

out her, would have been, at best, a scene of dissolute idleness, into a hive of industry and order.

We have already explained the nature of the employment which she provided for them; the manner of their instruction is described as follows:

"Any who could not read I encouraged to learn, whilst others in my absence assisted them. They were taught to write also; whilst such as could write already, copied extracts from books lent to them. Prisoners who were able to read, committed verses from the Holy Scriptures to memory every day according to their ability or inclination. I, as an example, also committed a few verses to memory to repeat to them every day; and the effect was remarkable; always silencing excuse when the pride of some prisoners would have prevented their doing it. Many said at first, 'It would be of no use;' and my reply was, 'It is of use to me, and why should it not be so to you? You have not tried it, but I have.' Tracts and children's books, and larger books, four or five in number, of which they were very fond, were exchanged in every room daily, whilst any who could read more, were supplied with larger books."—(*Life*, p. 32.)

There does not appear to have been any instance of a prisoner long refusing to take advantage of this mode of instruction. Men entered the prison saucy, shallow, self-conceited, full of cavils and objections, which Sarah Martin was singularly clever in meeting; but in a few days the most stubborn, and those who had refused the most peremptorily, either to be employed or to be instructed, would beg to be allowed to take their part in the general course. Once within the circle of her influence, the effect was curious. Men, old in years, as well as in crime, might be seen striving for the first time in their lives to hold a pen, or bending hoary heads over primers and spelling-books, or studying to commit to memory some precept taken from the Holy Scriptures. Young rascals, as impudent as they were ignorant, beginning with one verse, went on to long passages; and even the dullest were enabled by perseverance to furnish their minds and memories with "from two to five verses every day." All these operations, it must be borne in mind, were carried on under no authority save what was derived from the teacher's innate force of character. Aware of that circumstance, and that any rebellion would be fatal to her usefulness, she so contrived every exercise of her power as to "make a favour of it," knowing well that "to depart from this course, would only be followed by the prisoners doing less, and not doing it well."—(*Life*, p. 104.)

The ascendancy she thus acquired was very singular. A general persuasion of the sincerity with which "she watched, and wept, and prayed, and felt for all," rendered her the general depository of the little confidences, the tales of weakness, treachery, and sorrow, in the midst of which she stood! and thus she was enabled to fan the rising desire for emancipation, to succour the tempted, to encourage the timid, and put the erring in the way.

After the close of her labours at the jail, she proceeded, at one time of her life, to a large school, which she superintended at the work-house, and afterwards, when that school was turned over to proper teachers, she devoted two nights in the week to a school for factory girls, which was held in the capacious chancel of the old church of St. Nicholas. There, or elsewhere, she was every thing. Other teachers would send their classes to stand by and listen, whilst Sarah Martin, in her striking and effective way, imparted instruction to the forty or fifty young women who were fortunate enough to be more especially her pupils. Every countenance was riveted upon her; and, as the questions went round, she would explain them by a piece of poetry, or an anecdote, which she had always ready at command, and, more especially, by Scripture illustration. The Bible was, indeed, the great fountain of her knowledge and her power. For many years she read it through four times every year, and had formed a most exact Reference Book to its contents. Her intimate familiarity with its striking imagery and lofty diction, impressed a poetical character upon her own style, and filled her mind with exalted thought. After her class duties were over, there remained to be performed many offices of kindness, which with her were consequent upon the relation of teacher and pupil; there was personal communication with this scholar and with that; some inquiry here, some tale to listen to there; for she was never a mere schoolmistress, but always the friend and counsellor, as well as the instructor.

The evenings on which there was no tuition, were devoted by her to visiting the sick, either in the work-house, or through the town generally; and occasionally an evening was passed with

some of those worthy people in Yarmouth, by whom her labours were regarded with interest. Her appearance in any of their houses was the signal for a busy evening. Her benevolent smile and quick active manner communicated her own cheerfulness and energy to every one around her. She never failed to bring work with her, and, if young people were present, was sure to employ them all. Something was to be made ready for the occupation of the prisoners, or old materials to be adjusted to some new use, in which last employment her ingenuity was pre-eminent. Odd pieces of woollen or cotton, scraps of paper, mere letters, things which other people threw away, it mattered not what, she always begged that such things might be kept for her, and was sure to turn them to some account. If, on such occasions, whilst every body else was occupied, some one would read aloud, Sarah Martin's satisfaction was complete; and at intervals, if there were no strangers present, or if such communication were desired, she would dilate upon the sorrows and sufferings of her guilty flock, and her own hopes and disappointments in connexion with them, in the language of simple, animated truth.

Her day was closed by no "return to a cheerful fireside prepared by the cares of another," but to her solitary apartments, which she left locked up during her absence, and where "most of the domestic offices of life were performed by her own hands." There she kept a copious record of her proceedings in reference to the prisoners; notes of their circumstances and conduct during such time as they were under her observation, which generally extended long beyond the period of their imprisonment; with most exact accounts of the expenditure of the little subscriptions before mentioned, and also of a small annual payment from the British Ladies' Society, established by Mrs. Fry, and of all other monies committed to her in aid of any branch of her charitable labours. These books of record and account have been very properly preserved, and have been presented to a public library in Yarmouth.

During all this time she went on living upon her bare pittance; in a state of most absolute poverty, and yet of total unconcern as to her temporal support. Friends supplied many of her necessities by occasional presents; but, unless it was especially provided, "This is not for your charities, but for your own exclusive use and comfort," whatever was sent to her was given away to persons more destitute than herself. In this way she was furnished with clothes, and occasional presents were sent to her of bread, cheese, eggs, fruit, and other necessaries of a simple kind. Some members of the Corporation were desirous that a pecuniary provision should be made for her out of the borough funds; but the proposal was soon laid aside, in deference to her own most strenuous opposition.

In 1841, the question was renewed, and the wife of one of the magistrates wrote to her:

"We consider it impossible, from the manner in which you live, that you can long continue your arduous labours at the jail, &c. Mr. ——— and myself will feel angry and hurt if you refuse to accept it. I must entreat you to do this," &c.

Angry, forsooth! Poor lady! Sarah Martin's answer ran thus:

"Here lies the objection which oppresses me: I have found voluntary instruction, on my part, to have been attended with great advantage; and I am apprehensive, that in receiving payment my labours may be less acceptable. I fear, also, that my mind would be fettered by pecuniary payment, and the whole work upset. To try the experiment, which might injure the thing I live and breathe for, seems like applying a knife to your child's throat, to know if it will cut. . . . Were you so angry as that I could not meet you, a merciful God and a good conscience would preserve my peace; when, if I ventured on what I believe would be prejudicial to the prisoners, God would frown upon me, and my conscience, too, and these would follow me everywhere. As for my circumstances, I have not a wish ungratified, and am more than content."—(*Life*, p. 35.)

Such scruples should have been held sacred. Corporation gratitude should have been exhibited in some way which would not have excited a feeling of self-degradation; but, alas! a jail committee does not enter into questions of feeling. "If we permit you to visit the prison, you must submit to our terms," (p. 36;) and these worshipful gentlemen, who were then making use of Sarah Martin as a substitute for the schoolmaster and the chaplain, whom it was by law their bounden duty to have appointed,