

HOSPITAL SUNDAY.

Sunday, the 15th June, witnessed a remarkable sight in London—a sight worthy the day of that Lord whose characteristic, while on earth, was that “He went about doing good.” Almost all the churches of the great city, the Established, the Non-conformist, and the Roman Catholic, Plymouth Brethren, Quakers, and Jewish Synagogues, united on that day in “collecting” for the hospitals and dispensaries that are so prominent a feature in the metropolis of the Empire. Her Majesty was at Balmoral, but the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh attended the service in St. Paul’s; and the scene there was almost of the same national character as when the Queen went to give thanks for the recovery of her son. The collection taken up at St. Paul’s was over £500 stg., and the sum total from all the churches was about £30,000—a right royal contribution, to be divided among the London institutions for relieving the sick, the diseased, the maimed and the halt.

London is not the first city that has adopted this plan. The credit of the initiative has to be given to Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, or some other of the Provincial towns, where it has been tried for some years with signal success. When the plan was proposed for the metropolis, almost every one was disposed to throw cold water on it. Ecclesiastical dignitaries thought it was Utopian. Some said that too much money would be raised. Others, that it would dry up the present sources of revenue, especially the individual contributions that most of the hospitals have to depend upon. Some were sure that London was too big a city to get all in it of one mind. Others, that the churches were too hostile to each other to engage in any common work. Some, that the money would not be fairly divided. Others, that, even if it were, jealousies would be aroused. But while critics carped, a few earnest men worked. A Council was formed, presided over by the Lord Mayor, who threw himself heart and soul into the movement, and containing representatives of the different churches. It fixed on the day for the collection, and it appointed a committee of sensible business-like laymen to examine all the institutions that desired to be put on the list as in need of assistance, and to report upon them, their work and their claims. And, to the astonishment of even the most sanguine supporters of the plan, on the first trial, the success has been such as we have stated. The London churches were filled as they have not been filled for years. Men and women who do not usually attend the House of God, some who had never attended in their lives before, were drawn by the uniqueness and loveliness of the idea to go and to take an offering with them. The Bishop of London in St. Paul’s, the Archbishop of Canterbury in Lambeth, Archbishop Manning in his Pro-Cathedral Southwark, Dr. Cumming in the National Scotch Church, Dr. Parker in Exeter Hall, Henry Allon in Islington, Thain Davidson in the Agricultural Hall, Newman Hall in the Surrey Chapel, the Grand Rabbi in his Synagogue, all preached from different texts on the one great subject. For the first time in its history, the beautiful Temple Church had a collection taken up in it, and the lawyers did well, giving £344. But it is not the amount of money collected that surprises and delights the Christian heart most, but the notable demonstration given to the world that, underneath all our differences, there is a grand basis of unanimity, common feeling, common thought, and common worship. The *Times* truly says:—“Among the operative classes especially, whose Sunday leisure often seems to them too precious to be given up to churches or chapels, and who, in many instances, listen eagerly to the professors of very shallow forms of disbelief, the spectacle of this union of all denominations of worshippers in the performance of an act of charity, would exert a most powerful effect. The overflowing congregations must have included hundreds, nay thousands, of persons to whom the interior of a church would be unfamiliar, and who would be attracted thither by blended feelings of curiosity and of kindness—feelings eminently helpful to any preacher who could pierce through the crust of habitual apathy in others by some loosening of the chains of convention