

came to our hospital, and about the end of June that he had been wounded, and during all that time he had lain on his back in the hospital at Balaklava till his back was worse than his wounds. But not less astonishing than his being in life, was his patience and cheerfulness under so much agony. There was a singular gentleness and sweetness about that lad that deeply interested us all, and the surgeon who attended him was filled with admiration of his fortitude. He was several times despaired of, but rallied, and eventually, though slowly, recovered so far as to be sent home to his widowed mother, but, of course, to be an object for life. He always seemed most grateful for being read to and prayed with. He had but little education, and was ill-informed on religious truth, but all that was said to him he seemed to apprehend so intelligently and feelingly, that I have reason to hope that the Spirit's grace was added to that wonderfully placid and cheerful temperament to which, under God, he mainly owed his recovery.

As to the religious knowledge of the patients generally speaking, I found it very defective. Not a few of them were unable to read or write, but while some of them seemed not to care for the privation, others most feelingly deplored it. Had it been at all practicable to form a class of such, I might have tried my hand at the schoolmaster's as well as the chaplain's duties. But this was quite out of the question; and as most of them knew their letters, I did what I could to put them in the way of learning to read, by giving them spelling-books, and occasionally hearing them a lesson. It was pleasing to see the anxiety of some of them to learn, but in most instances their stay in the hospital was too short to admit of their making much progress. Many were the earnest and attentive listeners I found in my endeavours to impart religious knowledge, whether in conversation, in the Sabbath services, or in my daily classes for convalescents, in which I read and commented on a short passage of Scripture, and explained one or more of the questions in the Shorter Catechism. Among those who could read (and these, I am happy to say were the immense majority) there was an urgent demand for books, and, thanks to the providence of the Admiralty and the kindness and liberality of the Religious Tract Society, and other friends at home, I had a supply sufficient to meet the demand. The books I found most generally liked were such as the Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Chambers' Journal, Hogg's Weekly Instructor, the Leisure Hour, and Christian Treasury. I distributed hundreds of Newman Hall's and Bible's Tracts, which I have reason to think were in many instances attended with good effect. I had also to give away a number of Bibles, when the men were leaving the hospital, as so few of them possessed or had their Bibles with them. My only regret was, that so many of them applied to me on leaving for some religious book to take home with them, and so few of the kind that were suitable for such gifts as conveying religious instruction in the form of interesting narrative.

I had anticipated that I would feel considerable embarrassment and difficulty in speaking alone to the men individually on their spiritual interests in crowded wards where privacy was impossible. And in many instances, no doubt, when the patient was not seriously ill, and the subject was evidently unwelcome I did feel the want of privacy a restraint. But in many cases I found such a willingness to converse, and such a desire for instruction on these subjects, as to prevent all feeling of embarrass-

ment from the presence of others. And especially when death and eternity were visibly near were the icy barriers of false delicacy and shame melted down, and then I could speak to them with my whole heart, in the hearing of their comrades, of their need of a Saviour and the all-sufficiency of Christ. It often fell to me to tell some poor fellow, who perhaps had never suspected he was in danger that he had but a few hours to live, and in some cases I had but that one brief opportunity of speaking with him. These were indeed trying occasions but it is good sometimes to be brought to feel one's utter helplessness and thus to be thrown back in simple dependence on the efficacy of prayer. I had gone one day, after a fresh arrival of wounded, into a ward where several of the worst cases were lying. Among them I found one fine-looking lad whose leg had been shot off at the thigh. The amputation had been badly performed at the camp, and he could only be saved by the operation being repeated, for which he himself expressed a strong desire. At this moment the nurse was with him, and he was suffering such agony that it was vain to attempt speaking to him then. The next day I was told by the surgeon that he had sunk so much that a second amputation was now out of the question, and that I had better inform him that he could not survive many hours. On going to his bedside I found him much easier than on the previous day, and hopeful from that fallacious symptom. It wrung my very heart to bid him cease to hope but though at first incredulous, and evidently unprepared for the announcement that his end was near, he calmed, but far from indifferent spirit in which he received it, on my assuring him that such was the doctor's opinion, enabled me all the more calmly and hopefully to plead with him on behalf of Christ. It was touching to hear how he lamented his defective religious education; and as I spoke to him of sin and the Saviour I was greatly encouraged by the interested, intelligent looks, and feeling words with which he responded, and I spoke all the more from the heart because I felt I was speaking to the heart. I endeavoured to make the most of the short time his feeble sinking state allowed for conversing with him, and never did I pray more fervently than when kneeling down beside him, I entreated that the Spirit might give effect to the words I had spoken. How thankful at such times did I feel for the simplicity of the gospel, and that it needed so few words to give it full utterance in a dying sinner's ear, that if the Spirit have but convinced him of sin, we but need—not as in Rome's counterfeit of the gospel's simplicity to point his eye to a crucifix and pronounce the words of priestly absolution—but to point his faith to the Cross on Calvary and say, "Believe on that crucified Redeemer, and to-day shalt thou be with Him in Paradise."

I am sometimes asked, Sir, whether I met among the patients with many decided cases of conversion. Now, that is a subject on which I never like to pronounce decidedly on the strength of any mere professions, especially when I have not had the opportunity of testing these by the after life. But while there were many who showed hopeful signs of being interested and impressed, there were others who, though not seriously ill, and therefore not influenced by the near prospect of death, yet spontaneously, and in the most natural manner acknowledged to me the recklessness of their past lives, and professed their repentance with an earnestness that betokened a deep sense of sin. One of these seemed to have been awakened to serious thought by the narrow es-

cape he had of his life from a rifle bullet which entered close to his temple and passed through his eye, while another ill-favoured looking fellow, who had been wounded in a similar way, seemed wholly unimpressed by it. But whatever uncertainty may attach to death-bed repentances in general, there were not a few in that hospital of which I could not doubt the genuineness. The case of one poor lad in particular who lingered long in consumption impressed me deeply. He had been wild and thoughtless, and had been flogged on board his ship not long before he came to the hospital. Many a talk I had with him; and if ever I listened to the utterance of a broken and a contrite heart, assuredly it was then. Along with the deepest and most heartfelt penitence he evinced the most firm self-renouncing reliance on the Saviour's Work. I was greatly struck with the peculiar tenderness and humility of his spirit, and the absence of all anxiety as to the result of his illness, his sole desire seeming to be, that, living or dying, he should be the Lord's. No mere death-bed evidence of conversion could, I think, be more satisfactory than his.

But there were some whom I had every reason to believe had long known their Saviour. At the time when the hospital was most crowded with frost-bitten cases, I was particularly struck with the appearance of one young lad, a marine, who had lost all his toes and was suffering great agony. He was at this time in too weak a state to converse much; but as I expressed how deeply I felt for him, and represented the consolatory light in which the gospel bids us regard such trials, he replied in such feeling terms, and with such expressive looks from his fine dark eyes, as satisfied me that he was no stranger to gospel truth in its comforting and sustaining power. He continued long in a very feeble and critical state, but ultimately recovered. One evening when he was at the worst, a great consolation was created in the ward where he lay by his suddenly starting up in his bed and, after vehemently clapping his hands, shouting forth like one inspired some passage of poetry. He then with various gestures broke into the most passionate entreaties for Divine mercy till on the fit subsiding, he sunk back exclaiming "I thank thee, O Father!" On his being removed next morning to another part of the ward, there were found beneath his pillow a copy of Shakespeare and his Bible from which circumstance it appeared that in these delicious ravings might have been traced the poetic and devotional channels in which his thoughts were accustomed to flow. After this the doctor forbade his being spoken to on subjects that were likely to excite him. But I often saw him engaged with his Bible, and found that he had been one of a few like-minded who used to meet together on the heights of Balaklava for reading and prayer. The only other case I shall mention was that of a seaman who had lost his leg on board Sir Edmund Lyons' flagship. He was in a very feeble state and suffering much when he first arrived, but there was something in his appearance and in the tone in which he answered my inquiries which showed me at once that there was the patience and resignation of Christian faith as well as of mere natural fortitude. I found him to be a man of superior intelligence and education. He had been brought up in the Wesleyan body, and had been stationed on the Irish coast-guard when the war broke out. He was for three months in the hospital before he was invalided home, and was my decided favourite among all the patients. He had great delight in his Bible, which he had evi-