

and it is almost impossible to estimate how much they are needed and valued by these poor Indians, nor the help it is to the Missionary. W. McKay, Esq., of the H. B. Co., was present at the Service, and expressed his agreeable surprise at the hearty manner in which the Indian children made the responses, and joined in singing the Crec Hymns, none of which they knew when we came among them three years ago. I still have the brightest hopes of these children.

PERSONAL.—Ven. Archdeacon Mackay has returned to Prince Albert. The Bishop has left for the Provincial Synod, which meets in Winnipeg, on the 8th. By striking the Railroad at Indian Head, the journey from Prince Albert to Winnipeg has been shortened to seven days. It is probable that a branch road will be running to Prince Albert next year, which will bring it within a day's journey. The tide of immigration has not yet reached that fertile part of the country, but when it does, it will change the whole character of the Diocese.

OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

Salvation Army Experiences.

I have twice attended Salvation Army services. I will try and describe just what I saw and heard, leaving the few comments I may have to make until after the description.

My first visit was to Regent Hall, in Oxford Street, London, near Oxford Circus. It was on Friday evening; I went in about half-past eight. The room is a large one, holding about 1500 or 2000 persons, and is seated with plain, almost rough benches. At the end is a raised platform with seats sloping upward. These seats and the platform will hold, perhaps, 200 persons. There were in the hall not more, I should think, than 500 all told; about a dozen or twenty of these were on the platform. The congregation seemed to me to be mostly the sort of persons one would expect to see as a week-day congregation in a church. A good many apparently were like myself, persons who had come from curiosity. Most looked like well-to-do people, though there were a few poor women. On the platform was a "Captain," who led the services; with him were 6 or 8 men and over a dozen women. The order (if one can speak of order) of the service was a hymn, an address, a prayer, all short and very earnest. The addresses were chiefly relations by one and another speaker of the experiences of peace and forgiveness which had come to their souls since conversion. The prayers, like all *extempore* prayers I have ever heard, soon became addresses to the people rather than prayers, though at times they were very earnest appeals to God. Those on the platform broke in upon the prayers and addresses with "Amen," "Yes, Lord," "Arise," "O Come," and other more or less appropriate ejaculations, but there was little or nothing of the kind from the congregation generally. The whole service gave me an idea of a vigorous effort to whip up a very stolid audience into an excited state. The men and women—for women in a more quiet way did their share of praying and preaching—who were conducting the meeting seemed, as it went on, to feel this. Their appeals to "come up to this bench, come and be saved," were more and more earnest, but with no effect. Their pleading in prayer became really pathetic and touching (for they were all in earnest.) "O Lord, why wilt Thou not help? Lord we have done all we can. We have told these poor souls of Thy Love. Some of them have been coming here night after night, and want Thy grace, and are not yet saved. Lord we can do no more. Wilt Thou not save one, only one to-night." At last, after a hymn, the meeting closed informally. I had been rather taken with the "Captain's" straightforward, sensible manner. He seemed to me more natural and real than the others, so I stopped to have a talk with him. He readily answered my many questions, telling me, among other things, that the meeting in this room had been going on for a

twelvemonth, the attendance generally slackened off towards the end of the week, of the numbers who "came forward" about one-fourth joined the Army, another fourth became regular attendants at their own churches, the rest would slip away. As to Holy Communion, he himself received every week at his own church. If any of the converts themselves speak about the matter he urged them to go, but never set it before them as a necessary duty, or even suggested it to them. Upon my remarking that I had expected that the speakers would have aimed more to convict of sin, but that they had almost wholly dwelt on the peace they themselves experienced, he gave me an answer which showed a good deal of knowledge of human nature. "These fellows," he said, "that you have heard to-night are all young converts; they are full now of their own happiness; but in a year or two the sin that is around them will press more and more upon them, and then they will go straight for the sins of the people." "How," I asked, "do you manage to help these converts when they fall into sin? do you use confession or have experience meetings?" "No," he said, "nothing of that kind. I notice some days a chap will look pretty down, and I guess what is the matter with him, I get him to one side, and ask him what's wrong, he is pretty sure to tell me he has fallen into this or that sin, and then I try to cheer him up a bit and start him on again." For some time we had been the only two left in the hall, and now the gas was being turned off, so shaking hands with him, bidding him good night, and thanking him for the information he had given me, I hurried out while any light was left.

I felt that I had not seen a live meeting in full swing, and determined the next time to take a better opportunity. So one Sunday, having been twice to church in the morning, I resolved to give the evening to a Salvation Army meeting, and in company with a friend started for the "Grecian Theatre," in one of the roughest and poorest parts of London. Outside a crowd, somewhat rough-looking, but not ill-conducted, were standing about. A "Sergeant" was there who offered to show us to the "Dress Circle" or to one of the "Boxes." We declined this offer, and asked to see the "Pit" and the "Gallery." We went into the Gallery, from which we could survey the whole audience. The building was full (not crowded) with, I should judge, 3,000 persons; many were on the platform, one man holding a banner which he from time to time waved, but it did not appear very conspicuous. The hymns, addresses and prayers were much as I have described already, but there were life and power at this meeting. The "Captain" kept it mostly in his own hands, the assistants doing little more than joining in from time to time with loud cries and shouts. Salvation, through faith in Christ, fully and freely offered, the dangers of sin and of delay, the blessedness of forgiveness, were the chief, I may say the only topics of the addresses. The manner of the speaker was earnest and excited to a great degree, but I cannot say that there was any irreverence in the language used by him or by any other of the speakers. The appeals to "come up" soon began to tell. One after another men and women made their way from various parts of the building, and with anxious faces knelt at the "bench." Hymns were frequently sung, rudely but heartily, though the singing was hardly as general as I had expected. Hitherto I had failed to get any opinions about the meetings from my neighbours. I did not want at first to ask anything of "red-shirt" men, and the others to whom I spoke were either strangers or without any views. At last I found a somewhat quiet-looking workingman in the gallery who was inclined to be communicative. He "liked these people;" "didn't mind coming there" (I found out that by this he meant he liked coming there); thought they did good. The place was full every night, but the gallery was only opened on Sundays. He came himself whenever he could get off work, about three times a week. Used to go pretty regularly to an Independent Chapel, but they were too dead there; liked much better coming here; "there is more life about these people";

thought they did a lot of good to the people round, who are a rough set. The people kneeling at the bench will stay there until they are saved, and then will give their names and addresses to the Captain.

I then tried a young fellow belonging to the Army who was standing not far off. He had quite the appearance of a street rough, in some degree tamed and cleaned. At first he was inclined to go off into what seemed a sort of regulation speech, beginning—"I am thankful that the Salvation Army came here," but, after one or two questions he got into a more natural style. He thought the Army was doing good; he was sure it did him good, he could give a civil answer now. Kept sober—was better dressed than he used to be (glancing with some little pride at a coat not much torn, and not much too big for him.) There was peace at home now, for he used to go home drunk and fight with his brothers but now kept sober—had been an orphan without father or mother since he was seven years old—some good people had before the Army came tried to do him good—used to read him a chapter of the Bible, but he was among a gambling lot, and the devil had too strong a hold to give him up then. Here my friend whose duty it was to keep order in the gallery had to leave me that he might go and quiet some restless spirits who were getting rather noisy. I had a few words afterwards with the sergeant to whom we first spoke, he gave just the same opinion as that given by the Captain at Regent Hall, that about 25 per cent. of converts joined the Army. An equal number, some of the churches and the rest slipped away. What church they joined depended very much upon where their friends went.

In another large room off the theatre, there was an overflow meeting, smaller, but in most respects like the other.

Now I have tried fairly to describe just what I saw and heard; each one can draw his own conclusions. For myself I scarcely feel that I have material enough to form a sound judgment. But one thing seems quite plain. The world can be divided into two classes—those who are striving to turn men from sin and to Christ, and those who encourage them in sin either actively or by indifference. To the former of these classes the Salvation Army certainly belongs. That, night after night, they can gather thousands to listen to exhortations to lead a better life, is a gain—that, in but a few cases they succeed, and change a low degraded rough into a self-respecting young man who likes to think that "he can give a civil answer, is better dressed and does not fight at home" shows that their work is not in vain. They are then surely allies in that cause of God of which we reckon ourselves helpers—and as allies may we not think of them and be thankful for them? But because they are allies, we must be the more anxious about the way they use the forces at their command, and about any imperfections which may mar their work. But surely it is a mistake to think more of any defects in their work, than of the great fact that they are fighting on our side against the terrible forces of sin.

I watched their services to see what lessons might be got to help us in our own mission services, but so many considerations have force here that I am slow to express any decided opinion; but the following ideas suggested themselves, as among the outward means of their success. All prayers and addresses quite short, consequently rapid change from address to hymns, from hymns to prayers. *Extempore* prayers, no doubt, very powerful to move a large assembly. The sight of a number of "Supporters" round the leader, joining in the prayers, and vigorously leading the hymns, has a great effect. Generally the informality of the whole Service adds to its power. There is one other important matter which I mention, rather to invite discussion about it than to pronounce an opinion upon it. There is evidently much to be said in favour of a mission having some one definite act publicly made which may fully commit those influenced by the mission.

TRAVELLER.