

Some instances the houses are so ricketty, the cellarage beneath them so suggestive of rats and other vermin, and the general appearance of the lodgings so uninviting, that pedestrians, after a hasty look at the wretched tenements, will hurry away, preferring the cold blast of night to the questionable accommodation to be obtained within. Others, not so particular, will knock at the door; and as it opens, an odour of tobacco, onions, and of all kinds of cookery, will come steaming forth, and the ear will catch the din of laughter, loud talking, and perhaps singing, combined. If we follow the traveller who has just entered and paid toll on the threshold, we should find that he has passed through a dingy passage out into a courtyard on his way to the common kitchen of the establishment, whence came the smell of the onions and cookery and the noise of many voices. The kitchen is a room which will perhaps hold twenty or thirty people comfortably, and it is more than half filled. A good fire is blazing in the grate, and half-a-dozen people are cooking their supper by it. One is toasting a sausage, another a piece of bacon; another has a bit of steak, the gravy of which, as it drops in the process of cooking, he does not begrudge to a neighbour's heap of thick dry toast. If it were not that the smell arising from the bad tobacco which two unwashed Germans are smoking is well nigh suffocating, and that, notwithstanding laughter and singing, every one seems half-suspicious of his fellow, there might be many worse places in London on a cheerless night than this common kitchen. Supper over, the lodgers linger over the fire, or go to one of twenty beds in an adjoining room, and there repose until the inexorable dawn proclaims that they have had as much sleep as any landlord can reasonably allow for twopence.

Many strange stories might be written about those who from time to time seek the shelter of these lodging-houses. Here has been found "the university man," telling in half-sober mood anecdotes of his college days to costermongers and street beggars, and boasting of the position he might even now take if he were not too proud to accept the patronage of the wealthy! Here, too, has been that prodigal son for whom rewards have been offered in vain, and who, having spent all in riotous living, has had no other means of obtaining a lodging than by selling his attire bit by bit. Occasionally, the criminal has tried to be lost in such places from the eye of the police, and has been awakened in the dead of night by the glare of the officer's lantern flashing in his eyes. While the poor of the district in which lodging-houses are situate use them to a large extent, they are also places of shelter for hosts of casuals who have seen better days, and who, while they can scrape a few pence together, will pay for the poor accommodation afforded rather than go into the "House."

It need scarcely be said that such persons are seldom to be found attending any place of worship, and that, unless the Gospel is taken to them, they will be out of its reach while they continue inmates of the cheap lodging-house. We are glad to know, however, that they are not forgotten, and that well-sustained efforts

are put forth week by week to interest them in the truths which make for their everlasting peace. By the consent of the landlords of many of the lodging-houses, both in the Mint and in Spitalfields, services are held in the common kitchens of the houses every Sunday evening by devoted Christian labourers, who have every reason to be encouraged by the attention paid to their addresses and to the several parts of the service.

In company with one who knew every hole and corner of the Mint, we not long ago took a survey of the work done in the lodging-houses in the course of one Sabbath evening. "The Mint," as the reader may be aware, is a narrow lane leading out of the Borough, about 300 yards in length. It is frequented both night and day by tribes of the dirtiest men and women imaginable; and at almost every step the passer-by may see upon the window-blinds the announcement "Lodgings for single men, 3d. a night." In this Mint Street and the courts belonging to it hundreds of the poor congregate as naturally as the surgeons do in Finsbury Square, or as lawyers in the Temple and Lincoln's Inn. The houses are of all kinds, and lodgings are let to those who can only afford a cellar, or a part of one, as well as to those who can take a bed on the first floor. In the kitchens of several of these houses religious services are conducted every Sabbath evening by the Christian Instruction Society of Surrey Chapel, under the active superintendence of the Rev. Newman Hall. This society has gained access to no less than twelve houses in Kent Street and the Mint, and in some cases they are even warmly welcomed by the lodging-house keeper. In the first kitchen we entered, when we made our survey, we saw a strange scene indeed. It was a low-roofed room, with a good fire blazing in the grate, and receiving additional light from two glaring gas-burners. There were two or three rows of tables in the place, around which about forty men were seated; they were of all ages, and in every kind of working dress—Sunday dress there was none. Some were smoking, some were eating or cooking their supper, some were reading Lloyd's newspaper; a few here and there had the New Testament before them, which the Surrey Chapel Christian Instruction Society supplies to all the lodging-houses under their visitation. A few stragglers lounged about the door, and would neither come in nor go out. This was the kind of audience to whom the Christian visitor had that evening to declare the Word of Life. Nothing daunted by the scene before him, he gave out a simple hymn of praise, and commenced a well-known tune. He had the singing nearly all to himself; but as he proceeded to read the Scriptures, it was good to see that the newspaper in one instance was furtively laid aside, and that although smoking was still continued, talking ceased. He had no reason to complain of the attention paid to the fervent exhortation he delivered, and at the close of his address the tracts which he distributed were respectfully received. A similar audience, though perhaps not so numerous, assembled that evening in each of the houses in the Mint district. One of the kitchens we found to be underground, and