

peared at first to be mountains gradually disappeared, and the way was ultimately made plain before her. One of the chief difficulties was the want of money to make a commencement, but money came in an unexpected manner. Shortly after this, two gentlemen came to Paris to dispose of some money remaining over from funds provided by the Society of Friends for the victims of the war. The outbreak of the Commune had put everything into confusion; and as the money had been given solely for the relief of Paris, they came to consult Mrs. Alsop as to its disposal. Miss De Broen's resolution was mentioned to them, the money was handed to her, and the work began.

THE WORK BEGUN.

Daily this lady, though far from strong, visited Belleville—a district which had acquired so bad a notoriety that even strong men feared to enter it—and gaining the confidence of the people by that power of sympathy of which only women are capable, she invited some poor women to come to a room she had hired, and they would receive fivepence each for three hours of needlework. Wondering what all this could mean, only three made their appearance at the first meeting. Eight attended the next time, and gradually the number increased until the room became too small to hold them, and in this way the mission, which was at first so tiny a plant, continued to grow and put forth branches. The women who came to the sewing class having told at home what sympathy had been shown, what kind words had been spoken, some of their male friends thought they would like to be listeners also. Finding that this feeling was genuine, Miss De Broen arranged an evening meeting for them, and invited a Christian gentleman from Paris to conduct it. The room being situated in a prominent position, so many ultimately came that some had to stand. At first the poor women who attended the sewing class were rather rough and sullen, which was only what was to be expected from the scenes through which they had passed during the long siege, their own starvation, and the death of husbands, sons and brothers, and later on, the still sadder days of the Commune and its frightful consequences. "The sorrow and suffering I witnessed during the first year of my work at Belleville," says Miss De Broen, "are beyond description. Sometimes I found even aged people lying on the floor, the bedstead and other furniture having been taken and broken up for firewood during the siege." Gradually, however, this state of things began to improve, and in time a marvellous change became apparent in the neighbourhood. I shall never forget the first visit I made to this sewing class, after it had been in operation some two or three years. There were about one hundred women present, varying in age perhaps from forty to eighty years, but every face, many of them very haggard, was exhibiting evidence of satisfaction, and every word which was spoken to them was listened to with the greatest eagerness and even delight. It happened to be M. Theodore Monod who addressed them on that occasion, and his words, which came from the heart, evidently reached the hearts of his audience. It was clear to anyone acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, that the efforts of Miss De Broen at this time, supplemented by those of Mr. and Mrs. McAll, were effecting a complete moral reformation in this hitherto heathenish quarter of the city.

The work was much helped at this time by the labours of an evangelist whom Miss De Broen engaged to take the addresses. He was a colporteur who had spent the early part of his life in Brussels, of which city he was a native and a devout Roman Catholic. He had been converted many years before this, and was able to deal with the people in all their difficulties, and when necessary to enter into controversy with them. He thoroughly understands the people, has great tact, and is quite a favourite. When addressing the patients at the dispensary, he speaks in so tender a manner that many are melted into tears. Several ladies from England and Scotland also offered their services to Miss De Broen, each taking that part in the work for which she was best fitted, which greatly encouraged all engaged in the mission.

AN IRON BUILDING

purchased in England was brought over in pieces and set up in a public thoroughfare close by Park Chaumont. It was opened in June, 1876, and soon became the centre of the whole mission work. It holds about 400 persons, and is divided into girls' school,

infant school and meeting room, by partitions which can be easily folded back when the whole space is needed. The sewing classes are now held in this room, and many more poor women are admitted, who are almost entirely supported by this means. While the sewing proceeds, some of the ladies not occupied in overlooking the work read to them, or one of the evangelists—of whom there are now two—addresses them. Some time is occupied in singing hymns, and the meeting is closed with prayer. In winter coffee and bread are sometimes distributed, which gives great satisfaction to the poor women, and a little amusement to onlookers who witness the almost childish simplicity of the poor old creatures.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

At an early period of the mission, the ladies, noticing a number of children running wild in a vacant common, gathered them together and began an out-door school, consisting of two classes—the girls in one and the boys in the other. On the approach of cold weather this little school was transferred to the room where the sewing class was held, and ultimately to the iron room. Now there is a well-organized Sunday school of about 150 children, and a very pleasant sight it is to see these bright little ones repeating texts of Scripture, and joining in the singing of translations of Sankey's hymns. In 1876 a day school for girls was opened, and the number now on the books is about 100, and the order observed is as good as in other parts of Paris. This, like all the other work, is, of course, entirely free.

MEDICAL MISSION.

One of the most distinctive features of this mission is the Free Dispensary, which was opened at an early stage in its history, and which for several years was the only one in Paris. For two years the Edinburgh friends guaranteed the salary of the medical missionary, and one of the interesting sights to be seen in the iron room is the congregation of men, women and children, who meet here four times a week from all parts of the district to consult the doctor, receive medicine, and join in the religious exercises which precede the consultations in an adjoining room. Dr. McCrea, the present physician, is from Aberdeenshire, and is much liked both for his skill as a healer of the body, and for his tact in directing his patients to the good Physician who is able to heal both body and soul. This is the double ministry of which a French writer has given a true picture in the following lines:—

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

TRAINING HOME.

A home for training orphan girls for service has been in operation for some years. The house—3 Rue Clavel, Belleville—is a large one, and is now the property of the mission. Here dwell Miss De Broen, her lady helpers and the children of the home. A wing of the building contains rooms for sewing as well as places for washing, ironing and cooking. The girls do house work, and are fitted to take situations as nursery maids. In this house is held a monthly prayer meeting, which is attended by those who have been converted through the means of the mission, and who on this occasion speak out their religious experience more freely than in the ordinary meetings in the iron room.

There is now in operation, the refore, the sewing class and dispensary, day and night schools, as well as Sunday schools, children's meetings, visitation of the poor and sick, distribution and sale of the Scriptures, and the orphanage, all carried on by Miss De Broen and her evangelists, assisted by ladies who voluntarily give their services for a time. The expenses are largely borne by friends in Britain, though some money comes from Holland and Switzerland as well as from France. Visitors from many countries may be met here during the summer. They are always welcomed by Miss De Broen and her assistants; and if any Canadian ladies are disposed to give their services for a few months, I promise them a very hearty reception at 3 Rue Clavel, which is happily one of the highest and healthiest parts of Paris. They would acquire much experience in the management of missionary work by a brief residence here, and at the same time become familiar with French as an oral language.

WHAT ROMAN CATHOLICS THINK OF THE WORK.

In 1879 the "Société Nationale d'Encouragement du Bien," composed of Roman Catholics, showed their

appreciation of the good which Miss De Broen was doing amongst the Communists of Paris, by presenting her with a silver medal, accompanied by an address in which occur sentences like the following: "In 1871, when France had just passed through the painful experiences of the war and the commune, Miss De Broen established herself in the 20th arrondissement of our city to found a philanthropic work, which little by little enlarged itself to such a degree that to-day it is regarded as a well-recognized institution, exerting its influence over many classes of society within the walls of Paris." After referring to the various departments of the work, and the need that existed for it in this special district, they add: "She has succeeded; and in testimony of our admiration for her, let us present her with our grand medal of honour."

THE LESSON TAUGHT.

I feel that in the bald recital of a few of the prominent features of this mission, I have been unable to impart to it that interest which it creates in all who visit the locality and become acquainted with the workers, the people amongst whom they labour, and the results. One thing, at all events, the women of Canada may learn from the story, viz., "how great is the power of the female sex over the mightiest and fiercest of the human race," to adopt the language of Lord Shaftesbury, who, in telling the same story, brings this lesson into prominence, adding: "'A soft answer turneth away wrath.' And so, with these outcasts, manifest affection and a gentle manner abate, nay, conciliate opposition. A woman—aye, a young woman, earnest, decided, persevering, rich in piety and common sense, with the love of Christ in her heart, and with a burning desire to impart it to others, becomes all but irresistible. I speak from my own experience, and from that of others more widely extended than my own, that to penetrate the depths of ignorance and misery, to break down the barriers, and prepare the way for better things, they surpass all the ordained and unordained preachers put together, whether in town or country; and surely this assertion has seldom received a better proof than in the history of Miss De Broen's aggressive movements on rage, ignorance, suffering and despair amongst the communists of Paris."

Paris, 5th May, 1882.

T. H.

AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS' FUND.

MR. EDITOR,—I am glad to find that, after ample explanation, the difference between Rev. Mr. Middlemiss and myself is not so great as at first appeared. He explains that his object in seeking to exclude from present consideration any other scheme than the one set forth in the remit, is not so much to set aside all discussion on the subject as to hasten the accomplishment of a change much needed, namely, the mitigation of the severe penalty attached to non-payment of rate.

No one will regret more than I any improper representation of his position, as misrepresentation is not my object, but the fair discussion of a scheme as simple as the remit, and one which at the same time brings about reformation not only in those directions aimed at in the remit, but in others equally desirable.

Surely, enough of valuable time and space has been occupied already in the explanation of trifling differences; the discussion of the overture and remit is the important matter.

The scheme set forth in the Presbytery's overture is said to be *feasible*, but its *grounds*, its *principles*, its *details*, and its *reforms* are all questioned. This is certainly a very complete statement of the worthlessness of the overture unless these points can be vindicated.

Its *grounds*, as stated in the preamble, are *dissatisfaction* in certain quarters with the present working of the scheme, and *difficulty* in administering the fund on its present principles. The remit is proof in itself of dissatisfaction with the plan at present in operation. If there were none, why has the remit been brought into existence? And there is dissatisfaction on other ground than the severity of the penalty attached to non-payment of rate. But of this more afterwards. And in a former letter Mr. Middlemiss admitted that there were difficulties in this matter, as there were in all schemes of human devising.

The *principles* of the overture are simply those of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, as generally recognized by the great body of our Church members, who regard this scheme as one to supply the neces-