

that fashion since reaching the capable age of six; that his mother was dead, and his drunken father—an Irish Roman Catholic—had deserted him; that he never slept in a bed, but passed the night in an ash-box or under a railway arch; and that he did not know a letter of the alphabet.

One day, as he was standing on his head, he suddenly felt himself grasped from behind. This was the beginning of his civilization. It may be true, as a rule, that force is no remedy; but William Ready was dragged into the Kingdom of Heaven by the leg. Regaining his equilibrium, he found it was not a policeman this time, but a city missionary, who had long been anxious to rescue this promising arab, and had at last boldly executed a 'coup de main.' The prisoner appealed in vain for sympathy—the crowd around were only too glad at the prospect of getting the neighborhood rid of him—and within a few hours he became an unwilling inmate of George Müller's orphanage at Bristol.

The restraints of this institution, after the liberty of London open air, were almost unendurable, and many are the lively stories of insubordination during this period with which the reformed anarchist now regales his friends. The discipline at Müller's, however, was slowly doing its work, and he was a very different Ready, when, a year or so later, he was sent down to Chagford to become an apprentice to a Devonshire miller, Mr. William Perryman, who had written to the orphanage for a suitable lad.

At Yeo Mills he was in safe hands and among warm hearts. The very night of his arrival his new master took him up into a garret and prayed earnestly that the blessing of God might rest upon him. On Sundays he went with the rest of the household to the Bible Christian Chapel on the moor—the chapel, where, a few years ago, a distinguished London critic was delighted by the sermon he heard from this same Mr. Perryman, 'a local preacher in a tweed suit.' As a result of his employer's teaching, backed up by consistent example, William Ready soon became a Christian.

He had already begun to do some evangelistic work himself, when he removed to South London, where he had obtained a situation. Here he was in very different surroundings and exposed to much persecution, being on one occasion dragged round the room because he refused to stand drinks to his mates. At Southampton, his next place, he came under the influence of the late Rev. William Bray, who, not knowing the young man's inward strivings respecting his call to the ministry, placed his hand one day on his shoulder and said, 'Brother Ready, if we don't have you soon, we shall never have you.' He offered himself as a candidate, was accepted, went to the College at Shebbear for a year, and was appointed in 1885 to the Hatherleigh Circuit.

After spending a short time in the home work, he responded to an appeal from New Zealand, where more helpers were urgently needed. He won a good record by pioneer work on the Banks Peninsula and in Christchurch, but it was in 1890 that he made for himself his great opportunity. In that year the superintendent of the Bible Christian Missions, Rev. John Orchard, returned from a visit to England, bringing out with him a lady whom the young minister, to quote his own words, soon made 'as Ready as himself.' Mr. Orchard appointed the newly-married couple to establish a cause in the city of Dunedin. The outlook was not encouraging. Nine years before the Bible Christians had begun to preach there, but had retreated. Another Methodist denomination, in making a similar effort, had lost hundreds

of pounds and its minister into the bargain. When on a rainy Thursday evening in April, Mr. Ready stepped out on Dunedin platform, his only resources were his wife, £45, and the faith which 'laughs at impossibilities.'

On Friday morning he went out to look for a hall. In Rattray street he found a building that would hold 350 people, and took it at once, paying for a month in advance. On his first Sunday at eight o'clock in the evening, he stood up with his wife in the Octagon, in front of the Town Hall, began to sing 'Where is my wandering boy tonight?' and then took as the text of his address an infidel lecturer's placard on the other side of the square. At the close he announced his forthcoming services at the hall, and declared his intention of continuing open-air work as well. The following Wednesday he took a house for twelve months, and put his name on the electoral roll. He had come to stay.

On his second Sunday he began his ministry at the Rattray Street Hall with a congregation of twenty in the morning and forty in the evening. A contemptuous article appeared in the local press, and it was with difficulty that he gained admittance into the Dunedin Ministerial Union. But when a man has as much fire in him as William Ready, the more cold water you pour on him the more steam he gets up. When he had been in the city only nine weeks he had made his influence so widely felt that he missed election to the licensing bench by only seventeen votes. 'You ask me,' he has said, 'why in prayer and speech and sermon I incessantly bring before God and men this greatest of all villainies—the liquor traffic? What killed my father? What dug my mother's grave? What sent me to beg and steal and starve for seven years on London streets? The drink. If the steel had pierced you as it has pierced me, you would not keep silent about it.'

Within a short time Rattray Street Hall was overcrowded at every service. Presently the owner wanted to raise the rent. An Irishman like Ready could not stand that; so he courted eviction, and removed in August, 1892, to the Lyceum, a magnificent building, seating comfortably 1000 people. It had been erected ten years before by the Free-thought Society. Outside is an allegorical figure of Justice, scales in hand, which reminds the visitor very forcibly that Dunedin Free-thought has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Its congregation expired long before the lease, and its chief supporters had entirely abandoned their propaganda, the secretary having even become an active evangelist in Victoria. From the third Sunday onwards Mr. Ready crowded this hall at every evening service.

People from the country, if they had a Sunday in town, went to hear Ready, just as visitors to London go to hear Hughes or Parker. But hundreds among the regular attendants were people who for years had not been seen inside any place of worship. Striking cases of conversion were constantly occurring. In one instance a drunkard and profligate, who had for years been separated from his wife, followed the crowd from the Octagon into the Lyceum, and the steward, to whom he was quite unknown, happened to put him into the very same seat with her. Both were converted, and are now happily reunited. As early as the Rattray street days the church thus brought together sent a valuable missionary to China in the person of Miss Cannon (now Mrs. F. J. Dymond), who was well tested by the pastor in slum work before he permitted her to become a candidate for the mission field. And all the while, not only was a great

variety of evangelistic work being done, Sundays and weekdays, but the life of the other churches received a lasting stimulus. When Mr. Ready came to the city there was no open-air evangelism except that of the Salvation Army. Now almost every denomination carries on successful outdoor work.

In August, 1893, he was for the second time faced with a demand for more rent, the rise now being from 25s. to 35s. Determined to have his money's worth, Mr. Ready took the forward step of engaging, at £2 a week, the Garrison Hall, which seats 2000. On Sunday evenings it is well filled by a congregation which is said to be the largest in the Southern world. Since this last migration, he has had to fight exceptionally bitter opposition. An enemy of his on the town council, who has reason to dislike him, succeeded in passing a by-law which absolutely prohibited open-air preaching. Everybody knew at whom this was aimed. The gaoler, meeting Mr. Ready in the street, jocularly told him that he had a feather bed prepared for him. But it was long since there had been any terror for him in the name of a policeman. With a boldness which proved his apostolical succession, he went on, unmolested, with his outdoor evangelism, and the by-law is as dead as the Free-thought Society. He may have foolish opponents, but none of them are foolish enough to brave the public opinion of the city by making an open attack upon its most popular preacher.

Mr. Ready, whose work, owing to the recent union of Methodist Churches in the colony, now bears the name of the Methodist Central Mission, Dunedin, is now spending a few months in England. It is easy to see, from meeting and hearing him, that, though delighted and thankful at his success, he is absolutely upspoil by it. When asked the other day to tell his secret, he replied that the way to succeed was to pray, work hard, and have faith in God. So has this 'brand plucked from the burning' become a bright light to lead his fellows in the paths of purity and truth.

I understand that in the best-informed circles of London society it is generally agreed that the Gospel of Christ, though an interesting subject for academical discussion, has no longer any real uplifting and saving power. Somebody ought to tell Mr. Ready this—and prove it to him—before he goes back to New Zealand.

Storm-Tossed.

We may not sail the hoisterous wave
Of storm-tossed Gallilee,
With Christ, the Master, in the boat
Upon the treacherous sea.

We may not hear those words of power,
That mandate, 'Peace, be still,'
Or see those restless, angry waves
Obey that Sovereign will.

Yet often, on life's troubled seas,
'Mid billows mountain high,
Our little bark nigh overwhelmed,
Carest Thou not? we cry.

E'en as we call, the answer comes,
The whisper, 'Peace be still,'
And howling wind and angry sea
Obey their Sovereign's will.

He speaks the magic words of peace
And calms the troubled heart,
We know our gracious Master's voice,
And all our fears depart.

Now, as of old, when tempests rage
He wakes to still the storm,
And at His gentle 'Peace, be still,'
The gale becomes a calm.

—Harriet E. Banning in New York 'Observer.'