

Mr. Morgan, the editor of the *Christian*, the means were provided. A house was found at Hackney, where thirty boys were received at once. Looking at them somewhat later, it was difficult to believe in the dark surroundings of their earlier years. So great was the success of this work that it was found necessary to get more house-room, and a dilapidated dwelling at the back of Shore-ditch church was taken, and fitted up for yet another thirty boys.

Mrs. Merry, Miss Macpherson's sister, gave her so much help that she was able, not only to hold the evening-school for the match-box makers, but a sewing class for widows, and to provide a home on the upper storey for destitute little girls.

Still, more room was wanted for the increasing numbers, and it came in answer to prayer.

Along the great thoroughfare leading from the docks to the Great Eastern Railway, lofty warehouses had taken the place of many unclean tottering dwellings which formerly stood there.

During the cholera epidemic in 1866, one of these had been secured by Miss Sellon's sisters of mercy. Water and gas had been laid on in every floor, and arrangements made for convenience and cleanliness. When the cholera was over the building was closed. It was suggested to Miss Macpherson by one of her friends that she should secure it as a refuge. It had been closed twelve months when she and some of her friends entered the deserted dwelling, and prayed to God that where death had been seen in all its terrors, there souls might be born to God, and that the voice of praise and prayer might be heard within those walls, which had once resounded with the groans of the dying. Twelve months after this, through the kindness of Mr. Morgan, Mr. Dobbin, and Mr. Blair, the building was secured and the rent promised.

It was not without danger that Miss Macpherson undertook the work of this home, for the streets round about it were known as the thieves' quarters—about three thousand had their headquarters there.

Within the square mile on which the refuge, now the Home of Industry is situate, 120,000 of our poorest population are to be found, and it is difficult to name any form of distress, or any class, which has not been relieved and blessed at this home.

In a letter she wrote to the *Christian*, describing her early residence there, she says: "No words can describe the sounds in the surrounding streets during the night; yells of women, of murder, then, of police, with the rushing to and fro of wild, drunken women and men into the street next our home, where more criminals are to be found than in any other part of London."

The need of emigration was greatly felt by Miss Macpherson about this time. In her own words, "Boys came to us for shelter instead of going to empty barrels, railway arches and stairways; but our walls had limits, and our failures in finding employment for many away from their old haunts became a great difficulty, and God opened the way of emigration to Canada for us. It was a new and untrodden way."

Here is a picture of the first batch of emigrants on the eve of departure. These once ragged, shoeless wanderers stood in ranks dressed in rough blue jackets, corduroy suits and strong boots, all made within the Refuge, the work of their own hands; all alike had scarlet comforters and Glengarry caps. A canvas bag across their shoulders contained a change of linen for the voyage, towels, tin can, mug, knife, fork and spoon. The day before starting a friend brought each one a present of a strong pocket-knife, much to their delight. A Bible, a *Pilgrim's Progress* and a little case of stationery were

provided for each, and while they were indoors singing their last farewell, a dense crowd had assembled outside in the street, having waited for hours in the pouring rain.

At St. Pancras Station a band of Christian friends had assembled to wish them God-speed, nor must it be omitted that a number of young match-box-makers ran all the way from Spitalfields in the pouring rain and rushed on to the platform to grasp once again the hand of their best earthly friend, Miss Macpherson, who was herself taking the children to Canada. The passengers and railway officials were deeply interested and struck with the sight of the boys of whose history they had heard; they thought they had never seen more intelligent faces, and were heard to observe, "Well, this is real religion."

When questioned as to the result of emigration, Miss Macpherson says, "We do not take little angels to Canada, but very human little boys and girls; but ninety-eight per cent. of the children do well, and for the two per cent. we do the best we can."

How I wish I could tell you about some of these children; it would touch your hearts, I am sure. A brother and sister who had lived in a dreadful place in Drury Lane, whose parents had been buried by the work-house, and whose occupation had been picking up rags and bones, and whose condition was too deplorable to be told, were taken by Miss Macpherson to Canada; they are now able to read and write; they are well clothed with their own honest earnings, and the boy is thinking of having a farm of his own.

Another, the son of a drunken woman living in Ratcliffe Highway, has been many years in a lawyer's family, and has saved enough money to be apprenticed as an engineer, and I might go on with a hundred such.

The Home of Industry has been likened to the Pool of Bethesda, as love for the sick and suffering is shown there in a way hitherto unthought of.

The Bible Flower Mission had its origin here and is still one of the principal centres. It was brought about in a very simple way. In the early spring of 1874 a few snowdrops and primroses, with two or three violets, which had been casually enclosed in a letter to Mrs. Merry, were passed round her sewing class of two hundred poor old widows for each to have a smell, and then given to three dying people, one of whom breathed her last fondly clasping them.

From that time flowers were collected through the medium of women's work and distributed by the ladies at the Home of Industry among the sick in the neighbouring courts and in various hospitals.

It is not too much to say that these flowers going deep down into the haunts of vice have proved ready-made missionaries; they have opened doors and hearts hitherto locked, and have prepared the way for the ministry of the word of salvation. Natures hardened by years of sin feel their hearts melt at the sight of flowers, which recall the days when they were innocent and happy. Indeed, no one can say where the blessing ends.

The Bible Flower Mission is carried on still in the Home of Industry. Twice in the week one of the immense floors is devoted to receiving the flowers, and friends come long distances in order to arrange them and attach to each little cluster an ornamental card containing some message of redeeming love. By twelve o'clock the baskets are generally filled, and all the helpers assemble for a few words of counsel and cheer before taking up their lovely burdens and dispersing them among the sick and poor.

Of the number of flowers, labourers and texts required, you may imagine when I say that the Home of Industry supplies thirteen

hospitals, four unions and one lunatic asylum, beside the supply to the Bible women and City Missionaries, who bestow them upon sick people in their homes. Think what these flowers are to the sick ones in these courts and alleys, whose aching limbs have nothing better to lie on than heaps of shavings on the hard floor of a room filled with noisy children and disorderly men and women!

I think, as there must be many thousands of our readers who have never seen the Home of Industry in the Bethnal Green Road, and who know nothing of the varied works going on within and in connection with it, it would interest them to accompany us there.

It is an immense building. The ground floor is really a large hall where, on this evening of our visit, a large number of men and women workers are assembled and who will, after tea, give a report of their work; so while the tea is going on we will look about us. The first floor is one large class-room provided with double windows to deaden the sound of the traffic, and mounting still higher the stone staircase (a gift of Louisa Lady Ashburton) we arrive at the second floor, which is divided into cubicles for the seventy-five workers who, with Miss Macpherson, live on the premises. Each cubicle is panelled with polished wood and is just large enough to sleep in with comfort. Texts and mottoes brighten each one, and they all open into one large space called the square, which is a very large room. Still up a flight of stairs and we come to another big room with forms all facing one way and tables covered with red cloth. Here sewing-classes are held for factory girls on a free-and-easy principle, so that they can roam about and talk if they like.

The only time they are required to be silent is during the ten minutes' gospel talk, and then you might hear a pin drop.

A little sitting-room opens out of this large one specially for the factory girls, but they like the class-room best. We were surprised at this, as it looked so pretty with its ornaments, photographs and nice furniture.

Every corner of the building is utilised, and every day has its special work and special workers.

The poor widows have a sewing class to themselves on Monday afternoons. Each has a good tea and sixpence for the work. It would fill your eyes with tears if you could follow some of the widows on their way home and note how they spend their sixpence—breaking it up into farthings and halfpennies' worth of articles necessary for life.

Every nerve is strained to the utmost and every moment is occupied. Hospitals, work-houses and lodging-houses are visited by the workers; children are helped to emigrate; men are encouraged to fight against drink, and women are taught to be self-respecting and to keep their homes clean and respectable.

Miss Macpherson is the moving spirit of it all, though she herself asserts, "It is not my work but that of my many helpers."

Sunday is the busiest day of all, and the work done here on that day will require a chapter to itself.

We will now go down to the lower room and listen while the workers give an account of their work to Miss Macpherson, who is well enough this evening to occupy the chair.

We were greatly interested in the various accounts: The Colonel's address was general, but two things in it struck us; first he related seeing a card in a friend's house with these words written on it:—

"LOST,

Somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each containing sixty diamond minutes.

No reward is offered as they are gone beyond control."