

"A Stranger—and Ye Took Me In."

BY REV. H. W. CREWS, M.A.

THE scene of the following incident was on a Grand Trunk Railway train between Hamilton and Detroit.

The cars were crowded. Among the passengers were a physician and his wife returning from a medical convention to their home in one of the most prosperous towns in Western Ontario. They were accompanied by several medical men, who were also homeward bound. Just across the aisle, in the same car with the medical group, a man with his wife and two children occupied a couple of seats. They had the appearance of being much fatigued. The wife held in her hands a babe of about a year old, which was very restless, causing annoyance to the passengers and trouble to the mother. The scene was one which touched the sympathetic heart of the doctor's wife. She at once went to the relief of her distressed sister, to whom she was an entire stranger. She found on enquiry that the couple had come a long distance, and that their babe was hungry on account of the milk having soured, no fresh supply being available. The doctor's wife soon proved to be a veritable good Samaritan. She took the babe from the mother's arms, walked up and down the car with it, amused it, and after a time succeeded in pacifying it. On handing the child back to the mother as the train was reaching its terminal point she found that the little family of four had come from a long distance and would have to wait in the depot until after midnight before they could get connections for Michigan, their journey's end. On hearing this the doctor's wife determined that she would invite them to her home for the night. Telling her purpose to her husband and his companions, she only met with discouragement. However being a woman of strong personality

and deep convictions, she did not allow her womanly instinct to be overcome by the discouragements she met. When the train reached its destination the carriage was at the station and the strangers were ushered into it and driven up to the doctor's fine residence, where princely hospitality was given to them. The druggist was 'phoned and soon a supply of baby food was on hand, and after doing ample justice to it the child fell into a sound sleep. The strangers were given their supper and then allowed to retire for the night. Then came the rub for the doctor's wife. The family indulged in all kinds of kindly but humorous criticism of what they considered her foolish piece of generosity. They told her she had better lock up her silverware and jewelry, or in the morning it would be missing along with the strangers she was entertaining. The little woman, however, stood her ground and refused to admit she had done wrong.

The next morning her humane policy was fully vindicated. The strangers were on hand, and so was the silverware and jewelry. When the time for morning prayer was announced, seeing they were in a Christian home, they felt free to disclose their identity. They were returned missionaries coming home on furlough to seek rest and renewed health after several years' experience in the mission field. The missionary conducted devotions that morning, and a friendship was commenced which was continued for years after. The wishes of the travellers were well filled with dainties of all kinds, and they were allowed to go on their way rejoicing. This is one of the best examples we have ever heard of entertaining angels unawares."

Hamilton, Ont.

Elizabeth Fry, the Prisoners' Friend.

BY THE EDITOR.

ONE of the greatest philanthropists the world has ever known, was Elizabeth Fry, whose benevolent countenance beams forth from our front page this month. Her life story is a remarkable one, in which self-sacrifice triumphed over self-consciousness, and a high purpose made her brave and strong.

Elizabeth Gurney, afterwards Mrs. Fry, was born 21st of May, 1780, in Norfolk, England. Her father was a member of the Society of Friends. Benevolently inclined from the very first, when a young girl she taught the poor children in the neighborhood, and in a short time her school, which was commenced with one little boy, increased to seventy. In 1800 she married and took up her residence in London, devoting much of her time to visiting abodes of want and misery. In 1813, several members of the Society of Friends visited Newgate to see some felons under sentence of death. They gave such a sad account to Mrs. Fry of the state of the women confined there that she, accompanied by a friend, Anna Burton, entered this abode of misery and crime with the purpose of doing something to clothe the wretched inmates.

Not long after, she formed a school for the children of the prisoners and the young criminals, and organized an association for the improvement of the female prisoners in Newgate. The object was to provide clothing, employment and instruction for the women. The condition of the female prisoners at this time was frightful. All kinds of criminals, tried and untried, were crowded together, without classification, and without employment. In the same room, in rags and dirt, destitute of sufficient clothing, they lived, cooked, and washed. "With the proceeds of their clamorous begging from strangers, the prisoners purchased liquor from a regular tap in the prison, drunkenness prevailed, and the ear was assailed by the most terrible language. By gentleness and kindness she succeeded in getting a strong hold upon these poor creatures who had been regarded as entirely intractable, and did much for their comfort and moral improvement. The change wrought by Mrs. Fry's ministrations is thus described by a visitor to one of the jails:

"I was conducted to a ward, where sat at the head of the table a Quaker lady. She was reading aloud to about sixteen

prisoners, who were sewing round it. Each wore a clean blue apron, with a ticket of her number hanging by a red tape from her neck. They all rose at my entrance, curtised respectfully, and then at a signal resumed their seats and employments. Instead of a scowl, or leer, or ill suppressed laugh, they had an air of gravity and self-respect, a sort of consciousness of their improved characters, and the altered position in which they were placed. I afterwards visited other wards, and found them the counterparts of the first."

The poor ignorant wretches under sentence of death were visited, instructed, prayed with, and wept over by this devoted, sensitive woman.

In 1818 she journeyed into the North of England and Scotland, accompanied by her brother, and made a close investigation into the state of the prisons, finding much need for reform. In many places she founded Ladies' Associations for the reformation of female prisoners. By this means houses of shelter for discharged prisoners who had no homes were established, and help was given to those who showed a disposition to earn an honest living.

Mrs. Fry seemed constantly on the lookout for opportunities of doing good. When informed of the loneliness and peril of the Coastguard's life, she at once interested herself in providing for these isolated men good reading matter. Through her efforts 500 libraries were established for the stations on shore, and others for the ships, etc., with a total of 50,000 volumes. A similar scheme was also inaugurated for the numerous shepherds who lived such a monotonous and solitary life. At Falmouth every vessel that left the dock was furnished with a box containing thirty volumes, which were changed from time to time. The naval hospitals were also, by her efforts, supplied with books. A number of journeys were made through Scotland and Ireland inspecting prisons, lunatic asylums, hospitals, etc., and a vast amount of good resulted. Mrs. Fry and her brothers made appeals to the sovereigns of England, France, Holland, Belgium, and Prussia on behalf of suffering humanity. Many of their suggestions were adopted. It is said that none could listen to Mrs. Fry's simple eloquence, breathing the very soul of love, without being touched by it.

A new field of work opened up for Elizabeth Fry in the