who can withstand it?

3.—*With tender importunity.* 'We pray you,' &c. Then am I to solicit and importune you in Christ's stead. I do this, and pray you by the shortness of time, by the solemnities of death, by the awful realities of the resurrection morning, by the terrors of the day of judgment, by the immutability of the final sentence, by the horrors of hell, by the glories of heaven, by the sufferings of Christ, by His agony in the garden, by His shame at Pilate's bar, by the cross upon His shoulder, by His expiring groans, by His powerful intercession, by His love for your souls, &c. 'I pray you, be ye reconciled to God.'

In conclusion, look at what follows if you refuse. You patronise and approve all the rebellion and wickedness of men and devils; for if *you* have a right to continue in sin, why not *others*? Yea, every man upon earth, and every devil in hell. And are you for raising a universal mutiny and rebellion against the throne of God? Awful thought! He will soon give death a commission to seize and drag you to the bar. He will meet you as a bear bereaved of her young. And now, if you will not submit to mercy and make your peace with Him, 'Prepare to meet thy God.' Gird thee, put thy armour on, call earth and hell to help thee, &c. But oh! 'be ye reconciled to God,' &c.

APPENDIX B.

NOTES of the sermon preached at Hatton, on the 17th July, 1864, by Mr. C. Richardson:—

Text.—NUMBERS xiii. 30: 'And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.'

The history of the ancient Israelites abounds with many most important events, which give instruction to a Christian at every stage of his progress to the heavenly Canaan. From the period

of their grievous bondage in Egypt, to the very moment they took possession of the promised land, we have a succession of visible displays of an overruling Providence, in which all the perfections of the divine character were harmoniously at work for their welfare. When they were subject to the most cruel slavery, the Lord brought them out with a mighty hand. When pursued by the hosts of Pharaoh, He divided the waters of the Red Sea, and they walked over it upon dry ground. When they were parched with thirst, He caused the waters to gush out of the rock, which followed them. When they were perishing of hunger, He sent them manna from heaven in due season. And when they wanted to know their road, He led them by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, and safely conducted them through all their dangers to the promised land; and drove out the nations before them, little by little, lest the wild beasts should increase upon them.

The circumstances with which the text stands connected are as follows: Moses, in obedience to the command of God, sent twelve men, one out of every tribe, to espy out the land of Canaan, and gave them suitable directions relative to the facts which they were to inquire into; viz., whether the land was good or bad, whether the people were strong or weak, whether they dwelt in tents, or cities, or strongholds. They were to be of good courage, and when they came back they were to bring with them samples of the fruits of the land. Having received these instructions, they went up into the country, and at the close of forty days

returned with their report, and said unto Moses : ' Surely the land floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it ; nevertheless the people are strong that dwell in the land, the cities are walled and very great,' &c. See verses 27 and 28, and then the text.

It is generally considered that the circumstances I have referred to are typical of something better under the Gospel dispensation. We may therefore, with propriety, view the text as expressing what belongs to the Christian's pilgrimage to heaven, and shall notice :—

- I. The object which the pilgrims have in view.
- II. The line of conduct they must observe.
- III. The assurance which sustains them.

I. THE OBJECT WHICH CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS HAVE IN VIEW.

1.—This is, *a land of glorious and everlasting light*. There the sun is risen to set no more, and there he scatters his cheering rays through every part ; there the darkness of night shall no longer depress the feelings ; the darkness of sin shall no more pervade the land ; the darkness of Providence shall no more perplex the thoughts ; the darkness of hell shall no more alarm the fears ; the darkness of the grave shall no more conceal our friends ; the morning of the resurrection shall commence a day never to be followed by night, when every shade of darkness shall be banished from the mind, all the mysteries of Providence shall be unfolded, and we

shall for ever bask in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

2.—*It is a land of permanent rest.* There remains a rest for the people of God—a rest where pure enjoyment reigns, and where there is no more toil, or suffering, or danger, or want; no more persecution for the sake of the Cross, no more buffeting against the storms of life. There our labours end. The tempests are hushed into a pleasing calm. ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,’ &c. And do we not exclaim, ‘O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest?’ And shall we not ‘fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into rest, any of you should seem to come short of it?’

3.—*It is a land of constant peace.* No national convulsions, no domestic quarrels, no conflicting passions are there. All are the subjects of one king, all are children of one family, all are sanctified by one spirit, and therefore peace flows as a river. No enemies to invade that land; no spies to bring an evil report from another. The inhabitants are all peacemakers. The sovereign is the Prince of Peace, and the law of the land is the law of love, &c.

4.—*It is a land of unmingled pleasure.* ‘In Thy presence is fulness of joy, &c. Pleasures in beholding the King in His beauty—in listening to the loud hosannahs of the glorified throng—in feasting on the fruits of Canaan, and in all the high delights which shall ravish the spiritual senses. Not one streaming eye shall there be seen; not a single groan shall ever be heard; no pain shall there be felt;

no bitter cup to drink ; every fear dispelled ; every doubt removed ; every complaint banished ; every eye sparkling with joy ; every heart dancing with gladness ; every soul filled with glory, &c.

5.—*It is a land of glorious liberty.* All the inhabitants are free men, living in the privileges of a blessed emancipation, from the tyranny of Satan, from the dominion of sin, from the fear of death. They have exchanged the house of bondage for a house not made with hands ! a country of captive exiles for a land of noble freedom, where all are priests and kings, &c.

6.—*It is a land of abundant supplies.* There is no famine there. Jacob's family have no need to go down into Egypt to buy corn. There is bread enough and to spare. There a poor despised Lazarus doffs his tattered garments, and is adorned with the best robes ; none are parched with thirst, for the rock rolls living streams amongst them ; none faint with weakness, for the new wine of the kingdom revives them ; there is no complaining in the streets, for all are filled with the fulness of God. This is a land of corn and wine, &c. Living bread and living waters, and enough for evermore, &c.

7.—*It is a land of perfect holiness.* God, angels, and saints are holy, and none can be allowed to enter the country where they dwell, but those 'who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,' and kept them clean. A guilty conscience, impure affections, a stubborn will, and disordered passions, exclude from paradise. 'Except ye be converted, and,' &c.

II. THE LINE OF CONDUCT THEY MUST OBSERVE.

1.—At the commencement there must be *entire decision of character*. The spies may bring an evil report, and tell you of the sons of the giants, the lions in the way, and the floods of Jordan, and that the difficulties are so great they never can be surmounted ; but the lies of the world, the suggestions of Satan, and the reasoning of our own minds must not be listened to. The heart must be decided, and the journey begun without delay ; for the longer we look at the difficulties, the greater they will become. Everything connected with time and eternity call for decision of character. Time is flying, death is approaching, the Judge is at the door, the scenes of eternity are opening to our view. And shall we linger, and be found like Lot's wife? If death finds us loitering, we shall fall victims to the avenger of blood.

2.—*An unwavering confession of Christ*. We may well question that man's piety who feels ashamed to make a public profession of religion. Let us not suppose that we may secretly steal through the wilderness unobserved. The eyes of God, of men, of angels, and of devils, are upon us. O let us *confess* that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, as all our fathers were. This confession may expose us to the insults of the world, but remember what Christ said : ' Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My Word, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed,' &c.

3.—*The exercise of heroic courage* must mark their conduct. The wilderness through which we travel abounds with dangers and trials : hosts of foes

behind, mountains of difficulty on either hand, and Jordan's floods in front, &c. But, courage, your Captain cries. Shall we be alarmed at the number, malice, and power of our enemies, and prove cowards? 'No!' says the Christian; 'none of these things move me.' 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ,' &c. We must fight our passage through, and never sheathe the sword until we enter through the gates into the city.

4.—*The pleasing bonds of Christian unity* are also necessary. 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!'—in unity of principle, affection, design, effort. We are all members of the same body, engaged in the same cause, fighting against the same enemies, governed by the same royal Captain, with the same heaven in prospect. Then let us weep in secret together, join in agonizing prayer, fight in company against sin and Satan, plan, scheme, and work together; 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more.' Oh! it is a lamentable case when Canaan's travellers fight and tear each other by the way. How suitable the advice which Joseph gave to his brethren. Oh! let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ. Another requisite is—

5. *The cultivation of practical godliness.* Believers are called 'children of the light,' and were styled by the Saviour the 'light of the world.' And we must let our light shine before men—shine in our dispositions, so that these may recommend the Gospel—in the faithful discharge of every personal and relative duty—in the proper employment of those talents

committed to us for the good of others. When this is done, the religion of the Saviour appears in all its beauty and attractiveness. Men embrace its principles, and God's people shine in their different spheres and offices, &c. Oh ! for more of this ! 'As giants may they run their race.'

III. THE ASSURANCE WHICH SUSTAINS THEM.
'For we are well able to overcome it.'

1.—*Because 'well' fortified with divine protection.* If God 'weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance,' then He is a God of omnipotent power. If 'His eyes are as a flame of fire,' then He is a God of infinite wisdom. If 'clouds and darkness are round about His throne,' then He is a God of inflexible justice. If He 'pardons iniquity, and transgression, and sin,' then He is a God of boundless mercy. If He 'is not a man that He should lie,' then He is a God of perfect truth. And all these attributes and perfections surround His saints in all their journeyings through the present life, and thus He becomes our refuge in every danger, the foundation of all our hopes ; and while we trust in Christ, we are led on to certain victory.

2.—*Because 'well' supported by the Holy Spirit.* The Christian is a new man, and has a new nature ; he is blessed with the indwelling Spirit of God. 'Know ye not that ye are the temples of God.' This is the Spirit of light, that makes known the stratagems of Satan, &c. ; this is the Spirit of life, that animates our zeal, &c.,—of power, and arms us for the war, &c. He operates like water, and cleanses from all pollution—as fire, and burns up the dross of sin. This is the self-same Spirit that

'moved upon the face of the waters,' that inspired the ancient prophets, that enabled the apostles to speak in divers languages. And this Spirit dwells in all the saints, with all His mighty energies, to enable them to overcome the world, and everything that obstructs their progress to the skies.

3.—*Because 'well' furnished with good weapons.* There is the 'shield of faith,' and 'the breastplate of righteousness,' and 'the sword of the Spirit,' &c.; and 'the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty,' &c. We must use them well, and keep them bright, and then, 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' So we shall be able to force our passage through, and scale the mount of God.

4.—*Because 'well' encouraged by faithful promises.* And so numerous are these, that to repeat them is out of the question. But they are in the Bible, and can be read and examined in every season of trial, and when the comfort they afford is most wanted. And oh! when we call to mind the character of that God who has given them, the certain truth of the Scriptures where they are written, the efficacy of that blood by which they are sealed, together with their universal adaptation to the circumstances of God's people we cannot but thank God, and take courage. Oh let us cultivate this triumphant assurance. 'Let us go up and possess the good land, for we are well able to overcome it.'

5.—*Because 'well' commanded by a faithful Captain.* The Captain of our salvation is the Lord of Hosts—He who stood before Joshua with a drawn sword. He is always in the field with His soldiers. Oh! how

many He has already brought to glory! What encouraging examples we have in those who are gone before us! How many happy deaths of saints and sainted friends have we known! Praise the Lord!

A neat headstone with a modest inscription marks the grave of Mr. Richardson, in Tetford Churchyard. And a marble tablet in the Wesleyan Chapel, in the same place, reminds the congregation of the grace and usefulness bestowed upon one who 'was born there,' with the following epitaph:

IN MEMORY

OF

CHARLES RICHARDSON,

OF TETFORD,

A WESLEYAN LOCAL PREACHER,

WHO WAS THE MEANS OF

'TURNING MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS
IN VARIOUS PARTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

'He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.'

HE WAS BORN AT FULLETBY, DECEMBER, 11TH, 1791;
AND DIED AT TETFORD, AUGUST 11TH, 1864.

In Memoriam

OF

CHARLES RICHARDSON, THE PEASANT
PREACHER.



Not many from the noble and the great,
Are call'd to preach the Gospel to the poor;
Not many of the wise and mighty, wait
The Blessed Master's call, but evermore
Jesus anoints His own ambassador.
So sailing on the Galilean lake,
His first disciples heard the call divine;
The humble fishermen their nets forsake,
To follow their dear Lord, and in His service join.

Thus from the peasant's cottage on the moor,
Or bleak hill-side—unlettered and unknown,
Wielding the thrashing-flail upon the floor,
Or following the up-land plough, unknown,
God stoops some high evangelist to own:
Noblest of mission-martyrs—hero—saint,
John Hunt, the peasant—canonised on high!
And—yielding to the Spirit's sweet constraint—
Behold Charles Richardson—love, labour, conquer, die.

What burning zeal, unquenchable and pure,
Urged on the Peasant Preacher as he wrought
His Master's glorious work! His aim how sure
When the barbed arrow found the heart he sought,
And trembling penitents to Christ were brought.

With bended knees, and eyes up-cast to heaven—
 Pierced—wounded by the Spirit's flaming sword,—
 But soon rejoicing in their sins forgiven,
 They shout in chorus loud, and magnify the Lord.

Artless and natural as a little child,
 All guileless in simplicity and love,
 He preached the Gospel pure and undefiled,
 God's Gospel—sent to sinners from above,
 God's power—omnipotent, to melt and move
 The stubborn heart, and open the blind eyes
 To see their sin and cure,—the Lamb of God!
 The sleepers wake!—the dead in sin arise
 To pardon, peace, and joy, through faith in Jesu's
 blood!

All glorious is the Gospel dispensation!
 And Gospel-pardon offered unto all.
 O world-embracing, full and free salvation,
 O blest redemption from our sin and thrall,
 Which lifts us from the ruins of the fall,
 And sets us with God's princes—from our shame
 To brotherhood with Christ our living Head!
 God's sons! Our bright 'inheritance' we claim,
 Jerusalem above, whose golden streets we tread.

They that be wise shall shine in glorious lustre
 Like the clear firmament—but they that turn
 Many to righteousness—as stars shall cluster,
 Blazing in splendour for which angels yearn,
 God's jewels, round God's throne for aye to burn
 And they that suffer with their Lord below,
 And do, and bear, for Him they love and own,
 Heaven's bright rewards, on such He will bestow,
 Jesus shall give the crown, and lift them to His throne.

So wrought the Peasant Preacher for his Lord,
 With even zeal, and simple heart and eye

So wrought the quickening Spirit with the Word
In saving power, and brought salvation nigh,
To sinners, who felt Jesus passing by.
Thus ever so the weak confound the strong,
God's heroes in the Gospel's holy war:
Hark! how they shout the conqueror's joyous song
And things that are not, bring to nought the things
that are!

Wreathe a bright chaplet o'er the soldier's grave!
Christ's soldier he, who triumphed when he fell:
Over his tomb the red-cross banner wave,
And loud and long let solemn anthems swell
For him, whose dying hymn was "All is well!"
Over his honoured dust, thy vows renew,
Nor scorn to shed the sympathetic tear;
Keep the pure memory of his life in view,
While on his tomb you read, 'Charles Richardson lies
here.'

BENJAMIN GOUGH.

Mountfield, Faversham, Kent.

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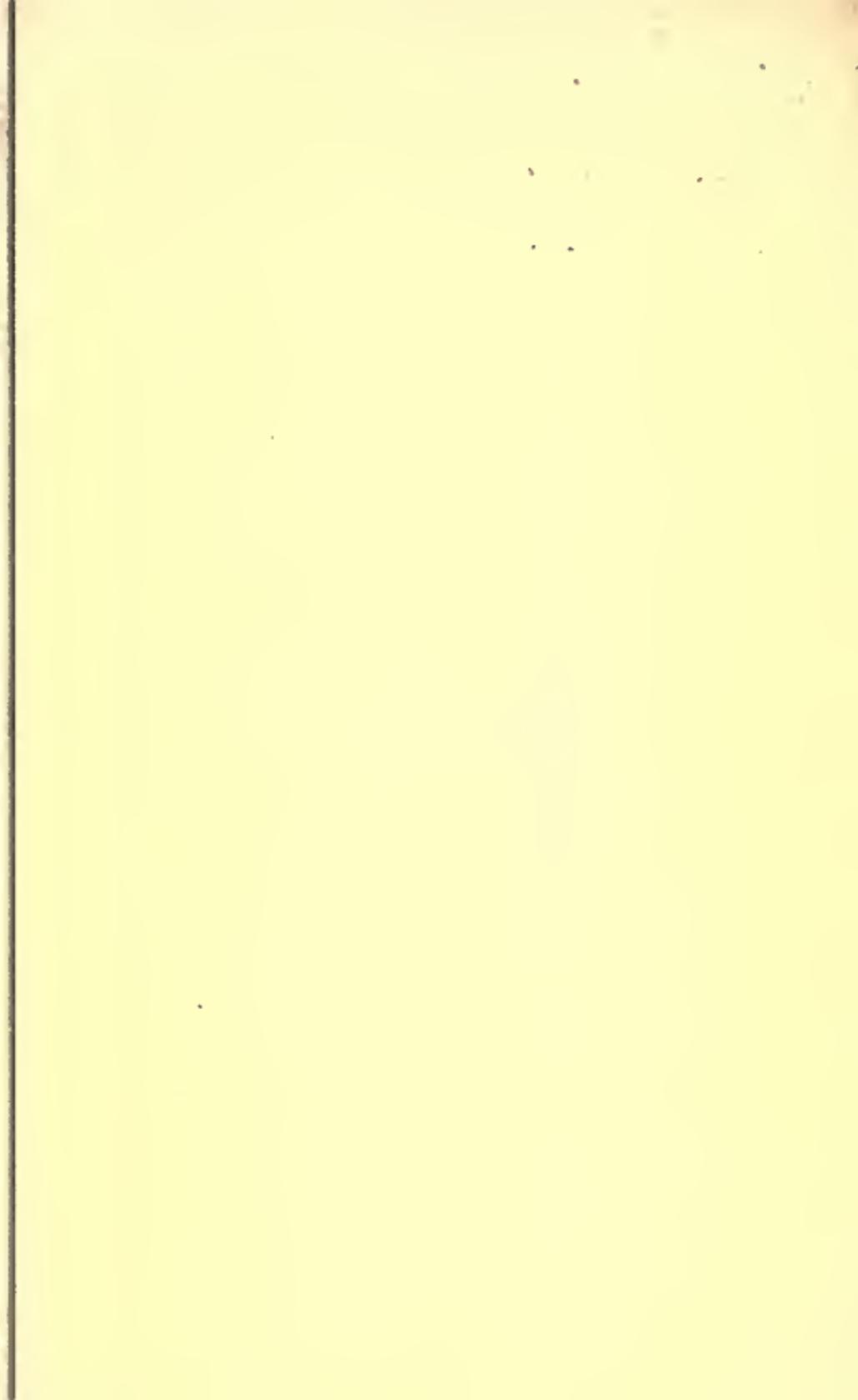
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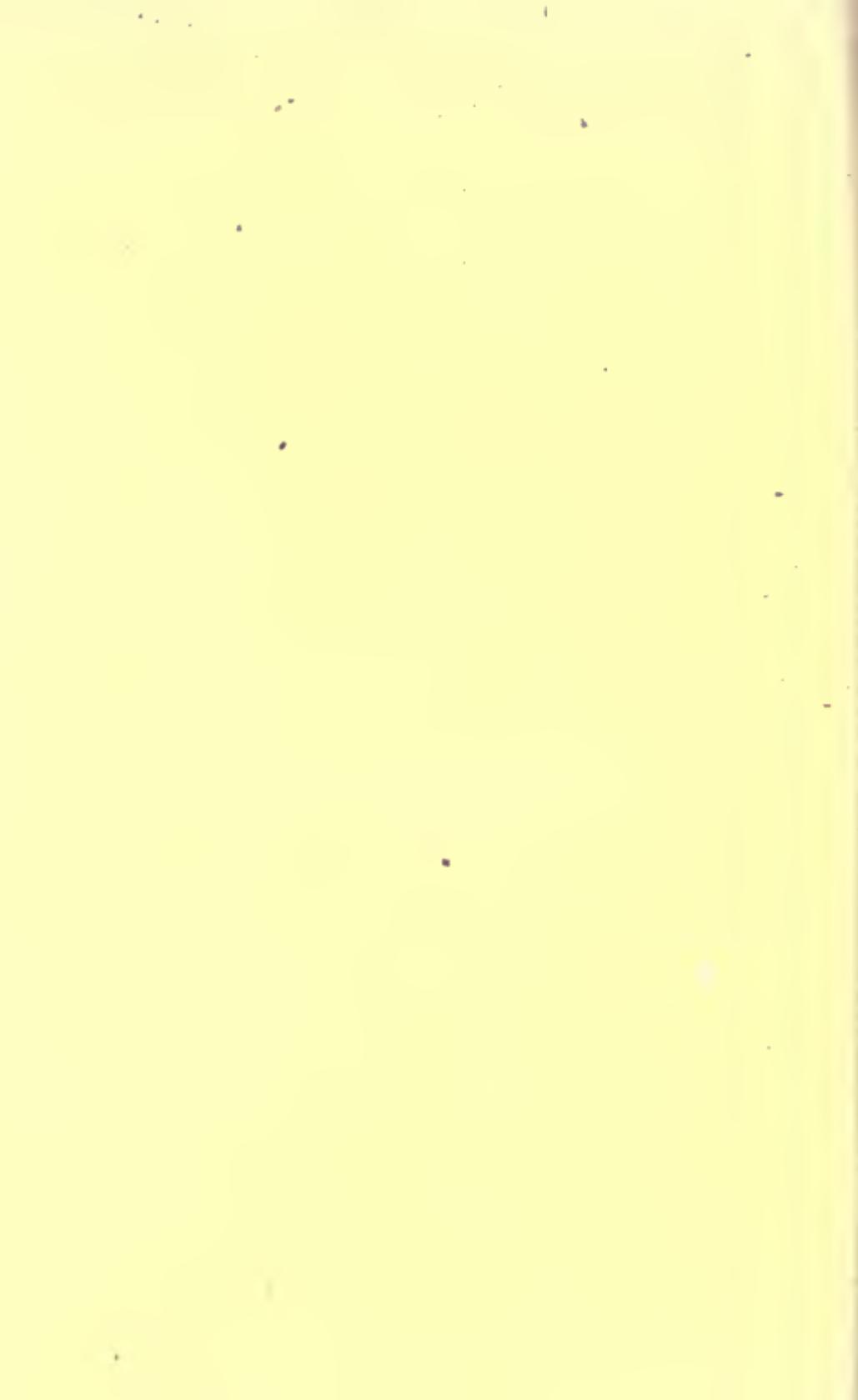
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