

thorough master of his trade than before. He was quiet and unobtrusive, too, as ever, and a greater reader of serious books. And so the better sort of the people were beginning to draw to Willie by a kind of natural sympathy. Some of them had learned to saunter into his workshop in the long evenings, and some had grown bold enough to engage him in serious conversation when they met him in his solitary walks; when out came the astonishing fact, and, important as it may seem, the simple-minded mechanic had taken no pains to conceal it,—that during his residence in the south country he had left the Kirk and gone over to the Baptists. There was a sudden revision of feeling towards him, and all the people of the town began to speak of Willie Watson as 'a poor lost lad.'

The 'poor lost lad,' however, was unquestionably a very excellent workman; and as he made shoes neater than anybody else, the ladies of the place could see no great harm in wearing them. He was singularly industrious, too, and indulged in no expense, except when he now and then bought a good book, or a few flower-seeds for his garden. He was, withal, a single man with only an elderly sister, who lived with him, and himself to provide for; and what between the regularity of his gains on the one hand, and the moderation of his desires on the other, Willie, for a person in his sphere of life, was in easy circumstances. It was found that all the children in the neighborhood had taken a wonderful fancy to his store. He was fond of telling them good little stories out of the Bible, and explaining to them the prints which he had pasted on the walls. Above all, he was anxiously bent on teaching them to read. Some of their parents were poor, and some of them were careless; and he saw that, unless they learned their letters from him, there was little chance of their ever learning them at all. Willie, in a small way, and to a very small congregation, was a kind of missionary; and what between his stories, and his pictures, and his flowers, and his apples, his labors were wonderfully successful. Never yet was school or church half so delightful to the little men and women of the place as the shop of Willie Watson, 'the poor lost lad.'

Years of scarcity came on; taxes were high and crops not abundant; and the soldiery abroad, whom the country had employed to fight in the great revolutionary war, had got an appetite at their work, and were consuming a great deal of meat and corn. The price of the boll rose tremendously; and many of the townspeople, who were working for very little, were not in every case secure of their little when the work was done. Willie's small congregation began to find that times were exceedingly bad. There were no morning pieces among them, and the porridge was always less than enough. It was observed, however, that in the midst of their distresses, Willie got in a large stock of meal, and that his sister had begun to bake as if she were making ready for a wedding. The children were wonderfully interested in the work, and watched it to the end,—when, lo! to their great and joyous surprise, Willie began and divided the whole baking amongst them. Every member of his congregation got a cake; there were some who had little brothers and sisters at home who got two; and from that day forward, till times got better, none of Willie's young people lacked their morning piece. The neighbors marvelled at Willie. To be sure, much of his goodness was a kind of natural goodness; but certain it was that, independently of what it did, it took an inexplicable delight in the Bible and in religious meditation; and all agreed there was something strangely puzzling in the character of 'the poor lost lad.'

We have alluded to Willie's garden. Never was there a little bit of ground better occupied; it looked like a piece of rich needlework. He had got wonderful flowers, too,—flesh-colored carnations streaked with red, and roses of a rich golden yellow. Even the commoner varieties—auriculas and anemones, and the parti-colored polyanthus—grew better with Willie than anybody else. A Dutchman might have envied him his tulips, as they stood, row above

row, on their elevated beds, like so many soldiers on a redoubt; and there was one mild, dropping season in which two of these beautiful flowers, each perfect in its kind, and of different colors, too, sprang apparently from the same stem. The neighbors talked of them as they would have talked of the Siamese twins; but Willie, though it lessened the wonder, was at pains to show them that the flowers sprang from different roots, and that what seemed their common stem was in reality but a green hollow sheath formed by one of the leaves. Proud as Willie was of his flowers, and, with all his humility, he could not help being somewhat proud of them, he was yet conscientiously determined to have no miracle among them, unless indeed the miracle should chance to be a true one. It was no fault of Willie's that all his neighbors had not as fine gardens as himself: he gave them slips of his best flowers, flesh-colored carnation, yellow rose and all; he grafted their trees for them, too, and taught them the exact time for raising their tulip-roots, and the best methods of preserving them. Nay, more than all this, he devoted whole hours at times to give the finishing touches to the parterres and borders, just in the way a drawing-master lays in the last shadings, and imparts the finer touches, to the landscape of a favorite pupil. All seemed impressed with the unselfishness of his disposition; and all agreed that there could not be a warmer-hearted man or a more obliging neighbor than Willie Watson, 'the poor lost lad.'

Everything earthly must have its last day. Willie was rather an elderly than an old man, and the childlike simplicity of his tastes and habits made people think of him as younger than he really was; but his constitution, never a strong one, was gradually failing; he lost strength and appetite, and at length there came a morning on which he could no longer open his shop. He continued to creep out at noon, however, for a few days after, to enjoy himself among his flowers, with only the Bible for his companion; but in a few days more he had declined so much lower that the effort proved too much for him, and he took to his bed. The neighbors came flocking in; all had begun to take an interest in poor Willie; and now they had learned that he was dying, and the feeling had deepened immensely because of the intelligence. They found him lying in his neat little room, with a table, bearing the one beloved volume, drawn close to his bed. He was the same quiet, placid creature he had ever been—grateful for the slightest kindness, and with a heart full of love for all—full to overflowing. He said nothing of the Kirk, and nothing of the Baptists; but earnestly did he urge on his visitors the one master truth of revelation. Oh, to be secure of an interest in Christ! there was nothing else, he assured them, that would stand them in the least stead, when, like him, they came to die. As for himself, he had not a single anxiety. God, for Christ's sake, had been kind to him during all the long time he had been in the world; and He was now kindly calling him out of it. Whatever He did to him was good, and for his good; and why, then, should he be anxious or afraid? The hearts of Willie's visitors were touched, and they could no longer speak or think of him as 'the poor lost lad.'

A few short weeks went by, and Willie had gone the way of all flesh. There was silence in his shop; and his flowers opened their breasts to the sun, and bent their heads to the bee and the butterfly, with no one to take note of their beauty, or to sympathize in the delight of the little winged creatures that seemed so happy among them. There was many a wistful eye cast at the closed door and melancholy shutters by the members of Willie's congregation; and they could all point out his grave.

Expiring Subscriptions.

Would each subscriber kindly look at the address tag on this paper? If the date thereon is July, it is time that the renewals were sent in so as to avoid losing a single copy. As renewals always date from the expiry of the old subscriptions, subscribers lose nothing by remitting a little in advance.

The Victorian India Orphan Society.

[For the 'Northern Messenger.'

The work amongst the famine orphans at Dhar, Central India, is continuing to yield most encouraging results. Following the recent deep spiritual revival which continued for some months, nineteen girls were admitted to Church fellowship, their consistent lives attesting the thorough sincerity of their profession, and five of the older ones have left the Orphanage for homes of their own, four having married Christian converts from Amkert; these newly formed homes will all be under the loving, fostering care of the missions established in those cities, and we trust the young couples will prove helpful Christian workers. Besides the orphans, two native evangelists and a Bible-reader are also supported by subscribers, the work of the Bible reader being at the Leper Asylum. At a recent meeting the society decided to admit the untainted children of lepers into the Orphanage, every possible precaution being taken to prevent contagion, which, from experience, seems to be quite possible. These little ones so sorely bereft of parental care appeal most strongly to Christian sympathy.

In a recent article, Mr. Charles Ed. Russell states that 130,000,000 of the people of India live in wretched mud huts, clad in strips of rag, with barely enough food to keep them alive, and swarming in filth unutterable. The Sudras, the lowest caste, who are day laborers and street sweepers, of whom there are millions and millions, only get \$2.24 a month for their labor. They are a hopeless, helpless class, despised and abhorred by all others, upon whom no thoughtful man can look without deep horror and pity beyond words, deprived even of the privilege of prayer, being forbidden to enter the temples and taught that they are hated by the gods. Next above them and others who work with their hands come the farmers, amongst whom the terrible famines work such awful havoc. They live in thatched huts without windows, mud walls and mud floor. The family sit on their heels in the damp, foul air, and for food they have in a week as much as is provided for a western farmer for one meal. Incredible as it may seem to us, nearly half the population, about 133,000,000, live constantly in a state of practical starvation, and never by any chance have enough to eat. In the country where such frightful conditions exist, Christian missions are indeed bright spots, and the noble uplifting work they are doing amongst these cruelly oppressed and downtrodden people must appeal to all who have any care for their fellow creatures.

Mrs. Crichton, of 142 Langside street, Winnipeg, is the secretary-treasurer of the Victorian India Orphan Society.

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