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The Story of a Tour, 1898

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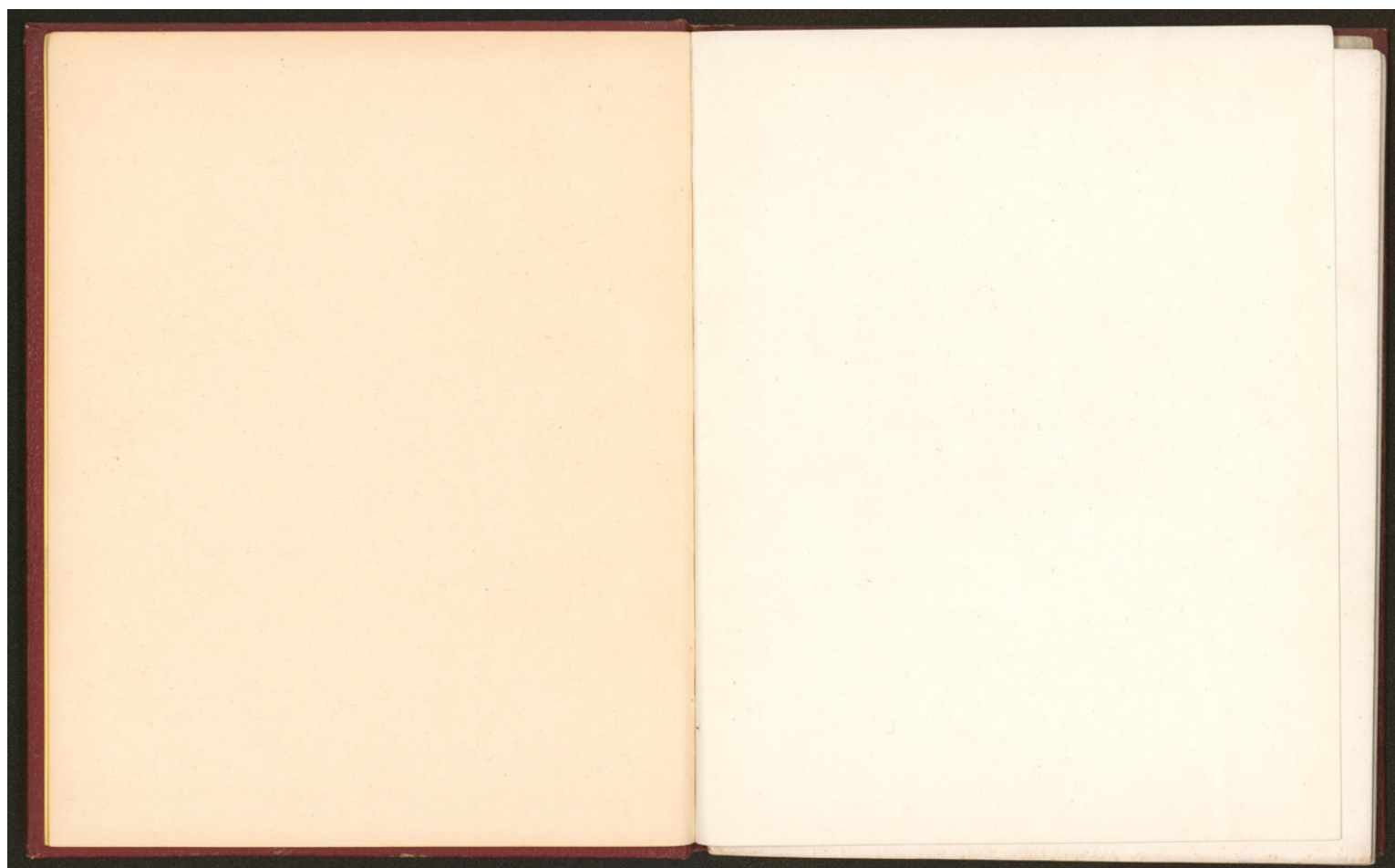
THE  
STORY OF A TOUR.

BY  
WILLIAM SCRIVEN.



LONDON, 1898.





THE  
STORY OF A TOUR.

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WILLIAM SCRIVEN.

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions  
Not from the ground arise,  
But oftentimes celestial benedictions  
Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapours;  
Amid these earthly damps,  
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers,  
May be Heaven's distant lamps.

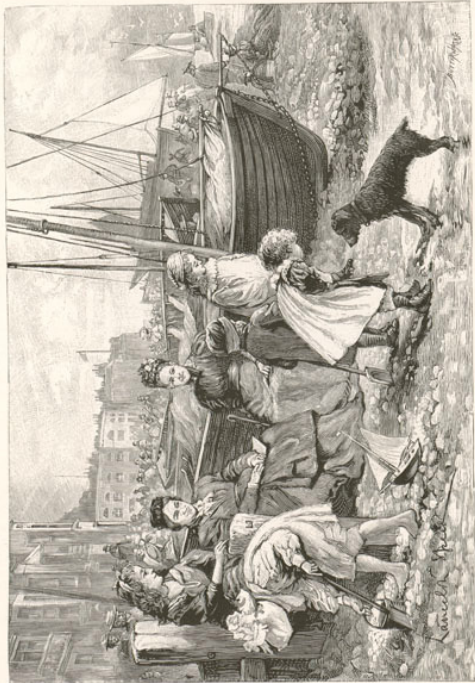
LONGFELLOW.

*Illustrated by LANCELOT SPEED and GODFREY HALL.*

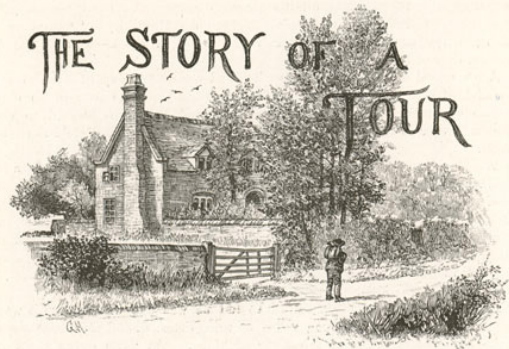
LONDON, 1898.

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A LIVELY SUMMER'S DAY.—(See page 50.)



W. L.'S COTTAGE, ELMLEY LOVETT.

A CROWNING MERCY.

WHERE is Elmley Lovett? I never heard of such a place.

No, my friend, nor had I, until I went there as your representative to carry your message of comfort and kindness to one who lives upon your bounty.

Far away from the smoke and din of London, in one of the most secluded parts of Worcestershire, embosomed in stately elms and pollard oaks of giant girth, the only living representatives of the forest of Elmley which, two or three centuries ago, covered all this part of the country, stands Elmley Lovett Church. The parish is very large, but there is no village; the houses stand alone or at most in twos. Nowhere did we see three together, though possibly such a congested corner may exist.

The train took us from Droitwich to Hartlebury, where a good kind friend of your Pensioner met us with his trap and drove us across a lovely stretch of country, now in deep hollows between high hedges, fragrant and gay with dog roses, and over uplands with wide stretches of pasture and corn lands,

where the wheat was beginning to ear and the beans to lose their flower, though enough remained to fill the air with sweetness. The "teen-tang," "teen-tang," of the mower whetting his scythe, and the whirr of "the cutter," fell upon the ear, for hay-time had just come in again—that happiest, sweetest time of the whole year.

A few miles' drive brought us to what had once been a small farm-house, now divided into two cottages, and standing back from the road in an old-fashioned garden, where flowers, vegetables and fruit-trees seemed to vie with each other as to which should make the bravest show and yield the best return.

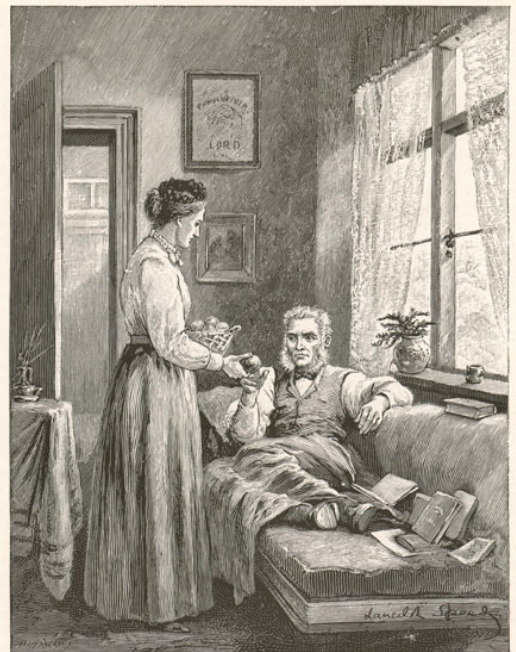
We found our friend, W. L., propped up in the corner of a large sofa, and eagerly awaiting our arrival. A big-limbed man with powerful frame and massive head, was before us, whose bushy iron-grey hair and whiskers, coal-black brows and keen piercing eyes gave an air of distinction to a face in which strength and refinement, after a long struggle for pre-eminence, had at length agreed to a partnership upon equal terms. Behind the outward appearance, and under the surface, was what Sir Joshua Reynolds used to call "that," the indefinable, the man.

Here we needed no spoken word to tell us was one who knew his way to the throne, who had the open vision of things eternal, and was accustomed to the audience chamber of the King of kings. As "the dyer's hand is subdued to what it works in," so men of humble faith and fervent prayer take on something of the glow that made the face of Moses to shine though "he wist it not."

From what we formerly knew of Black-country puddlers and iron-rollers, hard-working, hard-drinking, yet good-natured fellows, with a high appreciation of bull terriers and lurchers, and always ready for a frolic or a fight, knowing what his calling had been and where he came from, we were not quite prepared for the man we found here.

At first sight there was nothing of the invalid in the appearance of our friend, for such we are glad to call him. But those legs of his are worse than useless; they will never come straight again, the contracted sinews will never relent, for the man is paralysed from the hips downwards. His brain is clear and active, and he has the use of both his hands; but there his power ends, and for twenty-six years he has lain, as he lies to-day, a helpless prisoner with no hope of release.

We asked him for his story; it was soon told. His father, a farmer, who was unsuccessful, died leaving his widow and children in sore straits. As a boy he went into the Staffordshire ironworks, and he and his mother managed to keep their home together until the other children were able to work. By



W. L.

the time he was twenty-four he was master of his work as an iron-roller, and was eagerly looking forward to having a more responsible position, when a neglected chill settled in his spine, and soon, notwithstanding hospital treatment and operations, he became a cripple, and, what was worse, afflicted with kidney disease of a very distressing nature.

The help given by his benefit club, and the devoted love and toil of his mother, kept him from want until she fell a victim to cancer. Just before death released her from her sufferings, she had the great joy vouchsafed her of knowing that, through the kind efforts of many friends, he was placed upon the foundation as a Pensioner of the ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR INCURABLES. That was "an unspeakable blessing, his crowning mercy." By the help thus given he is able to have his own home amid the scenes of his youth, where he is carefully and lovingly tended, and delivered from all fear of want.

A former rector of the parish—son of Mr. Spencer Perceval, the Prime Minister who was assassinated in the lobby of the House of Commons—was the friend whose exertions mainly secured him his pension. Other members of the same family, though now removed, still maintain their kind interest in him. He is now, thanks to the friend who drove us over, and many others, including Miss Perceval, daily expecting the arrival of a self-propelling chair, by means of which he hopes to get into the open air.

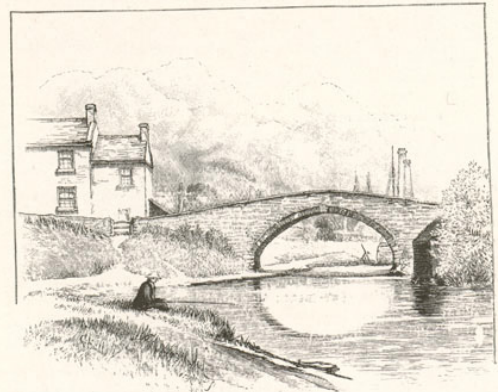
The farmers round about are very good to him, and by presents of milk, butter and vegetables (for he lets the garden he cannot cultivate), show their regard for him.

"They are all very kind to me," he told us; "I have never been forgotten by them." He had many a time come down to his last shilling, but he had never been without a shilling, and he had never wanted food. He did not know why he had been afflicted, but God knew, and that was enough for him. He had the comfort of knowing he had not brought his sufferings upon himself, nor contributed to them by evil living, so he was quite willing that God's plan for him should be carried out to the end.

An ancient pear-tree shades the window of the little sitting-room where W. L. spends his days, and from his couch there is a charming wooded prospect to the right, while, to the left, he can watch the last rays of the setting sun as they lovingly linger on the summits of the far-off Clent Hills, until they glow like burnished gold. From his bed he can see the purple Malvern Hills, some fifteen miles away to the south-west, and watch the dark shadows of the night, as they flee before the rosy tints of the morning, down into the mist of the Severn Valley. As he told us of these "pleasures" of his, these "compensations," we felt assured that God was preparing some fine gold for the kingdom in His crucible of affliction on the Worcestershire hill-side.

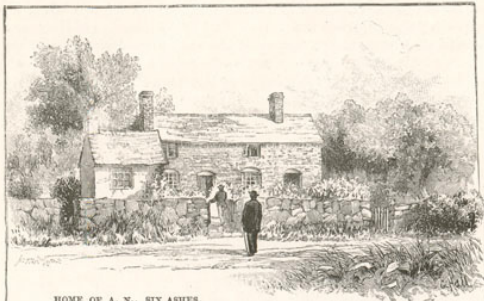
And, dear reader, if we may gauge your heart by our own, you are glad to be permitted to help God in His care and loving provision for one whom He is taking such pains to perfect and fit for a place in the Kingdom of His dear Son.

The friend who so kindly met us at the station entertained us at tea on the lawn of his house beneath a venerable pollard larch, in shape wholly unlike its kind; and then, having led us up to the top of one of the highest hills that we might enjoy the prospect, drove us well upon our way to saline, sleepy, topsy-turvy, slanting Droitwich, where we were to lodge.



CANAL, DROITWICH





HOME OF A. N., SIX ASHES.

## A TINY WORLD.

WE were not sorry to leave Droitwich. The older town is a depressing place, so many buildings are in ruins, though the newer part is very pleasant. The invalids who resort here for relief to swollen joints and tottering limbs have much to put up with unless their sufferings absorb all their attention. There is something uncanny in feeling that the ground beneath your feet is not solid. The walls lean and bulge, the windows slant down at one side, or lean over, looking at the pavement; the blinds hang all askew; the door that shuts at night refuses to be opened in the morning; only three-legged tables stand firmly, but even they refuse to be level. As the brine is pumped, so the houses incline. No one asks if he may put you in peril; it is done, and you have to put up with it. A queer state of affairs, but the natives thrive on these uncertainties, and so, not wishing to add to their dangers, we wish them good-bye without a tear.

An hour's ride by rail brought us to Highley, a little place on a bank high above the Severn. A winding path led down to the river and then northward on the right bank to Potter's Lode Ferry. The river is shallow and rapid, and only available for small craft; here and there, however, are deep dark pools of quieter water. From these we saw fish leap to take their prey, shining, for a second, like burnished silver, then lost to us for ever, but doubtless to

afford good sport to anglers whose may-flies are acquainted with hooks. A veritable Charon awaited us in his punt, with home-made paddles as classic in shape as they were rough in construction. The ferryman was so picturesque in person and attire that one of us looked at his watch, and sighed from the depths of his artistic soul that time did not permit him to use his sketch-book. Our landmark, Alveley Church tower, lay high above us, a mile or more away. Our route was by field paths, and then a steep, narrow lane, so rough and tiresome it reminded us of Pilgrim's road to heaven.

Half-a-mile from the church we expected to rest awhile at Miss N.'s cottage; but in the description of our route there should have been a figure four as well as the fraction. Somehow the four miles were not in the letter, but there they lay before us over steeper and higher hills than the one we had just climbed. That was not all, for when our call was made, there was a further tramp of nearly seven miles to Bridgenorth. Now, though we firmly believe with Robert Hall that "high hills draw like heaven," and we love them—in pictures—yet when we have to foot them on a Midsummer's afternoon, and not a cloud in the sky, it makes us serious. After much counsel



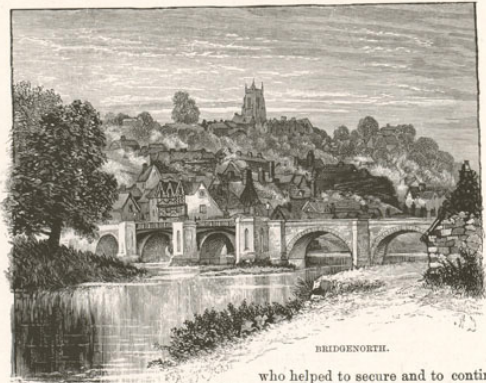
A. N.

with feminine rustics, a blacksmith's boy was found who had a pony and cart. A bargain was soon made, and we were on our way.

Miss A. N. lives with a younger sister, a dressmaker, the sole support of her widowed mother. They have a pleasant cottage, into which they have recently removed, standing in a garden by the roadside, their former home having changed owners. In this thinly populated district, where the houses are widely separated, and more are pulled down than are rebuilt, it is very difficult for a poor family to find another home. Many who would stay in the country are simply driven into the towns for shelter. The giving up of their former home was a great trial to these ladies, for such they are, though very, very poor. There was not only the expense of removing several miles, and the severance of lifelong ties with old friends and neighbours and the bit of ground so dear to them all, but also the removal of the poor invalid.

For ten long years she has been a close prisoner, unable to stand or in any way to move or help herself without assistance; hands and feet being powerless from rheumatic gout. She is only forty now, and, though she has suffered so much, does not look her years. Hers must be a terrible and awful trial—to bear what, but for the self-sacrificing love of her mother and sister, would be a living death. The little room, the view obstructed by the high hedge across the road, a corner of the garden, a few flowers on the window ledge, her reading stand and books, and her own thoughts, make up her world. To keep a home, her mother and sister toil early and late; and the sister, by no means strong, has the shadow of failing sight coming nearer and nearer. The constant care needed by the afflicted one takes up much of their time; nevertheless, they are bright, hopeful, and contented if they can but keep together. About the same time as her own powers failed, her brother, the youngest of the family and their chief support, met with an accident. He never wholly recovered, and struggled with the after-effects of it for seven years, when his mind, as well as his body, quite broke down. Since that time he has been in an asylum, and there is no hope of his recovery.

"And he was such a good brother and son, so good to us all," Miss N. told us, with sobs. "He worked for us as long as he could—he was our all, our only hope, and now he is gone; what could I do, what would become of me, if I had not the pension? If those who give could but know, if I could make them understand what their help is to me, and how grateful I am, I should be so glad." And we who looked at the brave patient faces of them all, and listened to the afflicted one as she tried to express her thankfulness, believed that if those by whose bounty she is provided for could spend an hour in that little room, as we did, their pleasure in giving would be greatly increased. No murmur against God or man fell from their lips, but thankfulness to all



BRIDGEMOUTH.

who helped to secure and to continue her pension. They had one wish in common—to be able to keep together, and to provide the little they needed. Surely it is a right blessed thing to help them in this for the Master's sake.

It was with a feeling of real regret that, after commending them to the God of all consolation, we said good-bye to our friends. The rector left a kind message for us, and expressed his regret that, being called away, he and his family could not entertain us. We look back upon that visit with pleasure, the memory of it keeps its fragrance still, and we sincerely hope that God in His mercy and goodness will continue His bounty to them.



HOME OF E. A.

## HALF-A-CENTURY OF PAIN.

"LIKE Bridgenorth Election—all on one side." We were told that old proverb, once more often heard than now, had its rise in the clannish feeling of the people. They had two parliamentary candidates competing for their suffrages, but one of them had all their votes. The good-fellowship in which they lived was not to be broken by the passing event of a contested election. When we reached Bridgenorth the sun was setting, and the old red church-tower stood out in bold relief against a pale green and amber sky. The "High Rock," on the opposite side of the ravine through which the Severn flows, was gorgeous in its crown of green and gold, while far beneath the gloom grew deeper every moment.

The artist at once woke up and forgot his fatigue. He wanted "a week," "a month" here, to catch those warm tones and shadows, to sketch those quaint chimneys and gables of ancient brickwork, and deep-set mullioned windows half hidden by wisteria and creeper. Then there was the bridge and the river, the old town gate, the school house and the market. "What can I do in one day?" he asked, "when I could fill my book in this place!"

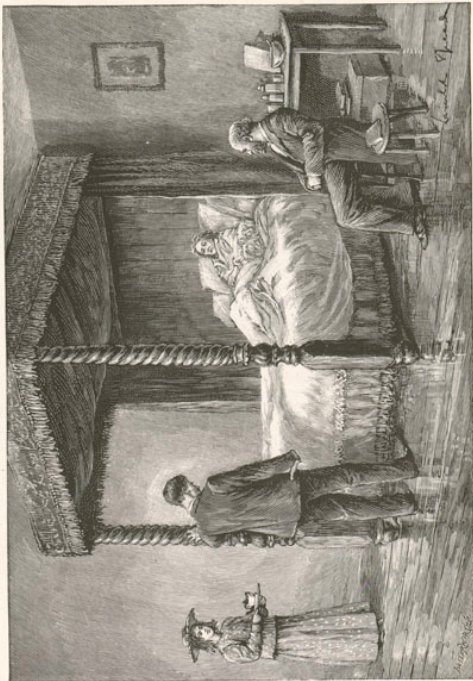
There are two towns here: the lower, on a narrow plain on either side the river, united by a handsome bridge; the upper town is upon a rock, with almost precipitous sides, round which are winding roads and paths with step

leading to the top. Of late, a double hydraulic lift has been constructed, making the otherwise toilsome ascent delightful. On the summit are all the best shops, the market, churches, and the ruins of the castle. This was a famous stronghold in bygone days, and during the Civil War held for the King. When it was taken by Cromwell the brave garrison retreated to the churchyard, where their champion was slain, and his sword now hangs in the church, while his loyalty is commemorated by a pretty group of almshouses near the spot where he fell.

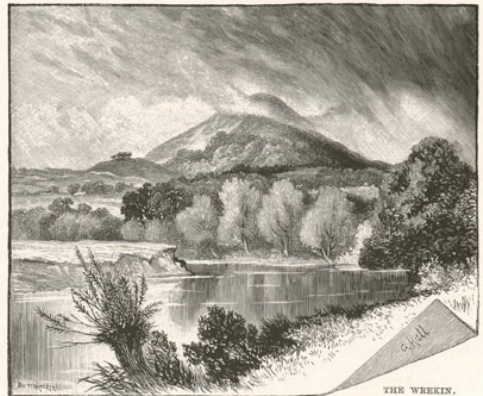
Bridgenorth is a sleepy place, that wakes up on market days and then dozes off until the next week brings market day again. Many of the houses belong to neither the upper nor the lower town, but observe a strict neutrality by clinging, like swallows' nests, to the angles and ledges on the side of the rock. In olden times many people dwelt on the rock itself, in holes and caves adapted for dwellings, remains of which are still to be seen. Our business here, however, was not to dwell upon sandstone rocks and cliffs with the Severn flowing between them, and the far-off wooded hills glistening in the sunlight after a morning of summer showers; but after making a few hasty sketches, to seek out a poor sufferer miles away from here. Thus it was that we found ourselves at Cressage, and set out on foot for Sheinton by a winding, narrow lane between high hedgerows. To our left, green meadows sloped down to the Severn, and beyond, the Wrekin lifted his huge shoulders above the plain, while driving mists and showers played around his head. Before us, and to our right, Wenlock Edge, its slopes varied with every tint of foliage, stretched far away. Leaving the lane by Sheinton Church, with its pretty timbered tower, we struck across the fields to a point where the valley narrowed at a brook, and a path led through dense woods, and opened at length upon a small patch of meadow, with a mill and a dwelling at its farther end. This was our destination.

In a few minutes we were by the bedside of one whose life has been one long struggle with disease and pain for nearly fifty years. E. A. is now sixty-six, and, from the time she was seventeen years old until now, she has not known a single painless day. Her limbs are wasted and contracted, until she lies with her knees drawn up almost to her chin, just wherever she is placed, until kind hands assist her to gain another position.

When her younger sister married, her husband, a small farmer, took her into their home, because there were none of her friends left who could do so. For seventeen years this good, kind-hearted man provided for her, though the world was going very hardly with himself. At length he had to give up his farm and take a bailiff's place, but he still continued his kindness, "because there was no one else to do it." Now he is in a little farm again, too



G. A.



THE WREKIN.

poor to employ labour, he and his family do all the work, the girls doing their part with the boys. The poor invalid said she thought she was of some use to them, and she enjoyed telling us how, lying awake with pain at night, she has heard the geese scream when a fox from the wood hard by has been among them; or the alarm in the hen-house when the rats have swarmed up from the brook after the eggs. "I woke the boys, I did, and they soon drove them off."

The house stands in such a secluded spot, almost surrounded by steep hills and woods and off the road to anywhere, that in the winter they do not see a single person outside their own family for days or even weeks together; and almost the only visitor at any time is the kind-hearted clergyman, who walks over the hills to this lonely dell to console and comfort the sufferer. He has his reward; we had ours. We learnt, from words spoken so low we had to stoop down to hear them, and between the paroxysms of asthma, how, amid the long agony of days of pain and nights of wakefulness, God can and does make that room bright with His presence, and floods her heart with a sense of

His love and care for her. How many times she told us "God is so good. You don't know, you can't know, how good He is to me."

E. A. told us she had such a feeling of "possession in the love of God," that her confidence never failed her but once, and that was when the bad times were at their worst for her brother-in-law, for she could not see what was to become of her. "Then, just then, the pension was granted. . . . Oh, it was such a relief, and such a *rebuke!* I have never doubted my God since, and never will again."

It was her joy to think that she need not now be separated from her kindred, who had tended her so long and made so many sacrifices for her sake.

Surely that pension was well and wisely given, and cannot be withheld. It will not be wanted much longer: the land where God wipes away every tear, and sorrow and pain and death are unknown, is not far from that room. As the level sun lighted up the poor pain-worn face upon the pillow, we needed no prophet to tell us we should never meet again on earth; but we shall meet for all that.

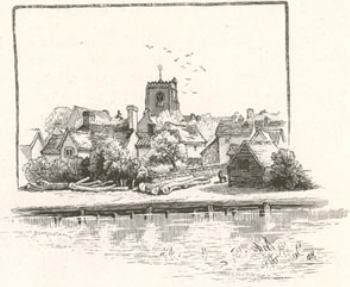
Her brother-in-law was busy about his work, but we could not leave until he was found and we had had the honour of shaking his hand. We did not insult him by our approval or thanks, nothing of the kind; but to what we said his only reply was, "Well, you see, there was nobody else to do it."

We should like to have that man's chance of hearing the Master say by-and-bye, "Well done!"

#### THE RUIN OF A MIND.

ONE of the many Newports in England is, as you know, in Salop, between Shrewsbury and Wellington. It consists, for the most part, of one long broad street, sloping downwards from the railway to a canal at the foot of the town. The church stands in the centre, with a noble square tower of warm red stone, all its sharpness of moulding and tracing worn by the winds and storms of centuries. It was early-closing day, and, as a cricket match was being played near by, the place seemed deserted, and a Sabbath quietness reigned. Our business there was to see A. D., who, about three years since, was elected a Pensioner upon the Foundation. After many inquiries, we at length found his abode, a tiny cottage in a lane as far removed from the main street as it could be to belong to the town.

The exterior was very attractive. A small bay window with spotless blinds, a miniature garden, a short path, flanked by a fragrant rose-tree in full bloom, led to the door that opened into a small sitting-room in which were traces, in the shape of books and oddments of furniture, of a once larger home and more affluent means.



NEWPORT.

A sad-faced woman received us very kindly, and pointing to a poor shrivelled vacant-looking man in an arm-chair, told us he was her brother, and the object of our visit.

We flatter ourselves that there is not much that is "fearsome" about us, and we had no reason for wearing an unusual hardness of visage that day, but all the same our arrival seemed to very much upset them both. Having quieted their fears by a few words of sympathy, we soon learned that A. D. was in such a state of weakness from paralysis and diabetes, aggravated by partial deafness and want of ability to make himself understood, that he wept at everything strange, even a look or a tone being enough to start him weeping. His sister and devoted nurse is also in broken health, but in her case it has been induced by ceaseless watching and waiting upon him.

Originally they were Bridgenorth people, where A. D. had a small business as a baker and provision dealer. He was never a strong man, and, with no business capacity or training, at the best of times he could not do more than barely pay his way.

Nine years ago a stroke of paralysis rendered him helpless in body and mind. He had been connected with the Sunday-school of his parish church as scholar and teacher nearly fifty years, and in his time of trouble the Vicar proved a true and kind friend to him. He was, however, soon removed by death, as were also one or two other lifelong friends who at first rendered aid. The little money realised by the sale of A. D.'s business and effects was soon

gone, and then he had nothing left but five shillings a week from his club, less payments, &c.

His sister had a little milliner's shop near by, and she took entire charge of him. As his infirmities increased, he required more and more of her care, until she had no time left for her business, so that she had to give it up. Then a place was offered her as caretaker, with rooms for both of them. This



A. D.

arrangement lasted but a short time, and then they were homeless, and drifted here and there where they could find shelter, until at length, through the kind efforts of many friends, he became a Pensioner of the Hospital, and they secured their present cottage. It is doubtful if they will be able to remain here long, as the rent is beyond their means, and at the same time they have not the money to pay for their removal, nor is he in a condition to risk any change.

Lately, gangrene set in his feet, and two of his toes came off; this, added to all his other infirmities, increased the burden of his sister. Still, they did not complain; they were too hopeless to do that.

To all human appearance Miss D. has nothing before her but to wait until death relieves her brother from his sufferings, and thus sets her free to resume her former trade. Like a sentinel she keeps her post, nerved by affection and duty to do her part as a sister to the end, among strangers, and rarely cheered by a visit or a word of sympathy from any one.



THE LOCK, NEWPORT.

There is no glamour of romance about this simple story. Its truth, its sadness, and its sombre tone relieved only by the simple faith which blossoms into the hope of heaven, this is its claim upon you, and this its appeal to your hearts. "George Eliot" had a great love for ugly dogs no one else seemed to care for. Poor nondescript things they were, with no points of breeding about them, or tricks of pretty fawning to attract attention to themselves. It was her delight to be kind to them, to win their hearts, and then to rejoice in their fidelity and devotion. And is there not among ourselves a need for larger hearts and deeper, wider sympathies, that can care for people with nothing very special about them, whose colourless lives are on such a dead level of monotonous privation and suffering that they make no call upon our sensibilities?

Yet, if we think over the details of such a case as this—and there are many such sufferers—and let our minds take in all the conditions of their lives, the many things that cannot be described here, but which to sensitive natures are great trials and humiliations, surely no appeal can be more pathetic than theirs, or move us to a more practical sympathy.

Long before we left, the sadness was gone from the sister's face, and though we could do so little in sharing such a burden as her brother's or her own, yet the poor woman seemed comforted and helped by having listeners "with hearts at leisure" and not weary of her story.



THE SEVERN AT SHREWSBURY.

## UNKNOWN TO FAME.

For a few days we were glad to have our headquarters at Shrewsbury, as it proved a convenient centre from which to reach those friends we were especially interested in on behalf of the Hospital. It is a very charming old town, almost surrounded by the Severn, dominated by a castle, and was, in ancient times, a place of great strategic importance in Welsh border warfare.

It is famous in our rough island story for stirring times and doughty deeds. Grim Glendower, with his hunger-maddened men, put everybody's hearts in a flurry when he made a call. And there were strange commotions here when Prince Hal and Falstaff came picnicking this way, after the manner of those days. There is no more picturesque county town in England than this. There are many bigger and grander, but none that so appeal to one's sense of beauty or waken more memories of the past.

We came to see two poor women, unknown to fame, living in a cottage in the outskirts, who had fought their fight with sorrow, poverty, and disease—not amid the clash of arms for one short day, cheered on by bray of trumpets and the shout of comrades, but alone and in silence through long years—and won the victory. The roll of fame knows nothing of them; they are not called to honour here for what they have done; yet when our mistakes are corrected and what is wrong is put right for ever, those who are now "last" will be "first."

These two sisters live together, and one of them, C. J., about a year and

a-half ago was placed upon the pension list. She has been greatly afflicted for many years owing to severe internal injuries received in a fall when a child.

Sometimes, in brief intervals of comparative freedom from pain, she has managed to earn, if not a living, yet something towards her support. This was not only pleasant to herself but also a relief to her friends, upon whom she otherwise depended, and whose means barely sufficed for their own needs. In the beginning of her affliction many kind hearts lightened her burden in various ways; but as time passed on, so too did these, until now but very few are left.

Her father died suddenly in the street. A brother, who was doing his best to take his father's place in the home, was drowned. Other members of the family followed them quickly, though in a less tragic manner. These repeated shocks have had their effect upon one always weak and ailing until almost the slightest effort became painful. Rapidly increasing bodily weakness, and daily lessening means, made her outlook upon life dark indeed, scarcely relieved by one gleam of hope. Her sister, whose only source of income was plain sewing, and whose health often failed, did her utmost to provide for her. Three times she has been under hospital treatment, in Salford, Birmingham,



C. J.



THE FERRY.

and London, but to no permanent benefit. She returned home greatly disappointed, and once more her brave sister took care of her. Then she was nominated for a pension, and for three years her friends worked for her until they secured her election. When the good news came it seemed too good to be true,

as she had given up all hope of success. "Had I been able to do so," she told us, "I would have fallen upon my knees to thank God for His goodness and those kind friends who had secured the pension for me."

Behind her refined reticence there lay a time of great privation and suffering for both of them, endured with a resolute stoicism rarely equalled. It was painful to both to refer to that period of their lives; but now, that belonged to the past, and there was no profit in recalling it. Her sister continues her occupation, and, though late, the cloud has rifted at last and brighter days have come.

She writes: "Words cannot express the deep thankfulness I feel for such a great blessing, which relieves my mind, and also helps to alleviate pain, and makes life seem rather more endurable."

What need to say more? The subscribers to this fund have no worthier recipient of their bounty than this poor sufferer, and we plead for its continuance, not alone for her sake, but as some recognition of the self-effacement and unwearied devotion of her brave sister.

#### THE SECRET OF CONTENT.

We left Shrewsbury for Craven Arms one afternoon in June, and thence for a common on the farther side of a large hill, the upper half of which was covered with timber to its summit. Crossing the Honey, now almost in flood from the recent storms, we had a steady ascent before us of a mile and a-half, then a bye-road took us over the northern shoulder of the hill to a high cultivated tableland. Backward, we had a magnificent view of the Welsh

mountains, sometimes black with the shadows of huge billowy clouds driven before the gale then blowing, which caused ruin and disaster at so many places on all our coasts, and in a moment the shadows were gone and the sunlight played upon their rugged heights. Presently, the road dipped to the south-east, with range after range of misty hills guarding the valley of the Severn, and below us, to our right, the Honey and the Teme hastening to join the larger river. Ludlow Church tower and castle were one moment full in view in the varying light, and in the next were blotted out by the mist and rain. A solitary horseman overtook us here and directed us to a cottage where we might get better information than he was able to give. We followed his advice, and an old lady kindly sent her little grand-daughter with us down a rough quarry road to a point from which could be seen the red gable of a cottage nearly a mile away. At the bottom of the dell we crossed a stone dam with a great sheet of water to our right, and at its farther end the red roofs of Pool's farmhouse and outbuildings showing through the trees. As we had not yet found the friend we were in search of, the sketch of this lovely spot had to be deferred. A quarter of an hour later we were in her neat little home, chatting with S. L. and her aged mother, while Polly, a little niece, prepared a cup of tea. We were glad to find the friend who enjoys the pension provided by the Hospital in good spirits, and, notwithstanding her bodily helplessness, with clear and active mind, and such eager interest and zest in life, that one might easily fancy she had the full use of all her powers and ample means at her disposal.

Yet what are the facts? Since she was eighteen months old she has never walked. A fall, at that early age, dislocated her hip and injured her spine; but being unable to describe her sufferings, the serious nature of her accident was not understood until it was too late. For forty years her right leg has been paralysed and contracted, and her hand



S. L.'S COTTAGE.



added to Miss L.'s pension, enables them to live together, and thus to share in common a more comfortable existence than otherwise would be possible.

Miss L. told us with much feeling how what might have been an unbearable affliction had been lightened and her life filled with peace and contentment by the goodness of her many friends. After an hour's quiet talk with this family, while the artist plied his pencil, we set out again for Craven Arms, this time securing the much-coveted sketch of Pool's farm. We were so much interested in discussing all we had seen and heard, that the return journey over the hills was made much shorter for us than when we went out.

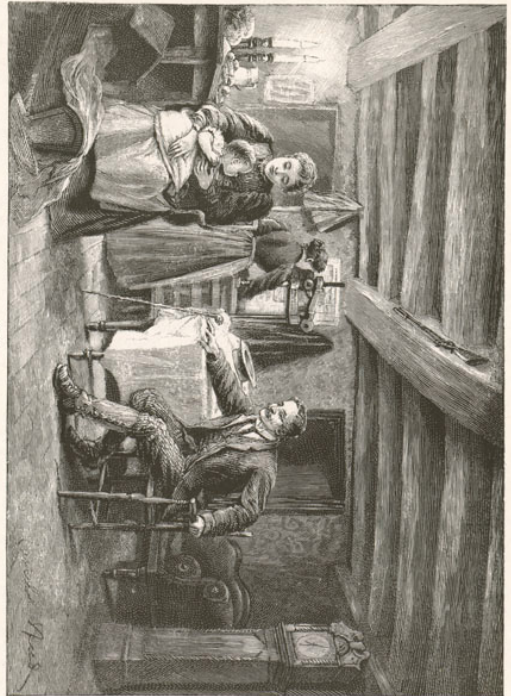
IN SLEEPY HOLLOW.



HOME OF S. W.

and small farmhouses. The air is so still, no sound is heard save the hum of myriads of midges on the wing, rejoicing before God in the heated, quivering air, with all their might. The cattle are lying close under the shadow of the tall elms; the fowls by the roadside, half hidden in their dusty lairs, are too lazy to be disturbed by our presence. We are going downward into "Sleepy Hollow," and may hap on Rip van Winkle just round the corner. The lane led on but little farther, and then a bridle path for hunters skirting the pleasant fields came out upon a well-known place of "meet." It would be hard indeed to imagine a more peaceful scene, or one further removed from the stress and storm of life, with its toil and pain of body and mind, and anguish of soul. Yet they were all close at hand; and something else—a compensation greater than all—combined in that tiny homestead, a mere cottage in a garden, flanked by cowsheds and a stable.

BETWEEN Nantwich and Whitechurch there is a little hamlet called Sheppenhall, lying off the main road on either side of a narrow drift-way between high hedgerows, and almost buried in trees. Here and there we catch glimpses of the red roofs and whitewashed walls of a few cottages



A woman stands in a low doorway shading her eyes with her hand, another peeps between the flower-pots on the window-sill, and a man fresh from the hayfield comes forward to meet us at the gate. We took stock of him at once. A good, honest face he has, bronzed by sun and wind, and lean from toil; but full of splendid health, and of something besides—the courage and determination which rejoices in overcoming difficulties.

"Yes," his sister was within; and this is his wife, he proudly tells us, as a young woman comes forward to greet us. We had better get in out of the sun—he would look after the horse; so we gladly did as we were bidden.

What a quaint little interior it was! so cool and sweet, and clean as a dairy farm should be. A huge oak beam, black with age, kindly invited us to test its soundness with our heads; heavy ledge doors with low framed lintels, which comfort, not less than politeness, prompted us to bow to as we passed under them to the inner room where our invalid friend awaited us. She has her wheel chair in a cozy corner by a sunny window opening upon the garden, and from that point of vantage commands a view of the narrow lane, with the chance thrown in of seeing a neighbour pass sometimes. She cannot walk, nor even stand, and has to be carried up and down stairs. But that big brother of hers manages all that. He just takes her up in his strong arms when he comes from the fields in the forenoon, and places her in her chair in the room below; and when his day's work is done he carries her back again to bed upstairs.

And such stairs! the treads all triangular—"winders" carpenters call them—as wide as one's hand in the middle, and each step rising a quarter of a yard. The getting of a helpless invalid, like our friend, up and down, without serious damage, requires great skill as well as strength, and love supplies both.

We were gladly initiated into some of the mysteries of Cheshire cheese making. One side of the living-room was occupied by an iron press, and by cheeses in all stages of manufacture; while above was a great store of others maturing for the market at their leisure.

The price? Ah! that touched a tender place. We learned it was so low, that when the heavy rent and outgoings are paid, it leaves far too little for those who take all the risk and do all the work of making them.

S. W. tells us she has been afflicted since she was seventeen. Rheumatic fever and complications were followed by a brief interval of comparative health. Then rheumatism came again, and this time to make her prisoner for life. Little by little her strength ebbed away, and her limbs became more and more rigid, until the partial use of her fingers is all the power she has



NANTWICH FROM THE RIVER.

left. This, however, though so small, is a great comfort: she can knit, and somehow she manages to sew. We looked incredulous, perhaps, for she added quickly, appealing to her sister-in-law: "I can sew, can't I now? But then, you see, it's a way of my own I've got, and of course it's slow; but then, I've plenty of time, and, you see, I nurse the baby."

In the early years of her affliction her father was living, and had a larger farm in the same hamlet (her brother has but twenty acres), and he spared no expense to obtain some alleviation of her sufferings. "He grudged me nothing, that he didn't, though he had such a hard time of it himself," she told us, with tears of affection as she recalled his kindness. A year or so before he died he had the comfort of knowing that, through the efforts of many friends, she had been elected a Pensioner, and his poor afflicted child was provided for for life. For a long time he had borne a double load of care. The losses on his farm and consequent diminishing means, plus the haunting dread of what would become of her when he should be taken away by death—this was the greater trouble to him. But with loving tact and reticence he kept

his fears from her, so that she knew nothing of them until long after he was dead, and then only by accident, for those he confided in were forbidden to tell her, for "he wouldn't have her vexed."

Who would not cherish the memory of such a parent? After twenty-three years of suffering our dear friend's eyes and voice are still young. No word of repining passed her lips, but, instead, fervent thanks for so many mercies, for such a good brother and sister, for so many friends, for the pension which prevented her from being a burden to them; then there was her sister at Blackpool, to whom she is consigned as "luggage," being sent down in her chair in the guard's van: everybody was "good" to her; and inwardly we said, "Who could help it?"

Early last year her brother married, and he and his good wife are untiring in their care of her. Three happier people we have seldom seen, for they are all, in their way, the willing slaves of a little baby-queen, who has a jubilee every day, and rules them all, and coos and crows, and, if they are good enough to her, rewards them with a most comical arch look which defies description.

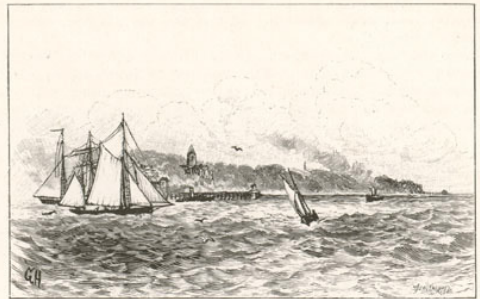
Ah, well! they all seemed to know what that look was worth, if not what it meant, for it made them all happy in loving her.

May her benevolent despotism continue, and may her happy slaves ever find their own hearts made gentle and patient and loving under the sway of one of God's most gracious gifts—a little child!

#### NOT A MURMUR.

AT Rock Ferry, near Birkenhead, many Liverpool merchants and ship-owners have pleasant semi-rural homes. They are within easy reach of that great seaport both by the splendid service of steam ferry boats and also by the new railway under the Mersey. Many of the larger houses stand in extensive grounds, and are so hidden from view by thick foliage that it is scarcely credible that Birkenhead and Liverpool are less than a quarter of an hour away, and that one can be in the midst of lovely sylvan scenery and quiet glades, listening to the birds or looking at kine in the meadows, and, in a few minutes, amid the roar of the traffic in the heart of a great city. The transition is so quick and complete that, so far as we know, it is unequalled.

But there are small houses as well as large at Rock Ferry, and there are far more poor people there than rich. Our special errand was to seek out one to whom all the facilities provided by rail and boat were matters of no con-



NEAR BIRKENHEAD.

cern: one whose longest journey for years past had been from one side of her room to the other, from her bed to her couch by the window, and that accomplished with the help of others and at the expense of so much pain and discomfort that it had not been attempted for the last eighteen months.

We found our friend in a nice room on the top floor, overlooking pleasant gardens to the southward, with glimpses here and there of beautiful trees in the distance. For twenty-five years she has lived in that room and looked upon the scene below, finding reasons for thankfulness in the bright colours and wafted fragrance of flowers grown in other people's gardens.

A. W. lives with her two sisters, who, by letting apartments and their own incessant labour, can just manage to keep a home for themselves and for this poor invalid.

She told us that all her childhood, and onward to her twenty-first year, when looked back upon, seems one long dream of pain. At the time when she needed the greatest care and was a heavy expense to her parents, her father failed in business, and poverty was added to her already heavy burden. Then there came a brief respite, and for a few years she was able to be of some use to those who had so long and tenderly cared for her. That time is the one bright oasis in her life, the one precious memory now of how good it is to be able to get about and to work, as well as to know some

cessation of nausea and pain. But that happy period lies far back in the past, twenty-five years away, and during all that time she has been confined to her bed.

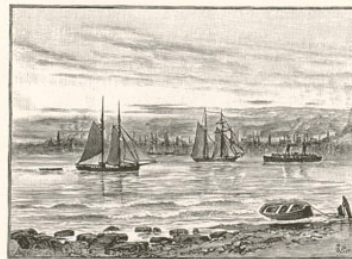
Seven years ago, through the kind help of friends, and of one lady especially, she was elected a Pensioner of the Hospital. "No one knows," she told us, "or can possibly understand, what that means to my sisters and to me." Up to that time she had been such a heavy burden upon their slender resources, as well as needing so much of their personal care and help, that they



A. W.

were greatly hindered in earning her living as well as their own. Their former friends and near relations have all passed away, and now none remain upon whom kinship might be supposed to give them any claim.

The pension coming to them when it did, and paid as it is month by month, has made life bearable to them all, and enabled them to enjoy some alleviation from their hitherto constant fear for the future when they should be no longer able to work as they do now. These brave women, no less than their invalid sister, have been cheered by this timely help; and it is a pleasing thing to



EVENING ON THE MERSEY.

notice how what is given for the support of those who are precluded by their sufferings from doing anything for themselves, is at the same time a comfort and relief to others who in so many instances have long borne the burden of their support unaided. This is not what is contemplated when the pensions are granted, but it is nevertheless what in many cases follows, and those who have exhausted their means, and almost worn themselves out in their devotion to an afflicted member of their family, have the strain of endurance eased before it reaches the breaking-point. This is a fact that should not be lost sight of by our friends and subscribers, for it is very cheering to know that when by their gifts some poor sufferer is provided for, other hearts also are made to sing for joy and other hands are permitted a little pause in the struggle for existence. The sacrifice love demanded has been paid so long, until it has perhaps come to the crowning sorrow that failing strength will soon forbid that it be any longer paid. In all such cases, and there are many of them, the relief, the help of an added twenty pounds a year—so little to some who read this—is more than can be told to not a few of these for whom we plead.

As we were leaving, A. W.'s sister said to us, "Twenty-five years, and not a murmur." "Yes, so patient, so thankful for every little service rendered, for every visit from dear kind neighbours and friends who, oftener than she knows it, come to see her that they themselves may be braced up and encouraged to face some bitter reality by a little talk with her." This is what we learned, and as we regretfully said good-bye, our own hearts told us it is indeed true "God uses His weakest ones to strengthen the strong," and that

"The mark of rank in nature  
Is capacity for pain."



A. E. K.'S FORMER HOME.

## A STURDY LITTLE SOUL.

EDREMONT is on the other side of Birkenhead to Rock Ferry, and nearer the sea. A. E. K., one of the Hospital's oldest Pensioners, resides here with her sister, the widow of a captain in the mercantile marine.

When an infant, just able to stand by a chair, she met with an accident which so injured her spine that she lost all power in her lower extremities. They grew, it is true, but without strength, and so twisted and distorted as to be entirely useless. But that happened *seventy-five years ago*; and to-day we found this dear old lady hale and cheerful. She can move only by using her hands for feet, and by dragging her body on the floor; but for all that she is so active and independent, that she almost resents having anything done for her. Had she been straight and well she would still have been a little woman. As she is, when on the floor she is barely two feet high.

"I'm more used to helping other people than to have them help me," she informed us with an emphatic jerk of her grey head which showed she did not lack spirit. As she grew so misshapen and helpless her mother lost all natural affection for her, and came to regard her with loathing. Her treatment of the little cripple was so cruel, that others begged to be allowed to take the child away; and her mother was only too glad to be rid of the sight



A. E. K.

of the deformed creature crawling on the floor, and always in the way. After sheltering her until she was fifteen, these good friends, with whom she wanted for nothing, met with such a reverse of fortune as compelled them to send her back to her own family, who told her she was "born only to be a burden to somebody as long as she lived." This roused her, not to resentment, but to cast herself utterly upon God. "He knows," she said, "how I used to lie awake at night sobbing and praying that He would find somebody to care for me; and He did!

"He sent somebody to me one day who took me away;" and after over-

coming many obstacles, she succeeded by his good help in learning the dress-making, "for I was determined I would earn my own living and be a burden to no one."

People laughed at the notion of her going into business for herself, and asked how she could "fit a lady's dress." We laughed too, as she told us how she climbed on a stool, from stool to chair, and from chair to table, and once seated there, like a tailor on his board, there were very few she could not reach. Customers came and came again, for she took pains to please. Her business so grew and prospered that in the end there was not one of all her mother's family, and she was the eldest of eleven children, who was not helped by her in some time of need. Her youngest sister, with whom she now resides, she took when quite a child and entirely provided for, and afterwards taught her her business. For nearly fifty years she maintained herself, and was a succourer of many. Then sickness came, her hands began to give way—her work was done.

Such a sturdy little soul could not altogether be hidden, even in a busy city like Liverpool. The late Rev. C. M. Birrell and his wife had a great regard for her, and admired her fervent piety, as well as her brave fight to live and to be of use. A brother-in-law, a master mariner, an inmate of an almshouse, sheltered her during recent years, and now he has gone to his rest, his widow, whom she protected as a child, takes care of her.

In her pleasant room with her books and knitting, and the memories of a long life in which her great deprivations have been wonderfully compensated by the kindness of many friends ("For I'm the 'King's daughter,' you know") and the possession of a brave, heroic spirit which never shirked a fight with difficulty, A. E. K. told us she "never wanted for company."

"I've enjoyed my life. I worked as long as I was able, and then when my strength failed, my friends secured me the pension; and so I am provided for.

"Cheerful, did you say? Of course I am; why shouldn't I be? God has always cared for me, and taught me to love Him, and He will keep me until He takes me to stand before His throne.

"Yes; I shall stand when I get there."

As we came out of that little room, bright with the sunlight of love and peace, she called out to us with a cheery voice:

"When you get up yonder, look out for me; for I'm going to be there."

It was a glorious July day, and the joy of the fulness of the summer filled the air. The Mersey with the shipping lay at the foot of the hill, and on the farther side of the river the stately mansions of the merchants, who are known as princes in all the earth, gleamed out from their nests of greenery

or fringed the shore. Down by the sands of New Brighton bands of happy children were at play without a thought of care, but none were more sure of their "habitation," none were more childlike in their freedom from care, in their enjoyment of life, and their unquestioning trust in the love that provides, than the little friend we had just left.



LIGHTHOUSE, NEW BRIGHTON.

THREE SCORE AND TEN.

LEAVING Birkenhead, we set out for Warrington, where two of our friends reside in outlying suburbs of that busy, noisy town. The streets are narrow, paved with granite sets, and thronged with people. The heat was most oppressive, and more than once we imagined a thunderstorm was at hand; but it was only an extra black blanket of soot, from the innumerable tall stacks at the various works, coming between us and the sky. It is not a lovely town, and it is unmistakably grimy. Buildings of equal age, in other towns we know of, still look startlingly new, while here they have an air of venerable antiquity. We were told that the two main industries by which the town thrives are iron and leather. Everything in iron—from plates for iron-clads to Warrington gas stoves, from ropes of steel for the rigging of ships



AN OASIS IN GRIME LAND.

we could soon learn to love it and its hearty go-ahead people if our lot were cast there. It is one of the world's good honest drudges, making every land its debtor for the service it renders to locomotion and commerce; while music, divinest of the arts, finds here the means to tell us the message she has brought from heaven. A people so serviceable to all the rest deserve at least some of the good things by which the world is gladdened and made beautiful.

It is fitting, therefore, that in the very heart of the town there should be a fine Park, secured for the free use of the people for ever, and so laid out and planted that young and old, the boisterous and the sedate, are alike provided for. It was a marvel to us to see what beautiful flowers and turf and trees can be grown in such an atmosphere; and we were told that other sites have been secured by this enterprising corporation as pleasant resorts for the people.

Our first call was upon Miss de P., an ancient lady of French descent, whose more than seventy years have for the most part been passed in bed.

Here, again, we found rheumatism has much to answer for; the crooked, twisted, distorted limbs and fingers told of long years of agony passed in its cruel grip. Its work was before us, fearful to look upon, unutterably sad to recall; but to endure the torture by which it has been accomplished must have been a living martyrdom. Yet for all that the light of love and faith is not quenched. The spirit has been chastened, not crushed. We were glad to find that she now suffers very little pain, and, though she is not able to move herself even the least, but has to lie just as she is placed, she

and winding gear for colliery shafts to piano wires, and all of the very best—are made here. And further, there is no place outside of Bermondsey where there are so many tanneries or such good leather made as here, and we all know “there is nothing like leather.” We have no wish to find fault with the place; we are sure



FIG. 10

has now better health than she has known for many years. Of late she has become very deaf, so that we were glad of the services of her niece as interpreter.

In her early womanhood, when life was just opening out before her with its hopes and allurements, she was stricken down. She was told she needed rest, a few weeks' quiet, and she would be all right again. It was not long before it was evident that she was a prisoner under a lifelong sentence of pain and weakness. The change was so great from a life of active sympathy in personal service for others to one of entire inaction and dependence, it is not strange that for the first few years she found submission very hard indeed.



TIMBERED HOUSES, WARRINGTON.

able to bear her heavy affliction with trusting heart and chastened spirit.

The end comes on apace and cannot now be far off. The spirit will soon be free of its house of bondage, and know the blessedness of that rest God has in store for His chosen ones. The pension will not be needed much longer, and while it is, not one of our many generous helpers would withhold it from Miss de P. Her last days should lack nothing that human love and sympathy can provide. The pension is now more than ever required, as those who have hitherto helped to support her are getting into years, and can do nothing for her now; while the married niece with whom she lives has lately resumed her work of teaching in a public elementary school, in order to make up for their deficiency of means.

It was all very well for others to preach it to her, and for good little books to recommend it, but to practise it hourly, daily, always, and in weakness and poverty, that was quite another matter. But God, who gives strength equal to the burden He lays upon His children, gave her strength and grace, so that ere long she was



WARRINGTON PARK.

#### A MINISTERING MOTHER.

In another suburb of Warrington we called upon A. S., one of those who have enjoyed the Hospital pension for nearly thirty years, though he is now not much over fifty. When a child he was caught in a chain at the back of a waggon, and dragged some distance along a rough country road before the horses could be stopped. The result was that his legs were so terribly lacerated that blood poisoning followed, and one of them had to be amputated. Since then scrofulous sores have broken out all over his body several times, leaving him in a condition of chronic weakness which entirely unfits him to do any thing to earn his living.

His mother, a nice-looking old lady, nearly eighty years of age, attends to him and cares for all his needs with the love that never fails. It was very beautiful to see her devotion to her son. Her husband is dead, and other children of hers are scattered over sea; but she clings to this one because he has always needed her so much more than the others have done. It is quite an open question which may be taken first. To us it seems that whichever went first, the other would soon follow, their lives are so much bound up in one another.



They removed to Warrington three years ago from the quiet seclusion of a Norfolk village, in order that they might be with another member of the family who was employed in the town; but sickness removed this remaining prop, and now they wish the change had never been made. We could see they were sadly out of their proper element. The smoke and din of the



A. S.

mills, the ceaseless clatter of the clogs as the workers go to and fro, and the grime finding its way everywhere, through every chink and cranny, covering everything with a layer of impalpable black dust, are sad trials to a country-bred woman with a passion for cleanliness. The time before them, they say, seems likely to be so short that they think it is not worth while to go back

again—they may as well stay where they are, notwithstanding all its drawbacks and discomforts; and, besides, they could ill afford the expense of removal.

The pension has been to them the greatest mercy they have known: it overtopped all others, and both mother and son quite broke down when they tried to express their gratitude for the help they have so long received, and that is now their all. But for it they must long ago have been separated; and to be separated is the one great dread of them both. It is very touching to see how affliction and the feebleness of old age learn to lean upon one another, and to find support and courage in their mutual love. So God is pleased to use the trials and burdens of life, forging in the furnace of affliction bonds of love stronger than death.

In both these cases the pension saves the sufferers from destitution, and secures to them, in their affliction, what is to them above all price—the companionship and kindly ministrations of their own people.

#### AT BARTON-IN-THE-BEANS.

It is a far cry from Warrington to Market Bosworth, our next halting-place. Here we made our quarters for the night at the Dixie Arms, an ancient hostelry of good repute; and in the early hours of the following morning explored the tiny town to see the grammar school where good old Dr. Samuel Johnson, of dictionary fame, was at one time master. A Latin inscription tells us the school was re-founded early in the seventeenth century by one of the Dixie family. Thence to the fine old church where so many Dixies are buried, and to see the park and hall that now know them no more. An old crone told us, as she counted their names upon her fingers, she remembered four of them; and evidently she cherished a warm regard for the late baronet, upon whose tomb is the prayer that befits us all and makes us kin, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Barton-in-the-Beans is the delightfully rural name of the place we were bound for. It is not only alliterative, but suggestive of early summer's delightful sweetness. But of "beans" we saw none. We do not say there were not any, only that in our long walk we did not see them; and, further, no one could tell us of any leguminous crop in the past that called for special remembrance. After much inquiry we regretfully left the name as we found it, a problem for the curious—

"For how, or why, it came to be,  
No man alive could tell."



MARKET BOSWORTH.

The place itself is in the very heart of the country, "far from the madding crowd," secluded, yet sufficiently in touch with the outside world to meet some of the larger needs of to-day. It lies to the south-west of Charnwood Forest, about midway between Ashby-de-la-Zouch (linked for ever in our memory with the name of "Ivanhoe") and the actual scene of the Battle of Bosworth, where Richard III. lost his life, and Henry of Richmond was crowned King upon the field.

There is no suggestion of "tourney" or of strife to-day. It is highly cultivated, well-wooded, undulating country. The parishes are small, and almost every eminence has its crown of clustering elms, cottages, and farms, and high above them all its slender spire. The white dusty roads wind round the hillsides, here and there losing themselves in the valleys below, and reappearing far off in the distance. Slender streams wind through the lower meadows, widening out into frequent mill-heads. Under the willows the pretty red and white cattle are sheltering from the sun, while others stand knee-deep in the brook.

Barton-in-the-Beans, though so obscure as to be known to very few people to-day, had its own share in the work of the great evangelical revival in the early and middle years of the last century. An ancestor of Miss D. was converted by the ministry of one of the godly men sent out to preach by the Countess of Huntingdon. He, in turn, began to labour for the good of others, and continued to do so until past his ninetieth year. His influence extended for many miles around, and was not only felt to be a great moral and spiritual force in the counties of Notts, Derby, and Leicester, but was also largely instrumental in founding the remarkable Orissa Mission in Southern Bengal. The late Mr. Thomas Cook, of tourist fame, occupied the leisure of his declining years in collecting and publishing the records of the lives of this good man and of his more gifted son.

Miss D.'s father, one of the descendants of the above, was a farmer in a village a few miles from Barton, where he died about twenty-four years ago.



F. P. D.

She was then a young woman of twenty-three, and for the next sixteen years lived a life of the most strenuous toil. Her mother was bedridden for six years, and needed constant nursing. She had also the management of the dairy and cheese-making, while her brother took charge of the outdoor work of a large farm. But, like so many more during the last two decades, they struggled with the adverse conditions of agriculture, only to lose all they had. The collapse of their business was quickly followed by her own breakdown in health, which rapidly developed into paralysis of the lower limbs, and from that time she has remained in bed, unable to move without assistance.

Reading between the lines of her simple story, it was clear to us that this good woman, who claimed no credit for what she had done and endured, had been sacrificed through her devotion to others. She was strong and brave, and full of affection for those about her, who probably never thought of the peril at which she was serving them, and, like herself, believed that she was too strong to take any harm from her exertions. But the day came when, on awakening, she could not rise; she could do no more; and she felt that her work was done.

Since then seven years have been passed in bed, and there probably it will be her lot to lie, waiting with patience until the Master says, "Come up higher."

Apparently that day is far off, for she is of strong physique, her mind is clear and alert, she delights in good books, in the converse of friends, and is able to take a keen interest in all the life about her.

It is a pleasure to find that her friendship is prized by her kind-hearted neighbours, among whom she counts the village pastor, the present representative in his office of her great and great-great-grandfathers. She is fortunate, too, in the situation of the pleasant cottage and in the kind-hearted couple with whom she makes her home, and who spare no effort to lighten her affliction by loving service cheerfully rendered.

The lean and hungry years at the farm ate up nearly all her savings, and they came quite to an end just as the pension was granted. Many noticed at the time how fitting it was that when her own little "cruse of oil" failed, God's good gift, through the kind ministrations of His people, should come to take its place. Several times we have noticed a similar instance.

"God never is before His time,  
And never is behind."

The pension given by the Hospital has come at the moment when all other resources have failed.

We spent a pleasant evening with Miss D. and her friends, and we were

glad to note how fully she could enter into the wider interests of the world from which her own life lies apart, and how keenly she enjoyed the subacidity of the artist's wit.

Sometimes, alas! it happens that suffering makes people selfish, and exacting, and even bitter; but it has not been so with those we have had the privilege to visit on this little tour. They are utterly dependent upon others, only one of the twelve being able to move about without help, yet somehow they have learnt to live as the birds live, "which have neither storehouse nor barn," and like them, too, "they are not forgotten before God." They are the happy possessors of the birds' secret of cheerfulness and hope, and have learned the lesson, so necessary for us all to learn, to live one day at a time.

Not one of these sufferers was previously known to us, but it has been a privilege to visit them. We feel that we are their debtors to-day, for they have taught us the duty of contentment, and shown us that whatever calamity may overtake us in life, there are for us all, when the day comes, undiscovered resources of goodness and peace in the love and mercy of God. And we have also learned that every subscriber to this Christlike Charity is sharing in a great and beneficent work, a work so blessed, and so greatly needed, that we regret our inability to describe as we would, either the blessedness of those who give, or the need of those who take.



F. P. D.'S LODGING.

## A LODGE BY THE SEA.

WHEN King David wanted to extol the goodness of God, and to commend His praise to the people, he not only sang of the national deliverances He had given them, but of His personal favour to the afflicted and scattered. "God SETTETH THE SOLITARY IN FAMILIES."

"There are ten of us here," said a cheery voice, "and we are all as happy as birds in a nest." This was one of the many kind greetings we had on our arrival at St. Leonards-on-Sea.

The room was large, bright, and airy, opening upon a wide balcony overlooking the shore. Within, in the cool shade, and without, in the August sunshine, in groups of twos and threes, in wheel-chairs or on couches, were the happiest holiday-folk we had ever met. They were poor women Pensioners of the ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR INCURABLES, who had been invited to the Seaside Home for a change of air and scene.

What a merry family they were! They had come down for six weeks, they told us, and no day was long enough, and the weeks were far too short; and "the worst of it is," said one, "we are all to go home again soon, and" (confidentially) "we none of us want to go."

"We never had such a time before, or expected to have a treat like this."

Another, "I hadn't been out for years and years, never seen a field of corn, or the river, or this lovely sea; isn't it beautiful? Look at it, and look at the ships!"

So one and another gave utterance to what was uppermost in their hearts. Some few were equally happy in a quieter way, for they are never wholly free from pain. On inquiry we found they were afflicted with internal disorders, and had spent many years either in hospitals for special treatment, or enduring the slow return to convalescence with the dread of yet another operation awaiting them. What agony of mind was thus added to their bodily pain! One dear soul, trembling at the outlook before her, told us (referring to one of her hospital experiences), "They said I was dead last time, and when I opened my eyes again and woke up they were quite surprised." Her lips quivered as she added with tears, "Oh, why did I wake up again? It would have been better if I hadn't—but that's wrong: God knows best, God knows best; and He has been very good to me."

"Here," they said, "we have everything; the matron, the nurses, the servants, are all so good to us. We can be moved about and as much as we like; nobody makes a trouble of anything we want done; and you can't tell how nice that is."



A LODGE BY THE SEA—A STUDY.

"No," chimed in another, "that you can't. I don't often have to ask for anything, for they all seem to know just what I want." It is impossible to convey the note of heartfelt gratitude in these few words, or what a luxury it was to be "moved about" as often as they liked.

They find much pleasure in the larger society and companionship of the inmates of the Home; and, besides, a day rarely passes in which they have not the presence of kind and sympathetic friends who reside in the place and regularly visit the patients.

Some were very pale and feeble when they arrived, but the fresh sea breeze has done much for them. Dr. Sunshine, too, has been unremitting in his

attention, both on the balcony at home and when wheeled on the pier, so that some of them have quite a glow of summer on their faces.

The sea comes up within a few yards of the house, and our friends are never tired of its soothing music, nor of watching the white-crested waves rolling in to break on the banks of shingle, running up them in long lines of foam, and then, as if amazed to find themselves ashore, hurrying back to be lost in the following billow. It was all very delightful to them, and scarcely less so to us to witness the artless enjoyment of what they said was the greatest pleasure they had ever known.

Now, if we who are strong, and are able to find delight in laborious days, can rejoice in leaving them behind us for a time, that we may hie away to the shore and the ever-changing sea, or to the hills and the summer woods, what must it be to these, who by their infirmities and helplessness have been confined



ON ST. LEONARDS PIER.

to one room five, nine, seventeen years, to have such a change as this made possible for them!

Well, that is just what the Committee have done, and they hope to be able to continue to do so for a number of the Pensioners who, though helpless, may, however, be able to bear the journey to St. Leonards. The Seaside House is a necessary adjunct to the Hospital, a happy and beneficent afterthought, giving great benefit and pleasure both to inmates and Pensioners all the year round, the wisdom of its institution and maintenance becoming more and more apparent.

After a personal and intimate knowledge of the work of this Charity for many years past, we most respectfully and confidently ask that it may have the increased sympathy and support of the generous public.



TOLLEMACHE PARK.

THE ROYAL  
HOSPITAL FOR INCURABLES,  
WEST HILL, PUTNEY HEATH.

SEA-SIDE HOUSE, 55, MARINA, ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA.

*Instituted 31st July, 1854.*

Patron: HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES, K.G.  
President: THE MOST HONOURABLE THE MARQUESS OF NORTHAMPTON.  
Treasurer: HERBERT JOHN ALLCROFT, Esq., F.R.G.S.

This Charity was established to relieve and to cherish, *during the remainder of life*, persons, above the pauper class, suffering from incurable maladies, and thereby disqualified for the duties of life.

For persons *needing a home* an asylum is provided: medical attendance, nursing and domestic comforts are supplied, and the endeavour is made to alleviate suffering, and to cheer the life from which health has departed.

To persons *having a home*, but without the means of support, a pension of £20 a year is given; thus the family circle is unbroken, and the invalid is relieved from the pain of dependence.

There are at present 217 Inmates, and 643 Pensioners. Total, 860.

The Institution is open every week-day for the inspection of Subscribers and Friends, between the hours of Twelve and Six.

Inmates' Visiting Days—Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, from Two to Five, and on Sundays from Two to half-past Three.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

An Annual Subscriber has One Vote for Half-a-Guinea, and an additional vote for every additional Half-a-Guinea. A Life Subscriber has One Vote for Life for Five Guineas, and an additional Vote for Life for every additional Five Guineas.

Subscriptions received at the Office, 106, Queen Victoria Street, by the Secretary, Mr. FREDERIC ANDREW, to whom all Orders should be made payable; by the Treasurer; by Messrs. GLYN, MILLS & Co., 67, Lombard Street; and Messrs. COURTIS & Co., 59, Strand.

OFFICES:—106, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.

January, 1898.

