

WITH FATHER DAMIEN AND THE LEPERS.

The *Nineteenth Century* has an article this month from the pen of Mr. Clifford, describing his recent visit to Father Damien:—

The sunset was orange, with a great purple cloud fringed with gold. It faded quickly, and by the time we reached a small pier head outside the town it was dark, and the moon was casting a long greenish light across the sea. From the pier came a continuous *tremolo* wail, rather mechanical, but broken by real sobs. I could see a little crowd of lepers and lepers' friends waiting there. "Oh my husband!" cried a poor woman again and again. Thirteen lepers got into the boat and were rowed to the steamer. Then we sailed away, and gradually the wailing grew fainter and fainter till we could hear it no longer. These partings for life between the lepers and their families are most tragic, but they are inevitable; for whether the disease be propagated by heredity or by contagion, the necessity for absolute segregation is equally evident, and the Hawaiian Government has risen to the emergency—would that our Indian Government with its 130,000 lepers would do likewise!—and, sparing neither labour nor expense, has sought out the cases one by one, and provided a home so suitable to their needs, so well ordered, and so well supplied, that, strange to say, the difficulty often arises of preventing healthy people from taking up their abode there. I know many sadder places than Molokai, with its soft breezes, its towering cliffs, and its sapphire sea. The Hawaiians are happy, simple, generous people, the fit off-spring of these sunny, windy islands; they yield themselves up readily to the emotion of the present whether for grief or laughter (even with lepers) smiles and play follow close behind tears and sorrow. The island is long, and shaped like a willow-leaf, it lies in the form of a wedge on the Pacific, very low on the south coast, and gradually rising to its greatest altitude, from which the descent 1,500 feet to the northern coast is precipitous. Between the base of these precipices and the sea lie the two leper villages of Kalawao and Kalau-papa. Not improbably, half the island is sunk in the sea, and the villages are in the actual cup of the crater of an immense volcano, half of which is submerged. We went on to Kalawao, but were again disappointed; it was too dangerous to land. Finally it was decided to put off a boat for a rocky point about a mile-and-a-half distant from the town. Climbing down this point we saw about twenty lepers, and "There is Father Damien" said our purser; and, slowly moving along the hill-side, I saw a dark figure, with a large straw hat. He came rather painfully down, and sat near the water side, and we exchanged friendly signals across the waves while my baggage was being got out of the hold—a long business; for, owing to the violence of the sea, nothing else was to be put on shore. The captain and the purser were both much interested in a case of gurgun oil which I was bringing for the lepers' use, and they spared no trouble in unshipping it. At last all was ready, and we went swinging across the waves, and finally chose a fit moment for leaping on shore. Father Damien helped me up the rock, and a hearty welcome shone from his kindly face.

He is now forty-nine years old—a thick-set, strongly-built man, with black, curly hair, and short beard, turning grey. His face must have been rather handsome, with a full, well-curved mouth, and a short, straight nose, but he is now a good deal disfigured by leprosy, though not so badly as to make it anything but a pleasure to look at his bright, sensible face. His forehead is swollen and ridged, the eyebrows are gone, the nose is somewhat sunk, and the ears are greatly enlarged. His hands and body also show many signs of the disease, but he assured me that he felt little or no pain since he had tried Dr. Goto's system of hot baths and Japanese medicine. I think he had not much faith in the gurgun oil, but at my request he began using it, and after a fortnight's trial the good effects became evident to all. His face looked greatly better, his sleep became very good instead of very bad, his hands improved, and last Sunday he told me that he had been able that morning to sing orisons—the first time for months. One is thankful for this relief, even if it should be only temporary; but it is impossible not to fear that after several years' progress the disease has already attacked the

lungs or some other vital organ, and that the remedy comes too late. In Molokai there are three Franciscan Sisters who take charge of the leper girls, and who are now using the oil. I think that their quiet, systematic endeavours are likely to produce important results, and that children will be more obedient patients than adults. I had brought with me a large wooden case of presents from English friends, and it was unshipped with the gurgun oil. It was so large that Father Damien said it would be impossible for his lepers either to land it from the boat or to carry it to Kalawao, and that it must be returned to the steamer and landed on some voyage when the sea was quieter. But I could not give up the pleasure of his enjoyment in its contents, so after some delay it was forced open in the boat, and the things were handed out one by one across the waves, and carried separately by the lepers and our two selves. First came an engraving of Mr. Shield's "Good Shepherd," from Lady Mount Temple, then a set of large pictures of the Stations of the Cross, from the Hon. Maude Stanley, then a magic lantern with scriptural slides, then numbers of coloured prints, and finally an ariston from Lady Caroline Charteris, which would play about forty tunes by simply having its handle turned. Before we had been at the settlement half an hour, Father Damien was showing his boys how to use it, and I rarely went through Kalawao afterwards without hearing the ariston active. There were beautiful silver presents from Lady Grosvenor and Lady Arlie, and several gifts of money. And, most valuable of all, there was a water-colour painting of the "Vision of St. Francis," by Mr. Burne Jones, sent by the painter, this now hangs in Father Damien's little room.

Father Damien is building a church with which he incorporates as a transept the small building which has hitherto been in use. By the side of it grows the palm-tree under which he lived for some weeks when he first arrived at the settlement in 1873. It was then a miserable place; the houses were wretched, undrained, and unventilated; the people were ill-fed, ill-clothed, and worse washed. The water supply was very bad. The sufferers were desperate, and often lived vicious and lawless lives. Now all these things are changed. The cottages built by the Government are neat and convenient, raised on trestles so as not to be in contact with the earth. The water is brought in pipes from a never-failing supply, and is excellent in quality and quantity. There are five churches; there is a large general shop, and the faces one sees are nearly always happy faces. Of course, I saw cases in the hospitals that were terribly emaciated and disfigured, but there is no doubt that the disease has taken a milder form than it wore years ago. As a rule, the lepers do not suffer severe pain, and the average length of life at Molokai is about four years, at the end of which time the disease generally attacks some vital organ. Women are less liable to it than men. One woman accompanied her husband to Molokai when he became a leper, and at his death became the bride of another leper, he died and she married another, and another after his demise; so that she has lived with four leper husbands, and yet remains healthy. It would undoubtedly be a great trial to heart and nerve to live at Molokai, as eight noble men and women have elected to do for Christ's sake. I found it very distressing during only fourteen days to see none but lepers, and it often came with a specially painful shock to find a child of ten with a face that looked as if it might belong to a man of fifty. But I had gone to Molokai expecting to find it scarcely less dreadful than hell itself, and the cheerful people, the lovely landscape, and the comparatively painless life were all surprises. Father Damien's little house almost joins the church; he lives upstairs, and his comrade, Father Conrady a man of considerable refinement and of warm affections, lives on the ground floor. They take their meals in separate rooms as a precaution against contagion. Two laymen, Brother Joseph and Brother James, assist them in nursing, teaching, visiting, and other ways, and they are often in communication with Kalau-papa, where live and work Father Wendolen and three Franciscan Sisters. The church at Kalau-papa was built partly by Father Damien's own hands. He is good at carpentering and building, and apparently able and ready to work at anything as long as it is work. He is specially scrupulous and business-like about accounts and money matters. I wished I could have understood the sermon he preached on Christmas