

Work for God at Home and Abroad.

A LONDON NURSE.

A VERY usual result of affliction rightly borne is the acquirement of a wider sympathy with the woes of others, followed by an earnest desire to mitigate them. Such at least was the experience of a friend of mine, Mrs. Crowie, who would not allow herself to be crushed by the previous trials of her early life, but rose from beneath them, eager to lift the like weight from the shoulders of her weaker brothers and sisters.

As a district nurse, in a poor part of London, she began her work. There is nothing so interesting as simple truth, so I shall try to tell you something of what she saw and did while acting as a servant of the poor.

A very poor old Irish couple in a narrow back court in London were her first care. The woman was bedridden. Both she and the man were helpless and dirty in the extreme.

'Let me make your bed for you,' begged Mrs. C., of the poor woman, nothing daunted by the state of affairs. With difficulty the old lady was lifted on to the floor, while Nurse set to work on what had once been a flock mattress, but was now a shapeless couch of horrors, full of holes—the holes plugged up with dirty rags . . .

'Aye,' said the old soul, 'it's got worse and worse of late; you see I've laid upon it so long.'

'How long?' was the quiet question.

'Nigh on three year.'

'And has no one made your bed for you in all that time?'

'No one, lady; who should? The ould man he's good for nothing, and we never were ones to ask the neighbours. So we just did as well as we could. But we've two blankets!' This last observation had a tone of honest pride in it.

Ah, those blankets! Nurse thought she was tolerably acquainted with dirt in all forms, but these brown woollen rags beat her. Nothing could be done with them; they had to be carried into the yard and burnt. Then room, walls, windows, bedstead, chair and table, were thoroughly cleaned; not without much difficulty and some opposition on the part of

both old people; but the Irish are easy-tempered and grateful, and they gave way at last, seeing that Nurse was very much in earnest, and promised to replace everything destroyed by her orders.

In a few weeks' time there was an 'At Home' in the Murphys' attic, Mrs. Crowie and a friend or two looking in. What a change! the low room fresh and clean, the window open, and the old woman sitting up in bed in a clean cap, cracking jokes with her husband propped in the one chair. 'Come in, my dears, all on ye, and welcome; it's a pallis we're living in now, and all along of her. A grain of help is worth a heap of pity! It's a few more ladies such as she as are wanted in the world.'

Then, when everything had been thoroughly admired, the voluble Irishwoman started again. 'Sure the blessing of Heaven will rest on you, lady,' she cried, to Mrs. Crowie; 'for you've clothed me, and fed me, and cared for me, body and soul, and I've only got to lie here and sing for joy, till the Lord calls me to Paradise.'

In eighteen months' time the room was empty indeed; the gay-hearted old woman and her husband silent; or rather, perhaps—as she had trusted—singing in Paradise.

I was walking in the street one day with Mrs. Crowie, or 'Nurse,' as she liked to be called (and, indeed, it is an honourable title), when we noticed a man with a barrow selling wood, and chopping it as he went along. A short cry and Nurse suddenly ran up to him; then I saw that he had just severely cut his own hand. It was the work of a few seconds to seat the poor fellow on a doorstep and bandage the wound with her handkerchief; after that he was taken home by Nurse and properly attended to.

The next day a poor woman came to the door and thus addressed Mrs. Crowie: 'I saw you take the man in here yesterday and bind up his hand as well as they do at the hospital, and now I've come to ask you to look at a poor soul at our place as has had a bad leg and foot this long time.'

This was an invitation that could not be disregarded. Mrs. Crowie started at once,