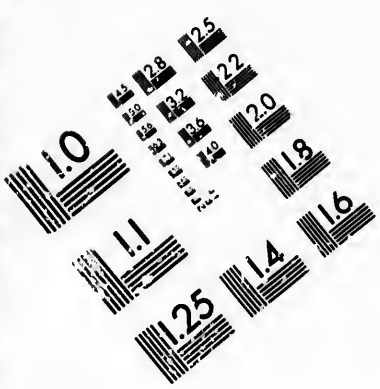

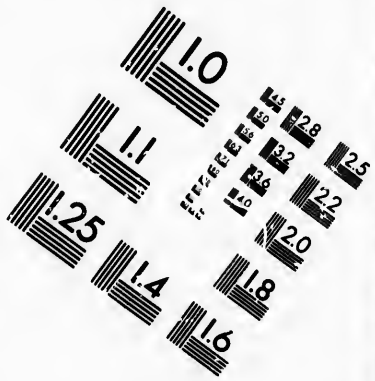

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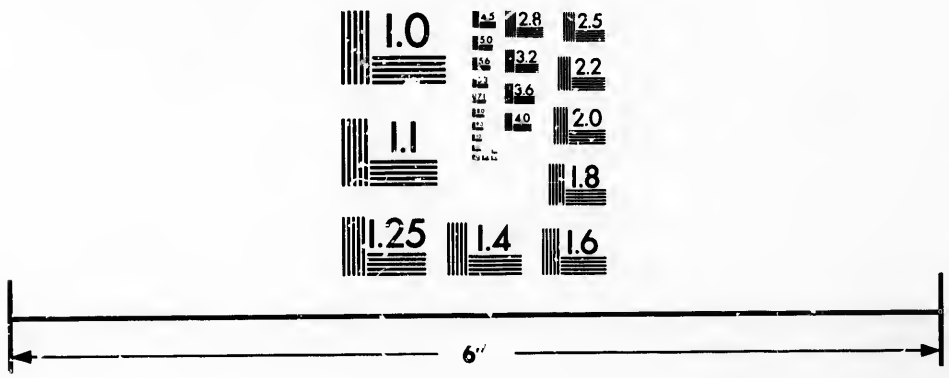

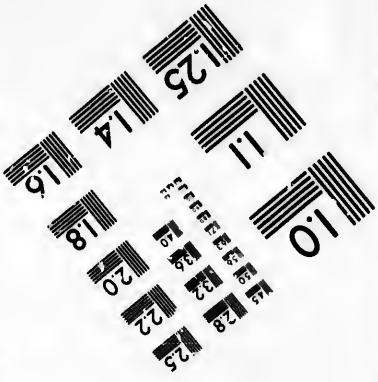

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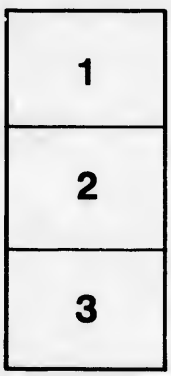

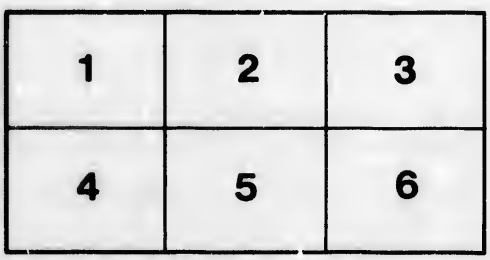

OUR CHILDREN IN OLD SCOTLAND AND NOVA SCOTIA

WITH SEQUEL

BEING A HISTORY OF HER WORK

BY

EMMA M. STIRLING

THE FOUNDER OF

THE EDINBURGH AND LEITH CHILDREN'S AID AND REFUGE SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1877

C. N. SPEAKMAN

COATESVILLE, PENNA.

LIPPINCOTT PRESS

PREFACE.

THE first edition of this little book was published in 1892, and met with a cordial welcome from the friends of "Our Children" on both sides of the Atlantic; so that comparatively few copies were left on hand in April, 1895; but such as remained shared the fate of all my other books and effects in the terrible fire of that date. Thus I have been unable since then to meet the request of many friends who wished to obtain a copy of "Our Children" and the sequel to the story of my work for them in Nova Scotia. To gratify this request I have reprinted the original volume, and continued the narrative to 1898, by including in this edition two small pamphlets written in 1893 and 1897 respectively; which tell their own story, and fully explain the circumstances by which I was led *most unwillingly* to relinquish my lifework for "Our Children" in Nova Scotia.

EMMA M. STIRLING.

DRUMPELLIER, COATESVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA,
November, 1898.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

* * * *

And well may the children weep before you,
They are weary ere they run,
They have never seen the sunshine nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man without its wisdom;
They sink in man's despair without its calm;
Are slaves without the liberty of Christendom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the balm,
Are worn as if with age. Yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep! Let them weep!

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

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PART I.

OUR CHILDREN IN OLD SCOTLAND.

OUR CHILDREN

IN

OLD SCOTLAND AND NOVA SCOTIA.

CHAPTER I.

FISHER CHILDREN AT ST. ANDREWS.

When I was a little girl, my home was in a large old-fashioned house close to the ruins of the Cathedral at St. Andrews (Scotland). It was a picturesque old place, standing in its own courtyard and garden, which were surrounded by high walls. These were our only defence against the inroads of our somewhat troublesome neighbours "the Fishers," whose dilapidated dwellings formed at that time the east end of North Street, except where the line was filled up by our stretch of high walls. From our upper windows I had ample opportunity of observing the doings, and compassionating the misery of swarms of the fisher children, the dilapidation of whose clothing was only rivalled by that of their dwellings. Our chief meeting-place, however, was the open sunny space between our gate and the Cathedral, which was the favourite play-

ground of our troublesome neighbours. Our gate itself was a curiosity, for over it were the Douglas arms—the bleeding heart—and, if it could have spoken, might have told many a tale of all who had come and gone beneath its arch, since the days of its original possessor, the celebrated Gawaine Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, and Dean of St. Andrews, before the Reformation days—whose mother is credited with lack of ambition for her son's education in the following distich :—

> "Thank Heaven, ne'er a son of mine
> But Gawaine e'er could pen a line."

While the fisher children took their noisy pleasure in the open space aforesaid, our favourite playground was within the precincts of the ruined Cathedral, where my brother and I played happily many a summer's day beside an old and highly respected friend, who united in his own person the functions of custodian to the Cathedral, and factotum to my father. So it came to pass that in our baby days our favourite stories were told us by David (about the Protestant Martyrs and John Knox), with certain gruesome details which we were enabled to realize more vividly by an occasional visit to the neighbouring Castle, with the window still remaining where Cardinal Beatoun looked out at the spectacle of George Wishart burning in front of the Castle gate, and at

which window he himself speedily met with the retribution due. We would then cross the Castle yard, and with fear and trembling look down into "the Bottle,"[1] in which so many victims of ecclesiastical tyranny were immured until death put an end to their sufferings. Who can wonder that I grew up a staunch Protestant?

So matters went on until I was about twelve years old, and one of my brothers, a young soldier, came home from abroad, deeply impressed with the importance of eternal things, who lost no time in speaking to me about my soul, and the need of salvation, and the ingratitude and heartlessness of going on neglecting such a Friend as our Saviour; but I sturdily resisted all such appeals with all the little strength and obstinacy of twelve years old. A short time after this a dear elder sister, thirteen years older than I was, who had been for long in delicate health, was called by the Lord in a very remarkable way, and having found peace in believing Him, naturally at once tried to lead me to Him too, but as it seemed without success. The effort did not last long, for she was sum-

[1] This vault or dungeon is what is known as an *Oubliette*, of which there are few now extant, but in the dark ages it was a common instrument of cruelty. It was of considerable size and very deep, and in shape exactly like a great bottle, with no aperture save the narrow neck, down which the victims were lowered by chains, in all probability never to return to the light of day.

moned to leave earth for heaven just a fortnight after her conversion, and died after a few days' illness, rejoicing in her newly found Saviour, but not before she had spoken many loving and earnest words to me, and induced me to read to her constantly, during her illness, from her little Testament she now found so precious, that she could not do without frequent reference to it. But it was not until the day after her death that I took refuge in the Testament too, and in the 17th chapter of St. John found the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and before the sun set that evening, was rejoicing in Him who thus called me out of darkness into His marvellous light. It is a long time ago now, but He has never failed me since, and I believe soon began to use the child He called then, as a means of helping other children.

As soon as the Lord had thus brought me to Himself, He made me wish to do something for Him, and the people most within my reach were the fisher children in the adjoining street. These now became the object of my life, and to prove the *sincerity* of my interest, I may mention, it overcame my former hatred of plain sewing, and one of my great pleasures was to make what I could, in the way of clothes, for them. When I was old enough to undertake the duties, I was permitted, to my great delight, to become a visitor at the Fishers' School close by, where I worked first as a visitor, and afterwards as hon. sec., for about four-

teen years, until disabled by the accident which laid me on the sofa for nearly six years, and from the effects of which I have never entirely recovered.

In 1876 I had gone to live in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, the result of turning a corner in my life, when by my mother's death, my old home had been broken up.

I was somewhat of an invalid, having been, as I said, lamed by an accident six years before, and this, I think, has been the secret of my desire to save young children from like suffering, and possibly of my knowing how to nurse them when in pain. I was a good deal alone in the world, felt my weakness keenly, and often wondered whether I would ever again be of any use. I often asked God to give me something to do for Him. I could not help it. It is so sad to feel of no use.

CHAPTER II.

DAY NURSERY CHILDREN IN EDINBURGH.

In the autumn of 1876 a friend told me she had been shocked by the fearful stories she had heard of the ill-usage of young children in Edinburgh, some of which she related. The result was that I opened a Day Nursery early in 1877, where mothers who worked out during the day could bring their babies and little children below seven years of age, and by paying a very small sum, leave them to be well taken care of till night.

A few came at first, but by degrees the Nursery increased, and the children grew and throve. I could not pay for much help, and had to be practically head nurse myself. For this end I spent the greater part of my days there, only going home to sleep. The work was hard, but most interesting from a missionary point of view, as in living the life and sharing the burden of the very poor, it gave one the opportunity of speaking words for Jesus which at a greater distance are either more apt to remain unsaid, or are less likely to be listened to. As you may suppose, the demands of so many hungry and often fretful

little children were incessant. The daily attendances, when reckoned up at the year's end, numbered by *the thousand.* How well I remember often sitting on a "creepie" (Anglicé, *low stool*) with seven infants round me on the floor, waiting for me to feed them turn about! All our arrangements were of an equally primitive description, which I discovered commended themselves greatly to the hard-working mothers who took advantage of my invitation. It will be seen we made no attempt to pose as a highly drilled institution.

The offer I made in return for *2d.* a day was a warm house, three meals a day and a piece for those who had teeth to eat with. For the bottle babies I provided the best milk I could get, and an unlimited supply of crusts and drinks of milk for the teething children. Some friends used to shake their heads gently and murmur, "Irregularity." But the proof of the pudding was literally in the eating, and the starving mites grew fat and even rosy. The great difficulty was in the nursing required. Babies will not do unless they are kept cheerful, and I strongly objected to their being left lying in bed for the sake of convenience. But we did our best; and I employed a certain number of motherless girls, who, with good looking after, made very efficient nurses. We had a good many cradles and swing cots, and I had a wonderful chair, in which I could nurse five little ones at a time. Added to these advantages, we had a large

and perfectly safe playground, with good-sized trees in it, and a steep bank to run up and down, which was an endless delight to our children. It was carefully fenced from the street at one side, from our neighbours' gardens on the other and top of the bank, also from the mill dam at the bottom, which was a greater source of anxiety, as this was believed to be more dangerous than the Water of Leith running just below. Many a decent mother has thanked me for this "more than anything. Just to keep the bairns off the street."

I think I loved the old Nursery better than any of the Homes, for I spent so many of the early days of the work there, and learnt so many hard lessons concerning the children of the poor.

This is a cheerful picture, but of course there were very black shadows too, in having to see in so many cases the children suffer for the mother's fault, even to the extent of poor innocent little babies being poisoned by whisky!

I often think what a wonderful result has, by the blessing of God, grown out of the seed planted at the Stockbridge Day Nursery. It is now a big family tree, whose branches have spread beyond the sea, where active and capable young men and maidens are carving out their own fortunes, and making homes for themselves in the New World, followed in their turn by bright, bonny boys and girls, who were brought as

babies in arms, or very little children, just able to toddle in and out after one, like a flock of ducks, whose greatest pleasure was "a dirt pie," and greatest grief to be inadvertently left behind when the rest of the family had adjourned to have dinner in the kitchen. Now they are earning their own living; and it is but fair to them to say I have had no reason to be ashamed of them.

One of my greatest pleasures in looking back to the old nursery days is the recollection of the pleasant and affectionate intercourse with Miss Auld, who was so true and kind a friend to me and our children all through those years of (it must be confessed!) the anxiety and drudgery of Day Nursery work. How she came in all weathers to look after us and see we had all we needed in the way of housekeeping; how she cheered us up by taking the best view of everything, coaxed the bairns with sweeties—I always *said* it made me jealous, but I did not *think* it—how she controlled rebellious and provoking girls, kept up the spirits of the nurse, conducted mothers' meetings once a week, and scolded me roundly for my imprudence in various directions and not taking care of my health! I wish I had her here now, that is all I can say. I had many other kind helpers in the lady visitors too, but as the object of their being there was to give me time for other things, I saw less of them, though I was most grateful to them all the same.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS OF THE WORK FOR VARIOUS CLASSES OF CHILDREN.

A FEW months after I began the Day Nursery work I felt constrained to open a home in the autumn of 1877, as I found so many children who had no home to go to at night, unless the common lodging-house could be called so, and so many others brought by fathers, the mother having died and left the poor things to the care of the even more-to-be-pitied man, who had now to be father and mother and all. Need I say it likewise grew?

At this time, 1878, I consented to have a Board of Directors. When I accepted their co-operation, I kept in my own hands three items:—

1. Provision and amount of food.
2. Entire control of the servants.
3. Admission of cases.

This I thought fair and reasonable, as I had undertaken to be responsible for the expenses of the Institution.

Then a terrible class of little sufferers was brought to me—the inmates of baby farms. These I was

enabled to protect efficiently by the help of the police, and many were rescued.

But there was a class even beyond these, more numerous and varied in bitter experience, as well as in age; for when does the drunkard's child, even the half-grown boy or girl, cease to be the victim of its parent's sin?

Many and harrowing were the cases for which my help was asked from all quarters, and in an extraordinary variety of circumstances. Sometimes help was needed only for a limited period; sometimes, until in a year or two, I could put the boy or girl in the way of doing for themselves. More frequently the little ones were left a burden on my hands altogether, until at last I had, for a long time before I left Scotland, 300 children to feed every day, to say nothing of clothing and education; and as all my Home children went to the public schools, the school-fees were a heavy item.

Thus the Home, once started, grew rapidly; first one house was opened, then another, till in 1883 I had Homes for girls and little ones at 11, Mackenzie Place, Stockbridge, Edinburgh; 2, Craigholm Crescent, Burntisland, Fife; for boys, at 1, Craigholm Crescent, Burntisland; and 4, Bayton Terrace, Granton, near Edinburgh. Three of these were arranged to accommodate twenty-five children in each, besides two or three older girls as workers, and we often

had to stretch a bit when those pleading for admission could not *wait* in cold, hunger and nakedness till some other had been provided for. At Bayton Terrace we tried to keep to eight boys.

I lived on both sides of the Forth, and my own houses, Merleton, Wardie, and 16, Craigholm Crescent, Burntisland, had many occupants, little ones, delicate children, or those requiring special protection from cruelty. I may mention that my servants, except the housekeepers, were all taken from the elder girls who had behaved well enough to deserve such promotion.

At this time I can well remember many a winter's night, when leaving Stockbridge at 8.30, after a hard day's work, when very pressing applications had been made *and sifted* for admission to the Mackenzie Place Home, I had to take two or three of the improved inmates from Stockbridge Home to Wardie with me, in order to leave room in the beds for the perishing little new-comers. Do you blame me? What else could I do? Could I have gone home *to sleep*, and know I had left little children to perish,—the little children whom the Lord Jesus Christ told us all to *receive* in His name?

I was careful *only to admit* children who were either victims of cruelty or really homeless, and without the necessaries of life; though, strange to say, from misfortune (too common at that time of general depression

and want of work, consequent on the commercial crisis) many became destitute, whose parents had been respectable and well-to-do people. *But I never, that I know of, refused* to admit a single destitute or cruelly treated child or young person, though I have refused hundreds of cases of mere convenience!

In 1880 the work had attracted a good deal of public attention and a good deal of criticism; and when the British Association met in Edinburgh, in October of that year, it was made the subject of discussion, introduced by our Chairman, Mr. Colston, which provoked most decided and, it seemed to me, most unjust opposition. I had been previously invited to read a paper on Day Nursery work, and the help and protection necessary for *little* and *innocent* children, unsuited by their age and lack of even petty crimes for Industrial Schools. I took the opportunity of pleading the cause of little children, whose only crime was their poverty, as earnestly as I could, and was listened to with much sympathy by many people, with amusement by others. At the close of my appeal a gentleman standing in one of the passages asked for leave to join in the discussion, and made a most touching and eloquent speech *in defence* (much to my joy and relief) of the cause of *little innocent* children. That speech, I am certain, turned the tide of public opinion in Edinburgh, and the speaker was J. H. A. Macdonald, Esq., then Sheriff of Perthshire afterwards

the Lord Advocate, and now Lord Kingsburgh, the Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland.

Here I may remark that in opening all these houses since 1878 I always sought the advice of the directors in every important matter, and when they failed to attend the meetings to which they were regularly summoned, I frequently went to them at other times. Thus, in December, 1884, I added the Shelter from Cruelty, 150, High Street, to the list of houses, the reason for this being, I had found it necessary to receive so many children requiring special protection from cruelty at Merleton, Wardie; and as this was extremely inconvenient to myself and my household, I thought it better to incur the expense of another house somewhere near the Police Office. Besides, it was extremely desirable to have a kind of test-house through which doubtful children could pass on their way to the Home.

At this time there was an idea of some other friends beginning a *new* society for the same end, *i.e.* of Prevention of Cruelty to Children, but finding how fully the Edinburgh and Leith Children's Aid and Refuge (which was the name *now* given to this work) occupied the ground, these friends thought it better to join us and all work together.

In May, 1885, we were greatly cheered and encouraged when the Earl of Aberdeen, who was at that time Lord High Commissioner, did us the honour to

visit the Shelter from Cruelty on his way from the General Assembly, accompanied by the Countess of Aberdeen, the Dowager Countess of Aberdeen, and members of the suite. His lordship, who was patron of the original society, expressed his satisfaction with the arrangements, and especially commended the manners and appearance of the children whom I had brought from the Homes for his inspection. The ladies also were most kind and cordial in their approval and sympathy with the work carried on in the prevention *of cruelty* to children.

That day I received a request from Mr. W. T. Stead to go to London and give evidence concerning what was known as the Leith case (of which further details will be found in Chapter V., headed "German Children"), which was desired for the effort then being made to secure the passing of the Criminal Amendment Bill. This I did, and went through a good deal of annoyance in consequence, as did everybody who ventured to meddle with the subject which so agitated the country at that time. I was therefore not sorry that I had previously arranged to go to Canada that summer, and carry on the inquiries, begun in 1882, relative to the emigration of children and the protection to be obtained for them. On this occasion I met with more success, and obtained promises of help of various kinds from various people; and matters having become serious, so far as I was concerned,

financially, I told the directors I must avail myself of the opening, with such children as could not be provided for otherwise. I further said if they (the directors) wished to withdraw from the undertaking, which had so outgrown its original proportions, I could only be obliged to them for what they had done. If they, on the other hand, decided to go on with me, I should be glad of their help. They decided to go on.

In the meantime I took a short lease of the farm at Leadburn Park as an outlet for our older boys, and as a means of employing them profitably, and training them for work in Nova Scotia. There were two houses on the place, one of which was very convenient for younger children in summer.

Thus, in 1886, when I sailed for Nova Scotia, and had closed my two private houses of Merleton, Wardie, and 16, Craigholm Crescent, Burntisland, I had *still* eight houses full of children, besides many boarded in the country. Under these circumstances, with 300 children to provide for, I was forced to see what I could do in the new country, unless, indeed, I accepted the alternative of giving up the children, which I *could not do.* You will say, "Did you get no help?" I answer, "Very little in proportion."

The Town Council of Edinburgh and other public bodies gave annual grants, and the public contributed latterly about £500 a year; but, as I said before, it was understood I was responsible for the expenses of

the various branches of the institution, which, before I left Edinburgh, amounted to at least £8000. This seems a large sum, but when you consider this paid the expenses for eleven years of so large a work, that at a very moderate computation 3000 children had passed through my hands, and that about 700 young people had been started in the world, the amount does not seem extravagant. In Nova Scotia I have spent about £2000 more.

In March, 1886, I accepted the invitation of the London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children to attend (as the representative of the Edinburgh Society) at a meeting held at their Shelter in Harpur Street, where I met Mr. James Grahame, chairman of the Glasgow Society, and others. The Rev. Benjamin Waugh greeted me most warmly, and introduced me to the meeting as "a veteran in the work," having been fighting the children's battle against cruelty since 1877, while, as he was pleased to say, stronger people had only awakened to the necessity in 1884. In the course of the meeting we Scotch representatives urged the necessity for legislation in Scotland, and were advised to ask the help of any parliamentary or official friends on whose support we could rely. I brought the case before the Hon. J. H. A. Macdonald, who was the Lord Advocate of Scotland at the time, and he most kindly arranged a meeting in one of the side rooms of the House of Commons, which was attended

by the Hon. Preston Bruce, M.P., Dr. Farquharson, M.P., and some other Scotch members. The Lord Advocate presided. James Grahame, Esq., represented the Glasgow Society, and I attended by special invitation to represent Edinburgh, which I believe was an unusual honour for a woman! Our friends spoke encouragingly, and promised to do all they could, though it was not until 1888 that the law regarding cruelty to children was altered. Praise the Lord!

I am thankful to have thus been the means of laying the foundation and developing in Edinburgh the work which since then, by joining the Glasgow Society, has become the Scottish National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, as recorded in their "Occasional Paper" dated November, 1889.

JAMES GRAHAME, Esq., chairman of the Glasgow Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, giving an account of its origin in 1884, and after noticing the formation in Liverpool of the first Society *called by that name* in Great Britain, says:—

In another part of this publication there is given an account of the origin of the Children's Aid and Refuge Society, which is now merged in the Scottish National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, but which was then a private enterprise of Miss Emma M. Stirling, who deserves the utmost credit as the disinterested and self-devoted pioneer of the great movement for the protection and rescue of children in the East of Scotland.

Here is the account of the Children's Aid and Refuge referred to, signed by Mr. Colston, chairman :—

This Institution was established for the protection of young people.

It existed several years before there was any project put forth to form societies in our large cities and towns for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. It was practically in its own way *subserving the very purpose* for which these larger organizations have been called into existence. The opening by Miss Emma M. Stirling of a small Crèche or Day Nursery *was the first* inception of the scheme.

Then follows a description of the Day Nursery, which it is needless to repeat. Mr. Colston continues :—

The Home was partly supported by public benevolence, but chiefly by the liberality of Miss Stirling, who generously made up the deficiency of each year out of her own private means. Having requested the aid and co-operation of a few leading citizens to act as a committee of advice in the benevolent work to which she had dedicated herself, it soon became obvious that there were many sad cases of cruelty towards children that the general public knew little about, and for which the state of the law did not afford any sufficient remedy.

Miss Stirling's active exertions in the work of rescuing and befriending neglected children are now well known to the community. It is not requisite to dilate upon these further than to say that her efforts, under the committee of advice who were associated with her, had, as their effect, in a large

measure, the work of prevention of cruelty to children as now understood.

Then follows an account of the German children described in Chapter V. of this book:—

Since that time, as Mr. Henderson, the Chief of Police, and other official gentlemen in the city can testify, a number of cases of gross cruelty have been brought to light through means of the Aid and Refuge, and have been reported to the Police, with the result that the offenders were punished.

The Shelter from Cruelty was opened in 1884 by Miss Stirling and those gentlemen who had by this time become associated with her in the management. It is situated at a convenient distance from the chief police office. During the same year a Society was formed in the city, called "The Edinburgh Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children." It was, however, soon found by its promoters that the work was being so well done by the Children's Aid and Refuge that there was *no need* for the new organization. It therefore became amalgamated with this institution.

In 1886 Miss Stirling thought it to be her duty to transfer her field of usefulness to across the sea to Aylesford, Nova Scotia, where she is still proving herself the friend of little children by devoting her time, attention, and private fortune to their benefit.

(Signed) JAMES COLSTON.

CHAPTER IV.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY CASES OF RESCUED CHILDREN.

As I have been engaged in another field for the last four years, and labouring for the good of children who *have been* rescued, and whose sorrows and sufferings are therefore things of the past, this chapter must be one of recollection; and I can only tell you cases as they occur to me in order to illustrate the story of the work given me to do between 1877 and 1888, when I left Scotland for Nova Scotia.

1. The first case with which I was called on to deal, and which opened my eyes to the *possibility* of hideous cruelty to infants, was that of a baby of something over a year old, which was brought me fearfully bruised, and had on its throat the distinct marks of a knife. I applied to the police for help, but, I regret to say, the perpetrator was not discovered. I nursed it till it died a short time after its admission.

2. Another was a girl of eight years old, who had jumped out of a window *sixty feet high* to escape from her mother, who was beating her unmercifully, without apparently any reason except drunken fury.

3. Another, a girl of ten years, whose mother had

applied to the Home for her admission and had been refused as unnecessary, who thereupon set to work apparently to get rid of her, and with the help of the stepfather hacked her feet and legs with an axe. This case was brought by a policeman. Both these girls have done remarkably well.

4. Three children aged six, four and a half, and two and a half years. The eldest, a girl, the two younger, boys, were found in a dying state from want of food to so frightful an extent that they ate *everything*. The elder children could go to the streets and pick up crumbs of bread and stumps of cabbages, but the younger could not walk, so lay helpless on the straw, which, in course of time, he *ate* as well as paper and cinders. This I saw him do myself. His hair for a long time was *perfectly white*, like that of an old man. They have all done well.

5. Boy of five years. Was found hanging by his hands out of a high window, in which position he had been forcibly placed by his father in a drunken freak of temper. The child was rescued with some difficulty, and brought to me by his mother, who came home from her work in time to see her child delivered from his awkward predicament, and consequently implored me to keep him. For a long time the effect on his nervous system was evident.

6. A little boy of three years, who had been so long shut up in a room alone for hours, with a "piece"

to keep him from starving, that his wits seemed to have become addled. He never smiled, but moaned and chattered feebly. After being nursed for a good many weeks, he recovered in a great measure; and one of our little girls having taken him under her special protection, he gradually became like the other children, and is now a fine sturdy fellow, decidedly clever.

7. A fine stout child of about two and a half years, whose mother apparently set to work to beat him to death. He was brought by some working women, and the mother sent to prison for sixty days.

8. Another little boy of about the same age, who is nearly blind, his mother having poked his eyes with a stick. One eye is entirely blind, the other nearly so. Otherwise he is a stout and intelligent boy, with mercifully an extremely happy temper.

I could go on with such painful histories, but these will be enough to show what I formerly was called to do, in the way of protecting children from cruelty, before this work was so well understood, or so much the fashion as it is now.

There is another form of cruelty to which I shall refer in the next chapter. I mean the trade in German children, which I am *thankful to have been* the means of stopping in Scotland. But whether foreigners or not, it is by no means the first time that little girls, mere children, have fled to me for refuge, as

they might have done to the old cities which God appointed long ago in Israel; they have come flushed, panting, terrified, as if the destroyer were at their heels.

Open the door for the children,
Tenderly gather them in;
In from the highways and byways,
In from the places of sin.

CHORUS.

Open the door, open the door,
Pray you that grace may be given;
Open the door for the children,
Of such is the kingdom of Heaven.

Open the door for the children,
Some are so hungry and cold;
Some are so young and so helpless,
Gather them into the fold.

Open the door for the children,
Stretch out a welcoming hand;
Bid them sit down to the banquet,
Point them to Canaan's land.

CHAPTER V.

GERMAN CHILDREN.

In 1883 a very strange thing was brought to my knowledge at the Day Nursery. It happened in this way:—

One day, about the end of May, a man called to apply for the admission to the Day Nursery of his motherless child, aged about four years. He said he was a German, and could speak very little English. He gave the name of N——, and said he was a chemist's labourer. The nurse supplied him with the usual certificate. He seemed unwilling to go away, and after a time made her understand he *now* wished a certificate for the *Home*, the existence of which he had discovered since he entered the house. She told him she must ask me for that, which she accordingly did at my next visit. It seemed to me a most necessary case, being, as I was led to believe, that of a little motherless foreigner, who had no other means of being taken care of. In a few days the child was brought, but, instead of being four years old, looked about six or seven. She remained in the Home all summer. N—— visited her frequently, and seemed

very anxious about her; in fact, was inclined to be intrusive, and to disregard the hours at which visitors were expected. However, we made all due allowance for his ignorance of our ways, and things went on smoothly enough. All this time I had never met him, though I had several times sent him a message that I should like to talk to him. In August I was away from home, and received a letter from him, not very coherent, written partly in German, partly in broken English. So far as I could understand it, the point was to beg me to admit *another* German child into the Home, whom he expected shortly to arrive from Germany. I felt provoked at his presuming to bring children from Germany for no apparent reason but to take advantage of the Home. However, as I could not decipher the letter to my own satisfaction, and was to be absent for some weeks, I thought it safer to ask our doctor to go and see him, to find out the truth of the matter, and, *if necessary*, receive the other child. After some correspondence Dr. Notley wrote to me that he could not understand the man; he had changed his address once or twice; that sometimes he said one thing, sometimes another; that the second child had dropped out of the question, and was not coming to Scotland in the meantime; that I had better make a point of seeing him (the applicant) as soon as possible, adding, he could speak English as well as any one.

On my return to Edinburgh I arranged for N—— to come and see me at the Home. He at once began the conversation by asking me to receive *another* little girl.

I said, "Is this the one you expected in August?"

He replied, "No; that child stopped in London, where she has been put into a Home for German orphans; this, madam, is *another*, a *third* little girl."

Startled out of all caution, I remarked, "How very extraordinary! What do you mean by it? What are you doing with all these children?"

He said, "Oh, madam, it is quite natural; the first is my own child; the second—well, her friends' plans for her are changed; the third, it is still well. I want a companion for my own child, and I prefer a German to a Scotch girl."

I felt it was *not* all well. The man looked odd. I suspected something wrong, but could not tell what. I thought the best thing was to be quiet and let him go on telling me anything he chose; so I made a good listener, and, except by a question now and then, did not interrupt him in a long and circumstantial account of his wife's illness and death, when his little girl was born in a poor neighbourhood close by where we were then sitting. The truth of this I never doubted, and expressed my sympathy.

At last it occurred to me to say, "Who helped you to take care of your little girl after her mother's death till now?"

He said, "She was with my friends in Germany."

I asked, "Why didn't you leave her there? or why don't you send her to them again?"

His English failed; he no longer understood, until at length he informed me his object in getting the third one was to have her as his housekeeper very soon, and by-and-by to make his wife. I felt the only safety for the poor child was to receive her into the Home as quickly as possible.

Accordingly I gave him the certificate required, which he got filled up, and in a few days there arrived from the German boat a fair, pretty little child of nine years old, who could not speak a word of English, and seemed dreadfully afraid of N——. She was in the Home about a fortnight, when he claimed the privilege of taking her out, as our children were allowed to go to their friends once a week, and arrived at Burntisland with her (where I was staying for a short time). He insisted on my allowing him to send her back to Germany. This I positively refused to do; and having warned him that I should inquire thoroughly into the circumstances, I allowed him to take the child away with him, having promised to take her straight to the Home. No sooner had I done so than I felt miserable, and after a sleepless night got up in time for the early boat from Burntisland to Granton at 8 A.M.; drove quickly to the Home at Stockbridge, only to hear, as might be expected, there

had been no tidings of them. From thence I proceeded to a German pastor in the neighbourhood. From him I learned it was a dreadful business altogether. That this man had had a succession of little girls, each personating his motherless child; that they had come and gone no one knew whither; that unless these children, now in his hands, were to have an awful fate, I must get and keep hold of them by any means, even if I had to get the police to help me. To this I not unnaturally responded, "Then will *you* come and help me?"

"No, he could not do that; he was *afraid*." I could not understand it, and wasted a few moments in coaxing and arguing with him. Finally, he advised me to go to the German Consul, who was *bound* to interfere. This I did, was courteously received, but obtained no sympathy nor any promise of help. Mr. R—— was strongly of opinion I should leave the whole thing alone.

Finding I was obstinate, he decided to tell me all he knew, and taking out a bundle of papers, translated for my benefit what sounded to me like a revelation of the greatest wickedness I had ever heard of. I need not say I left the office more determined than ever to rescue the child.

On returning to the Home, and finding the Nurse too frightened to be capable of helping me very much, I despatched one of the working girls to the

"land," or block of houses where N—— lived, and told her to ask the women on the stair if they could help me, charging the girl to bring the child to me at once. E—— was an active, well-grown girl of about seventeen, and set off, nothing loath. When she got to the stair where the wretched abode was, she heard a child crying piteously, and at the top of the stair the sound seemed to come from an empty attic, where the poor little thing had been locked in. But there was a broken window opening on the landing; and having satisfied herself that it was A——'s voice, she, E——, persuaded her to climb up on the inside of the wall, while she could help her through the aperture, and by a good jump get free. So that in a very few minutes the little prisoner found her way back to me, having apparently cried till she could cry no more. I thereupon decided to take her to Merleton, Wardie (my own house), believing she would be perfectly safe, and no one dare to molest us there. In this I reckoned without my host. The events of the forenoon I have described took place on Friday; and the Sunday following being the Communion Sabbath, all the grown-up people in my house wished to go to Church. To allow them to do so, a big girl was brought from one of the country Homes to cook the dinner and look after the little children, of whom there were three or four besides the German child.

I having a very bad headache, could not go to

Church, and stayed in bed. After the rest of the party had started, the children came to say their hymns to me for Sunday for a little, and then I believe I fell asleep. I was awakened by a knock at the door. "Please, ma'am, a gentleman wants to see you."

I speculated in vain what gentleman it could be. Visitors are rare in Church hours in Scotland. At length the girl hit on a name not *very unlike N*——. I jumped out of bed in perfect horror, and was told he was downstairs. On opening my bedroom door, I saw, to my surprise, the man standing at the top of the staircase close to my room door.

"What do you want?" I said. "What are you doing here? I am in my room, and can't be disturbed. You must go downstairs *at once*."

Rather to my surprise, and much to my relief, he obeyed me, but after getting to the bottom seemed to gain determination and proceeded to demand the child. Where was she? Was she in the house? A good deal followed that I did not understand. Again the question, Was she in the house? I did not feel called on to tell him; so contented myself with generalities and civilities,—asked him to be quiet, to see this person and that; above all things to leave the house.

The truth was my real position began to dawn on me. Here I was in a lonely house with no grown-up

person within hearing; our neighbours had all gone to Church; what could I do? I could pray to God, not audibly. I went on speaking quietly to the man, whose threats had now waxed furious. "He would kill us all. He would empty the house. He would either have my life or the child. He could take both. He had brought *this* with him (showing me a stick loaded at the ends), and he would let me feel the weight of it." All this, and a great deal more, accompanied by a perfect torrent of bad language in English, and apparently in German. I could only stand still at the top of the staircase and try to remonstrate. I heard my own voice like a mill-wheel far off; I was getting very faint, but all the time in my heart I was talking to God, and praying Him not to let that man get the child. I believed her to be in the nursery with the other children, and the door was just at the bottom of the staircase. I prayed Him not to let the little ones open it. This went on for twenty minutes. Why N—— did not give me the knock on the head he said he wanted to, I don't know, except, I suppose, that God did not let him.

At last help came: the children began to come home from Church. The first was a little orphan girl who lived in the house, and hearing the man making a noise, and my voice speaking as if in distress, she could not bear it, but rushed past him and got upstairs to me, and then went for a man a little way off.

Then the little boys from the Boys' Home on Granton Road, who in those days always dined with us on Sunday, came in, and when the little messenger brought the neighbour she had gone to seek, and others began to appear from Church, our visitor thought, I presume, he had better make off. Then policemen came, and one of these, an old friend in the neighbourhood, insisted upon bringing it to the notice of the authorities at Leith, and for the sake of the children I felt it would be better to have a full inquiry.

In a day or two a man and his wife—Germans—who had been supposed to be respectable, but who turned out to be accomplices, called on me separately and used every argument to dissuade me from this course. The man even again threatened my life, saying, "It is for your own sake, I warn you. You had better think *while you have time*." To which I replied they must do as they liked; I could not make bargains with a man like N——.

I am very thankful I made no compromise, as after a full inquiry through the Foreign Office, involving no doubt much that was painful to me, the Home Office gave instructions that the port of Leith should be watched by the police, so that no children should be allowed to land unless accompanied by their parents or well accredited people in charge of them, and that immediate notice should be given to the authorities of

the arrival of any such; and thus the trade in German children was stopped in Scotland. I was the means of seven children being delivered from this man. I may mention here that no sooner was the Criminal Law Amendment Bill passed than the man N—— was safely lodged in prison for a similar offence, and his accomplices found it convenient to leave Edinburgh, so that the gang was broken up. The following is an extract from a personal letter received from the Procurator Fiscal for the county of Midlothian. Referring to this case, he says:—

EDINBURGH, November 1, 1884.

MY DEAR MISS STIRLING,—I can see no possible objection to your making reference in your paper to the case of the German children. The result fully justified your interference. And all friends of the movement for the protection of children should be indebted to you for your persevering endeavours to get to the bottom of the business.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT L. STUART.

I had also the great satisfaction of receiving the thanks of the German Government in the accompanying letters from Count Münster, the German Ambassador:—

IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY,

LONDON, March 8, 1884.

MADAM,—In reply to your kind note of February 26, I beg to state that the question therein contained has received my most careful attention. The report which the Consul-General

has, on my request, just made on this matter, shows that all necessary steps have been taken to prevent, and to cause a thorough inquiry in the matter by the competent authorities in Germany. In thanking you most sincerely for the great interest you take in the fate of these poor German children, I have the honor to be, Madam, very truly yours,

MÜNSTER.

Also from the Imperial German Consul, Leith:—

LEITH, March 1, 1884.

DEAR MISS STIRLING,—I am directed by Burgomaster Dr. Carl Petersen, the President of the Board of Foreign Affairs at Hamburg, to intimate to you the safe arrival in good health and spirits of the girl A. N——. I am at the same time instructed to express to you the best thanks, and the recognition of the High Senate of Hamburg, of the humane and carefully loving manner in which you have protected a daughter of a subject of that State.

The Imperial German Consul,

ADOLPHE ROBINOW.

CHAPTER VI.

HOMES FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN.

In a former chapter, when giving an account of the progress of the work, I alluded to the rapid growth of the Homes and the number of houses required.

There were eight altogether, from 1883 to 1888. These were:—

Day Nursery, 10, Mackenzie Place, Edinburgh.
Girls' Home, 11, Mackenzie Place, Edinburgh.
Girls' Home, 2, Craigholm Crescent, Burntisland.
Girls' Home, Leadburn Park.
Boys' Home, Rosebank, Leadburn Park.
Boys' Home, 1, Craigholm Crescent, Burntisland.
Boys' Home, 4, Bayton Terrace, Granton Road.
The Shelter from Cruelty, 150, High Street, Edinburgh.

I know that some friends objected to having so many separate houses on the score of expense and increased difficulty in supervision, but, after all, the *Home* is the first necessity of a homeless child, and I am convinced, *a real home*, and therefore *individual attention*, can only be secured where there is a manageable number of children; beyond that it ceases to be a *home* and becomes *merely an institution*, which I believe to be a very different kind of life, and which

I have always been most careful to *avoid* for our children.

The Homes, as they existed at the time I write of, may all be described together, as they were all conducted on the same principle—exclusively that of a *family*. Each house was complete in itself, with Treasurer, some friend in the neighbourhood, who was entirely responsible for management of stores, accounts, etc., thus preventing any habit of waste or extravagance, which even in the *best* regulated (large) families is always too ready to creep in, this treasurer at the same time fulfilling the very important duty of seeing that the stores, etc., were used in the best way, and that the children *actually got* all that was intended for them.

I had not the means to build or adapt cottage homes all conveniently close together, and so I just made use of plain, ordinary buildings in suitable situations as I could find them, when the need for a fresh house arose. As to looking after them, no doubt it entailed a great deal of exertion on my part, even with all the help the treasurers so kindly and willingly gave me.

Next in authority to the Treasurer came the Nurse, whose duty it was to be mother in the Home. I did not encourage the children *to call* her so, for I think anything unreal is a mistake, and many of them who remembered good, gentle mothers of their own could not have failed to resent it. They so often told

us touching little stories of how happy and well cared for they were "when my mother was living," and how sadly matters changed when she was taken ill. How, for instance, "Bobbie was a bonnie bairn, with curly hair, and my mother kept him aye clean and bonnie, and syne when she took ill she could na sort him ony mair; and she could na bide to hear him greet: and we tried to do, and we could na; and she was taken away to the hospital, and—and——" The poor little historian at this point would frequently throw itself on my lap in an agony of grief. Some were more composed with a precocious gravity and care of "the baby" that was even sadder. A very troublesome baby of fourteen months was brought to us; he was accompanied by his elder sister of nine, because, as she explained, "he won't go to any one else." When I saw them at Mackenzie Place, I thought they were too delicate to stay there, and took them home with me. Master baby paid me the compliment of being pleased to go to me; and next day when I had him in my arms, playing with himself in the glass, Maggie stood watching us with great interest, and said in a tone of sorrowful composure, like an elderly woman, "Baby thinks you're my mother; *that's why* he's pleased with you." I said, "When did he see your mother, my dear?" "About a fortnight ago, and *she's died* since;" and poor little Maggie heaved a deep sigh and shook her head.

But I must be done with recollections, as these Homes in Scotland are now a thing of the past, and it is only necessary to refer to them by way of giving a history of the work which would otherwise be incomplete. My views as to the management of Homes for homeless children will doubtless appear hereafter, when I tell you the story of our Homes in Nova Scotia, where the same plan is carried on, and where the chief object is to make the Home *a real home* to each member of it.

Before I leave the recollections of this happy time of work in Scotland, I must mention the boarding out system, which I was obliged to have recourse to in 1884, when house accommodation failed. I was very careful in the selection of those with whom they were placed, and the children were arranged in groups of four or six, so that the friend who acted as treasurer and paid their board monthly, could see exactly how they were attended to, and look after them in every way. I beg to thank those friends in the country, especially Mrs. Paterson, of Buckrigg Farm, near Beattock, who so efficiently carried on this part of the work, the results of which were, to my mind, extremely satisfactory; and many were the lamentations alike of nurses and children when it proved too expensive to be continued, and our children had to be removed to other quarters, on my winding up my personal connection with the work previous to leaving Scotland.

CHAPTER VII.

FLOWER MISSION CHILDREN.

THE heading of this chapter brings before me a different set of children from those I have been telling you about, but of whom I saw a great deal, and by whose kindness I was enabled to do a most pleasant piece of work for many years. They were the Flower Mission Children of Burntisland. I daresay many of them will read this little book, and will like to remember as well as I do our lovely and fragrant flower mission, the fruit of which will, I doubt not, be seen many days hence. Therefore I shall take the liberty of reminding them of it, and telling strangers of a beautiful work which these children did, and which I never think of without longing that it could return, very much as in winter one thinks of last summer's flowers, and wishing they were with us again. The summer will come, and bring its flowers for those who are here to see them, and I cannot doubt that in the endless summer above the seed sown by the Flower Mission children will blossom abundantly in the garden of God.

The Burntisland Flower Mission began and grew in the manner following:—

When I used to drive from Wardie to the Day Nursery for my day's work there, very often, for the sake of a little more fresh air, I went round by St. Cuthbert's poorhouse, and each time I passed I felt a greater longing to get inside of that institution, and see if I might be allowed to take with me a little pleasure and comfort to its inmates. I always had a great fancy for visiting in poorhouses, chiefly, I think, because at that time the inmates seemed so cut off from the outside world (I fancy it is better now), so lonely, so in need of the good news of God's love—in fact, of good news of *any* kind, even of human love; and in those cases where being there was most obviously their own doing, still they were the sinners Jesus came to save, and seemed to me more accessible than prosperous sinners outside. For all these reasons I had found my visits acceptable in country poorhouses, and now that my lot was cast near the city, I thought I would try there too. But what excuse could I make? At last it occurred to me that having again become the fortunate possessor of *a garden*, from which I was careful to provide the "Sunday flower" on Saturday, I might take some flowers to the hospital. It had been our custom all my life in my old home to have this regularly attended to, and I have great belief in the blessing that goes with a Sunday flower, for I believe in flowers as a direct means of grace. They surely carry the message of God's love to us, and His

desire for our happiness and pleasure. He would not have sown them all over the earth, as He has done, if this were not so. Therefore it occurred to me to inquire whether flowers would be acceptable, or *permitted*, in the poorhouse. Finding they would be welcomed *if* there were enough *for all*, in the hospital for instance, so as not to excite jealousy, I speculated as to how I could get so many; and the stipulation seemed almost prohibitory, as the hospital had 250 beds, alas, apparently always full.

I noticed just at this time in some periodical an account of a "Flower Mission" in London. The name was new to me, but it seemed *exactly* the idea I wanted, and I lost no time in writing to the lady whose address was given. I forget her name and the address of the mission now, but I believe it was the first of the kind in London, the result of which has been the spread of flower missions all over the world. In answer to my inquiry I received a most kind reply, approving highly of my idea, and giving practical information as to how to set about the work, at the same time dwelling much on the necessity for accompanying the flowers by a text from the Word of God, which was most easily conveyed by being written or *printed* (by hand) on a simple bouquet-holder, a large number of which could be had for a nominal sum at the headquarters of the Mission. In my case it seemed to me they were supplied gratis. It then occurred to me I should be more

likely to succeed in obtaining a supply of flowers if I made known my desires in Burntisland. To those who do not know the neighbourhood of Edinburgh intimately, I may explain that at that time, before the Forth Bridge was built, Burntisland was a place of some importance to the travelling public, being the point to which the ferryboat of the North British Railway conveyed passengers crossing the Forth from Edinburgh to Fife and the North of Scotland. It was a quiet little town, lying close to the Forth, well sheltered by the Fife hills, with lovely woods stretching westward to Aderdour, and the whole country-side celebrated for wild flowers.

For some years previously, while I was an invalid, I was much in Burntisland, and had many friends among the children of all classes. With the assistance of twelve of the elder girls it seemed easy to have a very efficient flower mission band. We discovered Mr. Wood (bookseller) was strongly in sympathy with us, and he most kindly agreed to allow the contributions to be brought to his shop on Friday, from 6 to 8 P.M., on condition that each evening two of my young friends who were known as stewardesses should attend to receive them, and pack them in the large tin box provided for that purpose,[1] which was sent across

[1] The duties of the stewardesses did not end here. They undertook to make tea and amuse the children at the happy

the Forth to me early the next morning. I had thus plenty of time to put the finishing touches to our bouquets before taking them to the hospital at the visitors' hours. Our success was complete, and we were also able to supply the old people regularly at Kinghorn Poorhouse, about three miles from Burntisland. The effect was most touching.

The flowers were treasured from one week to another—better still, the texts were kept as a precious possession, and the simple words of love and comfort repeated to me over and over again, reverently and gratefully by quivering lips, which I fear had in the olden time been more familiar with oaths. I was assured by the nurses that the softening of many hearts was not confined to Saturday afternoon, but was very apparent at other times.

One very desolate, gentle old woman, who had always been most grateful for the flowers, and had expressed most earnestly her trust in Jesus, had just passed away at my next visit. I was taken by the nurse to her bedside, and on her breast were laid the withered flowers of last Saturday, and *all* the little texts of weeks before. The nurse whispered, "Give

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tea-party with which we wound up the proceedings at the close of each season, after the last Friday of September. We began with primroses! To show the popularity of the Mission, the contributors numbered over 300.

me one for her to-day, ma'am, *a white one*. She *thought so much of them*, and begged to have them buried with her." I believe from what she had told me she knew and loved the Saviour.

The matron told me she had never seen anything have so great an effect in softening roughness, and producing *good humour* in the place. She therefore asked that if I could manage it, I would bring large bunches of common flowers and stick in them a few texts mounted on wire, for the day-rooms in the main house. She was much gratified with the result, and told me she had often seen rough, apparently callous men, irresistibly attracted by the flowers, and reading the texts again and again, who had never appeared to notice anything else in the way of religion. Let us hope that even in their case the promise was fulfilled, that "*My word shall not return unto me void*, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

And did the children who did this work get no blessing, do you think? I believe they received a great blessing—in better acquaintance with God's word—when they searched for texts most suited to the sick and sorrowful,—in greater enjoyment of their gardens when they gave their flowers to carry a message of hope and comfort to those who needed both sadly, and the blessing which the Lord Jesus Christ promised to all who should give even a cup of cold

water to any needy one, however humble and insignificant, if given in His name. I believe these children, who gave their play-time, sympathy, sweet flowers, and carefully selected texts, got a great blessing in their own souls, as all do who try to make the world better and happier for Jesus's sake. I have told this story of their lovely and successful work in the hope that some other children may be encouraged either to join or to begin a Flower Mission on their own account. Even outside hospitals and workhouses there are many to whom such a gift as a Sunday flower would be most acceptable. And there are many bright little boys and girls, who are often sadly in want of "*something to do*," whose clever fingers and pretty colour-boxes might find pleasant and useful work on wet days in painting borders round bouquet-holders, printing texts on the same, and when the rain is over and the sun shines, could gather many sweet flowers to rejoice sad hearts and weary eyes in less cheerful places than have fallen to their own happy lot. Dear young reader, will you try? If you will, I am sure you will find there is great pleasure in being one of the Flower Mission children.

God might have made the earth bring forth
Enough for great and small,
The oak tree and the cedar tree
Without a flower at all.

He might have made enough, enough
For every want of ours;
Enough for medicine, food, and toil,
And *yet* have made no flowers!

Then wherefore, wherefore were they made,
All dyed with rainbow light,
Laden with sweet and rare perfume
Upspringing day and night?

Springing amid the meadows fair
And on the mountains high,
And in the silent wilderness
Where no man passeth by?

To whisper to the heart of man,
When faith and hope are dim,
That he who careth for the flowers,
Will much more care for him!

MARY HOWITT.

CHAPTER VIII.

COFFEE-HOUSES.

THOUGH Temperance work is not, perhaps, strictly speaking, the work required for our children, still it is practically inseparable from it, and in my experience, directly sprang *out* of it, for my first impulse to become a total abstainer arose from witnessing the sufferings and deprivations of poor little children in the course of my early work at the Day Nursery and Home.

I was *not* at that time a teetotaler; I thought that many good people who were so were mistaken, and pressed a theory too far. I had been used to seeing beer, wine, and spirits moderately used, and that by people for whom I had the highest respect, and I did not feel called on to take any other view of the subject. I do not suppose I was singular in this. I fancy most moderate drinkers would tell you precisely the same; *but* I had hitherto seen what may be called the *right side* of the drink question, with no knowledge of the *wrong side*, except, I admit, the recollection of the fishermen at St. Andrews, long ago, when they had come home from the herring fishing, or for

some reason were flush of money, when they too frequently became excited to maniacal frenzy, and used to make it dangerous for quiet folks to pass near their dwellings; but these recollections were of frights long gone by, and which at the time I had accepted as a necessary evil. Therefore, when *I began* to work at the Day Nursery *I was not a teetotaler!* A short time, however, sufficed to entirely change my opinion.

It was *impossible* for any moderately humane woman to witness the sights and hear the stories of sin, suffering, and sorrow, which were a considerable part of every-day life there, without feeling horror and disgust at what was only too clearly the *direct cause* of nine-tenths of all the mischief.

As time went on and the Homes increased I had to be about more and more, and thus saw more of the life and temptations of working men, railway servants, dock labourers, sailors and others; and as my work had to be done in all weathers, and at all hours from 8 A.M. until 10 P.M., I had ample opportunities of seeing the effect of cold, wet, and discomfort on the men. What seemed to me the most fruitful source of habits of drinking was the want of proper food, at reasonable hours. This, as so many of them work at great distances from home, seemed unavoidable, as it was no part of the business of the too numerous public-houses to supply *food.* I therefore thought of

trying what a coffee-house at Burntisland would do to meet the want, on the plan of food *versus* drink.

By this time, 1881, the British Public-house Company in Edinburgh had been started, and the Secretary was most kind in giving me all information and assistance, and in helping me to an excellent man as manager. So that, suitable premises having been secured near the pier and railway station, I was in a position to begin work. I took the utmost pains to make the place attractive and pleasing in every way, with plenty of looking-glass, bright pictures, clean marble tables—in summer, flowers, and in winter, plenty of fire and gas. I also provided what seemed much valued—*wash-basin* and clean towels, a plentiful supply of the daily papers, *Shipping Gazette*, etc., and from the kindness of friends a good stock of second-hand magazines. The bookshelf was a prominent feature, and to this I added, for the sake of the boys and lads whom we induced to come in the evening, the *Boys' Own Paper*, *Animal World*, etc., and some sets of dominoes, draughts, and other quiet games. *Cards and gambling of any kind* were strictly forbidden. I am sorry to say it required some firmness to carry out this rule. We also had as much music as possible in the way of accordions, flutes, etc., and found a musical box very useful in attracting customers.

You will say I have left out the *food* question. I

wished to tell you first how I tried to fight the public-house with its own weapons. As John Wesley said, "I don't see why the devil should have *all* the pretty tunes," and I fail to see why the drink-shop should be brighter and more attractive than the "*public-house* WITHOUT *the drink!*"

One of our customers said to me one day, when he and some others had been admiring the arrangements, "Eh, mem, I think ye wad gie us *onything* but the *ae* thing, and that is—WHUSKEY! and I'm sure we're muckle obleeged till ye!"

So they were, I am sure; but remember the coffee-house was in *no way* a charity. The people paid for what they had, and I was very careful to avoid any idea of the kind, which would certainly not be acceptable in Scotland. At the same time our prices were not exorbitant, as will be seen from the fact that a man could have three excellent meals a day for 1*s.* This was managed on the plan of the British Public-house Company aforesaid, and cheapness achieved by means of the large quantity required. We called it a *coffee*-house, but provided a great deal more than tea and coffee, viz.—soup, cold beef, ham, eggs, bread and rolls, butter, some cakes and pastry, and plum-duff for the sailors. For these I took a great deal of pains to provide *fresh* meat, but found to my surprise and disappointment there was no demand! Thus the Ship Coffee-house was launched at Burntisland in July, 1881.

Finding it likely to succeed, I ventured to try a *coffee-barrow* on Granton Pier, with a view to possibly starting another Ship Coffee-house there; and finding our earnings justify the effort, I applied to the Duke of Buccleuch for ground on which to erect a wooden building, which was opened in December, 1881, exactly on the plan of the other, and which, after I left Scotland, was most successfully carried on by a friend in the neighbourhood. The Burntisland house I disposed of to a suitable purchaser, on condition it should be worked on strictly Temperance principles.

I may mention that in one year the earnings at Burntisland were £600, and at Granton, £500. Since then I hear that the Burntisland house has gradually lapsed, and finally been given up. I fear any such effort requires the active supervision of some one on the spot who is really in earnest in the work. I afterwards opened a third Ship Coffee-house at Kinghorn, at a time when the ship-yard was in full work, and several hundreds of men employed, whose habits and condition certainly seemed to require it very much; but it never prospered so well as the others, and after two years of work I gave it up. There was a fourth house, which was successful while required, at the Binn End shale work, near Burntisland, which I helped the manager of the works to arrange and carry on chiefly at the expense of the company; but after the village was built for the men to live near their work, this was not

found to be necessary, but did well for the time. The routine business of the coffee-houses was managed on the same plan as the Homes, by having a treasurer for each, who ordered and kept account of the stores, and balanced the sheet of supplies and sales every week. The Temperance Tent was a most helpful adjunct, where fairs, games, or any other large gatherings were held, to say nothing of supplying refreshments to the cricket-players on Saturday afternoons. The good effect of all this was evident many days after.

PART II.

OUR CHILDREN IN NOVA SCOTIA.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW THEY GOT THERE. 1886 TO 1892.

As I told you in a former chapter, I had come to the conclusion, in 1885, something must be done to feed and provide for the ever-increasing numbers of our children, and went again to Canada to see what could be done for them there.

As I could not make up my mind to resign them to the hands of strangers for the selection of their future homes, I preferred going with them and buying a farm, where I could make a home for the little ones, and headquarters for those who had already been placed; for it would obviously be worse than useless to send boys and girls across the sea, without a home within reach of them, with their own people there to look after their interests, and to hear constantly how they are getting on. One great trouble to us all in this was, that it divided the work and divided the workers, and in great measure broke up what had been for so many years a happy and useful Home party in Scotland. Still, for the sake of our children, we will do a great deal. I felt it was for the best to go and transfer my efforts to the new farm, where I could feed the little ones at a cheaper rate than in

Scotland. I told the directors eighteen months before this was the only way I could see of continuing the work, and left it to them whether they would continue to co-operate with me or not. As I said before, they decided to do so. Some of my most active workers joined the party, which was divided into two sections. I may mention that complete lists of children were formally submitted to the directors before starting.

In the end of May, 1886, I sailed with twenty-five children and sufficient helpers to take care of them, leaving the rest to follow when we were ready to receive them.

It is said, "He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about"; and so it was with us. We set out, not knowing *exactly* where we should find a home, but trusting in the same God who has led us and fed us all these years, and He has not disappointed us.

Kind friends in Edinburgh asked us to breakfast the morning we started for Liverpool, and wished us God speed. After breakfast they sang with us the grand old words beginning :—

"God is our Refuge and our Strength,
In straits a present aid,
Therefore, although the hills remove,
We will not be afraid;"

and read the ninety-first Psalm, the *Traveller's Psalm*, as some one has called it; and ever since, if anxious

or perplexed on land or sea, we seem to hear the words again, so that we have been kept from ever being afraid. It seemed very hard to leave so many kind friends that morning. It seemed as if they were sorry to have us go; but still for "our children" what cannot one do? And the necessity was the same as it was in the olden time to Jacob's sons, when they heard there was corn in Egypt. Wae's me, there seemed to be little bread in Scotland, especially for "our children"; and so, when we had heard the last "good-bye" and "God bless you" on the railway platform, and had seen the last friendly face at the carriage window, we could only feel thankful that so many would think of and pray for us and our little ones, and would carry on the work of caring for our children while we were far away doing what we could.

But we did not leave all our friends in Edinburgh, for at Liverpool a dear friend and constant helper suddenly appeared, to the great delight of our children (who had not expected to see her); and as Liverpool was to them a "far-awa-place," almost beyond human ken, her appearance on the stair of our resting-place seemed little short of supernatural; "no *a'thegither* canny!" but the reality soon proved itself in the embodied spirit, full of kindness and help, *and* an immense stock of sweeties. Our children were soon all put to bed. The older folks had still various arrangements which kept us busy till late.

The next morning saw us early up and away to the Alexandria Dock, where all went smooth, and very soon we found ourselves on board the big ship *Caspian*. Our children attracted a good deal of attention, with their Scotch tongues, neat cloaks, and bright fisherman's caps, which I devised as a means of keeping them in sight; for when we saw the red knitted cap, we knew the little head inside must belong to one of "our children." Remember, so many were under eight years old, four below four years. I took the very little ones with us, for I knew those to follow would have enough to do without such a heavy handful. The youngest of the party, a fat, good-natured baby of two years, seemed to enjoy the whole thing as well as any one.

Everything comes to an end; so does even waiting in dock for a ship to sail. At last all is ready; our last friend says good-bye; we say good-bye too, the children give a cheer for her; some of us feel a little as if we could cry; ropes, chains, etc., seem to make a little more noise, and we are off!

There is plenty to do to look after our children. The matron and girls are busy doing everything; I relapse into uselessness, feel ashamed of doing nothing, but I can't help it; I am a shocking sailor. It is said somewhere, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." I often think that that is a good thing; for if they could, the waters of

the Atlantic would certainly quench mine for our children. As it is, and there is no other way to Nova Scotia, I do my best. The others are very kind to me, and do all they can for me; it is not much, and their efforts are better bestowed on our children, who are *extremely* ill to begin with, and then, with the fickleness of youth, become lively and active, and used to the ship as if they were old sailors. They come and see me in detachments; by-and-by I am able to be dragged on deck, and we have great times; mercifully, the rest of our party are excellent sailors. The passengers are very kind to the children, and like to hear them sing: so they had a frequent resource in singing their Scotch songs and school rhymes, as well as the hymns of which they are so fond. Of all this I knew nothing for many days, but on Sunday we had a lovely day, and I was able to be at service in the morning. We had a children's service in the afternoon, and I was asked to let them stay up a little to sing hymns with all on board in the evening, which they enjoyed extremely.

Next day we began to see ice, and then our progress became slow, owing to the fog being more dense than usual.

On Wednesday we reached St. John's, Newfoundland. We did not go ashore, but enjoyed the warm afternoon on deck, when the sun had broken through the fog, and shone brilliantly on the rocky cliffs of St.

John's harbour and some of the vessels of the squadron lying there.

It was a pretty sight, and land is pleasant after being ten days at sea. In the evening some friends came on board to see us.

They said they had the greatest sympathy with the work, and wished to shake hands with me and wish me God speed, and would have liked to see our children. One said, "If he had known of our coming, he would have had us all come to his house." As it was, our children were in bed, and I did not wish to disturb them, a bad night being no joke. I was very grateful to the visitors, however, and felt it was a good omen, and an indication of the welcome we were to receive later on.

I must tell you about the icebergs. Fancy! we saw seventeen the day we left St. John's, from the deck at one time. They are most wonderful, like masses of statuary—figures of lions, bears, obelisks, sphinxes —one exactly like Ben Nevis, others fluted with pillars, like pictures I have seen of Staffa and the Giant's Causeway, one or two like a Swiss scene—a snowy mountain in the background, and on its side and beneath on the plain, villages with gable roofs, churches and snow-sprinkled pine trees glistening all over with prismatic colours. It was difficult to realize that the visionary houses were built by no human hand, or that from the tapering church spires no

Sabbath bell had ever rung. One fancied the spirits of the air had helped John Frost to represent what they had seen and admired on the earth.

But with all the pleasures of the voyage, I was truly thankful when we all got safely off the ship, for our children had such a merry time dancing about on deck, with skipping-ropes and games, that I felt a little nervous that one or two might skip overboard! We saw several whales, and whenever they were visible the excitement was overpowering. Not that there was any real cause for anxiety about the little ones, as the sailors and everybody were so careful of them, and both the ship's company and passengers extremely kind to them. Many were the words of counsel and encouragement, as well as gifts of fruit and goodies which found their way to our children's quarter. But still I felt we had much cause for thankfulness when we all landed safely at Halifax early on the 5th June, and went into temporary quarters until I could arrange our future plans.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT THEY DID ON LANDING THERE.

In beginning the story of our life in Nova Scotia, I may say once for all that when I say "*I*," and speak thus in the first person singular, *I hereby include our children*, as my life was now more than ever identical with theirs. I was now *alone* with them, to work for them, to shelter and take care of them, to protect their interests in every way—in short, to live and die for them. As I told friends and the public before leaving Scotland, "I had given them all I had, and now I had nothing *more* to give *except myself*, to go to Nova Scotia, and do my best for them there."

This, God knows, I have done. By day and night, in winter and summer, in health and sickness, our children and I have been inseparable.

It is also fair to everybody to state that the directors, to whom reference has been made in former chapters, had nothing to do with the Home in Nova Scotia, except to send children to it as I was willing to receive them. After settling the party in Halifax, I went in search of our future home, and in a few days saw what I thought extremely suitable for the

purpose. I had been guided by the advice of Dr. Lawson, Secretary of Agriculture for Nova Scotia, as to the points to attend to in choosing a farm; and the value of his assistance has become more and more apparent as time has gone on.[1] So much for the general choice. When it came to the "short leet" I had the benefit of practical help from Mr. Herbert Stairs and Mr. Leander Eaton, both well known as excellent practical farmers in the province: to these and all the other friends who helped us in many ways, my best thanks are due.

Before we could move to the farm, however, we had a time of waiting and trial in Halifax, owing to the severe illness of one of my boys, who was seized with enteric fever, and had to be nursed in a separate house from the other children. At last, after several anxious weeks, it pleased God to restore him sufficiently to be removed to the country, where he speedily picked up health and strength, and became again the rosy active boy he was in Scotland. For this blessing we were indebted, humanly speaking, to the unremitting care and attention of Drs. Farrell and Cogswell, as well as those friends who helped us by sitting up with him. I take this opportunity of thanking them all.

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[1] A letter from Dr. Lawson will be found in another chapter, giving his opinion of our success, and the farm as it is at the present date—1892.

In July we were joined by my friend Mr. H——, and he began the work of the farm just at the busiest time of year, when *hay* was the crop in hand.

As soon as my boy was able to rejoin the other children, I went to the farm, to see about enlarging the house, and adapting the place generally to our requirements.

Now I must try and describe Hillfoot Farm as I found it in 1886. It lies in the Annapolis Valley, about one hundred miles from Halifax, in what is known as the Garden of Nova Scotia, sheltered by the North Mountain, as it is called, though there is nothing like a mountain about it, no rugged steeps, or uncultivated moorland—a green swelling range of hills, with here and there a brook, and here and there a wood. Spruce and hemlock trees are abundant, but there is also a variety of "hard wood," as beech, birch, maple, ash, and oak are called. There are also plenty of "willows by the water-courses"; some of them are very fine trees, many have been planted by the French when Nova Scotia was called Acadia. In many places the pasture on the hillside is broken up by the plough, and excellent crops of potatoes and oats are growing on it. Turnips at that time were more scarce; but we have raised them largely, and they seem to be coming more into fashion. Lower down in the valley more Indian corn and squash are to be seen, and quantities of hay.

All over the valley, whether on hill or in valley, the apples grow as natural fruit; of course the orchards consist of trees grafted with fine kinds, and the effect is beautiful, whether in the early summer, when the blossom is on the trees, or later on in the season, when from the beginning of August till the end of October, it is the principal industry to gather and pack for sale the wealth of the orchards, bending with their weight of splendid fruit, of all colours, so that at a little distance no leaves are very apparent, and you only see a tree, red, crimson, golden russet, bright green, pink, and yellow—in short, all colours except blue.

I think our farm is one of the prettiest in this pretty neighbourhood, lying as it does on the sunny side of the mountain; the house is shaded by some large willow trees, in all probability planted by the French.

The orchards lie behind it, and on the tableland at the foot of the mountain there is an excellent situation to be in time filled up with fruit trees, which will bring the orchards into one. It is well sheltered by the rising ground to the west. In front of the house is a fine meadow of fifty acres, fairly well cleared, but with the stones left in heaps of various sizes, which we shall find use for by-and-by. The rest of the tillage land and pasture extends to 210 acres, well sheltered by the "Woodlot" or natural forest, and

dotted here and there with clumps of spruce and deciduous trees, and any quantity of apples. There are also large quantities of wild raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries; so we are at no loss for jam. By-and-by we shall cultivate small fruit as well as orchard produce.

There are lovely views in every direction. Two miles off is the village of Aylesford, with its pretty houses, railway station, post-office, and three churches. The house was a small, old-fashioned farm-house, thirty by forty feet, with small L (or wing) for kitchen and woodshed, one and a half stories high, the lower flat divided into a wonderful number of tiny rooms, with two staircases, so narrow and steep that it was to me a marvel how any person of ordinary proportions ever succeeded in getting up or down. I, however, managed to get to the top, and found myself in what is called in Nova Scotia an "unfinished chamber," that is, an attic merely partitioned with rough boards, with no plaster, but with windows, and in warm weather quite fit to sleep in. The roof slopes down nearly to the floor. I was strongly reminded of mice, and heard one half had been used as a granary. It was evident that much must be done before the accommodation could be made in any degree sufficient for our large family. I therefore, as soon as possible, rented two cottages in the neighbourhood, one a quarter of a mile to the east, the other half-way to Aylesford, so that

we had no lack of bedrooms, and used to meet at the farm in time for breakfast. The house there being speedily in the hands of workmen, we lived chiefly outside! The alterations had begun actively two or three weeks before I brought the children from Halifax. The first thing I did was to knock down almost all the partitions in the house. There is only one room left now as it was then, or nearly so, always known as the parlour. When the rest of the space was cleared, it gave us a good-sized hall and staircase in the middle, the parlour aforesaid to the west, and to the east a larger room, divided from the hall by folding doors, which, when finished, was in those days the living-room of the family. At the time I am writing of it was *not* finished, had not even windows in it, but the weather was fine, and we were not easily discouraged. The parlour was the only room we had. In it we had our meals, at least for the grown-up people. The children, fortunately, were content with the greater freedom of the porch. When the table was cleared of food it was speedily replaced by sewing, clothes to be ironed, letters to be written, apples to be pared, and a host of odd jobs too numerous to mention—all had to be done in that wonderful room. No wonder I have a liking for it—for the sake of that busy struggling season. At this time I did all the driving of express waggon necessary, having no one else to do it. The first day I was in Aylesford, after

the children came, I drove fourteen hours—from 5.30 A.M. till 8.30 P.M., with very short intervals for breakfast, dinner, and tea—in order to get our goods from the station and the actual necessaries of life that we could not do without.

Then the next thing was to add a storey to the house, and I was told the easiest way was to *raise the roof bodily*, and build chambers in between. No sooner was this begun than I found it would be better for the sick boy to sleep on the premises. So, with my maid, I elected to stay with him.

I must say I felt a little nervous when, in the course of the afternoon, I looked up and saw the roof *under which we were to sleep* raised on blocks about nine feet above its original position, like an umbrella. However, I was told there was no danger, and in the belief of this we slept like tops! I have since been thankful the nights were calm.

All this time our children were leaving us and going to new homes, where they received a warm welcome, and gave great satisfaction. In September the second party arrived—thirty-six. I went to meet them in Halifax, and when we reached Aylesford the whole neighbourhood assembled at the railway station to bid us welcome, and brought their "teams," or waggons, to help us to carry the party and their baggage home; and as they kindly thought I should be less comfortable at our unfinished house, from the influx of so

many of our children, they had arranged that I should visit each of the neighbours in turn until my rooms were supposed to be fit to be occupied; and I must say their evident sympathy with, and pleasure in, the welfare of our children was very comforting and reassuring.

I remained at the farm till November, when I received very urgent requests from Scotland to go home, so that I gave up the idea of staying the winter. I sailed in the steamship *Carthaginian* from Halifax on the 8th November, returning in April, 1887.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT WE DID IN 1887–8.

In the last chapter I told you of the work we had to begin on our arrival at Hillfoot Farm, of enlarging and adapting the farmhouse to the wants of its new and numerous tenants. I left all in order as far as I could for completing the new wing (or L as it is called in Nova Scotia) to the east of the old house, and which was to contain kitchen, laundry, nursery, store-room, bath-rooms downstairs; and upstairs, six good large bedrooms, and over that the boys' attics. This part of the building was framed, roofed and finished outside before I left, but inside much had to be done, and the inconvenience was considerable. However, with good fires, and happily a mild winter, no one seemed to suffer from it. Our children grew and throve. They were in great request, and went to homes as quickly as the necessary inquiries could be made, which, according to my plan, takes some little time. But in the spring so many had gone that there was room for another large party, and I went out in April with fifty-six children.

As my friend Mr. H—— proposed joining a rela-

tive in British Columbia, I took with me as farmer one who had been in my service in Scotland for many years; and on our arrival we set to work in earnest to complete the main building, and to make an efficient set of stone drains in order to carry off the surface water, which at some seasons rushes down the mountain with considerable force. Besides doing this, we re-laid the pipes which conduct the water to the house from the springs on the mountains, and then proceeded to fence the orchards and pasture. This, with the necessary work of crops and caring for the stock already on hand, was as much as we could undertake that season, and we felt it better to leave other improvements until we had completed those begun. I forgot to mention what has been of great profit, and that is an arrangement for collecting the soapsuds from the laundry, and applying it to the crops by means of a water cart.

But all this time, to my great annoyance, the front side of the house, with only the road between, was still disfigured by the old barns, stables, etc., which had to be left until we could do better. Early that fall we laid out a fruit garden to the west of the house, with strawberries and raspberries; the black and red currants and gooseberries we brought from Scotland next year—and this has been most productive—so that in October, 1887, I again returned to Scotland, leaving the party at the Home wonderfully more com-

fortable than any of us had been on our arrival, but still in want of more accommodation, and many comforts and conveniences which I proposed to add as opportunity served. At this time I determined to wind up my personal responsibility with regard to the Homes in Scotland, and to transfer my efforts to forwarding the interests of our children in Nova Scotia. My time in Scotland that winter was mainly occupied in carrying this out, and arranging for the final exodus of such workers as had decided to accompany our children to New Scotland.

In this I was much aided by my farmer, who had returned to Scotland with me in October, 1887, and in March following sailed with a party of boys and girls, who were accompanied by a matron from one of the Girls' Homes. To accommodate the boys I had again to rent a house close by. I followed in April, having now no home of my own in Scotland. As may be supposed, this was a very trying time for me, both as regards the history of the work, in leaving the Homes in Scotland, where I had worked so long, and been the means of rescuing so many children from cruelty, to be carried on by others—and trying, too, as regarded my own personal feeling. Remember, I was literally *leaving all*—my own home, and its comforts, country, friends, and kindred. I was going away for at least three years, to fight a hand-to-hand battle with poverty and hard work, heavily

weighted with a number of young and helpless children. Surely no one can doubt *the love for them* which induced me to do this! I thank the God of all mercies that I have been successful in providing for so many.

I cannot leave this stage in my journey without thanking my dear friend Miss Hope Johnstone for her great kindness and hospitality to me during my last fortnight at that time in Scotland, which I spent with her at her beautiful place, Marchbankwood, and there regained sufficient strength to enable me to undertake the voyage, worn out as I was by the work, care, and anxiety consequent on such an undertaking. I believe, but for this timely rest and tender nursing, I would not have been able either for the voyage or the work which lay before me on my landing; and I shall be grateful all my life. In May another party of children were sent by the directors in charge of suitable escort. This party had been joined by several children from Miss Croall's Home for Destitute Children, in Stirling.

Having now mustered our party, we lost no time in using the fine weather to complete the house accommodation required for a permanent colony. In the meantime I rented a commodious farmhouse close by for the new-comers. That summer, 1888, we actually built and adapted three houses; one is the north wing to the main house, which was required to

give schoolroom, summer kitchen, and store-rooms, large enough for our winter supplies; for as we eat wholesale (as to numbers), I have to buy wholesale, and flour and meal by the car-load. In this north wing there are three nice bedrooms; one is known as the "Prophet's Chamber," or "Hole in the Wall," like Elisha was made welcome to long ago, just enough to hold a bed, a table, a chair, and a *lamp*—we don't use candlesticks! This is, as its name implies, set apart for the ministers who come by turns to preach to us once in four weeks, and thus we have service every Sunday evening. At a quarter to seven the big bell (now promoted to a cupola on the top of the house) rings a cheery summons, and we all assemble, with the many neighbours, who gather often to the number of one hundred, to worship God in the schoolroom, and hear the message the minister has to tell us.

He has probably driven a long way to deliver it, for country circuits in these parts are very extensive. A large number of young men attend these meetings, and come a long way to do so. They are now most orderly, and certainly listen with great attention to the truths of the Gospel, the *free Gospel*, the Good News of the Love of God, and salvation NOW by the Lord Jesus Christ offered *freely* to ALL. Our watchword is "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." This is every Sunday evening affectionately

pressed upon all, though no doubt from various points of view—for we try not to make the meeting tiresome or formal, but THE MESSAGE is always given; and that the people are impressed is shown by the regularity and interest with which they attend the meetings. Our children lead the singing, and all join heartily.

Before we had the schoolroom these meetings were held in the dining-room and hall thrown together by folding doors; but now, having larger accommodation and a separate entrance, we can invite and provide for many more.

I ought to add that the Sunday evening service is very often turned into a Temperance meeting; but this will come under the head of Temperance Work, in another chapter. As to public worship, we are three miles from the village churches, but still we go in considerable numbers. All walk who can do so, and those who cannot, drive, or take it in turn to stay at home. We are perfectly unsectarian, and are helped and referred to alike by ministers of all Protestant denominations — Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist or Baptist. Every Sunday we have regular Sunday school with the old-fashioned concomitant of "Sunday sweeties" and reward tickets, which are preserved carefully and pasted into a book for each child as a remembrance of "Sundays at Home." We have also plenty of singing all through

the Sabbath Day. So much for our north wing and its uses.

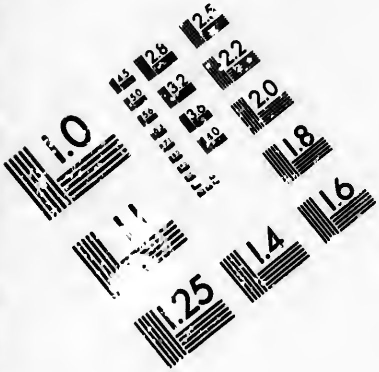
Besides this wing we built, that summer of 1888, a new and pretty house for our farmer in a convenient situation near the proposed site of the New Barn. Close to it is the Boys' House, which, though we did not build, we finished and adapted. This is a wonderful country for easily changing everything, even the situation of buildings; houses, barns, and churches move along the road contentedly, and take up new quarters apparently without suffering in the process; so our boys' house walked or *rolled* up the road nearly half a mile, and there it is as comfortable as possible—a good two-storey dwelling; and there live our working lads and boys above ten years, with their housekeeper. So much for buildings completed.

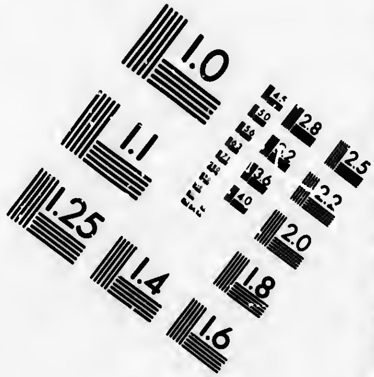
In honour of this crisis in our history as settlers, I took the opportunity of expressing my gratitude to all those friends who had so kindly welcomed and helped us on our arrival, by having a great "house warming" at Christmas, our acquaintance being large and districts scattered. I felt the utter hopelessness of *sending out invitations;* so the various clergymen within reach kindly announced the Sunday before Christmas that "Miss Stirling would be at Home on the 4th January, from 4 to 8 P.M., and would be glad to see any friends of our children who would like to visit her at that time."

The invitation was accepted, if not from "Dan to Beersheba," at least from a radius of over eight miles. The result was a gathering of 800 people.

But we were ready for them. All hands in all the houses had been busy baking cakes and preparing other good things, and the men and boys had done their share in decorating the rooms. I threw open the whole lower part of the house, brought down all our pictures (including many views of Scotland, in which our friends were much interested) to the servants' hall and corridor.

The schoolroom was lined with the beautiful cards of object lessons, which were given to us before leaving Scotland by the Granton Public School, and which were *greatly* admired. We had as much music as possible. The musical boxes and "*Bunny's* performance" gave great satisfaction. *Bunny* is a wonderful mechanical rabbit, who is one of the most valued possessions of our children, who does wonders!! There was a Christmas tree in the schoolroom, from which the visitors bought little things for the benefit of our children. We had fortunately provided plenty of tea, cake, and fruit in the dining-room. Our more intimate friends were *most* kind in attending to and entertaining the guests and helping the cause generally. And at 8 o'clock precisely the assembly broke up, declaring they had enjoyed themselves thoroughly.





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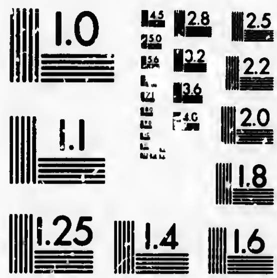

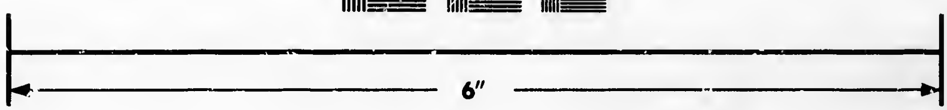

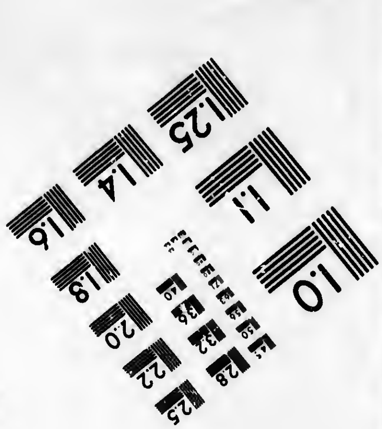

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CHAPTER XII.

VARIOUS EVENTS IN 1889–90.

At the close of the last year I had bought, to great advantage, a wood lot of fifty acres, with a view to building the new barn; and after the Christmas holidays the men and big boys set to work to chop timber for it. This they did so energetically that while some of our neighbours were lamenting they could hardly get cordwood out of the woods, by the spring we had it nearly all down in the yard, ready for the portable saw-mill which I intended to hire; but finding the terms so high and time required so uncertain, I decided it would be cheaper to buy one and continue sawing on my own account.

My share of preparing for the new barn was drawing the complete plan of it and arranging dimensions of timber required with the master carpenter who had undertaken to frame it, so as to give the exact size of every stick required to the sawyer when the mill began work the first week of June. That this was somewhat of an undertaking you will understand, when I tell you the barn is one hundred feet by sixty, and *everything* (except piggery and sheep-house added

next year) is under one roof—stabling for six horses, including excellent loose box, stalls and boxes for over thirty head of cattle, coach-house, into which we drive in bad weather, and harness-room above, granary, silo, root-cellar, and large space for farm implements; besides, of course, large storage for hay and straw on the second storey. The improved plan in Nova Scotia is to drive into the barn floor at one end and out at the other, after unloading the hay and grain by a patent fork worked by a horse, which saves time enormously; but it is some work to build these driveways of stone. I planned the barn to use as much stone as possible, as we had more than we wanted on the place in the shape of old stone fences, neglected heaps, etc., which have now all (or very nearly so) been put out of sight in good stone drains, cement floors, and roads to barn and mill. There was also a great deal of good building stone used for the barn basement, nine feet high and sixteen inches thick, which I preferred to the *cellar* plan usual in Nova Scotia, as I do not see the good of keeping the manure underneath the stables, and thus converting a good barn into an unsavory manure shed. I am glad to see my ideas on this subject lately advocated by some of the leading farming journals in Canada. The stables, cow-house, and piggery are kept *perfectly* dry by the water from the stalls being run into a tank outside and pumped into

the water-cart at the proper season for the crops. The only defect in our barn site is the lack of a sufficient water-supply. That I have remedied by three large tanks, one at each end of the barn proper, and one in the boiler-house of the piggery. They are eight feet by ten, to ten feet by twelve, and eight feet deep, built solidly and cemented so as to be thoroughly watertight, and into these *all* the water from the immense roofs is led. It is perfectly clean soft water, having no smoke within reach, and has been amply sufficient for our large stock of animals, with the advantage of *never freezing*.

The stables, cow-houses and piggery, as well as sheep-houses, are thoroughly lighted, and ventilated by small boxes on the roof, just above the stalls, and on the apex of each building are two large cupolas for the same purpose. In the glass turret in the middle of the barn roof I intend *some time* to make a little room, when we are rich enough in timber to make a staircase up to it! The view would be really splendid. The basement is of solid masonry, and the fine granite blocks split and hauled off our fields make grand corner-stones. The farm generally being *much* benefited by the removal of all available stones; and their being thus put to good use. The wood required for barn alone was 115,000 feet of lumber, and this our men and boys, with very little help, cut, hauled, and sawed, since January, in time to have the barn finished

by October, 1889. Of course, to collect so much stone and timber I had to get extra working oxen, and employ a few labourers for the summer, besides the carpenters required. When the frame was to be raised, we invited twenty-five neighbours to come and give us a day's work. Twenty-five more came and offered their services; this, with ten men of our own, made sixty for dinner in the schoolroom that wonderful day, and I was truly thankful when it was all raised (like a great skeleton on some old-world animal, against the sky) without any accident! Still more thankful when all those who had worked at the building met at a cheerful supper in the same place on the occasion of its completion.

Our next year's (1890) experiences of building the piggery and sheep-house were so similar, on a smaller scale, that I will not trouble you with them, except to remark that, as an illustration of how "every little helps," it was wonderful to see how much even *very little* ones of six or seven years old helped the building by picking up little stones for the stone drains and cement floors. I was often amused to see half of them running after the ox-cart which was to collect the stones, and the other half carrying them inside the building to the masons.

There was another successful effort of a different kind carried through in 1889, which is, I believe, likely to be of use to many besides our children—

I mean the passing, in the House of Assembly, New Brunswick, "An Act in Addition to and Amendment of Chapter 70 of the Consolidated Statutes of Minors and Apprentices," which was introduced by the Hon. D. L. Hannington, and received the cordial support of Sir John Allen, Chief Justice of New Brunswick, and Hon. A. G. Blair, Attorney-General, New Brunswick.

The object of the Act is to provide more efficiently for the protection of emigrant and other poor children in New Brunswick, as has been for some years the statute in Nova Scotia. The need of such an Act was felt in the one case of difficulty about our children in New Brunswick, on which occasion I received the utmost help and sympathy from the authorities.

The following letter from the Hon. D. L. Hannington will show the estimation in which my work for our children is held in New Brunswick :—

DORCHESTER, N. B.,
January 26, 1892.

MY DEAR MISS STIRLING,—I am very sorry to learn that your health has not been so good as usual, and that you intend removing for a time from our sister province, but trust that any temporary change in your arrangements will not hinder that most laudable and charitable work you have been engaged in among us.

The children whom you have settled in these provinces, and who have been under your kind consideration and supervision, will no doubt generally be successful, and prove a blessing, we

trust, to themselves, as also to the communities in which they live. They promise to be good citizens, and their comfort and success are undoubtedly due to your untiring care and generous liberality.

It affords me great satisfaction to know that at your suggestion I had the honour to introduce into the Legislature of this province the Bill (now law) passed in 1889, which provides suitable guarantees for the proper care, control, and protection of those children whom yourself and others are bringing from "home" to become residents among us. The good conduct of those in our province taking these little strangers into their homes has, I am glad to know, been such that the provisions of the Act have not yet had to be enforced against them. We trust it may continue.

In the one case of difficulty in 1888, when you took the children back, your conduct elicited from the Chief Justice, Sir John Allen, the expression of his high esteem and appreciation of yourself in your good work; and when the Bill came before the Legislature, the statement of the work, and charity of yourself especially (and other of your co-workers), in the interest of the unfortunate and suffering, won the *unanimous support of our Legislature to your desired legislation.* I sent you a copy of the Act when passed. Hoping that your health may soon be quite restored, wishing you rest and happiness during your stay at home, I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Yours very sincerely,

D. L. HANNINGTON, M.P.P.

I wish I could speak only of joy and success in 1889–90, but in many respects these were years of peculiar trial. In April, 1889, there came the greatest

sorrow we have had at the Hillfoot Farm, in the sudden illness and death of my dear boy R. H——, aged fourteen (he came to me at eight years old), who, from getting wet and heedlessly neglecting to change his damp clothes, caught rheumatic fever, and, after an acute illness of three weeks, passed away early in May. When he was first taken ill I went over to nurse him at the Boys' House, and watched him two nights there; but finding this too fatiguing, and the arrangements of necessity less suitable for sickness, I had him carried over in his bed by four men, who were most tender and careful in the transit, from which he did not seem to suffer. I put him in one of the visitor's rooms to ensure quiet, and nursed him night and day, with the help of our best nurses, but at the end of a fortnight the doctor told me there was imminent danger. I could hardly realize that he would die. Among the many hundreds who had passed through the Homes, and whom I had nursed in all kinds of illness, I had never lost a child above two years old, and I could not *expect* it. But I thought, *if* the doctor was right, it was cruel not to tell R—— how near he *might* be to his journey's end. I hardly knew how to begin, but in the evening, when as usual I helped him to pray at bedtime like the little ones, I mustered courage to say:—

"My dear, the doctor thinks you are *very ill;* he thinks you may not get better. *I think you will, dear;*

but IF NOT, if the doctor is right, and that *the message* has come for you to go, are you ready, my darling?" "*Yes*," said R—— very low. I said, "You love Jesus, don't you, R——? You would not be afraid to go to Him?" I had risen from my knees and bent over him. I am afraid I was crying.

The boy looked up in my face with such a bright sweet smile, and said in a steady and wonderfully strong voice, "*Yes*, I love Jesus; I have known Him a long, *long time*, *and I'm not a bit afraid to go home to Him now*." Then he drew my head down to him and kissed me, saying, "Don't mind, ma'am."

He liked very much to have us sing to him in a low tone; the hymn he liked best was that one of Sankey's, "O land of rest, for thee I sigh," and often asked for it. And in about a week R—— was gathered home. The grief of the whole colony was most touching, especially the boys. His companions wept bitterly as we laid him to rest in the peaceful burying-ground at the Methodist Church, where the trees have been cleared away to give room for the white church and its peaceful God's acre.

We had a short but impressive funeral service in the schoolroom, and all the women and girls, as well as men and boys, went to the grave. Truly the feeling manifested on this occasion proves how true it is that "the Lord setteth the solitary in families."

There were other trials in these years, of which I will speak in another chapter. But in 1890 a great help was given to me by my cousin J. H—— coming to stay with me, and, finding the life suit him, stayed all winter, and in spring purchased the adjoining farm, so that we have now 650 acres to look after, which is a great field for our boys.

O land of rest, for thee I sigh,
When will the moment come,
When I shall lay my armour by
And dwell in peace at home?

CHORUS—We'll work, we'll work till Jesus comes,
And we'll be gathered home!

To Jesus Christ I fled for rest,
He bade me cease to roam,
And lean for succour on His breast,
Till He conduct me home.

I sought at once my Saviour's side,
No more my steps shall roam,
With Him I'll brave death's chilling tide,
And reach my heavenly home.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUR MILL AND WORKSHOPS.

In my last chapter, in giving an account of preparations to build the barn, I mentioned I had found it better to *buy* instead of hiring a saw-mill, and to continue sawing on my own account. This proved a most successful venture. After sawing the lumber (Anglicé *timbers* and *boards*) for the buildings, we had plenty of work to do for our neighbours at a fairly remunerative price, and as I added a grist-mill, which could be worked by the engine by simply adjusting a different belt, we were never a day idle, as the harvest begins almost directly after the season for sawing lumber is over. Grist is brought in the whole winter, so that *the toll*, or portion left as payment, goes a long way towards feeding our cattle. It makes the Hillfoot Farm a busy place, for there is always some order on hand at the mill, and in winter it is a curious sight to see, as soon as snow comes, the great logs being "hauled" along the road to the mill on ox-sleds. Sometimes horses are used, and the men, generally

with long beards, in their (to Scotch eyes) strange winter costume—fur caps which cover their ears, long coats with leather band round the waist, high boots or larrigans, which are moccasins of undressed leather, big enough to hold *several* pairs of stockings, and mittens. Altogether, they look more like pictures one has seen of Cossacks than anything else. For the last few years we have had comparatively little snow, and when it comes, every man and boy, horse and ox, is busy getting cord wood (fuel) out of the woods and swamps, and hauling logs to the mills, so that the roads are alive with sleds of every description, taking advantage of the smooth snow making transit easy. At the old mill we saw most of them pass near the house. I say the *old* mill, for, alas! last year our beautiful mill and convenient building over it, including the joiner's shop, was burnt to the ground, in the middle of a summer's night, in a *most* mysterious way. We could not account for it, and there seemed reason to fear some unfair play, but we do not know, and so cannot say anything about it; but the loss has been *very* great, about $3000 (£600 sterling). I felt that it would be better to re-build it in another situation, as the wonder was how the other buildings had escaped the slightest damage. But this time it is placed beyond all risk to them, and now the mill is thoroughly insured. I was advised to replace it, as it is a very profitable adjunct, and we had established

quite a small lumber trade. Will any friends help me to pay for what is an excellent method of training and providing employment for a number of boys, as this and the carpenter's shop always must be? Besides sawing lumber and grinding grist, we have a shingle-mill, the proceeds of which are in constant demand, and pay well. Shingles are a sort of wooden slate used to cover roofs and walls. The engine also cuts all the firewood used in the houses, which is all excellent training for the boys. Everything connected with the management of wood is valuable to them in Nova Scotia.

This summer (1892) we must build a house for the sawyer close to the mill. Of course, having the wood and machinery of our own enables us to do this at less cost, but I do hope friends who have *any* money to spare will help those who help themselves as really we and our children do.

The joiner's shop is never idle. In it we make all sorts of things, from ox-yokes and Dutch racks (a kind of rough farm waggon) to strawberry-boxes, which the very little boys make on winter afternoons, and which sell well in the berry season. Besides these articles we make nice furniture for the houses as required—tables, benches, cupboards, varnished and otherwise, washing-stands, clothes screens, etc., etc., and do all the jobbing carpenter work required in most country houses. This is an item to consider,

as we are now quite a small village. Friends who wish to save and train destitute boys and lads of good character, from ten to fifteen or sixteen years, could not, I believe, have a better opening and school for them than our farm and workshops. This, I think, is borne out by their success when they leave us.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUR CHILDREN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

In the last number of "Our Children" I gave an account of their life at home at Hillfoot Farm, so that it may be somewhat tedious to repeat; but still, for the sake of new friends, it may be well to give a few details, and I shall then leave other friends, who have frequently visited us, to give their own account of the Home and our doings there.

In summer we have to make the most of our time, The workers in the house and out of it rise at 5 A.M., as the men and boys must have their breakfast at 6.30. after doing the morning chores. The breakfast for the various classes in the big house goes on till 8.30. Prayers in the schoolroom at 9, when the children settle to lessons and the women and girls go to the forenoon's work. I am then ready to meet them, and make a round of visits to kitchen, laundry, schoolroom, nursery, and bedrooms, not forgetting the *poultry-house*. I forgot to say our latest improvement was to make a beautiful one out of the old stable and coach-house, which provides ample accommodation for our turkeys, geese, ducks, and hens.

We then all go on with our work, and I write letters till 12. Then usually when school is over, and the men and boys are coming in to dinner—at 12 till 1—somebody or other wants me most of the time till 1. The children dine at 12.30, the rest of the family at 1 o'clock.

At 2 we all settle to the afternoon's work. The children usually go to play in the "*little woods*," a pretty, shady nook across the ravine behind the barn, with somebody looking after them, or pick berries to make jam for them later on.

There are immense quantities of wild strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries on the farms, and down on the Caribou Bog, as it is called, about four miles off, any amount of blueberries. Every year we have one or two picnics to go and gather these. Of course only those big enough to pick well and steadily go, to say nothing of the risk of infants being lost on the wide-spreading bog, which extends for miles. I need not say these ploys are a great delight.

Few people of *any* age will be found doing nothing round the doors, as I have great faith in Dr. Watts' statement as to the ingenuity of somebody with a bad name providing employment for idle hands, and I never find it fail when the hands and heads are so left empty. *Play is most desirable.* Idleness is destruction. All boys of eight or nine get something to do with the men, in farm work or the workshop, even

bringing in kindlings and firewood. The women and girls have enough to do to cook, bake, clean house, wash, iron, and sew for such a party. Yet we have plenty of music and recreation too. Tea at 6, prayers at 8.30, supper at 9; and I expect everybody to go to bed at 10, except on Saturday nights, when a general and extensive *tubbing* takes place.

In winter the hours are the same, except that no one rises till 6 o'clock, and of course the children must be occupied and amused *indoors* instead of *out*. They make strawberry-boxes in the afternoon, when the material is to be had, which is not until February or March, our most inclement weather. And they (when there were more boys of ten and twelve years than could be employed in the barn) used to make toy furniture, boxes, etc. When our party increases, this will be revived. At other times, in bad weather, they have what we call a "*play school*," when the boys as well as the girls knit, draw, etc., and are allowed to *talk quietly* at the same time. There is also a collection of toys, which are given out on these occasions, and returned to the teacher when play school is over, about 4.30. Some of the bigger ones have learned to make common scrapbooks for the little ones, by cutting out pictures, *advertisements* chiefly! and pasting them on strong brown paper, stitched together. I save every *mite* of a picture or coloured paper for this purpose.

In fine winter weather, when there is hard frost and snow, their "*sleds*" are a great joy and delight, as our slopes are capital for "coasting." The big boys are very kind to them in making these, and each has one. The fun seems to consist in the child throwing himself on his stomach on this arrangement, which forthwith, and without the *slightest warning* (it seems to me), shoots like lightning down the nearest hill, the performer uttering shrieks of rapture, and dancing like a wild Indian when he reaches the bottom. I cannot help feeling nervous, and don't like to look at them while this is in progress; but they never seem to get hurt; and with a lot of boys, really, if they are happy and *not in mischief*, I can but be happy too. And it evidently agrees with them, for a more sturdy, active, merry, independent set of little fellows you seldom see. And although they have all good appetites (bless them!), and *will* wear out their clothes, and *will* outgrow their boots with fearful rapidity, they are very good children. This is the almost invariable testimony I receive from those who have taken them, as well as the character they bear in the neighbourhood of the Home.

I have finished the description of our winter's life when I have again alluded to our Friday evening merry-making in the schoolroom, which is begun every year at Hallow-e'en and continued till March, when all in the houses are invited at 6.30. The little

ones stay up till 8.30 to enjoy it, and big and little dance reels and country dances, play games and sing songs to their hearts' content. There is a general preparation in the way of "tidying" for the occasion; and at the close we take care to have ready some sweeties, cakes, or "jelly-pieces," and disperse at 9 o'clock, very happy. I make a point of keeping up this custom, as we have a long dull winter, and I think it positively very bad for children and young people to be kept without reasonable amusement and variety.

At Christmas we have great doings. The Christmas shopping is a great event, and conducted with the utmost caution and secrecy—consists of gifts for everybody in the houses, *not all* painfully useful! but toys, goodies, pretty things, and a great many useful things too. I find this institution will have to be continued, as about July requests and *suggestions* are made by the smaller members as to what they think "Santa Claus" should bring them "AT CHRISTMAS." *I used* to fill their stockings, but having stayed up one Christmas morning until 1 A.M. for this purpose, and having carried it out successfully (as I thought), was interrupted at the close by a perfect chorus of congratulation. I never did it again! My sleep is too precious to be wasted on *such very* wideawake people!

To return to Christmas Eve. In the course of the

day the boys have followed up a thorough house-cleaning, which has been going on for nearly a week, by bringing evergreens, and the house is decorated before evening, and the Christmas tree decorated and filled with its nice things in the schoolroom. When all is ready, about 7 P.M., *everybody*, old and young, in the various houses, every man, woman, and child on the place, assemble in the drawing-room, and I read the Christmas reading which we have read together for so many years—Isaiah ix. 1–9 and St. Luke ii. 1–20—sing the Christmas hymn, "Once in royal David's city," and pray. Then we all go down to the schoolroom, and admire and benefit by the Christmas tree, which is amusement enough till 9 o'clock, when, very happy and rather sleepy, most of the assembly want to go to bed, and get ready for to-morrow, with its "Merry Christmas," all good wishes all round, Christmas cards, and—Christmas dinner of roast beef and plum-pudding. Those who have left us are not forgotten, as I send every one of them a Christmas card, with loving greeting, and receive a pile of such in reply or anticipation.

This completes my story of our children's life at home. My friend Mrs. Gee will now give her account of it, and after her, Dr. Lawson and other friends will give their opinion of our children and their surroundings at home—at Hillfoot Farm.

METHODIST PARSONAGE, MIDDLETON,
ANNAPOLIS CO., NOVA SCOTIA,
February 4, 1892.

Passing the world-famed land of "Evangeline," and entering the Annapolis Valley by the Windsor and Annapolis Railway, we have often heard travellers inquiring about the picturesque group of buildings nestling at the foot of the North Mountain, in the vicinity of Aylesford. A few times we have felt glad to have the chance of giving full information; more frequently, however, we have been obliged to sit and hear meagre and incorrect details given about the history, past and present, of "Miss Stirling's Homes," Hillfoot Farm.

As the honoured founder and supporter is about to extend the work by giving a hearty invitation to destitute children—amongst fresh people in fresh places—perhaps a few words from a disinterested and constant visitor may be received with interest.

At this point in the history of the work a *summary* will be given by the founder herself, so that no statistics need be repeated here. It is rather of the *home element* in these Homes of which we would now speak.

Since the commencement of the work in this country from two to three hundred children have been received into the homes of the people, the great majority of them giving satisfaction and *doing well* in the truest sense of the term. Again and again persons having these children have spoken to us of the constant proofs given by them of their love for Miss Stirling, and the happy recollections of their home with her; others say "marvellous," "wonderful." Still others ask, "Whence this strong bond of union?" Perhaps the secret can only be discovered and understood by those who are often

in their midst. It is not found in the literal "giving food to the hungry," or "clothing to the naked," though we would to God that *all children* EVERYWHERE could have this *literal work* done for them. Alas, alas! even this week we read of *hundreds* going to school in the city of London "without breakfast, and no prospect of dinner or tea!"

Soon after our arrival on the Aylesford circuit three and a half years ago, we were shown over the buildings by the founder. The most striking thing to us was not the noble arrangements for the bodily comfort of the children, but *her own manner of dealing with the children.* Now a fat, rosy boy, then a happy-looking girl—scarce able to speak plainly—would appear from all corners, and with a pull at her dress exclaim, "Tirling! Tirling!" but the *look* in the *baby eyes*—who could portray it?—of fullest confidence and entreaty, for what the human heart, old or young, everywhere craves, the soft touch of a loving hand on the cheek, the hug, the kiss!—all this *these children* got ere they were sent off to their play.

Millions in other days have given thanks to God for that precious narrative which tells of *Christ and the children.* Millions more will yet give thanks for it. If the children brought to Him then had needed bread or clothing, we believe those disciples would have tried to supply them willingly. But oh, that *further action* on the part of Christ our example—that *folding to the heart!* What pen can tell of *all* it means to the human soul? How the world yearns for more of it to-day! This is the element permeating the lives of these children of whom we write; it is shown in everything that goes to make up life to them, in the way they are taught the commandments of God, in the observance of all Christian festival seasons, down to the care of a sore toe or finger.

This is the element into which other children are now invited to enter and partake. Within and without the gospel "law of kindness" reigns; the large stock of animals and fowls, as well as the wild birds, come in for their full share of love. If the venerable "Father Chirpie" and noble "Uncle Toby" of *Dicky Bird* fame, presiding over their thousands upon thousands of captains, officers, and members, could spare time to visit the leafy shade of Hillfoot Farm they would be very much delighted.

Some of the most precious memories of our stay on the Aylesford circuit are in connection with our intimacy at their Homes—watching the effect of good food and tender care upon the delicate boy or fragile girl, until all have become alike rosy and strong, saying "Good-night" to them snugly tucked up in their warm beds, when *all* with folded hands and closed eyes would say, "God bless all the little children in the world." Reading God's truth with them, and kneeling for prayer in the morning, sharing in their games, etc., etc.

Not much more than a dozen years ago we supplied daisies and buttercups to children in cities, who had never seen a daisy growing, never been in green fields, knowing nothing of murmuring brooks or of singing birds, as they abound around Hillfoot Farm. Much, much has been done since then in the way of trips to the country for a day or more. Still there is so much to be done, and we can never, never forget these suffering children as we gaze upon the luxurious abundance of flowers and fruit in these favoured provinces. We close with a prayer that God may direct His people to send of His most needy little ones to where "there is bread enough and to spare," until the doors now opened unto *Christ Himself* by one of His followers, shall all be filled.

Remaining the attached and devoted friend of "Our Children,"

MRS. (REV.) JOHN GEE.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA,
February 6, 1892.

In September last I accompanied my friend, the Rev. Dean Ellis, Rector of Sackville, on a visit to Miss Stirling's "Home for Children, at Aylesford, in this province." We spent part of two days there, enjoying the hospitality of Miss Stirling and her cousin. We visited every part of the establishment, the school and play rooms, work and mending rooms, washing and drying rooms, dairy, pantries, kitchen, dormitories, and the large room used for worship and social meetings, which neighbours as well as the servants and children attend. The schoolroom was visited while the teacher was engaged in her work, and Mr. Ellis spent an hour in drawing out from the children the results of the useful instruction in reading and arithmetic which they were receiving. We conversed freely with the servants, male and female, while they were engaged in their several employments, and found them to be industrious and intelligent, all working together under Miss Stirling's judicious direction in perfect harmony, with a sincere desire to do the best they could for the little ones committed to their care. The children were well and happy; they spoke affectionately to and of each other, and showed a confidence in Miss Stirling's love for them that any mother might envy.

The "Home" occupies "Hillfoot Farm"; the buildings are pleasantly situated on level ground facing the main road, and are sheltered behind by a hill range a few hundred feet high,

the farm stretching up the hill, which is mostly wooded, and serves for pasturage. The level fields of the farm showed successful cultivation, the grain and root crops being in fine condition. The main building, the "Home" proper, is a commodious villa, shaded in front by old willows that were probably planted by the Acadians while Nova Scotia was a French colony, and there is an old apple orchard in rear. There are separate dwellings at some little distance off for the farm servants. The farm barn is substantial, commodious, and complete, one of the best in this country, and there is a separate piggery, commodious and well planned. Early in the morning (before breakfast) I found several of the boys at work in the barn, feeding the cows and doing other ordinary light work, in which they took evident interest; some I met on a pathway bringing in firewood or kindling, and others were engaged in a workshop near by. They were too young to do much effective "work," but were obtaining their early lessons in industry, and showed cheerful signs of emulation in trying to be useful.

I was much pleased with what I saw on the occasion of our visit, a comfortable and happy Christian home, where young children were being carefully brought up to habits of industry, and of regularity in the performance of daily duties, and educated for their prospective sphere in life, so as to become useful, independent, and self-respecting members of society.

GEORGE LAWSON,

Professor of Chemistry in the University, and Secretary for Agriculture of Nova Scotia Government.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA,
June 15, 1891.

MY DEAR MISS STIRLING,—Will you allow me to convey to you my best thanks for the great pleasure and profit I derived from my recent visit to your farm at Aylesford, and your large and very comfortable Home for children there. I regret very much that you were not at home, but I nevertheless embraced the opportunity to carefully go over your delightfully situated Home and well-cultivated farm, and was surprised beyond expression to find that in so comparatively short a time you have brought your farm to so high a state of cultivation by many improved methods of agriculture, as is not, I believe, attained elsewhere in this province.

The little ones, both boys and girls, all looked so healthy, happy, bright, and generally well kept, that I could not help thinking what a great change for good has been made in their lives. There is every prospect that each will grow up to be a useful member of our Canadian society. I am glad that your work is already bearing good fruit, as those placed by you in homes in different parts of the country show, I am informed, the results of their training under your good care, and by their conduct testify to the good work you are accomplishing.

I wish for you many years of continued usefulness in your arduous, but nevertheless grand work, and trust that each year you will have greater rewards for your labours in the direction you have chosen for yourself.

Again thanking you for the pleasure and privilege I enjoyed,

I remain, yours faithfully,

WALLACE MCDONALD.

Barclay Webster, Esq., M.P.P. for Kings Co., N. S., writes :—

KENTVILLE, February 6, 1892.

DEAR MISS STIRLING,—During my visits to Hillfoot Farm I had an opportunity of seeing how the children there under your charge were looked after and cared for. And I have much pleasure in testifying that in my opinion the well-being of the children was carefully regarded and seemed the first consideration of all there. The schoolroom was under the charge of an efficient teacher and the children appeared happy, contented, well dressed, and cleanly.

Yours sincerely, B. B. WEBSTER, M.P.P.

George Whitman, Esq., M.P.P. for Annapolis, Co., N. S., writes :—

ROUND HILL, ANNAPOLIS, N. S.,
February 6, 1892.

DEAR MADAM,—On visiting Hillfoot Farm in Aylesford, King's County, found the buildings and grounds admirably suited for a school of agriculture for children. The variety of soil is well adapted to mixed farming, and gives employment to young as well as old—to the young in the care of small fruit, poultry, etc.

The farm is protected from the cold north wind by the range of mountain along the south of the Bay of Fundy, and from the buildings you have a fine view of the valley.

On visiting the schoolroom found the children comfortably situated and being taught by an efficient and painstaking teacher, and looked as though they would make themselves useful in the work for which they were being trained.

Sincerely yours, GEO. WHITMAN, M.P.P.

MISS EMMA M. STIRLING,
Hillfoot Farm, Aylesford, King's County.

Rev. A. S. Tuttle, Berwick, N. S., supernumerary minister Methodist Church, writes:—

Having resided in the vicinity of Miss Stirling's Home for Children, at Hillfoot Farm, Aylesford, N. S., since it was founded, and having had every opportunity of observing its managements, I am fully persuaded there is no institution of the kind where more ample provision is made for the physical comfort and religious training of the young, and where better facilities are afforded for acquiring all the elementary branches of education. The greatest care is taken to secure the best homes for the children, and in this Miss Stirling has been remarkably successful, as well as most particular and indefatigable in seeing that the conditions *made in their interest* are carried out by those who adopt them or *receive them in charge*.

There is much additional that I could say, but it is probably not required.

(Signed)

A. S. TUTTLE.

Rev. George Steel, 104, Broad Street, St. John, N. B., writes:—

ST. JOHN, N. B.,
February 6, 1892.

DEAR MISS STIRLING,—During my residence in the province of Prince Edward Island, I had great satisfaction in placing several children, who had been under your training, in suitable homes. After their adoption into those homes I visited them from time to time, and made careful inquiry about their characters. In addition to this I visited several other children, who had received the benefit of training in your institution. From all that I have both seen and heard I am most thoroughly

convinced that the training you give them is admirably fitted to make good Christian men and women of those who are fortunate enough to be placed under your care. The children compare favourably in educational ability with the other children of the province. And they are also trained in habits of neatness, obedience, and reverence. Happy are the children that come under such influences. Your work is deserving of all confidence and support. May it continue to prosper!

Yours fraternally,

GEORGE STEEL,
Methodist Minister.

I receive from all quarters good accounts of our children. No doubt they are not all alike, and none of them are perfection, but they are a very well-conducted and promising set of young people, and, I must do them the justice to say, have in the vast majority of cases done what they can to do me credit and repay the care and pains bestowed upon them. A great many have risen to positions of trust, as well as usefulness, and are a testimony known and read of all men to the good results of the work for our children at Home and Abroad.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST TWO YEARS.

In Chapter XII. I brought the history of our work and experiences at Hillfoot Farm down to the close of 1890.

Since then there is a good deal of interest to record, but it will not be tedious.

There is nothing very new as *to details* of work done for our children at home and abroad; but the work itself has gone on with unabated vigour. Last June we were joined by a party of children from Miss Croall's Home, at Stirling, and except one little boy, whom I found it better to keep at home for a time, all these are now in good homes and giving satisfaction.

Each year more boys and girls have been placed in suitable homes, and thus enabled to do for themselves, while leaving room for new-comers, and I rejoice to be able *still* to say that the reports of them which I receive from all directions are *most* encouraging. At Home all goes on as usual. I have reason to be thankful the Home element remains unbroken, and the Home feeling among those who have gone from us seems as strong as ever, judging from the piles of

letters, photos, Christmas cards, and other tokens of goodwill which come from our children abroad.

I have already told of the serious calamity in the destruction of the mill last year, and its rebuilding. It is now at work as busily as ever, and employs more hands.

As to the farm work, we have done much to improve the stock of cattle and sheep, since there has been suitable accommodation for them in the new buildings. We have now a fine herd of registered Ayrshire cattle, and the flock of sheep has been also much improved. By dint of constant care and pains, we hope by-and-by it will be one of the best in the province. I must not forget the Berkshire pigs, which live in what is known as *Piggy's Palace* (which excited the admiration of Dr. Lawson), and where each family has a parlour and bedroom! one pen for eating, the other for sleeping, with access to "Piggy's playground," a large sunny yard where the manure from the barn is taken, and where the pigs occupy themselves usefully in turning it over. This part of the farm is a great amusement to visitors; and as it is light, airy, and perfectly clean, there is nothing objectionable, as is too often the case where piggies are less well attended to.

We have, since 1890, planted three orchards—one of 300 trees on my cousin's new farm, in a very fine situation; one of pears, peaches, plums, and cherry

trees, immediately in front of the big house (where the old barns used to stand), and which, as the ground slopes gently to the south, and is sheltered by the house to the north, bids fair to do well. The third is on the tableland behind, and stretching west of the big house mentioned in my description of the farm when I bought it. We shall only be able to fill part of this ground this year, as the space is large; but it is a good piece of work to have on hand, as preparing the ground can be carried on at intervals when there is not much else to do—though that is but *seldom*, we find!

In order to explain one great subject of interest and increased anxiety during these years, I must go back in our history to 1886, and tell you that no sooner were we located here than my troubles began in another direction. A man of notoriously bad character had brought his three children to my care in 1882, and deserted them immediately after. When he applied for their admission, he stated he had been a Roman Catholic, but was tired of the neglect and tyranny of the priests, and desired to have them brought up as Protestants. As I have said, he deserted them immediately. In the course of four years he only once asked after them, and during the same period sent £1 17*s.* towards their maintenance. But in 1886, finding that two of the children had been sent by the directors to Nova Scotia in the course of that

year, he consulted a priest, who recommended him to a Roman Catholic agent, by whom he was advised to apply for them. The directors then requested me to bring them home, which I did at once, but, knowing what the fate of the children would be, I was naturally unwilling to give them up if it could be avoided; and as the father did not make any further attempt to obtain them, the former application to the directors was allowed to drop. After waiting five months, I sent them out again, and with them the third child, who had not been in the Homes since 1884, but had been supported at my private expense in the country, and in due course they were provided for.

After eighteen months a lawsuit was instituted, which has been alike troublesome and expensive.

The decision in my favour recently given by the Court in Nova Scotia in the above case has been a great relief to me. The inconvenience and outlay have been very considerable; but as I was advised to carry it on in the interests of poor children as well as of the Protestant cause, the risk seemed unavoidable.[1]

I cannot leave this subject without thanking my cousin J. H—— for his help and kindness to me all through this trying time.

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[1] Full particulars of this case will be found in Part III.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT WE HOPE TO DO.

THIS is an important chapter, but one contained in few words.

I have told the story so far of my life's work for destitute children in the hope that many friends will be inclined to help me to carry it on, and so permanently help to save many more.

I have established the Home in Nova Scotia in the hope that it will be a *real home* to numbers of poor children who have no other, and that it will be a safe starting-point for many boys and girls in a new country, where they have the opportunity offered to them of rising in the world, as well as a home to which they can come at any time for counsel or refuge in time of trouble—to say nothing of the place where their success will always be most heartily rejoiced in by all the folks at home!

We have all laboured to make the farm and workshops an efficient training school for lads of good character, from whence they quickly obtain good situations, and therefore hope that *many* will take advantage of it. We hope that the same habits of

industry, faithfulness, and kindness learned in the house will help to fit many girls for being the good household helpers who are so ardently desired and warmly welcomed on this side of the Atlantic. And I earnestly hope that this work will increase yet more and more, and that our children and their descendants will long be known as a seed whom the Lord has blessed in the maritime provinces, not to mention the States, where some of our young men and women are prospering abundantly. I trust that long after my work for children is over, they will be known as heads of godly, righteous, and sober families.

I hope that God's people will consider the case of many poor children who are orphans, or worse, by reason of the cruelty of their parents. No doubt *all* are not suitable cases for emigration, but many are. Competent judges say the need is as great as ever in our large cities, yea, even all over the country. I, for one, dare not contradict them.

Much has been done, but *much* yet remains, and therefore I desire to open the doors of these Homes at Hillfoot Farm, N. S., as wide as possible to every destitute child.

For this I cry to God day and night, for this I have given my life, and I know that in this work the Lord has blessed me; so I hope by His help still to save many, body and soul, to bring sunshine and hope into many a poor child's life, and to lead the active steps

of many young men and maidens into safe and pleasant paths. Truly, "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." Truly has the word been verified in our experience: "The lame shall take the prey." So we go on from day to day, hoping, praying, "in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

N.B.—This sixteenth chapter treats only of *what we hoped to do.* For the apparent result I must refer the reader to the fourth part of this book, the sequel to the story of our life in Nova Scotia. Yet I cannot but believe the fruit will be seen in that land, many days hence.

CHAPTER XVII.

TEMPERANCE WORK.

THIS has been a most helpful and blessed adjunct to the work for our children. We have been enabled at Hillfoot Farm to maintain a united and steady protest against drink in all its forms.

It will be obvious that this is the only safety where so many young people are concerned. In it we have received cordial sympathy and support from the public generally.

The Sunday evening service has very often been used to spread the cause of Temperance by the exhortations and warnings given, and it has not unfrequently been actually a Temperance meeting, at the close of which considerable numbers of people have signed the pledge against drink, tobacco, and swearing, and the good results of this are known to all.

Soon after I went to Hillfoot Farm I was asked to form a branch in Aylesford of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. I did not at first see my way to it as a stranger, but when, two years after, the request was again preferred, I could not refuse. The members asked me to become president, to which I

agreed, on condition that I should be excused if hindered by causes over which I had no control. To this they agreed, and have been most forbearing, and we have quite a flourishing though small Union. I have thus been privileged to take part in Temperance work in other places, and to give addresses, invited by the W. C. T. Unions in various towns in the province. Also to take literature of a *good kind*, Temperance and otherwise, to the lumber camps, of which there are several every winter, near Lake George, and twenty miles from Hillfoot Farm. A large number of men are employed in these camps all winter, being thus cut off from home comfort and amusement, and are most thankful for the reading supplied. One winter I collected *two hundred-weight* of books and papers, which, as you may suppose, supplied many. I never enjoyed anything more than driving over the snow across the valley, up the South Mountain, and across the frozen lake, to the heart of the forest, where the lumber camps were. It took a short winter's day, from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M., but we received a warm welcome and a good dinner in the camp, and returned feeling we had carried what would give pleasure and profit to many through the long winter nights. Last November I was much honoured by being sent, at the request of Miss Willard, as the delegate from Nova Scotia to the World's Convention of the W. C. T. U., held in Boston.

PART III.

HISTORY OF MY TROUBLES.

CHAPTER XVIII.

INCIDENTS IN THE WORK.

I WAS brought up strictly in the Protestant faith, and impressed from my earliest years with a perfect horror, not only of the Romish Church, *but* of that portion of the Episcopal Church, now known as *Ritualistic*, then commonly called *High Church* or Puseyite.

We attended the Scotch Episcopal Church, where my father held the office of vestryman, and it seemed to me, as a child, that his whole efforts in connection with the Church were concentrated in resisting all the various forms and ceremonies—"*innovations*," they were called—which have since brought so much misery, and, as now appears, *real* danger in the way of false doctrine into the Episcopal Churches both of England and Scotland. His instruction and advice to me on these points, and as to the sufficiency of THE BIBLE ONLY, as a rule of life, were most solemn, and made a deep impression on my mind. This was very natural, as I was hardly fourteen, and my father, to whom I was devoted, died very soon after. My mother also held these views quite as strongly. We,

therefore, were never allowed to make *any* Roman Catholic acquaintance, or to mix *much* with those who were known to be High Church. No doubt our parents were considered very narrow-minded. I have often since been glad it was so. Therefore, when I was led to begin the work of the Day Nursery in Edinburgh in February, 1877, I was ignorant of the devices of the priests, of whom, no doubt, I had a wholesome horror as aforesaid, but my love and compassion for poor little children were so overpowering that these feelings quite overcame any fear or prejudice I might otherwise have had in dealing with Roman Catholics of the poorer classes, and my *whole object* being to alleviate the misery of these poor little ones for the sake of Him who so loved the little children, I received ALL ALIKE, contenting myself with the stipulation that no popish practices or idolatrous prayers should be permitted in my houses, and that no priest or sister should on any pretence whatever be allowed to visit the Day Nursery or Homes. Soon after I began this work I found that a somewhat unnecessary case had been admitted, in 1878; so I judged, from the frequency with which the mother visited her two children, and as in addition, in a few days, it transpired that she was tampering with some of my girls as to prayers, symbols, etc., I desired her to remove the children *at once*. She wept and protested and said, "Oh! ma'am, you said you did not

interfere with my religion." "No," I said, "I don't interfere with *your* religion, but I can't have *you* interfering with *ours!*" and added, to clear myself of the charge of cruelty, "If you have time to be so much in my home with your children, you ought to have them with *you* in your own home!" I may state here, the grandmother of these children thanked me cordially, and told me the reason the children had been sent to me was only to make an excuse for the priest to visit at the Home, and that though she herself was a Roman Catholic, she thought it very wrong thus to abuse my kindness, but *begged me not to tell anyone!* as she feared the priest!

I mention this case to show that I clearly made it understood that mine was a *Protestant Home*, and that any child placed therein would be brought up as a Protestant. In the *Day Nursery* I made *no distinction*, except forbidding priests or sisters to visit. People used to ask, "Do you make any difference as to what religion the children here belong to?" I answered "NONE, any little child, whether Jew, Turk, Heathen, or Mohammedan, will be welcome; it is not the religion I care about, it is *the child*, for the sake of Jesus who so loves them."

Dear reader, you who may very possibly blame me in this case, which has given so much trouble, may very likely think of me as bigoted, harsh, and narrow-minded, are you quite sure that *you* have love for

little perishing babies *wider* than that? Was it not well-nigh as broad as humanity? If I shut the door so as to keep the *priests out*, while I let the children *in*, it was only because I instinctively dreaded the fascination of the Old Enemy ROME! As years went on, there used to be occasional small attempts at interference by sisters and Ritualistic ladies, but these being always successfully parried, nothing startling happened till 1883—when my eyes were opened a little wider by the following case:—In 1879, a very poor, sick man, far gone in consumption, brought his four motherless children to my care, saying he was in utter misery; no one looking at him could doubt it! He had been a Roman Catholic, but said that he had been so unkindly treated by the priests, that he had determined to be done with them, and wished very much to have his four youngest children brought up as Protestants. To this I agreed, and they were admitted to the Home, and remained there, *free of charge*, till 1883, when the father died. During his last illness they had been sent to visit him. When he died I had them clad in decent mourning and sent to the funeral. They went alone, as the eldest girl was now twelve years old, and they were to meet their elder brothers and sisters, who had more or less passed through my hands, and eventually became Protestants. To the astonishment of my housekeeper they returned from the funeral in a cab! saying that

they had been obliged to do so to escape from the priests—of whom two were at the funeral, and I think, two sisters. *Before* the father was buried, the priests turned to the children, and told them they now belonged to them, and must go where they chose—therefore could not be allowed to return to the Home. On hearing this the children cried, and made a great fuss. A Protestant bystander interfered, and said to the priests, "You have no right to the *clothes*, whatever you have to the children!" on which the priests told the poor children, "That will be all right, *we will strip you* and send back the clothes!" The elder brother became indignant, and obtaining the money for a cab, put them into it, and sent them back to me. A few days after, their grandmother arrived, and asked me to give her the children. I refused, on the ground of my promise to their father —made and kept in his lifetime—and which I saw no reason to break, merely because he had died. I asked her what she could do with the children if she had them, she replied, "Nothing—I am a poor creature, and getting parish relief, but the priest wants them to go to the sisters at Lanark," and, beginning to cry, said, "I would *never* have asked for them, for ye've been good and kind to the children, but I dare not say nay to the priest, who made me come to you." I soothed her, and sent a civil message to the priest that "I could not think of such a thing," and kept

the children. After this I had no more trouble, but was *very* careful not to admit Roman Catholic children to the Homes permanently, though I helped them temporarily.

This was in 1883, but in the preceding year I received the three children of a Roman Catholic, as stated in Chapter XV., under circumstances best explained by the following extracts from a Bible-woman's journal:

"*November* 1, 1882.—Have been trying to get three motherless children into a Home, Mrs. T—— kindly gave me 5*s*. to get bread for them."

"*January* 15, 1883.—Felt very thankful to-day to hear that Miss Stirling had taken the three motherless children (already referred to) into the Home. Their mother died last summer, and the neighbours took in the children. The father went to live elsewhere, and, being out of work, was not doing much in keeping his children. One poor woman, who had four children of her own and her husband all in one little attic-room, took two of these children; her husband was out of work too. It is very trying to visit here and see the children crying for bread—any little thing that I could give was like a drop in the bucket. The youngest of these children was a nice little girl about three years of age. A widow, who had six of a family, and one of them a poor crippled boy, took this little girl in. Many a time my heart has been pained

to see these poor half-clad children sitting in the stair on the street in the cold."

At the time of admission I stipulated that the father, whom I shall call X, should pay 2*s.* 6*d.* a week for each of the elder children, but I agreed to receive the baby free of charge, on condition that it was not interfered with. This payment the man eluded by deserting them soon afterwards, having only paid £1 17*s.* towards their support, and he did not re-appear till December, 1884, when he was got hold of by one of my nurses, who sent him to see me at my house. There I remonstrated with him most seriously as to the neglect and desertion of his children, and said everything I could think of to arouse a proper feeling in his mind on the subject, but without any effect! although at the time he begged my pardon, and promised amendment. He again *vanished*, and no more was heard or seen of him for two years.

At this time, December, 1884, the second child had become so delicate that the doctor objected to her being kept in the Homes, and accordingly she was sent to the Sick Children's Hospital, from whence she was discharged as improved at the end of two months, but being still considered unfit for the Homes, I boarded her at my private expense in the country, that she might have the advantage of a milder climate and milk diet. In May, 1886, I sailed for Nova Scotia with 25 children, consisting entirely of girls and little

ones, among the... was the youngest child of X, aged 6, whose name, history, and circumstances were, like all the others, submitted to the Directors of my Homes before her passage was taken. In September, 1886, a party of boys was sent out by the Directors to me in Nova Scotia, among whom was her brother. At that time their father stated that a Roman Catholic priest had gone to him, and advised him to apply for his children. This appeared in a daily paper of that date. He afterwards stated in the Court of Session that he had gone to the priest. I do not know which is the truth, but they *together* went to Mr.——, a Roman Catholic agent, and the result was the Directors asked me to bring back these two children. I brought them back in November, 1886, but when I got them home, and heard the quarter from whence the demand had come, I hesitated to give up the children if I could possibly help it, knowing what their fate would be if given back. Altogether I demurred, and said *I would not* give them up if it could possibly be helped. I believe it was through some intervention that the priests dropped the case at that time. X himself never came near me, or asked for his children so far as I ever heard. This went on for five months, and during that time the children were boarded in the South of Scotland at my expense—as were a large number of other children from the Homes. At the end of March, 1887, I sent them back to Nova Scotia,

believing, as did everyone else, that the quest was over, and that the whole thing had been dropped for ever.

Early in 1887, February, I think, a baby was brought to the Shelter in Edinburgh by its father, whom I may name Z, in a horrible state of neglect and ill-usage. I personally had nothing to do with the admission of this case, *except to consent to it*, as the routine business of having papers properly signed, etc., had been undertaken by Mr. ——, one of the Directors, who took special charge of the Shelter from cruelty, to which all fresh cases were brought. I was told that the father's only object was to prevent the mother getting hold of it again, and that he *wished* it to be emigrated. Finding in a few days that the poor child's condition required more careful nursing than could be had at the Shelter, I took it to my own home, where it began to recover. The man called and asked to see it, saying he had brought his wife to bid it good-bye, which they did. I then boarded it in the country, and in April it was sent to Nova Scotia. On my return the same year, in October, the parents appeared and demanded to have it back again, which demand, of course, I could not accede to. It then transpired they were Roman Catholics. An action in the Court of Session speedily followed in January, 1888. The Court remitted the case to Sheriff ——, to make report as to the condition of the parents and their abode, which he did, the

report being of such a character that the Court could not with any show of right or safety for the child give it back to them, but ordered that it should be sent back to Scotland. As it was still in the Home, I agreed, and the child was given to the Directors of the Homes in Scotland, and I believe it is still in their hands. As soon as the above trial was initiated, in January, 1888, the man X, who turned out to be a friend of the man Z, again appeared on the scene. One day I was at the Shelter in the High Street considering the cases of poor children, among others a girl in whom the police were interested, and one of the Inspectors was in the committee room talking to me when X arrived; hearing that someone wished to speak to me, I went to the door of the room, and saw a man standing in the passage, but did not know him; he told me who he was, became very rude, and distinctly threatened violence, as he did not *see* the policeman from his position in the room. I went back to my seat, and desired X to come into the room and speak to me properly. He came in not knowing till he got in that there was anyone else present. He demanded the children. I said I had not got them, and he became very abusive, only restrained from violence by the policeman being there, who thought so seriously of the interview that he remained with me some time after X left, and reported the matter at once to the Chief Constable. X, on this occasion,

appeared to have had a large quantity of liquor, and was in what the policeman called "a state of *white heat*, which is just the state in which men do the most dreadful things." I was advised on this occasion *never again* to go to the Shelter alone, as X had been in prison for stabbing. This I saw in the police books. The first time, in February, 1888, I was in the Court of Session about the Z child, X took up his position behind me, and for a long time, I think nearly an hour, continued to pour forth close to me a torrent of the most revolting, vile, and shocking language that could be strung together by a wicked man. The Secretary and some of the Directors were sitting by, and though, of course, I dared not look round, the Secretary told me it was all they could do to hinder X laying hands on me, but at last they got him moved further off.

The next time (March, 1888) I was in the Court about the same case, as also the Secretary and some Directors. X said he had brought a loaded pistol with him, and swore that "as it was St. Patrick's Day, he would have the Secretary and myself dead before night." I, on hearing this, when we came out of Court, went over to the Police Office and made a complaint to the Chief Constable, who advised me to make the circumstance known to the Leith police, and to remain indoors until he could see the man and admonish him. He put me into a cab, told the driver to

go to the Leith Police Office before going home, to drive quickly, keep to the thoroughfares, and *not stop to speak to anybody!*

I did as I was advised, till I again saw the Chief Constable, and learned he had remonstrated with X. I think, myself, some stronger measures should have been taken, as a week afterwards, just before I left the city, X, being pretty tipsy, actually tried to get into a cab where I was sitting, and was only hindered by the agility of my maid and the cabman. At this time (March, 1888) I had police protection for some weeks.

While I was winding up my affairs in connection with the Homes, preparatory to leaving Scotland. Various legal friends advised me to go on making my arrangements as quietly as possible, and not to let it be too clearly understood *when* I would sail. I afterwards learned *why!* Just at this time I was summoned to the Sheriff's Court, with several other people, to give evidence about the Z child. We were interviewed in the Sheriff's private room. As I left by the one door through the waiting room, Mr. —— left by the other, and overtaking me and two other ladies at the top of the stair, advised us to get into a cab. He told me afterwards X and Z were sitting in the lobby, and he distinctly heard them swear in the most dreadful way they would, if they did not gain the case, murder me here or in Nova Scotia.

Mr. —— went to them and remonstrated, but with no effect.

Just after this, in April, 1888, the Sheriff asked me to go and see him at his room in the Sheriff Court Buildings, and pointed out to me it would be desirable to dispose of my property, as there was reason to believe my enemies would lay hands on it, with a view to compelling me to submission as regarded the children. I said I would not do what I knew to be cruel and wrong. I would rather never see Scotland again. He said, "If you have property, they will reach you through that and bring you back." I said, "Then I will *have no property.* I would rather go out and leave all, as people long ago did." He said, "Have you thought? Do you mean what you say?" I replied, "I can't help it. *I cannot* do what I believe and know to be wrong. A time comes when one must obey God rather than men. I have done what I can in Scotland, and now I will go out." Then, said the Sheriff, "If you have made up your mind to that, I say *GO and God's blessing go with you, but,*" he added with a smile, "I'll give you Lord Westbury's advice, '*If you have an old umbrella, don't leave it behind you!*'" and, taking up his inkbottle, added still further, "If they find *anything* the value *of that,* they will found a jurisdiction on it and bring you back at your own expense." He then proceeded to details, and astonished me by his knowledge of what property I had in

Scotland! The houses in which the children had been living must be disposed of at once—which was already being done. A coffee-house at Granton had been erected at my own expense on a site the former proprietor had granted me at a nominal rental, with the provision it was to remain *entirely* in my own hands. In this difficulty I went to the agent, and found that the proprietor had sent me a most kind message, bidding him relieve me of any trouble at once, and to express his sympathy with me in what was taking place.

The Sheriff then gave special attention to a farm I had near Edinburgh, saying, "I hear you have fine horses there, and some fair cattle, they will lay hands on those at once." I proposed having a "roup" (Anglicé, an auction), he said, "You can't do that, it would be most dangerous to advertise." And then gave me practical hints as to what to say on the morrow to my man at *the farm*, winding up with an injunction to go to my agent on my return, *not later* than the next day's afternoon, and so bade me goodbye, and bid God bless me!

I did as I was told, and found myself in Mr. ——'s office at 4 P.M. next day—related to him what I had done and what I had been told—he looked very uncomfortable, and, apparently with great reluctance, told me the reason of all this advice was that proceedings were expected to be taken against me (*if not*

already begun) which would make it impossible for me to buy or sell, or draw money from any bank, the *supposed object* being to stop the supplies of support for my children in Nova Scotia, and thus starve me (*through them*) into submission. This statement I treated with utter incredulity, believing an old friend —whose house I reached at 8 P.M.—would have told me. But that evening I learned from him it was only *too true!* and that he had not told me because he thought no one would be wicked enough really to do it. That night was a sad one; my friend said I could only escape the warrant by not being found in any house, and that friends could only shelter me and refuse to receive the warrant at great risk to themselves. He said, "*Where will you go?*" I answered, "To Miss ——, an old and intimate friend in the country." I got hold of my maid; we had no time to get anything else, and returned to the house, where I had tea. I can only walk slowly, and it was late when we got there, the maids had gone to bed, but the ladies took us in and gave us a bed till 4 A.M. Then we rose and left the house before the servants were up, and walked to the station, three miles. I was not able for this, and it made me ill for months. I took refuge in a cab until late enough to go to a friend's house, where I got breakfast and an hour's rest. I shall never cease to be grateful to her. I went that day to the country and remained hidden

there for eight days, while my foes sought high and low for me, but as no trace could be found, gave it up. The Directors, who had previously approved of the cases, and taken the passages of the final party of poor children, refused at the last moment to let them go. I learned this on the evening of the 15th April, when I had expected to meet the children. I telegraphed to a friend to ask his intervention and sailed for Nova Scotia the next day, and the children followed soon after. There were no further proceedings till June, 1889, when the Court of Session ordered the Directors to deliver up the children, and they sent the Secretary out to Nova Scotia, in July, 1889, to look for them. He applied to the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia for a writ of *habeas corpus*, which was refused, and a note was given to the Secretary to this effect. The Directors then joined with X, and obtained the writ of *habeas corpus* in October, 1889. It, however, was ineffectual, and proceedings dragged on in Nova Scotia till May, 1890, when I pressed for a decision—again postponed more than once. All this was a great worry and extra demand on my strength and energies. I have often had to rise at 2 A.M., and drive the rest of the night to reach the morning train at Kentville, in order to get to Halifax on this business in the forenoon. In August, 1890, the Court in Nova Scotia required me to give the children's addresses, or where I last heard of them, which I did at once. I

was desired to instruct a solicitor to find them, which he failed to do, but did not tell me so until December 23, 1890. I then received a letter from him to this effect, and another from my ordinary solicitor, saying that the Court required a man to be sent to look for the children within twenty-four hours. Two men were suggested—one was my farmer, the other was a detective. To both of these I objected. To the first, because having a large stock of cattle in the barn, I could not do without his work; and also because that, being my servant, I could not expect the Court to be really satisfied with any effort he might make. To the second I objected, as, being a Roman Catholic, I could not employ him. I proposed going to Kentville to a well-known solicitor there, and ask him to find a man, competent, reliable, and without interest either way. This I did there and then, though the date was 23d December, the hour 7 P.M., the thermometer below zero, the snow lying in drifts seven feet deep on the roads in some places, and I very far from strong in health. Accompanied by my cousin, I set forth on this expedition to drive in an open wagon to Kentville, about twenty-five miles off. As we might almost have expected in such frost, the bolts of the wagon snapped, and we broke down about sixteen miles from home! I think it was a great deliverance and proof of the Lord's care that this happened near a house, and not in the woods and

bogs (or uncultivated places) we had just passed, where for miles there was no sign of human habitation. At the house we got help, the wagon was "fixed up," and at 12 P.M. we reached Kentville, and sent the man off next morning. Who can say I did did not try to carry out the orders of the Court? The man failed to find the children. I was asked in January, 1891, through my solicitor, I believe by the opposing counsel, if I would *advertise* for the children. I said "No." I had already done all I could to find them. I was then told by one well versed in such things I had better be prepared to make choice of a prison, so as to avoid the worst.

I was again before the Court on the 10th March, 1891, and sworn in to undergo the interrogatories (about ninety questions) on the 14th March, 1891, which occupied from 11 A.M. to 7 P.M., with an hour for dinner. Shut up alone with the man appointed for this purpose to thus morally torture me, *not* allowed pencil, paper, or means of making memoranda, or permitted to know the drift of following questions before answering, I was worn out.

On March 28, 1891, the Chief Justice and Judge Wetherbee expressed *great disapproval* of this moral torture. The Master of Interrogatories declared that I had not cleared myself of contempt of Court. The two judges aforesaid held that I had, Judge Ritchie dissenting. The opposing counsel clamoured for

the prison that afternoon, *at once!* saying nothing but *sentence* would satisfy them! The Chief Justice asked what they wanted. "Order *sentence*, my lord." "What do you mean by *sentence?*" inquired his lordship. "*The prison*, my lord, for this woman; now you have got her, keep her safely." Thus the uproar went on, till the Chief Justice said, "Am I to give this sentence with my eyes shut and my hands tied, and against my own conscience and knowledge of what is right! I will do nothing of the kind!"

We were dismissed at 4 P.M., the discussion having lasted about three hours.

The case dragged on till July 10, 1891, when the decision was given in my favour. But I was so worn out in health that I fainted in the street in Halifax about the end of June.

I was informed, on excellent authority, that my *whole* crime had been taking a Protestant population into Nova Scotia, which would tell at the general election, that when my boys landed, in September, 1886, they attracted a good deal of attention, and on finding that we had come to found a Protestant colony in the province, the Roman Catholics in Halifax determined to stop it, and, therefore, wrote home to their friends in Edinburgh to know if they could find an occasion against me by reason of having Roman Catholic children, with the result that X was brought forward as described above. *The date* of X's first

demand for the children agreed precisely with this statement.

The Roman Catholic action comes out clearly in the proof before the Court of Session.

July, 1891, I was also most warmly congratulated on the decision by a dignitary of the Church in Nova Scotia, who said: "When I first heard of your troubles I thought they merely were that you were a very kind-hearted woman who was very fond of children, so fond of them that you had done something that was a little irregular, and I hoped you would not get into a great deal of trouble over it, but I have since learned very differently, and that it is a most intolerable piece of Popish persecution. I am *most* thankful for the late decision in your favour; it is the first check that has ever been given to Popish tyranny in Nova Scotia, and *thousands* of Protestants are rejoicing in it."

I came home on the 23d February, 1892, and in spite of arrest threatened in England, went to Scotland in May and returned in June. X said he had meantime gone to Nova Scotia. Be this as it may, in the first week of July, 1892, he applied to the Court of Session for an order against me to appear before them. On hearing this, without waiting till the order was served on me, I went to Edinburgh, on 11th July, 1892, of my own accord.

I appeared by counsel, and explained that I did not

know where the children were, and referred the Court to the proceedings in Nova Scotia. Eventually, and after I had laid before them the whole proceedings in the Nova Scotia Court, the Court of Session gave a unanimous decision in my favour on 23d November, 1892.

But on the 5th November two summonses were served on me, both at the instance of X—one for £1000 as damages for loss of his children! and the other for £500 as damages for an alleged libel contained in a letter written by me and published in *The Christian*, of 14th April, 1892, in which I referred to him as a man of bad character who had deserted his children.

The first of these actions, after a protracted and expensive litigation, was decided in my favour, on appeal to the First Division of the Court of Session, on 9th March, 1893, it being held that X had already got sufficient damages by accepting from the Directors the sum of £100, which they paid him in consequence of a similar action raised against them in 1892.

The second action proved a regular fiasco, for when the trial had been arranged to take place on 22d March, 1893, before a jury, X, on the last day of the Session, threw up the action, and decree was given in my favour. During the long months of waiting for these actions to be tried, I was mercifully provided with a quiet and sunny resting place in the South of

France, which was rendered necessary by the enfeebled state of my health, owing to all the fatigue and anxiety I had undergone. I cannot too strongly express my gratitude to those friends who, during this painful time, showed me every kindness and so much sympathy, and thus enabled me to weather the storm to which I was subjected, and from which the Lord mercifully delivered me by the decisions of the Courts and retreat of my opponents; themselves being judges on the very eve for the second trial. As soon as this legal victory was proclaimed I returned to my work for Our Children in Nova Scotia, and continued there unmolested until the events related in the next chapter made it impossible for me to continue my work there with any prospect of comfort or safety.

PART IV.

A STRANGE TALE OF EVANGELINE'S LAND.

CHAPTER XIX.

1895.

EVANGELINE'S LAND! To every reader of Longfellow's exquisite poem, how much does the name recall! What a host of poetical ideas! How many visions of lovely surroundings of land and water, more widely known than in Longfellow's time, through the reports of enthusiastic readers who, to see for themselves the home of Evangeline, have actually taken long journeys, and have been rewarded by the scene of rural beauty so aptly described in the "Acadia" of long ago! These descriptions, even in this unromantic age, are endorsed and sent far and wide by steam and photography—in the shape of railway advertisements—and are successful in attracting visitors from long distances.

These glowing descriptions are all *true, quite true!* Indeed, it is wellnigh impossible to exaggerate the beauty of Evangeline's Land, even in the imaginations of people who have never seen it, as I have been told Longfellow himself never did, yet his description is almost a photograph at least of the Annapolis Valley, the scene of the events which I am about to record.

Where we settled, as related in the foregoing chapters, in June, 1886. I returned to Scotland the two next winters, and only took up my permanent residence at Aylesford in April, 1888. I found on my arrival there that the Scotch people left in charge had said a good deal about my efforts in the cause of temperance in Scotland, and, as I supposed in consequence, some of our neighbours, ladies in the village, ministers, and others in various directions, were very earnest in their requests that I would begin a union of W. C. T. U. in Aylesford. I said NO. First, because at that time I did not know anything about the W. C. T. U.; secondly, because I had enough to do in looking after so large a party; thirdly, because, being a stranger, I did not feel that my efforts were likely to do any good until I had time to get acquainted with the inhabitants. However, even then I was frequently asked to give temperance addresses in various places; and was always willing to do this, or anything else to help the cause of temperance. As time went on, I began to see more and more need for temperance work in our neighbourhood, and in 1890, when the request was again preferred that I should begin a union of the W. C. T. U. in Aylesford, I felt it would be right to do so. The result was a small but active and flourishing union, which was very popular with all the decent portion of the community. In 1893 I was requested to become the superintendent of the

W. C. T. U. of Kings County, where also my work seemed acceptable; so much so that in March, 1894, when the Prohibition Committee in Halifax asked me to do what I could for the cause in the county, friends came forward to help me in every polling district, with the result that in Kings County we had three thousand seven hundred votes for prohibition and only two hundred against it, so that what had been considered "*Hopeless Kings*" came in as the banner county of Nova Scotia. And all went well until March, 1895. On the 25th of that month I received a letter from a well-known and respected doctor, in which he informed me that one of my girls had come into his hands in very serious trouble; that she was at a certain house in the adjoining county of Annapolis, about thirty miles from my residence; that he thought a most serious investigation should take place, as the girl had received most improper treatment. In the evening of the same day the above was confirmed by telephone, saying the girl was getting worse and begging me to go and see her at once, which I did, when I found her in a terrible condition; the magistrate was also there, who had just taken her dying declaration; the revelation it contained was of the most horrible description.

While we were speaking of the matter the doctor came into the room and said it was not safe to speak for fear of being overheard; he added, it would be

necessary to have a legal opinion on the matter, because if the facts should be hidden, he and I would be held as accessories after the fact.

This statement so impressed me that I deemed it necessary to go to Halifax to consult my solicitor, who decided that if this information *were true*, there was no alternative but to have the two men arrested —viz., the doctor who performed the operation and the man who employed him.

I said that as further inquiry into the matter was necessary, I did not feel capable of doing it, and that such a proceeding must be undertaken by a lawyer, and begged him to go to the place where the girl was and make all inquiry necessary. This he did, and found ample ground for a strict investigation.

I went in the meantime on to Annapolis Royal to consult Mr. J. J. Ritchie, Queen's counsel in those parts. I waited there until my solicitor came. From what he had learned of the circumstances, both these gentlemen were of opinion that it was necessary for me to lay information against the two men, which I did, and they were arrested on Saturday, March 30. In order to have the arrest carried out, it was thought best to have the constables sent from Annapolis, as the local constables in Aylesford are known to be completely useless. The only exception to these useless officers is Constable John Selfridge.

The prisoners were brought to Annapolis and

lodged in the jail at noon on the 30th of March. I was advised not to leave Annapolis until this was done, as they were well known to be desperate characters. However, on their arrival I went home by the next train. I was accompanied by my solicitor. I said to him that, knowing the habits of that part of the country (which are, that if you offend any one, especially a bad character, your barn is probably doomed to be burnt in less than a week!), I had better look after my buildings. I thought *only* of the barn, God help me. I had no idea of any OTHER *danger!* My adviser said I had better warn my men when I got home, which I did at once as to the barns and mill. I never thought of the house as being in danger.

That was on Saturday afternoon, March 30, 1895. Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday passed without anything unusual. On Monday night about ten o'clock we heard talking outside, but believed it to be some of our own people; it turned out *it was not.*

On Tuesday night there were in the Big House twenty-six people, consisting of myself, six servants, and nineteen children, of these eighteen below twelve years old. We all went to bed as usual, and at 3.45 next morning I was awakened by a loud outcry. It was the shrieking of frightened women and children. I went instantly towards the nursery passage communicating through my dressing-room, and was met at

the door by all the women and some of the children, who were of all ages from three years old to twelve. I asked what was the matter. One of the women replied, "the house was on fire and full of smoke, and the rest of the children were being suffocated and they (the women) could do nothing with them."

I went on to the children's room, which I found full of dense smoke; with great difficulty I persuaded some of them to come to me. The others were afraid to move and stayed in bed. We saw no fire then, but the smoke was so dense I could not see my hand before me. I gave the children who had come to me to the women, who took them out; and I stayed in the room alone to get the rest. The cries and pleading of the poor, terrified little ones, too frightened to get out of their beds, were pitiful. "I'm choking, oh, why don't you come to your boys? It's hurting us; *it's* killing us," etc. It was hopeless to find them all in the dark quickly enough for safety, as the room was large and the voices in various directions, besides I must keep hold of the baby child I had got. The only hope was to persuade them *to come to me.* This I did by telling them if they would ONLY come, God would take care of us all. One little thing said, "I don't *see* God." I replied, "I daresay not, but He's there for all that." Another said, "I don't SEE YOU EITHER." This idea of God's actual presence, and power to help them, seemed to comfort them; and they stopped

crying, and made their way through the smoke to me. I could not see any of them, only felt their little hands clinging to my night-dress. I had prayed earnestly to Him who is the ever watchful Helper of the helpless ever since I realized our danger, and He heard me and came to our relief, and gave the poor little children courage and strength to keep their senses and come out of their beds to me. One of the big girls came back and took the baby child from me, while I sent the others along the passage.

But *I* could not for a few minutes leave the room, for I did not know if ALL were saved. I did not know what to do; all was dark with thick, dense smoke, there *might still* be a child there who was too far gone to cry. I could only ask God to tell me if there were any more, and, oh, dear friend who may read this, I wish I could tell you how *much nearer* heaven is than earth at a time like that, when you are literally on the top of a big fire. How true His promise is, "WHEN THOU PASSETH THROUGH THE FIRE I WILL BE WITH THEE"! Verily, the Lord is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever! The same as when the Fourth was seen with the three children of Israel in the burning, fiery furnace, and it is written, "THE FORM OF THE FOURTH WAS LIKE UNTO THE SON OF GOD." He was with us in that children's room that night. I waited alone with Him for two or three minutes, and then it seemed as if He told me there were

no more, and that I had better go—yes, I had better go. There was no time to lose, for in seven or eight minutes after I left that dreadful room the whole back of the house fell in. The joists must have been burnt nearly through while I was standing on the hot floor.

I cannot but tell you what to me was a very touching incident: two little girls had been asleep in an adjoining room, and, awakened by the outcry, they, knowing I had gone into the nursery, *actually waited* in the passage above the fire until they saw me come out. Then I went to the front of the house, where one of my boys (twelve years old) had most bravely and cleverly collected all the children in the porch below, and so saved thirteen younger than himself. From the top of the front staircase (mercifully *made of iron*, planned and made nine years before) I asked if they were *all there!* The answer was, *Almost all.* Hearing *almost*, I felt it was not enough; on finding two big girls missing, who had gone up to ring the alarm-bell, I went back to try and get through the smoke to them; but by that time I could not. I lost my way in my own bedroom twice, and felt I must give it up, as I could hardly stand. I thought "the Lord is very merciful. He may have had pity on them in some other way." It turned out so—they had got out by a back window.

Then I saw them all out, the maids carrying the very little ones. The others toddled over to the

Boys' House, several hundred yards away, on their poor little bare feet over ice and snow, with nothing on but their night-gowns, every one of us barefooted. I know my feet were first blistered by the hot boards in the children's room, and very soon bleeding on the ice and stones on the bleak hill-side.

On reaching the Boys' House the first object was to get the children into the beds, still warm, which the elder boys had just left to go and help at the fire. One of the women gave me a pair of slippers and a boy's fur coat, and thus attired I watched the barn until 6.30, when the fire died down; and the Big House at Hillfoot Farm was a heap of ashes.

There we were, homeless, naked, and without a shred of personal property. Have you thought what that means? No clothes, no furniture, no shelter, no personal possessions or comforts of *any* kind; no books, no papers; literally NOTHING saved but our lives. For those who have not gone through a like experience it is hard for any one to realize; *possible even for some to smile*; as a few of the passengers in the train did when they saw a small party of us making our way to Halifax, yet it is a terrible ordeal to go through.

Until I got outside the house I was not hopeless, for I thought only of *one fire*, but as soon as I was outside the hall door I saw a second fire raging in the wood-shed.

The existence of this second fire has been attempted to be denied, but it was proved by the *two fires* having been seen by a man living a mile off. The fires were forty-five feet apart. There was not a stick of dry wood in the house on the night of the outr ıge, but only wood so green and full of half-melted ice as to leave a puddle on the floor, it *would not* have burnt without the addition of parafin oil, of which there was a strong smell.

As I said before, there was literally *nothing* saved but our lives (the insurance being very small); and as barely twenty minutes elapsed between the first alarm (given by the children who awoke choking) and the roof falling in, I think the wonder is that any of us were saved alive. Truly, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him *and delivereth them.*" The enemy of souls and his emissaries *could burn the house*, but they *could not burn us*, without the permission of a higher power.

Several of the children suffered in health from the shock and exposure, but I was the only one actually injured by the immediate effect of the fire, and suffered much for more than a year from the internal scorching of breathing dense smoke and overheated air, which sadly affected my heart and lungs, and from the effect of which more than one doctor told me most people die three days after the occurrence. Even now I am far from strong. Two days after the

fire I was able to be removed to Halifax, and have never been a night at the Hillfoot Farm again. Places were found for the servants, and six of the children went at once to homes which had been previously arranged, but of all their nice new outfits not a stitch remained. The rest were cared for at the Boys' House until I could provide for them in safer parts of the country. This I did before leaving Nova Scotia, on the 19th of July, 1895. Up to that time I hoped to be able to return to my farm, but after the (what I can only call) *mock trial* at Bridgetown, I felt that unless protection could be obtained from the Dominion Government, as that of Nova Scotia appeared to be utterly powerless or callous in the matter, I felt my position very unsafe, as I had been credibly informed that the gang, or some of them, had sworn in the most horrible manner "that they would not have me round that country. That it would be useless for me to think of rebuilding, for, as fast as my houses were built, *they would be burned*, AS THEY HAD BEEN BEFORE!"

We will now go on with the strange story and see what was done to these sinners against humanity and morality, in having, as I have said, horribly ill-used a helpless girl. On the 9th of April I was credibly informed by the poor-law authorities of Annapolis County, through the inspector at Aylesford, that unless the girl were protected she would be carried off

and made away with. Crown Prosecutor J. G. H. Parker, of Bridgetown, Mr. J. J. Ritchie, of Annapolis, and Counsellor Vidito were all so impressed with this idea of danger that they had the girl carried out of the house, where she was lying on a bed, by six men to a safer place some distance off. This was done; two constables—one from Halifax, the other from Annapolis—being constantly in the house to prevent any attempt being made to carry her off. This watch was kept up day and night for three weeks; and I was informed that *in consequence of our vigilance* no attempt had been made, although a reward of $2000 (two thousand dollars) had been offered to get her out in order to prevent her giving evidence. The doctor who attended her at Annapolis (where she had to be kept pending the preliminary examination) received anonymous correspondence with a request to deliver it to her, which was of a nature to frighten the girl. At that time she was waiting to give her evidence in the case. The doctor did not deliver the message, but did not think it wise to say he had not done so, lest the enemy should find another means of communication. She was now under my care, and I nursed her day and night, requiring the help of two watchmen to avoid annoyance.

The preliminary examination lasted three weeks, with the result that the prisoners were committed for trial, the evidence of their guilt being most clear and

convincing. While the girl had been employed as servant by one of the prisoners, she had been subjected to the most revolting cruelty, the marks of which were still visible when the doctor first sent for me to go and see her.

As I have said, the result of the examination before the stipendiary magistrate was that both prisoners were committed for trial. No sooner was this done than the county court judge, without informing the crown prosecutor or the assisting counsel, liberated the doctor at 10.30 P.M. on merely nominal bail. I may mention that during his supposed incarceration this prisoner (although the counsel for the prosecution successfully opposed every application for bail) was frequently seen going about the streets of Annapolis, receiving visitors in the jailer's family, and making himself generally agreeable as a visitor in the house.

When the case of the two prisoners came before the grand jury at Bridgetown on the 18th of June following (1895), the judge opened the proceedings by giving the strongest possible charge to the grand jury that they find no bill against the prisoners, thus effectually protecting them. He said that the prisoner, at whose instigation the evil had been done in the first instance, had gone to another doctor, who had refused to do it, and they might indict him for *attempting* to have it done. This they did. The petit jury in the case was most obviously and infa-

mously packed, the judge being aware of it; *yet* he allowed the trial to proceed, and, *of course*, the verdict was not guilty.

In order to create a sentiment in favour of his impartiality, the judge fined the sheriff $100 (one hundred dollars) ostensibly for contempt of court, but *really* (*he said*) because the sheriff had packed the jury. One strong bond among the members of this gang is strong political influence; they are all Liberals, and most of them very useful to the Liberal interest. The judge said to me, "The fact is, no one can be convicted in this country *unless* certain people please."

I think, however, they should be fairly *tried* in the interest of the public.

This horrible condition of public morals has been known to many decent people for many years, and the frequency of this particular form of crime has simply poisoned the moral sentiment of appalling numbers of people in Annapolis and Kings Counties; deaths from it have been by no means uncommon. I was told by various respectable people, among others an official of the crown, that one woman had been simply murdered from this cause at Middleton in the fall of 1894, and that between the months of January and May, 1895, no less than three graves had been made in Middleton church-yard and filled by three young women from this cause alone. Of course, an impetus was given to this horrible trade by a house of ill-fame being opened

on the outskirts of the village of Middleton which "*was found profitable*," and accordingly a branch of the same was opened in Aylesford. To compass the supply of young girls for these, and doubtless other places of a like character, two procuresses were employed to go about and trap the unwary. The horrible ingenuity and fiendish barbarity in this instance are too revolting for publication here, and inconceivable in any but demons. Of course, I was totally ignorant of all these facts until I had taken the absolutely necessary step of giving information in this case of crime, which was brought to my personal knowledge by events over which I had no control, but to screen which would have been in itself becoming accessory to crime after its commission. That I was fully warranted in acting as I did in the matter is, I think, completely confirmed by the following letter, which was written at my request, for the purpose of publication, by the gentleman who acted as the assisting counsel for the prosecution, and whose name is too well known to require any introduction or comment.

J. J. RITCHIE, Q.C., LL.B.,
Harvard,
SOLICITOR FOR BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA
AND UNION BANK OF HALIFAX.

ANNAPOLIS ROYAL, CANADA, July 20, 1895.

MY DEAR MISS STIRLING,—Referring to our conversation at Bridgetown the other day, I desire to say that I cannot see

how any one possessing any knowledge of the facts could doubt that you were fully justified in the course which you took in regard to the case of Grace Fegan. Before you laid the information against Dr. Miller and Mr. Robert S. Parker, you had the declaration of Grace Fegan as to the cause of her condition, taken by J. E. Oakes, Esquire, a justice of the peace, and sworn to before him at a time when neither Grace Fegan nor the doctor in attendance thought there was any hope of her recovery. The law attaches such weight to declarations of this character as to receive them in evidence even in cases of murder, although not sworn to. This is done on the principle that the person making the declaration is at the point of death, and every hope of this world is gone, and every motive to falsehood silenced, and the mind induced by the most powerful considerations to speak the truth.

It cannot therefore be said that you were not justified in acting upon this declaration which I now enclose. If anything more is required, I would refer to the sworn testimony taken before Stipendiary Leavitt as a complete justification. I sent the other day to your solicitor, Wallace McDonald, Esquire, typewritten copies of the evidence.

That very gross immorality has been rampant in certain portions of this county and Kings is also amply proved by the evidence, and if any one doubts this, I think a perusal of the evidence will settle the matter.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) J. J. RITCHIE.

MISS STIRLING, HALIFAX.

I have not the slightest moral doubt that the outrage which took place as I have described *three nights after my action in the matter was with the view of preventing any further light being brought to bear on such doings in Evangeline's Land.* That I am not alone in this opinion will be seen from the following quotation in the Montreal *Witness*, from a Halifax paper:—

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, November 10, 1897.

The statements made by Miss Stirling are not regarded seriously here. In fact, the charitable view taken of it is that they are hallucinations.

Miss Stirling came here from Scotland about ten years ago. She was possessed of considerable wealth, and started a Home for orphans and friendless girls at Aylesford. One of the girls got into trouble, and through the prosecution of the author of the girl's disgrace some bitterness was created, and the Home was burned. Some think the fire was accidental, *while others are of opinion that it was resolved to get rid of Miss Stirling and her girls from the scene, and this unlawful method was taken to do so.*

On being shown the above quotation, I requested the *Witness* to make public my view of the matter—at least to ask some questions which were suggested to my mind by the Halifax correspondent's admissions.

Miss Stirling, late of Hillfoot Farm, Nova Scotia, stated to a *Witness* reporter this morning that she is very much interested in the communication from Halifax, published in the

Witness yesterday, in which the correspondent stated that the charitable view taken of her statements is that they are hallucinations.

Miss Stirling said, regarding this, If my statements are to be regarded as hallucinations, it would be well to find out whether the two men, Miller and Parker, were labouring under an hallucination when they spent nine weeks in the jail at Annapolis. I would inquire whether the insurance companies laboured under an hallucination when they paid to Miss Stirling $3000 insurance on the house and its contents which were entirely destroyed on April 3, 1895.

To me it is remarkable that the "hallucination" regarding the fire should be endorsed by half the community in Nova Scotia, with whom the correspondent is in communication.

The correspondent says :—

"Some think the fire was accidental, while others are of the opinion that it was resolved to get rid of Miss Stirling and her girls, and this unlawful method was taken to do so." In connection with the latter opinion I would inquire who resolved to "get rid of Miss Stirling"? Was it the respectable portion of the community or was it evil-doers? Is it allowable in Nova Scotia to "get rid" of inconvenient people? If there is any law allowing people to be "got rid" of in that province I would like to know if an unlawful method does not require an investigation? If there is really such a law it would be well that the public were informed of it, in order that they might exercise discretion in coming within reach of it.

I can support my statements in everything by documentary evidence, except the fact of the fire, of which the paying of the insurance policies should be sufficient evidence. To my

mind it is a very frightful thing that the correspondent should coolly record a resolution to "get rid of Miss Stirling and her girls," as this idea of "getting rid" of somebody is the chief motive which has actuated murder from Cain downward.

The Halifax correspondent goes on to say:—

> Miss Stirling spent money freely, and was regarded as a well-meaning but *peculiar* woman.

I am delighted to hear it, that I thus impressed the community in Nova Scotia, for I read in the Word of God, in the Epistle of St. Paul to Titus, ii. 13, 14: "Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us: THAT He might purify unto Himself a PECULIAR PEOPLE, *zealous of good works.*" And with all reverence I say it that I feel convinced if He were suddenly to appear in Nova Scotia, He would be regarded by the majority of the inhabitants as a MOST PECULIAR PERSON. His apostles, likewise, from all we read of them, and "those women who helped them *much* in the Lord," were in their day and generation considered VERY peculiar people, and were persecuted accordingly. The Lord's people must expect that. But that the penalty for a woman doing what the law requires in defence of another woman should be that she and her unoffending household, comprising a number of young children, could be set fire to in the middle of the night, having only time to escape with life, hardly even with that, but continuing to exist through great

suffering and with permanently impaired health, seems a strange episode in a professedly free country like Canada; even for the purpose of "*getting rid*" of so peculiar and inconvenient a person as Miss Stirling, whose only crime (as set forth by the counsel for the prisoners at the mock trial at Bridgetown) was that "she had come from Scotland some years ago, and had ever since been posing as a Reformer;" in plain English, had actively done all the good she could.

I believe inquiries were made as to *whether*, and *how far*, I had irritated my neighbours, but no one, man, woman, or child, in the Annapolis Valley, could be found to say I had ever been anything but kind and considerate to them.

Dear sisters of the W. C. T. U., these facts concern YOU. In the action which I was obliged to take in the matter of giving information concerning crime, I simply did what every decent citizen is *bound* to do under similar circumstances. In my whole life, the aim and object of which was to do good, as above declared, my enemies themselves being the judges, I say in this respect, I HAVE ONLY DONE *what every one of you has undertaken*, AND IS PLEDGED TO DO, by the promise which she has signed as a member of the W. C. T. U., and which she openly confesses to the world by the white ribbon she wears. YOU, *as well as I*, have pledged yourselves to do all you can to spread temperance sentiment, and by every lawful

means in your power to promote the cause of temperance; also, we wear the white ribbon to show we uphold the cause of social purity and oppose immorality in every shape. In fact, by it we announce publicly that we remember, and feel bound by, the vows taken for us at our baptism, "That we would be faithful soldiers and servants of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ to our life's end, and NEVER be ashamed to fight under His banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil." This is practically what we vow when we put on the white ribbon. And it is well worth our while to consider what is our position in faithfully carrying on this warfare. Is the penalty for that to be subject without warning to a sudden and horrible death? or if delivered alive from the flames kindled by wicked hands in the middle of the night, to suffer thereby the loss of all things which make life worth having? This is no exaggeration. What has happened *once* may happen *again*. These miscreants got off scot-free, having escaped even the annoyance of an inquiry.

There is no doubt that, as a sensible man in Nova Scotia told me, who was also a godly minister, and knew the country well, "There is no doubt that immorality has in this case obtained a terrible and tremendous victory."

It *much concerns the women of Canada* to exert themselves to prevent the possible recurrence of such proceedings by doing all they can to have a voice in

the election of those WHO MAKE as well as of those who ADMINISTER the LAWS OF THE COUNTRY; that those laws shall no longer be made the "*ministers of sin*," and by judicial injustice and audacious maladministration ACTUALLY BE MADE a PROTECTION to CRIMINALS.

The burning of the Big House at the Hillfoot Farm was a terrible means taken to "*get rid of*" an inconvenient person, who was "SO PECULIAR" *as to tell the truth.* That a well-known and highly respected resident (actually a MAN) in Annapolis Royal told me, "We were thankful when this trouble came to you, for we felt that now it must come out; that YOU WOULD TELL THE TRUTH; the only person in the Annapolis Valley who would be likely to do so." Yet, dear sisters, if *you likewise tell the truth*, the same fate may soon overtake you. And if by means of this strange story you are aroused to greater zeal and activity in your own defence for the protection of your Homes, your young girls, and your dear little children; if you can really see sin as *it is*, and YOUR DANGER AS 'T IS, looked at in the light of the flames of that burning house, I will almost feel reconciled to my share in the transaction, and will thank God that we have not suffered in vain nor laboured in vain.

That I have been in no hurry to ventilate my grievances is partly due to the physical suffering I have had to [illegible]o, which for a time made much writing im-

possible; partly to the fact that the Dominion Government, to whom I applied for protection, promised *that if I would be quiet* for a certain length of time (wellnigh a year after I asked for help), they would do all they could to protect me and my property by having a fresh trial and full investigation.

They ended by doing just NOTHING. I have wondered whether the required promised of silence and so long delay were not merely a neat arrangement to cover up the whole matter?

To give them the chance of doing right I kept silence for a long time. I now feel it right to speak for my own sake, for the sake of the women of Canada; yes, for the sake of WOMEN EVERYWHERE, I think it right to let these facts be known.

Thus I have told briefly and plainly this strange tale of Evangeline's Land.

PART V.

HAPPY RESULTS.

CHAPTER XX.

HAPPY RESULTS.

I HOPE that no one who is wishing to work for God will be discouraged by the story of persecution contained in the foregoing pages; and to remove this impression I am about to tell you how bountifully the Lord has provided for us. After the events described in the last chapter I was as heavily laden with care and suffering as it was almost possible for anyone to be—with 20 children below 12 years old to provide for, without a shred remaining of personal property. Homeless, as it was obviously dangerous to return to my farm, which had latterly been our chief means of subsistence, and which (unless the Dominion Government would protect me) I had only the prospect of selling at a disadvantage; worst of all, my own health so injured by the agony of inhaling dense smoke and overheated air that my powers of breathing were well-nigh exhausted. Surely I was as *helpless* (many people would have said as *hopeless*) a creature as you could find. Yet, helpless and almost hopeless as I sometimes felt, I could say with David, "The God of Jacob is our refuge; *therefore* will we not fear!" and

as it turned out, the very extremity of my distress brought me into the right way, which was to lead us out into a wealthy place. When I had provided for the children in safer parts of the country, I decided to try to find a refuge among the Quakers of Pennsylvania, remembering the words of good William Penn, that "This colony" (as it was in his day) "should be kept as a refuge for the oppressed of all countries." So I came to Philadelphia from Montreal one terribly hot day in August, 1895, with the one little boy I could manage to keep with me—the same who saved so many from the fire that awful night! There had been some correspondence with the Dominion Government, which ended in my going back to Ottawa and giving evidence in the hope of obtaining redress. It ended in NOTHING. There I became so ill on the approach of cold weather (owing to the injuries of the fire) that I was told by the doctor I would certainly die unless I went to Florida for the winter, which we accordingly did. I think surely the angel went with us, for everyone was very kind to us, and helped us as far as they could. Up to that time I had a *hope* of going back to our old home in Nova Scotia, but just then circumstances began to point the other way. I felt very sad, far from strong, money becoming scarce, and the season for returning North near at hand. A minister and his wife were filled with compassion for us. One day she said to me, "We are so concerned

about you. Where will you go?" I replied, "I don't know, but God takes care of all who put their trust in Him." It was *literally* AI L I had to trust to. My friend went on to say, "There are some people here who I think might help you to a home in Pennsylvania," and directed me to a house near at hand. I was most kindly received, and heard from these friends of the beautiful home, which seemed to have been waiting for us, as it had stood empty nearly 20 years. When I went to see it I was amazed to find a most comfortable house in excellent repair, and only needing to be swept and garnished to make it fit for the habitation even of fastidious people. It almost took away my breath. I had asked for shelter and here was a mansion! So Willie and I went and lived alone there that first summer, with such help as we could get, alone in the empty house. By-and-by our numbers increased; again they have been diminished by boys and girls growing older and going to other schools, only coming home at intervals.

We are very happy there. It is a beautiful place with its grassy lawn, sloping terraces, and fine old trees.

We have few children nowadays, so we make up by having lots of animals. Everything clad in furs and feathers thrives with us, and we have even now rescued quite a number of waifs and strays.

We have many kind friends in Coatesville and the

neighbourhood, and a much greater prospect of worldly prosperity than we could have had in Nova Scotia.

This happy deliverance from all our troubles should, I think, be a great encouragement to every tried worker in God's vineyard. May He enable us all to say, "The Lord is my Helper. I will not fear what man can do unto me."

THE END.