Miscellaneous.

A naval officer sends us the following statement concerning the working of a sisterhood in a cathedral city, which we happen to know from other sources to be generally correct. He writes:

—"Your article upon the general need for sisterhoods will find an apt illustration in the modest, unobtrusive work done by some members of one of those societies in a peculiar case which has just come under my immediate observation. This city has been severely visited by the cholera, not for the first time, and the same expedient as had been resorted to on the former occasions for checking the progress of the disease in families which had suffered was again put in request by the authorities. On the outskirts of the city a field was taken, and at first a single tent and wooden shed were erected; afterwards, as numbers flocked in, more of the same kind, for the reception of the families of the sufferers; their clothes were washed, food and medical attendance provided, and in the meantime their own dwellings were cleansed. These poor creatures, as might be expected, were, with scarcely an exception, of the lowest dregs of the population; squalor and want were too clearly their intimate companions to cause any surprise that the dreadful disease should have singled them out. Their habits were less like those of human beings than of the brute creation; they herded together, adding to one another's distress; Death was not idle amongst them, and their misery seemed scarcely to have left them by many degrees. Nurses had, indeed, been provided for the sick, but nurses they were only in name, so that it was found necessary to eject them, nearly all, one after another. In this state of things a lady in the dark weeds of her society appeared; she soon summoned one or two more to assist her—the places of the ejected nurses they supplied; all day and all night long they were by the bedsides of the sick and dying; medicines to be given at frequent intervals were now no longer neglected; not one of the thousand alleviations of distress so precious at such times was left untried. No one stopped to find fault with their being called Sisters of Mercy, nor with their sombre garb. Women who had been screaming with agony became mute and patient as they prayed by their sides; many died clasping the hands of their benefactors, and praying for blessings on them with their last breath. One little dying boy I heard of who kept crying to the last, 'Lady, lady, I cannot go without you.' Nor was this the only work they accomplished. They took the children under their entire charge. Little ones who had never heard of asking a blessing on their food learnt the regular habit of doing so, as well as that of cleanliness and good behaviour. Between their meals they were instructed or amused by some one or other of the ladies, and at morning and evening service, which a clergyman came daily to perform, there were they to teach those who had never learnt before the way to worship God. It is needless to say to say that an entire change was gradually effected in this sad place. Order, resignation, and cheerfulness became evidently visible, and not only were all temporal wants efficiently provided for, but spiritual seed was sown, which we may surely hope will at the last day be found to have borne much fruit. Since the temporary establishment has been broken up from the cessation of the disease I have casually met some of those who benefited by the devoted ministrations of these ladies. Their almost extravagant expressions of gratitude in speaking of them, but especially of the one who began and took the lead in the work will never be effaced from my memory. I believe those who really work for the poor will seldom fail to reap at least the reward of their gratitude. Now, sir, will any one say that there was not a call here for members of a society set apart for charitable work? I will not stop to enquire whether in this case the work might not have been done by any other agency; at least this may be said, and the public now knows it is no solitary instance, there was a crying want, and they who were found to be the fittest and readiest to supply that want were Sisters of Mercy. I did not mention the name of the place where this has occurred, as the ladies would probably be horrified to find their deeds were famed; it is a place well known to most of your readers. If any wish to know more I leave my address privately in your hands, and beg to subscribe myself AN OBSERVER."—*London Guardian.*

Family Reading.

LITTLE KATE'S STORY;

OR, THE LITTLE GIRL WHO WAS AFRAID TO MEET HER FATHER.

Afraid to meet her father! What could be the reason? What could have happened to make her so? She had a kind, indulgent father, who loved her, and whom she dearly loved. Why then should she be afraid to see him? I will tell you. Mr. S——, the father of the little girl, (we will call her Clara,) had occasion to go a long, long journey, and before he left he charged his children to be good and obedient during his absence. They promised to be very good indeed, as they no doubt fully intended to be when they received his parting kiss. They had no mother, but a kind relative took care of them in the place of the dear mother who was in her grave.

They had lessons to learn, and Clara did not much like to learn them; she would much rather read the pretty stories in the little books that had been given to her.

One day when she was set to learn a lesson, she had not quite finished the pretty tale she was reading, so she laid the book inside her arithmetic, and went on reading. She had not finished it, however, before she heard her aunt coming, and hastily put her book behind her; but not so hastily, however, as to prevent her aunt from seeing the act.

"Clara," said she, "what are you doing?"

"Studying, ma'am," was the reply.

"But what were you doing when I came in?"

"Studying, aunt," she again replied, but more faintly than before.

"Clara, were you studying your lesson when I came in?"

She hesitated a moment, and then turning pale, and trembling with the consciousness of guilt, said faintly, "Yes, ma'am." Her aunt lifted her out of the chair, and without saying a word, pointed to the book. Clara, ashamed and guilty, then wished she had told the truth. She knew she deserved punishment, and expected it; but her aunt said, "I shall not punish you, Clara; your father will be home next week, and you must tell him what you have done."

"O, I can not, aunt! I can not! a thousand times rather would I that you should whip me. Do any thing you will, but do not, please do not, make me tell him."

But her aunt wished her to learn a lesson which she would not soon forget, and remained firm. O, how sad and miserable was Clara all that week; she had so wished for her father's return; and now she almost wished he would not come. Clara was reaping the bitter fruits of disobedience and falsehood. She could not play, and she found no pleasure in reading. The very sight of the book for which she had risked so much was hateful to her. At last her father came home. Mr. S—— had expected to see his merry-hearted little Clara run on the first to clasp her arms around his neck and kiss him, and bid him welcome home. But no, there were the rest, all but she. Not a little surprised, he asked for her: none knew her whereabouts; but she was with. So he concluded she did not know he had come, but would come when she knew of it. Soon he went into the library for something, and there by a window stood Clara. In spite of her sad feelings a gleam of pleasure lighted up her countenance as she saw her dear father, but when he asked where was my little daughter that she did not come to welcome me, her sorrow returned, and as he stooped to kiss her, she drew back, and exclaimed, "No, father, you would not kiss me if you knew all." And covering her face with her hands, she burst into tears. Mr. S—— sat down, took little Clara on his knee, and asked the cause of her grief. And when she had told him all, she felt worse than ever to see how grieved and troubled he was. At length he said, in a low sad voice, *the way of transgressors is hard*, my child, *the way of the transgressors is hard.* And putting her off his knee, he knelt by her side and prayed that God would for Christ's sake forgive her sin, and make her meet for Heaven, that she might one day meet her dear mother there, and dwell forever with her Saviour. Then he rose and said, "I say little girl sorry for her fault?" "O, yes, father, I was sorry as soon as I had done it, but I did not think how wicked it was till now I hope, O, I hope I shall never be so bad again," said she, earnestly. "Then may God forgive you as I do now," and stooping down he kissed her tenderly in token of forgiveness, and she went away once more at peace with herself, and determined, with God's help, to keep in mind the words of her kind parent. And little Clara never forgot that the *way of transgressors is hard.*—*The Banner of the Cross.*

THE SHADOW ON THE DIAL.

REMARKABLE SCRIPTURAL CORROBORATION.

An able member of the Asiatic Society, Mr. J. W. Bosanquet, a very eminent archæologist and Eastern Scholar, read a paper of great and peculiar interest, which gave a striking corroboration of a point in biblical history which has been so often the subject of sceptical sneers, viz: the going back of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, king of Judah. Resting on the recent discoveries of Colonel Rawlinson, of the names of Sennacherib and Belshazzar among the Babylonish inscriptions, and taking the dates as thereby developed in connection with those given by Herodotus, he fixes the invasion of Judea by Sennacherib at 690, the time we are in search of, as nearly as the case admits, when successive reigns are taken, which may be, and of course are usually, incomplete in the full number of years given. Having found the probable time when the invasion of Judea by Sennacherib took place, and consequently when the shadow went ten degrees backward, Mr. Bosanquet proceeded to inquire whether any astronomical fact occurred about that time which could have produced the phenomenon in question. It is well known to Hebrew scholars, and noticed in the margin of the authorized Bible, that the exact meaning of the word translated sundial of Ahaz is "degrees," or steps of Ahaz. Mr. B. went on to show by extracts from the earliest Targum and from an early Byzantine writer, that Ahaz had built steps which would show the hour of the day. By an ingenious astronomical argument, aided by diagrams, but unintelligible without them, Mr. Bosanquet showed that such steps as appear to have been used for exhibiting the sun's meridional altitude, any very large partial eclipse, almost but not quite total, on the northern limb of the sun, occurring about ten or a few more days from the winter solstice, near the hour of noon, would produce the effect described by Isaiah in the Book of Kings. He then stated that by the kindness of the Astronomer Royal, he was enabled to show that such an eclipse did take place at the very time deduced from the chronological argument—namely, on the 11th of January, fourteen days after the winter solstice of 690 B. C. The only difficulty was, about the time of day. Mr. Airy calculated the time of the central eclipse at Jerusalem to be soon after 11 o'clock, which is too early for the phenomenon on the steps to be produced, but a letter was read from the well known mathematician and astronomer, Mr. Adams, showing that the received secular variation of the moon was slightly erroneous, and that the time of the eclipse in question might perhaps be advanced half an hour; adding, however, that in his opinion the error was not quite so large, but that he hoped to arrive at more complete results, which he would communicate to Mr. Bosanquet. Although, therefore, there was some uncertainty yet remaining, the learned writer trusted that he had shown at all events that a high degree of probability attached to the dependence of the phenomenon which was the subject of the paper, upon the solar eclipse which occurred in the year 689 B. C., and that this was the actual time in the 13th year of Hezekiah.—*Epis. Rec.*

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