

Family Reading.

WORK AND WORKERS.

BY CHARLOTTE FISKE BATES.

Diverse the mission, as the mind, of man;
Mighty it may be as the prophet's word
By which the mighty multitude is surd;
Simple enough for childhood's palm to span.

What shall be done by each is Nature's choice,
Nor is it right of any man's to say
Another must be working in his way,
Whether it be by hand or pen or voice.

The generous greeting and the happy look
Bestowed when one's own lot forbids them
both,

The willing service done when limbs are loth;
The bearing well what yet we ill can brook;

The liberal sowing with no hope in view
That one will any of the garner share;
Seeing, in quietness, another wear
The well-earned praises that to us are due;

The silent spreading of true charity
In wordless sermons whither slander comes:—
These are the giving out of golden sums
When bare of gold may be the treasury

Who keeps his soul in patience through his
pain,
Through dark seclusion and through hopeless
ill,

I one of God's best missionaries still,
Nor presses back his murmurings in vain.

He who to such an one may minister,
Seeking with word or look or song or flower
To wing away pain's burden for an hour,
Exchanges service with the sufferer.

With ever ready lips yet loitering feet
Many declare "I go," and still they stay,
While some who vow "I go not" turn
straightway
Their old refusal into duty's heat.

Children that almost tire the listener's ear
With repetition of the father's name,
Are first to bring his honor into blame
And last to do the will that seems so dear.

We judge not Christian, who have likewise
gone,

Impulsive love may still be indolent;
Those who are fondest, sometimes wayward
bent.

Hurt most that heart to which they soonest
run.

But sometimes he whom no one can observe
Nearer with show of love the father's breast,
Comes nearer to it than do all the rest,
Just through his utter earnestness to serve.

And, child or Christian, this must test the
soul,—

The faithful doing of the Higher will,
Love's words are good—its demonstration
still

Must be the best, where best is love's control.

Strong Christophers there are that daily stem
With other's burdens life's exhausting flood,
Who, serving well the human brotherhood,
Unknowing, bear the very Christ with them.

GEORGE WISHART AND THE ASSASSIN.

While Wishart was busy with his administrations in Ayrshire, terrible tidings reached him from the city he had left. As is so often the case in this world, it was the unexpected evil which had happened; and Dundee, after driving away her best friend that she might avoid the vengeance of Beaton, now lay low in anguish under the terrible scourge pestilence. But it may be that above the wailing which rose from so many homes, some hearts still caught the echo of words of Christ in hope spoken by their banished preacher; and those who mused sadly on the fulfilled prophecy of Wishart's farewell sermon, could remember also how he had bidden the sufferers in the coming trouble find help in a merciful God. And surely something of the love which is above all earthly love must have shone forth to the miserable city in the wealth of pity and forgiveness which the

servant of Jesus Christ had ready for those who had scorned and forsaken him. Without apparently a thought of his own wrongs, or a moment's hesitation on account of his own danger, he made haste to re-enter the door which sorrow had suddenly opened for him, only longing to offer again to the poor in spirit the treasure which had been too lightly esteemed in days of prosperity. "They are now in trouble, and need comfort," was the reason he gave for returning at once to the plague-stricken city; and his Ayrshire friends pleaded against it in vain.

The day after he reached Dundee a great company assembled to hear Wishart preach, and because the risk of contagion would have been too great in any building, the meeting-place was at the East Port of the town. The sick and infected had their place without, and those whose houses the plague had not yet touched gathered within, while Wishart, standing on the gate between the two crowds, read out his text from the 107th Psalm, "He sent his word and healed them." Then, turning for a moment from the wan and eager faces beneath him to speak first to the good Physician, he said, "It is neither herb nor plaster, O Lord, but thy word that healeth all." Thereafter followed what must have been, indeed, a wonderful sermon, for, when it ended, the hearts of the hearers were so encouraged that the pestilence had lost its terrors indeed, it seemed to have transformed itself into a friendly messenger sent to summon the weary home.

That was only one of numerous services held in that strange place, to the great joy of many sick and sorrowful ones whom Wishart comforted there with the comfort that had been given him of God. Nor did he confine his efforts for the aid of Dundee to preaching; he visited the sick and dying in their homes, and his tender care for their bodily welfare so moved the hearts of the magistrates that the poor patients were provided for at the public expense, and fared as well as their rich fellow-sufferers.

One might have thought that the bitterest enmity would have been pacified, and that a man occupied in such blessed ministry bore, for the time being at least, a life which none would seek to harm. But Beaton's selfish and ambitious soul apparently knew no human tenderness. He had long ago recognized in the doctrine of the Reformers a force which was adverse to his own power; there was to be no truce, therefore, in the warfare waged against it, nor any scruple made about the means employed to gain the long-desired victory.

Dundee, garrisoned by the plague, was secure against a visit from the Cardinal in person; but there were those who would enter the infected city if gold were to be gained by it, and Beaton was able and willing to pay for the doing of his errands. One day, as Wishart came down the steps from his place of preaching on the East Gate, he saw a stranger in priestly garb waiting for him below, with his right hand hidden in the folds of his gown. Something in his attitude and expression struck the preacher as peculiar, and with a sudden intuitive perception, he guessed what it meant. "My friend, what would you do?" he asked as he came near. And, quick as thought, his grasp was on the other's wrist, and he had drawn forth and taken possession of the dagger held by the stranger. Then the miserable wretch grovelled before the man he had been hired to murder, openly confessing, in his terror and humiliation, what was the work he had come for, and who was to pay him his wages. Meanwhile, however, the news of the minister's danger had spread rapidly through the dispersing congregation, and reached the ears of the sick outside, who were probably waiting until the others

had gone. Then there arose a wild tumult of wrath, finding vent in one loud and determined outcry for vengeance. "Give the traitor to us, or we will take him by force!" was the shout. The gate was burst open, and when the trembling criminal saw the furious and ghastly mob that swept in, he must indeed have thought his doom was near. But Wishart flung his arms about him, and sheltered him in a brother's embrace. "Whoever troubleth him shall trouble me," he said; and his voice acted upon the angry spirits around him like a spell. "He hath hurt me in nothing," he added calmly; but he has let us understand what we may fear in times to come. We will watch better."

Thus the strange scene ended, and he whose life had been saved by his intended victim, passes off the stage of history. We would fain hope, nevertheless, that John Wigton, that "desperate priest," never returned to his master, the Cardinal, but being moved to repentance by the goodness of Wishart, sought and found the Almighty's forgiveness and eternal life through the mercy of Wishart's Lord.

Soon after this the plague seems to have abated in Dundee; and when matters in the town were again looking brighter, her friend and helper prepared to leave. "The battle here is over," said Wishart, "and God calls me to another." He was not a soldier who could quietly wait to enjoy the gratitude of the people delivered from danger, while there was work for him, to do in other regions, and he heard the voice of his Captain calling him on. What he had wrought for Dundee by the infectious example of his courage and tenderness, as well as by the blessed words of Christian comfort and hope he spoke in that terrible time, can scarcely be estimated too highly. Never, except for a passing visit, did he enter into its gates again; but the memory of the good deeds he left behind him has been kept there through the centuries. The wall that encompassed the city in Wishart's time has long been a thing of the past; but the East Port still remains, preserved for the sake of the brave and gentle preacher who loved the town so well.—*Catholic Presbyterian.*

DANGER OF DISREGARDING ADVICE

"Be sure, Herbert," said Mr Wise to his son, "not to go beyond your depth in the river: the surface looks very fair and sparkling, but there is a dangerous eddy beneath that may prove too strong for you."

"How do you know, father?" asked Herbert.

"I have tried it," he replied. "It nearly overcame me; but I could swim, and so got beyond it. Remember what I tell you—beware of the under-current."

Herbert went in to bathe, and was very careful to keep near the shore every time. "It cannot be very dangerous here," he thought, and uttered it aloud to his companion. "It is as smooth as glass; and I can easily return if it is rough beneath, for I can swim now."

"You had better not go," urged his friend. "My father knows this river well, and he says the under-current is very dangerous."

"I will go in a little way," replied Herbert; "and if I find it dangerous, come back." And he started vigorously for the middle of the river. His companion, watching him, saw him throw up his arms wildly, and heard his shout for help, but when help reached him, it was too late. The under-current had got him. He was drowned in the treacherous river!

REAL BIRMINGHAM "JEWELS."

There are plenty of them, alas! but they must be searched out and separated from the filthy dross in which, through no fault of their own, they are embedded. Our readers know that this is being done, as far as possible, by Mr. J. T. Middlemore and his friends; they will therefore be glad to have some details of his work. The following sketch is written by one who has an intimate knowledge of it:—

On April 27, Mr Middlemore left England for Canada with seventy neglected and criminal children. Most of them had had a year's training in the Birmingham Home, and they were now taken to Canada for the purpose of settling them in Christian families, beyond the influence of associations amid which, in Birmingham, they would come to ruin. They had come from the lowest parts of Birmingham—from the Inkleys, Thomas-street, John-street, and similar districts, they had come half-starved, half-clothed, lawless, and ungodly, and now they started from Liverpool, a troop of light-hearted boys and girls, well clothed well fed, and looking, full of hope, into the future. There were dear little fellows amongst the band, bright little girls, looking very pretty in their scarlet hoods and grey dresses, and there were older boys who had given hope to their kind friends that they were looking up in earnest to their Heavenly Father to guide them in a distant land to a life of honour and usefulness. It was a grief to think of parting with all these, but there were other children, as wretched as these had been, to be sought for amongst the haunts of poverty and vice.

There was one boy fifteen years old. He had been almost a year at the "Home." He had lived in the Gullet—an alley leading from Thomas-street. His mother was a poor outcast; his father, at the time he came to the "Home," was on trial for the attempted murder of his mother. The boy had lately been in prison for stealing eggs. In the day time he maintained himself at the Market Hall, at night he slept under railway-arches. At first he gave great trouble at the "Home;" he was disinclined to conform to any rules, however lenient, and several times he attempted to run away. But at length, through God's grace, his heart was touched, he grew attached to the "Home," he showed some anxiety to learn reading and writing; he was frequently Mr. Middlemore's companion, and often spoke to him about his anxiety to become a Christian and honest man.

Two brothers came to the "Home" in December: William, fourteen, and John, five years old. The elder used to gain his livelihood by pilfering about the streets. He was tracked to his home. It was a back room in the Inkleys; the room was almost unenterable through filth and rubbish. In one corner, on a heap of rags, lay the father, dead drunk; the mother had died of drink some time ago. William was not at home, but the little boy was sitting near the drunkard, munching a dry crust. Not easily will the sight of that little face be forgotten. Such an old man's face, such a sharp knowing look; turn him out into the streets at night, and at an age when happier children are scarcely out of their babyhood, he would know how to dodge the policeman, and get a night's sleep in some shed or under some railway-arch. A child that had never had a picture-book or a toy, that knew nothing of life but drink and curses, and swearing and lying.

One little girl was brought some months ago to the "Home" by a kind lady. She had found her in a little cottage in Moseley. The mother lay dead in the house, partly from drink, and partly from starvation. The little crea-