

more intelligent of the English working classes? It is such wise movements that often give an impulse to the education and position of a whole class.—*Correspondent of Independent.*

FOUNDED ON FAITH.

In the neighbourhood of Bristol there exists an institution, but little known to the general public, yet of such a singular nature that it may fairly be classed amongst the wonders of the age. It is situated at Ashley Down, one of the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and is simply and unobtrusively named 'The New Orphan Asylum.' Within its walls, 300 fatherless children, aged from a few months upwards, are fed, clothed, and taught. The elder girls are instructed in sewing and all domestic arts, and at a proper age are each provided with an outfit and a suitable situation; the boys are similarly fitted out, and apprenticed; and all this is done without any regular funds or subscribers, by a man who neither does now, nor ever did, possess any property, or pecuniary means. Nor has a single shilling ever been solicited for its support, for the New Orphan Asylum is founded on faith.

This statement will probably raise a smile of incredulity; but it is, nevertheless, a fact which cannot be gainsaid. There is the extensive range of buildings, in substantial stones and mortar; there, too, are 300 living witnesses, the recipients of its bounty and protection. On every Wednesday, the doors are open to all who choose to inspect for themselves this monument of love and charity. Enter: in this stern, practical, matter-of-fact nineteenth century, it is refreshing to halt for a moment on such a verdant oasis. There is no charge for admission; neither are the attendants permitted to receive any fees; but in the entrance-hall is a small box labelled, 'For the Use of the Orphans;' and if you think fit to drop a coin therein, you may do so. Visitors are shown the dormitories, each little bed with its snowy coverlet; the wardrobes, fitted up with presses, wherein every child deposits his or her Sunday clothing with admirable precision of folding and arrangement; the nursery, and its tiny inmates, their basins and toys; and the dining-room, so large and lofty, and well ventilated, that it must be a pleasure to eat therein. Then there are the schools, three in number—the girls', the boys', and the infants'—all of whom go through their exercises and sing their simple melodies, wearing, withal, a healthy, hearty, and happy expression, which speaks volumes for the system under which they are trained. Passing on, we visit the 'cutting-out' and 'making up' rooms, the bakery, the dairy, the kitchen, the laundry, the bath-rooms—all well arranged, and indeed perfect in their appointments. Another range of offices is devoted to various store-rooms. There are stores of flour, of bread, of meat, of rice, of oatmeal—good Scotch meal, which forms the staple of the children's breakfast. There are stores of shoes, of clothing, of soap, of linen, of crockery, and even of toys for the delectation of the younger ones. The staff of teachers, nurses, and servants is large and efficient; the mental and physical wants of the children are amply provided for, and their comfort most sedulously studied; and all this, as many will know, has been brought into existence literally out of nothing. Doubt it not. Were you as incredulous as Thomas of Didymus, yet must the evidence of your senses convince you of the reality of this extraordinary fact. Seek not to explain it away, for the truth of the history attached to that asylum is incontrovertibly established.

That history is to be read in a little book, entitled *A Narrative of some of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller*—a quaint, strange little, which, of itself, seems to remove us far from the world of steam, and gas, and electric telegraphs. It is written in a simple style, wherein is no seeking after effect or ornament, and con-

sists principally of extracts from the author's diary. I much fear, that in giving the substance of this narrative, I shall be unable to render it due justice, but my limited space forbids expansion. Here it is:

George Muller's creed is so unsectarian, that I have never yet been able to ascertain its precise nature; he, indeed, distinctly states that he does not belong to any sect, and his writing, no less than his deeds, confirm the assertion. He is a Prussian by birth, and emigrated, in 1829, to England, where, to quote from the narrative, he 'began the service of caring for children who are bereaved of both parents by death, born in wedlock, and are in destitute circumstances, on December 9, 1835.' For ten years he carried on his work of love in Wilson Street, first renting a single house for the use of his protégés. As their number increased, other premises became necessary; till in 1845, four contiguous houses were occupied by about 130 children.

The expense of supporting these establishments was entirely defrayed by unsolicited contributions. Upon this principle they were started, and even when sorely pressed, it was rigidly adhered to. A perusal of the author's journal shews that he was often reduced to great extremities, from which he was always relieved in what will no doubt be deemed an unaccountable manner. Thus under dated August 10, 1844, is the following passage:

'In the greatest need, when not one penny was in hand, I received £5 from a brother at Hackney.'

And again:

'Aug. 16, 1845. Our poverty is extremely great. The trial of faith as sharp as ever, or sharper. It is ten o'clock, and there are no means yet for a dinner. I now thought of some articles which I should be able to do without, to dispose of them for the benefit of the orphans, when one of the labourers (teachers) gave me £1. There were also taken out of the boxes in the orphan houses 1s. 6d., and by knitting came in 2s. 3d., and from A. A., 2s.'

Such passages as these are of continual recurrence. Frequently, the last crust of bread, and a sip of milk, was consumed, and Muller never contracted debts. Over and over again, the daily record commences with, 'Not a penny in hand!' and ends with, 'Only a few pence left;' and there was no treasure to draw upon, save the inexhaustible fund of faith—a fund which indeed appears to have fully answered every demand upon it, for the wants of the day were always fully supplied.

But the great work was yet to come. In 1845, Muller first began to conceive the idea of building an asylum for the accommodation of 300 orphans, and having fully considered the undertaking, 'judged,' he says, 'that the cost would be £10,000; and on November 4, I began asking the Lord for means. Strangely enough, on the following 16th December, £1000 came to hand. This was the largest donation which, up to that time, had ever been received; but when this money came,' he writes, 'I was as calm, as quiet as if I had only received one shilling; for my heart was looking out for answers. Therefore, having faith concerning the matter, this donation did not in the least surprise me.' Other donations followed, including a second sum of £1000 on the 30th of December; and then he relates how he, 'having asked the Lord to go before him, went out to look for a piece of ground' whereon to build.

Here is a picture of startling sublimity! Imagine a gaunt, grave man, attired in a suit of rusty black, walking forth into the bustling city, like the pilgrims in Vanity Fair, and in all simplicity of heart, and earnestness of faith, seeking to be so directed to a suitable site. One almost expects to read on the next page, how that 'one of shining countenance appeared unto him, and bade him be of good cheer.'

It is not my intention to follow George Muller throughout the gradual process by which he effected his purpose; suffice it to say, that by little and little, the necessary funds flowed in. 'The building, which, with the land, cost eventually upwards of £15,000, was commenced in July 1847, the children were removed from Wilson Street to the healthier locality of Ashley Down. No flourish of trumpets ushered in the event; quietly and unostentatiously the children and their more than father walked from the one house to the other; and save that the old school-rooms were closed, whilst merry voices awoke the unwonted echoes of the Down, no change was perceptible.

Little more than twelve months elapsed ere Muller began to contemplate an extension of his work: and, undeterred by the absence of visible means, the frequency of pecuniary difficulties, or the magnitude of the undertaking, he determined to build another wing, capable of receiving other 400 orphans, with a view to the ultimate extension of this additional number to 700, or 1000 in the whole. The first donation received for this purpose was ten shillings! But nothing discouraged, he persevered; and in May 1852, the building fund amounted to £3530, 9s. 0½d. The next year this amount had increased to £12,531. In 1853, upwards of £5000 was added to the fund; and in 1854, the sum in hand being £23,059, 12s. 0½d.—always the odd farthing—the new building was commenced, and is, at the present writing, on the point of being opened for the reception of the forlorn little beings for whose benefit it is designed. Whether the benevolent founder will be enabled to complete his self-imposed task, by the construction of the intended third building, time alone can determine. Let us hope so.

Muller seems to have been incited to his efforts by the success of a similar institution at Halle, in Prussia, founded in 1696 by A. H. Franke, Professor of divinity. This is the largest charitable establishment for poor children in the world, containing 2000 inmates, and is in a flourishing condition. We will here let our author speak for himself:

'Franke is long since gone to his rest, but he spoke to my soul in 1826, and he is speaking to my soul now; and to his example I am greatly indebted in having been stirred up to care about poor children in general, and about poor orphans in particular.

'At the last census in 1851, there were, in England and Wales, thirty-nine orphan establishments, and the total number of orphans provided for through them amounted only to 3764; but at the time the New Orphan House was being built, there were about 6000 young orphans in the prisons of England. Does not this fact call aloud for an extension of orphan institutions? By God's help, I will do what I can to keep poor orphans from prison.'

The utter abnegation of self which prevades the work is remarkable and characteristic. 'What have I done,' he cries out in one place, 'that men should praise me? I have only sought to be used as the honoured instrument of saving young children, who have neither father nor mother, from sin and vice.' Truly, such men are in the world, but not of it.

Contributions appear to arrive from all parts of the globe, and from all kinds and conditions of men. Here are a few entries, for example: 'From negro brethren in Demerara, 12 dollars;' 'From an Archdeacon, and one of the Queen's chaplains, 12 guineas;' 'From one of the orphans formerly under our care, a sovereign;' 'From Mount Lebanon, £2, and from Orleans, five francs;' 'From an Israelitish gentleman, an entire stranger, £5;' 'From a shepherd in Australia who had read my narrative while tending his flock, 12s.' The amounts vary from a single farthing to thousands of pounds; and the receipt of a copper coin, or the presentation of a check