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Glowing Facts and Personalities

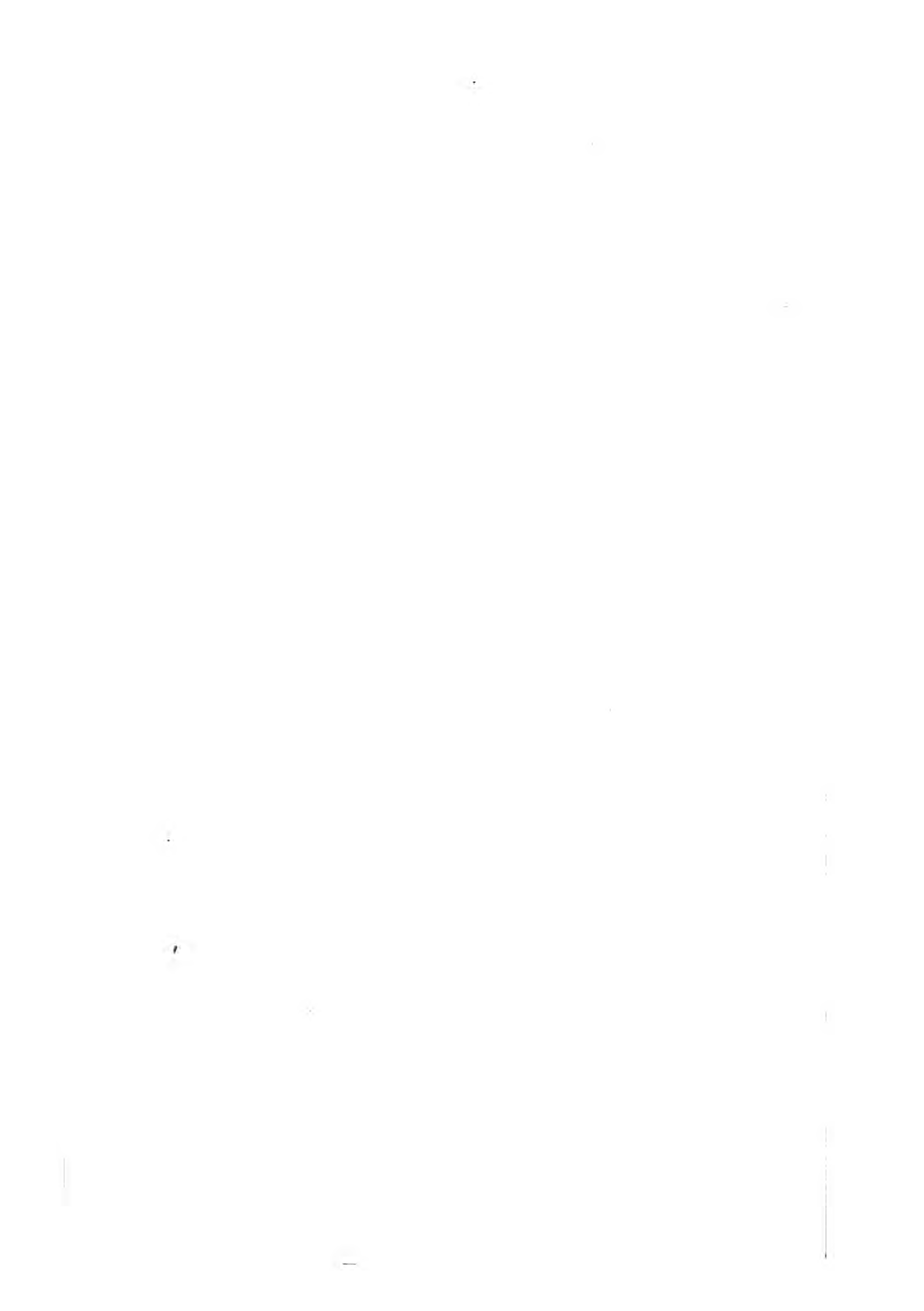
By the late
EDWARD SMITH, J.P.
Author of "Mending Men," &c.

With a Foreword by the
REV. J. H. JOWETT, M.A., D.D.

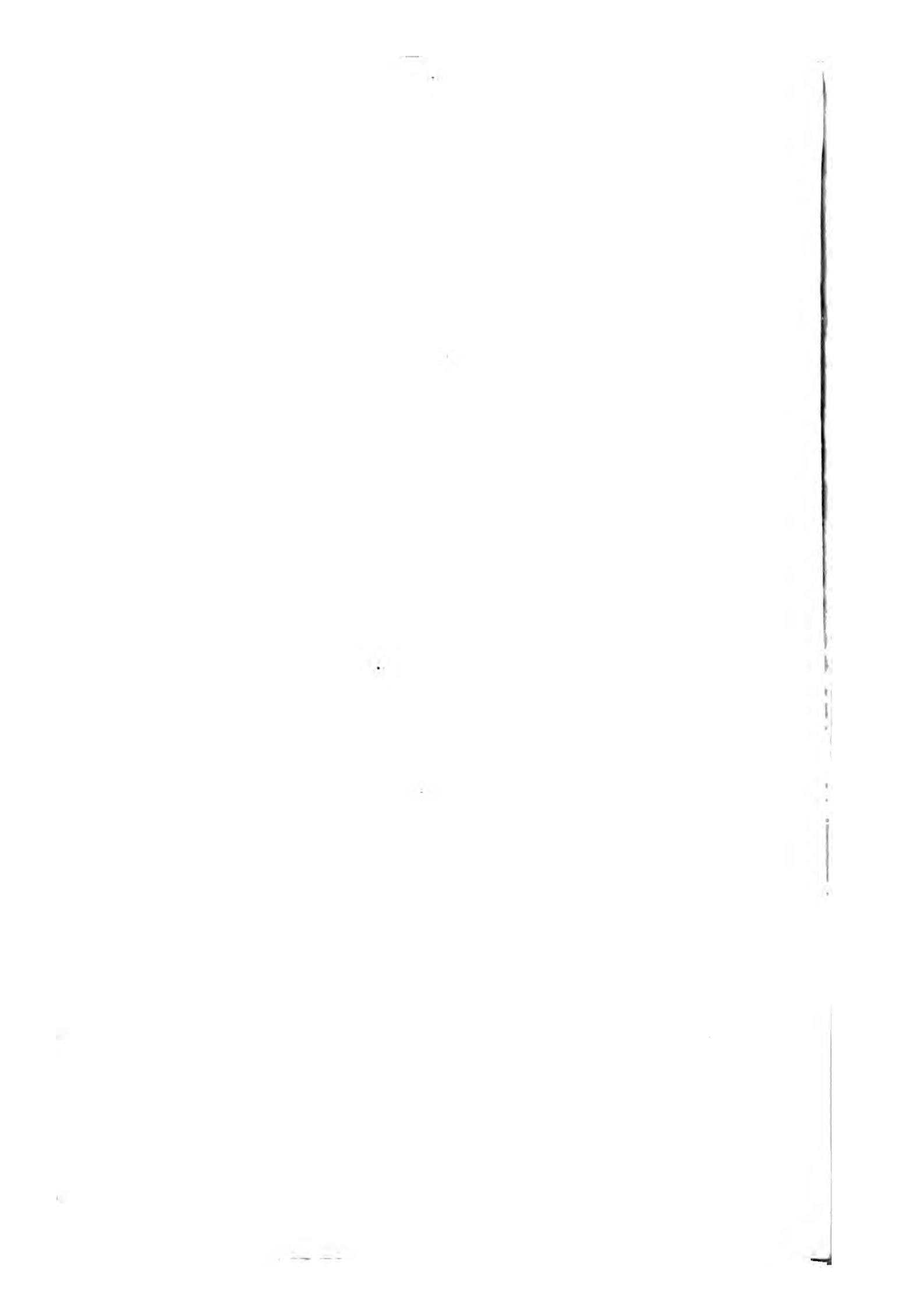
and a Biographical Sketch
of the Author by the
REV. WALTER LEE

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**GLOWING FACTS
& PERSONALITIES**





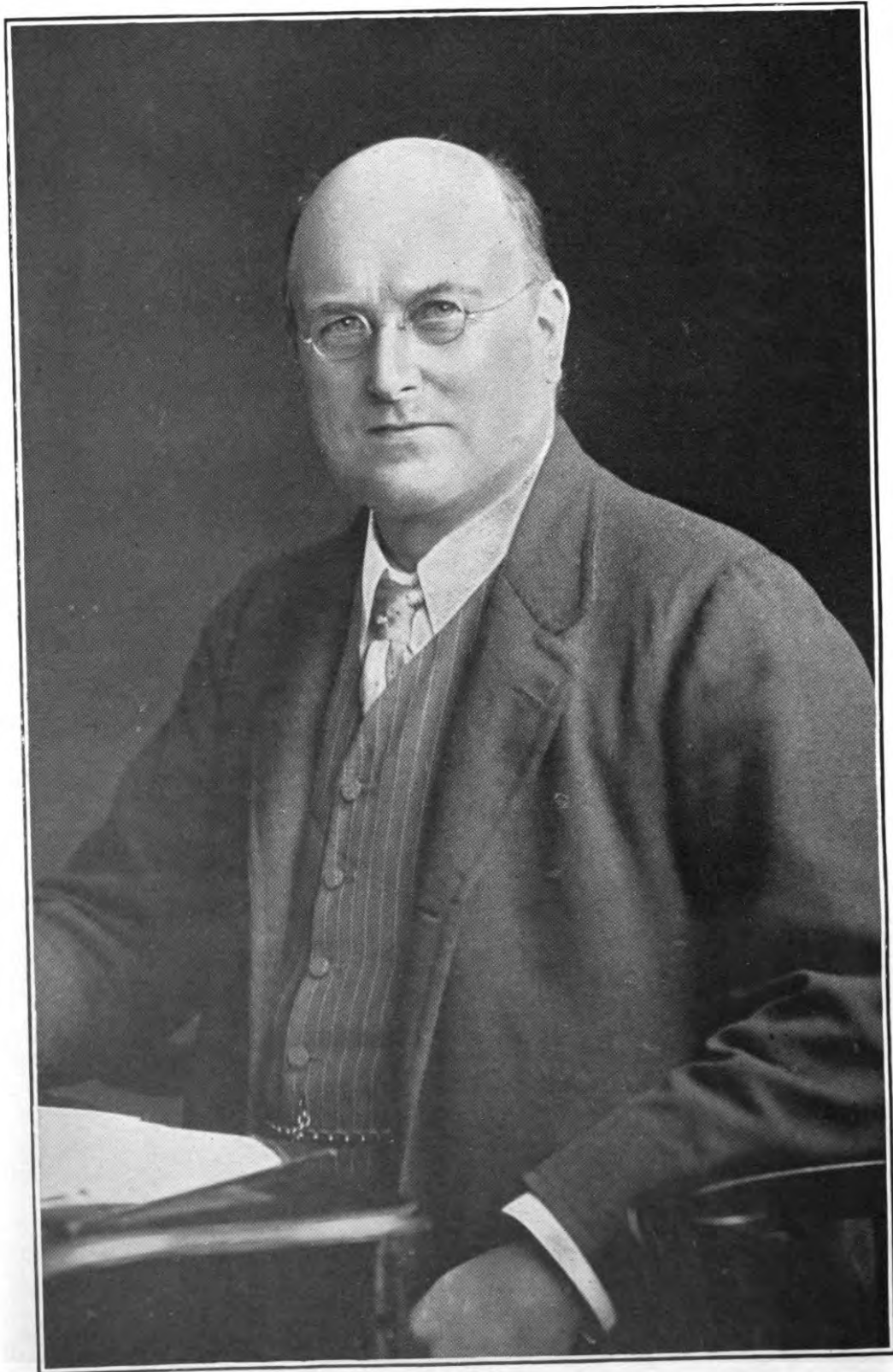


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[LAFAYETTE, *Manchester.*

EDWARD SMITH, J.P.

THE GREAT FACTS OF PERSONALITIES

... the Birmingham
... and the late
... President
... on ...

...
...
...

... WORD BY THE
... WETT, M.A., D.D.

... SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR
BY THE
... WALTER LEE



LONDON
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
4 Bouverie Street and 65 St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C.
1916



Photo.

[LAW OFFICE ...]

EDWARD SMITH, J.P.

GLOWING FACTS & PERSONALITIES

Chiefly associated with the Birmingham
Adult School Movement and the late
Alderman William White, First President
of the Midland Adult School Union . .

BY THE LATE
EDWARD SMITH, J.P.

Author of "Mending Men," &c.

WITH A FOREWORD BY THE
REV. J. H. JOWETT, M.A., D.D.

AND A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR
BY THE
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR . . . <i>facing title</i>	
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR . . .	vi
PORTRAIT OF ALDERMAN WHITE . <i>facing page</i>	vi
FOREWORD	xiii
PREFACE	xv

BOOK I

THE BIRMINGHAM ADULT SCHOOL MISSION . . .	I
---	---

BOOK II

THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE "BEEHIVE" MISSION	37
---	----

BOOK III

EDWARD THE TERROR! AND OTHERS . . .	86
-------------------------------------	----

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

EDWARD SMITH was born at Twyford, near Winchester, on November 26th, 1849, and was educated at Dr. Cruickshank's Commercial School, Southampton. In 1864 he was apprenticed to his uncle, a draper in the same town. Four years later he became manager of the woollen department in the modest linen and woollen establishment of the late Mr. Edward Grainger, at Dudley, and within two years was taken into partnership, together with the proprietor's son. The business rapidly expanded, and upwards of a thousand workers were eventually employed. Messrs. Grainger & Smith, Limited, is now one of the largest and most prosperous firms of its kind in the country, and possesses branches or agencies in many centres of the British Islands, in the Colonies, and foreign lands. This phenomenal progress was chiefly owing to Mr. Smith's remarkable combination of business qualities,—integrity, energy, organising powers, tact, and enthusiasm.

These qualities also pre-eminently characterised his religious career, because he regarded his whole life, with its powers and possessions, as a sacred trust, and refused to separate it into religious and secular departments. Sometimes he quoted a favourite couplet :—

“ Put your business into religion,
Put your religion into business.”

In his twelfth year he joined the Congregational Church at Totton, near Southampton, and undertook work



ALDERMAN WHIT



Photo.]

[LAMBERT WESTON & SON.

ALDERMAN WHITE.



Biographical Sketch of the Author

in the Sunday School, of which his father was the superintendent. Later, he laboured successfully for young people at the Congregational Churches of King Street, Dudley, and Francis Road, Edgbaston, and finally at Baxter Memorial Church, Kidderminster, where he was member, and also deacon, for thirty years.

The powers of speech and of leadership which Edward Smith quickly developed brought him into an unprecedented variety and number—over a score at one period—of presidential and other offices. Among the more distinguished were the presidencies of the Midland Adult School Union, Midland Temperance League, West Midland Federation of Free Churches, and the Congregational Colonial Missionary Society. He was chairman, twice elected, and also treasurer for twenty years, of the Worcestershire Congregational Union. Of minor offices, his favourite was the Presidency of the Bewdley and Wribbenhall Mutual Help Society, which he founded in 1886. In this local work, as also in his voluminous correspondence, he enjoyed the devoted co-operation of his daughter, Miss E. Beauchamp Smith.

As a great traveller, and a missionary enthusiast, Mr. Smith was deputed to visit Canada, and various foreign and colonial fields, for the Congregational Union of England and Wales and the London and Colonial Missionary Societies respectively. On all these visits he found opportunity to champion the Temperance and Adult School movements.

His chief literary ventures were *Mending Men*, *Studies in Men Mended*, and a war volume, *Private 7664, a Faithful Soldier of the Brave Worcesters*. It has been my privilege to edit these books, and the present

Biographical Sketch of the Author

one, and I can testify that the author sought neither personal fame nor material profit by their publication, but only a new and wider means of realising his unselfish aims—the salvation of souls, the encouragement of Christian workers, and the more general adoption of the Adult School methods.

Of the following three outstanding interests of his public career—*Temperance* was his “first love.” Whether in excess or in moderation, drink and drinking habits had in him a redoubtable antagonist, with pen, and voice, and influence. Mainly through his enthusiasm and munificence, the magnificent Temperance Institute at Dudley was erected. Latterly, he advocated State Purchase of the drink traffic as the shortest way to ultimate Prohibition.

Adult School enterprise loomed largest in his manifold activities. Some deprecated, and others resented, his so-called “fanatical” advocacy of the movement. His good-tempered and unanswerable argument, based upon experience, was that the method did really save and “mend” the utterly broken and shipwrecked. To quote his own words, it “got the things done” which are the primary objects of the Gospel of Christ.

In *Work amongst Prisoners*, the Christ-like pity and overflowing love of Edward Smith’s heart found special scope, and by a beautiful and uncommon method. His position as a Dudley and County Magistrate he regarded in the light of a ministry, and ever sought to temper justice with mercy. To every defendant convicted in the local police-courts and sent to prison, it is recorded that he sent a letter of hope and encouragement (recently these messages exceeded 500 a year), visited and prayed

Biographical Sketch of the Author

with many of them in prison, and on their release had them met at the prison gates and befriended by sympathetic Adult School men of their own class. Moreover, he sought re-employment for the discharged prisoners, and during their imprisonment personally visited and helped their families.

In all his rescue work he believed in the supreme value of direct personal effort. By this courageous course he probably "plucked more brands from the burning" than any layman of our time. A great compliment on his method came from Gipsy Smith. While showing him photographs of men he had helped to reclaim, Edward Smith remarked modestly, "But what are these to the great crowds you gather?" "Ah," replied the famous Evangelist, "but yours are hand-picked fruit, and everyone knows that hand-picked fruit is the best!" Further, Mr. Smith kept in touch with his prisoner and other *protégés*, whether at home or abroad, by vast and continuous correspondence, and he loved to read the much-valued replies to sympathetic hearers. By my study fire, late at night, the tears have welled from his eyes and the eyes of his listeners as he told the tragic histories of reclaimed reprobates, and read their letters, often uncouth and illiterate, but always sincere and teeming with pathos and with gratitude to him and to God.

It is not surprising that so many sin-hardened men yielded to his persuasive powers. His addresses and private entreaties were simple and forceful; but it was not the mere words that melted the hardest hearts so much as the magnetic and lovable personality of the speaker. Once, while earnestly addressing an Adult School meeting, his voice broke and he was moved to tears.

Biographical Sketch of the Author

“ Why, he *loves* us ! ” exclaimed an astonished hearer. Here we touch the secret of Edward Smith’s success. It was his almost Divine love and patience which conquered the men. They realised that his was no superficial emotion or perfunctory zeal, but that he was deeply concerned for their social and spiritual welfare. No wonder they called him “ Our beloved President.”

All these outward activities had their source and strength in the secret springs of his inner spiritual life. He lived much with God, and prayer was his vital breath. His faith was childlike and invincible ; he knew no doubts. He fed his soul by constant reading and study of the Divine Word, and of the best religious literature. His consecration was heartwhole ; the love of Christ completely suffused his intensely emotional nature, fired his intellect, and stimulated his passion for humanity, especially for the fallen. He loved the worst, despaired of none, and was kind and courteous to all. Although he came so much into contact with sin and the suffering caused by sin, he was never gloomy, nor a “ kill-joy.” He was no ascetic, he encouraged wholesome pleasures. His happy temperament radiated sunshine and hope, and he infected others with his own enthusiasm. His soul, sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, vibrated to every call of humanity. All his powers were mobilised for the Christian fight. Wherever evil and misery were found there was he, the “ Happy Warrior,” wielding the weapons of the Holy War. No selfish or petty ambitions besmirched his shield, and no difficulty chilled his consuming passion for souls. He said he had been often helped by the following verses, written on the fly-leaf of his Bible ; and surely no verses could more

Biographical Sketch of the Author

truthfully portray the spirit and aims of his life and work :—

“ There where the hosts of darkness lie,
And the brave battle rages high,
Give me my post to live or die
 With fearless heart.
Thou, Lord, alone may'st plan the fight—
Alone array the battle right.
Mine but to do with all my might
 My little part.

Not mine to choose my work or fate ;
Whether to die with hope elate,
Or live the triumph to relate
 In after years.
Enough to battle in Thy Name,
For truth and right, but not for fame ;
And ne'er the Holy Cause ashamed
 By coward fears.

And if it be my lot to fall
Unnoticed and unknown by all,
Named only in the Great Roll Call,
 So let it be.
Give me my weapon and my task—
Timbrel, or sword, or water-flask ;
To know my task is all I ask,
 And to serve Thee.”

Edward Smith's call to higher service came suddenly, on July 15th, 1916. He died, as he would have wished, in harness, for he was on his way to an Adult School

Biographical Sketch of the Author

Conference when "God's finger touched him, and he slept." His death caused widespread sorrow, and called forth countless testimonies, in public and private, to his unique work and beauty of character. His remains were laid to rest in All Saints' Churchyard, Wribbenhall, on a bed of moss and ivy, enshrining a cross of flowers, appropriate symbols of the fragrance of his life and the foundation of his faith. A widow, three sons, and two daughters, mourn his loss; many churches and philanthropic societies miss his wise counsels, generous benefactions, and inspiring presence. And who shall compute the hosts of rescued souls, throughout this country and in distant lands, who grieve for the loss of a spiritual father—men and women who learned to love God through the love Edward Smith bore to them. The Rev. Dr. Horton writes:—"It fills one with wonder that such a Fisher of Men should be called away, when so many of us could have been spared and easily replaced. My solution of the problem is that such a worker can do more for the mending of men in Heaven than he could here. He was called, because he was wanted." Is it not, indeed, easily conceivable that Edward Smith is still serving his Master by preaching "to spirits in prison" beyond the veil?

Thanks be to God for his fruitful life and beautiful example. His memory will be cherished, and his influence will long prevail. "He, being dead, yet speaketh."

"Thus saints, that seem to die in earth's rude strife,

Only win double life:

They have but left our weary ways

To live in memory here, in Heaven by love and praise."

MERIVALE,
MALVERN.

WALTER LEE.

FOREWORD

WHATEVER value belongs to this little book is sacredly enhanced by the fact, that he who tells its story has now, by a sudden call, joined the hosts of light; and he rejoices in that vast fellowship to which his spirit so intimately belonged. The appeal of the book has gained a stronger and even loftier constraint, for it calls to us from the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Edward Smith has been gathering the "thousand sacred sweets" on the slopes of Zion for many years, and this climbing road to the heavenly city never had a gayer or more delightful pilgrim. He would have been a splendid companion for Christian to have fallen in with when he was at the Slough of Despond, or when he was creeping through the valley that was filled with dolorous sights and sounds.

For, first of all, he was very sure of the supreme things—sure with the assurance, not of the theorist who has only reached logical conclusions, but of the believer who has tasted and seen how gracious the Lord is. Edward Smith knew his Lord, and his Christian life was just a deep, reverent, gladsome friendship: he walked with Him. It would be more true to say that, at most times, he danced along the way. He could have sung with the Psalmist: "Thou hast made my feet like hind's feet."

And then, for a second thing, he had an invincible confidence in the power of saving grace; and he loved

Foreword

to testify that grace to men and women who were sunk and imprisoned in the most appalling sin. I was privileged to have letters from him very regularly, and they were packed with records of the latest conquests of redeeming grace. He did not waste a single sentence about anything else. They were all about Jesus, and the men whom Jesus had saved and transformed. Nothing else mattered. Salvation was his one and only passion. The business which gave him his living was only an incident: the business of saving men was all in all, and it fed and exercised all the powers of his being. One could not be in his presence five minutes without feeling the glow of his holy fire. And everywhere he found opportunity, for his sunny and genial spirit made every door open at his touch.

It is altogether fitting and beautiful that his last testimony should be to the glory of the Saviour. In these pages he writes about his fellow-workers, who have laboured with him in the Gospel; and he tells new stories of lives made over again by the marvellous ministries of the Eternal Love.

The memory of Edward Smith is very bright and sacred to all who had the privilege of knowing him; and I pray that this little book may add to the trophies of his unselfish and chivalrous life.

J. H. JOWETT.

PREFACE

MANY of us, who have proved by personal experience the realities and the joys of the life of faith in Jesus Christ, learn that the divine life is strengthened and intensified the more the evidences of witnesses are studied. In every age, among all classes, peoples, and nations, there are those who have testified, and are testifying, to the quality of the life principles which Jesus Christ proclaimed. But the more one rejoices in the proof of these facts, the greater is the surprise that so many ignore the truths involved—truths which illuminate the darkness, and solve the hidden mysteries and problems, of our transient earthly life. So many around us are seeking happiness in the senses of the body, and are ignorant of the potentialities of their undeveloped faculties of mind and soul; while others seem to measure the capacity and outlook of life by the drab and low levels of those living in their immediate circle.

Again, the puzzle is, why so many who, in every department of their daily business and social intercourse, exercise to the full their natural inborn spiritual faculties of faith and imagination, yet ignore their use entirely in the things which belong to their highest welfare. If they do pause to think, at times, they reason in a circle. Instead of accepting by faith the truths and facts which the age-long experience of nations and individuals has verified,

Preface

they prefer to live in doubt. Surely this is neither science, nor philosophy, nor common sense.

I have received many letters of thanks for help derived from the spiritual experiences recorded in the three small books already published under my name. With the same helpful object in view, and at the suggestion of several friends, I have ventured, in the following pages, to preserve from oblivion a selection of the stories and experiences of a few, mostly humble persons, who were more or less associated with the work of the late Alderman White. Some of these incidents will recur, with pleasure, to the minds of those who are familiar with Sam, of *Mending Men*.

EDWARD SMITH.

GLOWING FACTS AND PERSONALITIES

BOOK I

BIRMINGHAM ADULT SCHOOL MISSIONS

Incidents in the early life of William White—"A Brother of Men"—Joseph Sturge—Whittier's poem on him—Alderman White and his work—Effective Button-Holing—Public-house or Sunday-School, which?—Joe, the prize-fighter—The power of little things—Transformed art-metal manufacturer—Mary and her snappish husband—The journeyman chandelier maker—Praying Bill and the "prize-fight"—John Bright in Doubling Castle—Sudden death of Alderman White—His illness—Impressive ceremony at funeral—In the name of 50,000 men—Burial—An Exemplar of Christian Citizenship—Letter to the press—His character and influence—His rules for Adult School Workers—In Commemoration of Alderman White, the reorganisation of Adult Schools.

THE story of the conception, birth, and growth of the Birmingham Beehive Adult School Mission will perhaps rank as one of the most romantic yet unique phases of Christian enterprise, by one family, which the first decade of the twentieth century has witnessed. To appreciate fully the inspiration which gave it birth, it will be necessary to recall some of the interesting incidents in the life of William White, Alderman of the City of Birmingham, and an ex-Mayor, who was called to his rest on September 11, 1900, at the ripe age of eighty.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

The value of his life and of his fifty-three years of labour in the Severn Street Adult School can never be measured. One generation follows another rapidly, each crowded with events so startling and obtrusive, that the humble work of those who, quietly and almost unseen, contribute perhaps the most to the growth and elevation of society, is soon forgotten. "A Brother of Men"—a very true sketch of the life-work of Alderman White—was written, soon after his death, by W. Morland, and published by Headley Brothers. My main purpose, however, is to record a few personal reminiscences of the last twenty years of his life.

No memories are to me so sweet and stimulating as those of hours spent with my friend by the fireside, after some public meeting, when he would fascinate one with accounts of adult school triumphs, of his friendships with Joseph Sturge, John Bright, and other distinguished personalities, and of impressions made upon his mind by the various types of character he had met. The story of his joining the Severn Street Early Morning School in 1847, on introduction by George Baker (afterwards an Alderman and Mayor of the city), and the attractive charm of his intimate friend, Joseph Sturge, in the winning of the wayward, were ever themes of interest.

JOSEPH STURGE, THE QUAKER PHILANTHROPIST.

At the funeral, in 1859, of Sturge, that great philanthropist and reformer, William White overheard two workmen discussing the character of the man whom

Birmingham Adult School Missions

everyone loved. "He wer'n't a bit proud," said one of these men; "he used to make hisself just one o' we; and if anyone wanted a little help at any time, and called at his house, he'd alus be so pleased, and sort o' grateful that you'd given him the chance to help."

Whittier has enshrined the nobility of Joseph Sturge in a poem which runs to twenty-five verses. After describing, in chaste phrases, his many deeds, he says:—

"Thanks for the good man's beautiful example,
Who in the vilest saw
Some sacred crypt or altar of a temple,
Still vocal with God's law:
And heard with tender ear the spirit sighing,
As from its prison cell,
Praying for pity, like the mournful crying
Of Jonah out of hell.
Not his the golden pen's or lip's persuasion,
But a fine sense of right,
And Truth's directness, meeting each occasion
Straight as a line of light.
His faith and works, like streams that intermingle,
In the same channel ran:
The crystal clearness of an eye kept single,
Shamed all the frauds of man.
The very gentlest of all human natures
He joined to courage strong,
And love outreaching unto all God's creatures,
With sturdy hate of wrong.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

Tender as woman ; manliness and meekness
In him were so allied,
That they who judged him by his strength or weakness
Saw but a single side.

Men failed, betrayed him, but his zeal seemed nourished
By failure and by fall ;
Still a large faith in human kind he cherished,
And in God's love for all.

And now he rests : his greatness and his sweetness
No more shall seem at strife ;
And death has moulded into calm completeness
The statue of his life.

Where the dews glisten and the song-birds warble,
His dust to dust is laid,
In Nature's keeping, with no pomp of marble
To shame his modest shade.

The forges glow, the hammers all are ringing ;
Beneath its smoky vale,
Hard by, the city of his love is swinging
Its clamorous iron flail.

But round his grave are quietude and beauty,
And the sweet heaven above—
The fitting symbols of a life of duty
Transfigured into love ! ”

ALDERMAN WILLIAM WHITE AND HIS WORK.

As one listened to the record of the changed lives and strange characters of the many whom William White

Birmingham Adult School Missions

attracted to his Class, the Bible became a live book, and its precepts and testimonies became realities of the present. Especially did the songs of the Psalter stand out in the Severn Street Adult School characters. As one came to know them, the Bible was writ large for all to see and understand.

The process of mercy and redemption was visible in its successive stages. One could see, as it were, the penitent "waiting patiently for the Lord," and for the certainty of Divine attention: "He inclined His ear unto me, and heard my cry." Then the recovery, the sense of rescue: "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay." Then gladness, on the discovery of the firm foundation and the clear road: "He set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." And then, finally, came what has been the great reward of the adult school work, the new joys and life, and their certain influence: "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

EFFECTIVE BUTTON-HOLING.

So simply, yet vividly, did William White tell a story, that one can picture that lover of the wayward button-holing the men to whom he was led to speak.

On seeing two youths, in one of the poorest streets of Birmingham, heedlessly and purposelessly strolling, he invited them to Severn Street. He baited his hook by pointing out the opportunity they would have of improving their reading and writing, with perhaps a little arithmetic

Glowing Facts and Personalities

thrown in. The two youths joined the school, and soon realised the advantages they were securing.

One Saturday night, as they left a free-and-easy held at a public-house, they were both struck with the incongruity of the public-house and the Sunday-school. It became a question with them as to which of the two should be sacrificed. They decided for the school, and, after shaking hands, to seal their mutual choice, one of them remarked enthusiastically :

“ I will be there at seven-thirty on Sunday morning, even if I have to sit up all the night before to enable me to do it.”

Forty years afterwards one of those youths had risen to be Lord Mayor of Birmingham, and he subsequently became Member of Parliament for one of the divisions of the city ; but he still remained faithful to his early attendance as a scholar at the class, where he sat and learned the good things his old teacher loved to impart.

JOE.

“ Joe,” a prize-fighter, who was rather fond of drink, was walking with his little lad one Sunday morning up Carr’s Lane, when they saw a crowd of well-dressed men and women just leaving the famous chapel. The boy noticed the contrast, and, guessing the cause of his father’s poverty, said : “ Daddie, I wish you would not drink so much beer.”

The wish of the little lad went home ; the prize-fighter resolved to attend the adult Sunday-school which he had

Birmingham Adult School Missions

been asked to join. He did attend, and for a while gave signs of improvement.

At the school, one Sunday morning, the verse was read: "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." In answer to the question, "Joe, what would thee do if anyone ge'ed thee a smack in the mouth?" he rudely replied, "Why, he'd sharp have a harder one back that'd roll him over."

The words were no sooner out of his mouth than he realised that he was not fit for such a class, and resolved never to go again. His loving teacher, William White, as he bade him good morning, reminded him that he had heard the rude remark, and added, "Ah, Joe, if I had had your life, I expect I should have said something far worse."

The kind word and sympathetic voice had their effect. Joe became one of the most successful soul winners among the men of his own type, second only to his beloved teacher. Twenty-five years ago it was my privilege to hear him, and to delight in finding how he had caught the voice and beautiful simplicity of William White.

A "JAIL-BIRD" TEACHER.

Many will remember another most successful pupil. This man had a passion for the "jail-birds," and he conducted a class for them many years. The qualification for membership was that they had been inmates of Winson Green Jail.

This good man, on his way home one Saturday evening, saw a poor fellow, the worse for drink and in sad plight,

Glowing Facts and Personalities

seated on the pavement. The friend persuaded him to go to his home, where he lodged him for the night, and succeeded in getting him to the Severn Street School at seven-thirty on Sunday morning.

The young fellow was somewhat bewildered when he saw the number of men, and noticed that, though they were working-men, they were all better clothed and more established in character than himself. He threw his dirty, well-worn apology for a cap under the seat ; but almost immediately another man picked it up and hung it on a peg with the rest. It was that simple act that told him he was welcome, since he afterwards remarked : " If they can respect my cap and hang it on a peg with others, it looks as if they'll pass me." The poor dejected victim of drink knew, by the attention given to his dirty head-cover, that he had found friends.

To that man I once had the pleasure of an introduction and hand-shake. He had become the librarian of the school. In abstaining from muddling, fuddling beer, he had realised a taste for good and useful literature. He had tasted the qualities of the books in the school library, and was able to prescribe the sort of book most likely to benefit a particular reader.

THE POWER OF LITTLE THINGS.

Another story told by the Alderman affords an illustration of the little things that arrest attention, and set the mind thinking on ways that lead to God.

A man who usually took a walk on a Sunday morning

Birmingham Adult School Missions

to a well-known public-house on the outskirts of the city, had missed his old pal. Chancing to meet him one day, he asked where he had been lately.

“Why,” said the man, “I’ve been going to the hospital, and mean to stick there.”

Somewhat confounded by the answer, he inquired if he had been ill.

“Yes,” said the old pal, “I have, but I am improving.”

The explanation was soon forthcoming; the “hospital” proved to be the Severn Street Sunday Morning Adult School. The “hospital” pal suggested to his old mate that it would be good for him to come, too, and added that he would soon understand why he meant sticking to the “hospital.” So he undertook to call for him the next Sunday.

Pursuing his accustomed walk on the following Sunday, the man reached the inn he had usually frequented. It stood back from the road, and had in front a few seats placed under tall elm trees. The leaves of the elm are very tenacious, but after one or two frosts they fall in showers. It was so on this Sunday morning; the leaves, glistening in the autumn sunlight, fell continually, and soon completely covered the ground.

It is said that “those who drink beer, think beer;” accordingly, this man soliloquised: “I shouldn’t wonder if I hadn’t drunk as many pints of beer as I see leaves a-fallen, and what have they done for me?” The resolve was taken, and on the succeeding Sunday morning the two pals walked together to school. The benefit the one had rejoiced in was soon shared by the other.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

Alderman White was "a good steward of the manifold grace of God." He was ever on the outlook for souls. With him, to know the Lord was to possess the vision. To help such souls he would invite a few to his home, where his good sister, Mrs. Pike, loved to make her brother's scholars welcome. There, where the spirit of true fellowship abounded, hearts would open, difficulties would be stated, and obstacles removed. One man in the class soon revealed, by his manner and words, that the light had come, and that the new birth was a reality. White said to him :

" John, when did you receive the light ? "

John answered : " Why, teacher, it was on the last time we came up to your house to supper, when we had that white flippity-floppity stuff."

The beginning of the knowledge of the Spirit of God was memorised by the eating of blancmange.

THE TRANSFORMED ART-METAL MANUFACTURER.

In the Art Gallery one day I watched a Birmingham manufacturer carefully examining some of the beautiful specimens of art metal-work exhibited in the many show-cases. I looked, and wondered if any of those rare samples of men's handicraft could compare with the beauty of the character of the man who was so intent. He was a man the Alderman loved to mention—one of those successes that give hope to adult school teachers when seeking the lowest.

Birmingham Adult School Missions

This man had been a poor drunkard, but he was persuaded to sign the pledge at a temperance meeting which William White addressed. The Alderman called at the man's home and induced him to come to the school. He came, but soon after he lost his work, and found the storms of adversity dead set in his face.

In his drinking days he appeared to get along well enough, but now that he had "turned" from the drink, everything seemed to be against him; yet, despite it all, something told him he was on the right path. For two years the struggle was bitter, but he had no thought of turning back.

One Sunday, in the class, the lesson was taken from the story of the Saviour's healing of the blind man, as recorded in the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel. As they read round, this poor fellow read the twenty-fifth verse, wherein are the words: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." His heart leapt for joy; the light had come, and he realised the spiritual meaning in his own experience. He beheld! Jesus had opened his blind eyes! The illuminating Spirit was his. He was a new creation; old things had passed away, all things had become new. All things were of God.

It was not long before this man was able to start in business; he was successful in building up one of those small but useful manufactories for which Birmingham has such a reputation. The good fellow, whenever he spoke in praise of the adult school methods of winning men, usually said: "It is the process *that works.*"

Glowing Facts and Personalities

MARY AND HER SNAPPISH HUSBAND.

William White was a great visitor in the homes of his scholars, where he was always welcome. They, in return, knew they were sure of a welcome at his residence in Sir Harry's Road, if they had some trouble to unburden or joy to impart.

One evening a woman called to unburden her soul regarding her husband, who was one of the Alderman's Sunday scholars, and was, as she said, "So awfully snappish in the home, he was getting unbearable." Mary—the wife's name—came to ask White just to tell her husband how he ought to behave; she said she thought he might do it in the class some time.

The good Alderman listened patiently to the woman's rapid and almost breathless delivery. Then he gently asked her if she thought she was doing all she might, for he had noticed, at times when he had called, much untidiness—the washing and cleaning going on when the husband returned from his hard and toilsome labour, and the children running about when they would be far better in bed. On finding the home so unattractive, it was no wonder that he very naturally got out of temper.

"Now, my good woman," he finally said, "just try and improve things a bit. Your husband's work is very dirty; let him have some hot water for a good wash when he comes in; and, what is most important, just tell your Heavenly Father all about it, and you'll soon find a way to his heart."

Birmingham Adult School Missions

The advice given, the woman, a little ruffled in temper at what she had heard, departed. The matter had passed from the Alderman's memory, when one summer Saturday afternoon, while he was watching some of the men from his class enjoying a game of cricket, suddenly a woman accosted him with the words :

“ Oh, sir, your plan 'ave beat ! ” He at first thought the remark had reference to the game ; but the woman said : “ Don't you remember me calling to tell you about my husband ? ”

Then the Alderman recalled the interview, and listened to the following story from the woman's lips :

“ Well, do you know, sir, I was a bit ruffled at what you had said ; but when I began to think it over, and did what you said—tell God about it—I at once set to work. I took good care to get all my cleaning done. I thought of John's favourite puddin', and made one, and had it warm in the oven. I got out a white tablecloth, as you said, and had everything spick and span. I put some hot water in the wash'ouse, and sat me down awaiting for him, with a bit of sewing in my lap, and the eldest little girl clean and waiting too.

“ My heart was all of a patter as I heard his footsteps. When he comes in, he just looks all round and says :

“ ‘ My word, what's up ? ’

“ I just says : ‘ There's some hot water in the wash'ouse.’

“ So he cleans hissself, and then comes in and sniffs the puddin', and we seemed to be at once like we was when we were first married. Presently he said, ‘ Has

Glowing Facts and Personalities

our teacher been here lately?' and then I had to tell him how it all came about ; and our home has ever since been ' Home, Sweet Home.' ”

THE JOURNEYMAN CHANDELIER MAKER.

Alderman White visited my school on our anniversary day, September 13, 1896, and told two interesting stories. He had one scholar in his class who had been in attendance forty-four years. This man, a journeyman chandelier maker, joined the school in 1852, and at once began to take advantage of the savings bank by putting in what he could spare. Two years after, much poverty was caused by a very great depression in business.

“ Well, my friend, how are you meeting the times ? ” asked the good man.

“ Well, sir, it's very bad ; but, thanks to the school, I've forty pounds saved, which will tide me over the bad times.”

He began to do a bit of chandelier work at home with a few tools he possessed. That laid the foundation of what is now a very large business. Said the Alderman : “ He now lives in a fine house in Warwickshire, to which I sometimes go ; but the man comes every Saturday night to Birmingham, and sleeps at a friend's house, in order to be at school at seven-thirty.”

When asked by a friend why he still went to school, he answered :

“ Because my education is not yet finished.”

Birmingham Adult School Missions

PRAYING BILL AND THE "PRIZE-FIGHT."

The other story is one of the most romantic I have ever heard. I will transcribe it from a note-book in which I recorded the story the very night it was told me.

On October 12, 1895, the Severn Street School celebrated its jubilee. On the Sunday evening, October 17, Dr. R. W. Dale lent Carr's Lane Chapel for an adult school testimony meeting, at which men could be encouraged to relate some of the benefits they had derived from the teaching and attendance at these schools. As the ordinary congregation was leaving, at eight o'clock, men were seen coming in crowds from east and west, north and south. The building was soon filled to its utmost capacity.

Many testimonies had already been given, when a man rose at the far end of the chapel and said he felt he must "just say a word." He was asked to come to the front. He did so, but when he saw the great host of expectant faces before him, he was embarrassed. Again and again he stroked his chin and exclaimed :

"To think of me standing here ! How different to two years ago !" Then he added, "I am afraid I can't speak, sir."

The chairman gave him some encouraging words, while the audience cheered. As he wiped a tear from his eye, he said :

"Well, two years ago, one Sunday morning, I got up with an awful head. I had had a good fuddle on the Saturday night, but could not sleep it off as usual ; so I

Glowing Facts and Personalities

got up, thinking the fresh air would be the best thing. As I walked along Bristol Street, about half-past seven, I see a lot of young chaps and other working-men going along at a fair pace, so I says to one young chap :

“ ‘ What’s up? Is it a fight ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Yes,’ he says. ‘ Will you come along ? ’ ”

“ So I joined in the stream, and soon turned into the playground of a board school, where a number seemed hanging about talking. Presently they all began to move, and I says to myself : ‘ Now they are going round to have this mill, before the bobbies come.’ Instead of that, they all turned into the schoolroom.

“ At first they sat down, and then stood up to sing. Well, I thought, here’s a rummy go. Presently the young chap I first spoke to comes my way, and I says :

“ ‘ When’s this fight going to commence ? ’ ”

“ He says : ‘ It’s on now ; we are all here to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil.’ ”

“ I didn’t understand them words then, but I do now. In the class the teacher read the sixth chapter of Matthew, and seemed to look at me when he read, ‘ But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet ; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.’ ”

“ At the close, up comes a gentleman and shakes me by the hand, and says : ‘ I hope we may see you here again next Sunday.’ That was Mr. George Cadbury.

“ ‘ Why,’ thinks I, ‘ there’s a gentleman, with lots of money, speaks to me as if I was a pal for years.’ ”

Birmingham Adult School Missions

“ When I went home, I went straight upstairs and knelt down and offered my first prayer : ‘ Lord, help me to be a better man.’ Just then I heard my wife come up the stairs ; I didn’t want her to see me, so I pretended I was looking for something.

“ All that week I didn’t have a spot of beer, and next Sunday was at school. I went home, and then, seeing my wife was in the yard, I sneaked upstairs, and knelt down and prayed again ; but just as I was getting up, my wife came upstairs again, and while I pretended she shouldn’t see what I had been doing, she put her hand on my shoulder and said :

“ ‘ Let us both kneel down, Bill ; we both need to pray to God to help us.’

“ And we did, and from that moment the light came. Oh, what a change in our home ! We gave up, after a few weeks, the dirty house in the court we was living in, and moved to a cottage with a bit of garden. In place of the few sticks we had, which wasn’t worth five shillings, we had a tidy bit of furniture, and a bit of money in the savings fund. What is more than all, I have got peace and pardon here ” (he touched his chest) “ and well know what the fight is against the world, the flesh, and the devil. When I think of what I was two years ago, what a change ! ”

When I succeeded Alderman White as president of the Midland Adult School Union, I endeavoured to visit as many schools in Birmingham as possible. One Sunday morning I called at the Bristol Street School, and asked for the individual whose story I have related. I gladly

Glowing Facts and Personalities

shook hands with him, and then told him the story about him which I had heard from the lips of Alderman White, and inquired if it was really true that he thought he was going to a prize-fight when he followed the men into the school. He quickly replied :

“ Quite true, sir.”

“ Now, tell me,” I asked, “ how many years ago since it happened? ”

“ Why, it’s just eleven.”

“ Did you ever have a fall? ”

“ Me, sir? Oh, no! I’d seen too much of the devil’s country ever to want to get back there again.”

The next time I called he had become the teacher of a class. I have seen him twice since. On one of these occasions, at an Uffculme fête, I told him I had related many scores of times his wonderful call to God.

“ Oh,” said he, “ I often, when I thinks of it, feels what I felt when I sat in the class and looked round, ‘ Well, I’m capt! ’ ”

On the second occasion I was strangely impelled to visit the school. It was Sunday morning, April 9, 1916. I asked if my old friend was alive. “ Yes,” came the secretary’s reply, “ there he is. He has been ill some weeks, but has just come again this morning.” How glad was I to greet him! He told me his age was seventy-five. The radiance of that strong face led me to remark :

“ Why, you’ve the face of an angel! God bless you! Wonderful, wonderful, is God’s grace! ”

Birmingham Adult School Missions

JOHN BRIGHT IN DOUBTING CASTLE.

Another reminiscence concerning Alderman White I noted, after a Sunday night chat about the People's Tribune, the Right Hon. John Bright.

Mr. Bright, while spending a Sunday at Mr. Charles Sturge's, in Edgbaston, decided to stay indoors, as he had a bad headache. Alderman White, who was one of the company, was about to leave, when Bright said to him :

“ Friend, won't thee stay, too ? ”

“ Yes, I will,” replied White ; and they sat down for a good long talk.

The conversation soon turned to the subject of personal religion. Bright gave his experience to the following effect :—Dark doubts, he admitted, had slowly crept over him for some years, and though he had kept up his Meeting attendances, there had been no comfort. He found some help in association with those who had strong faith ; but, nevertheless, his former experience of personal assurance and peace seemed to decline more and more.

Then a happy change was brought about by a visit which he received from a good friend named Benjamin Seebohm. It appears that in the Society of Friends, generally at the yearly meeting, someone, in obedience to some “ leading,” will resolve to visit a certain neighbourhood. The fact will be communicated to the locality by circular letter. The local secretary of that centre will make engagements for the visitor to breakfast with one

Glowing Facts and Personalities

family, dine with another, pay an afternoon call to a third, and sleep at a fourth's. Thus it was that Benjamin Seebohm visited the home of John Bright, at Rochdale.

The very presence of this good man naturally invited confidence; and to him John Bright opened his heart, and confided the nature of his difficulties. This friend's tactful, loving talk caused the light to shine clearly. The truth became a living fact, and the Word of God a treasury; "and from that day to this," said the eminent statesman, "I have had no more doubts." As they finally parted in the hall of Mr. Sturge's house, Bright thanked Mr. White for an enjoyable evening, and added that he had never before revealed the experiences above described.

SUDDEN DEATH OF ALDERMAN WHITE.

Alderman White completed his eightieth year on July 31, 1900. He had arranged to speak at the fourteenth annual meeting of the school at Bewdley, on the 9th of the ensuing September. On the 4th of that month I received from him the following letter, written in his usual beautiful handwriting :—

" MY DEAR FRIEND,—

" I hope to leave Snow Hill at 4.20 p.m. Saturday, as you suggest. I trust we may look up in faith for a blessing in the coming meetings.

" With kind regards to Mrs. Smith and your household,

" Yours very truly,

" WILLIAM WHITE."

Birmingham Adult School Missions

On the afternoon of September 7, I met him coming from Snow Hill Station, and looking very pale. He told me he would be with us on the Saturday; but on that morning I received a letter from him, written in pencil:—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—

“I am writing in bed. When I met you yesterday afternoon, I was returning from Reading, having, in consequence of sickness and giddiness, had a most terrible journey. On getting home, the doctor ordered me to bed, and, as painful symptoms continue, he says I must rest a day or two.

“I very much regret any possible inconvenience which my absence from Bewdley will cause, as well as disappointment to myself. I have hardly ever had to cancel an engagement before.

“With much regard,

“WM. WHITE.”

On the following Tuesday morning, September 11, he passed away.

Many times have I remarked that, if ever an angel walked this earth, blessing all who knew him, it was William White. When I have addressed meetings in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, and have mentioned the adult school movement and the name of William White, someone has invariably found an opportunity of telling me of being led to the truth by this good man. No wonder there was a great gathering at his funeral, of which the following account was given,

Glowing Facts and Personalities

accompanied by a letter to the editor, in the *Birmingham Daily Post* of September 17, 1900 :—

“ FUNERAL OF ALDERMAN WHITE.—IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY.

“ How great and widespread was the influence which the late Alderman White exercised upon the life of Birmingham, was admirably illustrated by the crowd of sorrowing friends who on Saturday gathered round the tomb in Witton Cemetery to which his remains were mournfully committed. Friends they were evidently, though their social status varied from that of the city father, the prosperous man of business, and the leader of religious thought and life, to the humble mechanic whose hard, rough hands proclaimed the arduous nature of his daily occupation. Churchmen, Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, Liberal Unionists, Conservatives, Gladstonians, trade unionists, and doubtless Socialists and Democrats, joined in a sorrowing company, where differences of belief and opinion were for the time being submerged by the one thought of regret that the life, which had hitherto been so full of good works, was henceforth to be but a fragrant memory.

“ The place itself was pregnant with sad memories. A very small circle sufficed to contain the last resting-places of many eminent members of the Society of Friends ; and there were not a few present whose memories went back to the time, not far distant, when the Alderman himself had been one of the circle of mourners, and when,

Birmingham Adult School Missions

with venerable head unbared, he had poured forth the depth of his sympathising nature in prayer, or had uttered words of kindly exhortation to those who remained behind to continue the daily task.

“ No one uttered these thoughts, but it is no stretch of imagination to say that they were flitting through the minds of many members of the silent throng, who watched the long string of carriages slowly emerge from behind a clump of trees, and wend their way along the path which leads close to the Nonconformist chapel.

“ The ceremony, if such a formal word can be applied to anything so informal as the burial of a member of the Society of Friends, did not, however, take place in the chapel. The afternoon was one of the most brilliant which have been experienced this uncertain summer ; and so the coffin was carried to the ivy-lined grave, and the last words of parting and of hope were said within the hearing of everyone, and all were able to feel that they had a full part in the sad occasion.

“ For some moments no sound, save the rustling of neighbouring trees, broke the silence which followed the lowering of the coffin, a plain oak one, containing the simple record of the name and dates of the birth and the passing away of the late Alderman. But at length Mr. George Cadbury offered up a short prayer of thankfulness for the life, full of rich blessing to many, which the Alderman has lived.

“ Then from out of the stillness again rose a voice, to repeat the brief text, ‘ He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light.’ Another interval of communion

Glowing Facts and Personalities

with the inmost thoughts, and Whittier's hymn commencing—

“ ‘ Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may Thy service be ?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following Thee,’

was sung.

“ Then the simple rite came to an end with one or two short addresses. Mr. H. S. Newman, of Leominster, described the late Alderman as a man who had had much worldly experience, and yet was above the world. He knew what it was to go in and out among men without having his heart soiled with the selfishness and greed of men. It should kindle fresh enthusiasm for Christ, and for serving their fellow-men, to know that, if there was one thing that rejoiced the heart of William White, it was when he was serving and helping others. Perhaps the thing he most enjoyed was his fellowship with the men of Birmingham.

“ Mr. Samuel Price spoke of the late Alderman as a public man. He expressed the pride which every Birmingham citizen felt, that the public work of the city brought forth the services of the best and wisest men. He believed there was nothing that could promote the acceptance of the Christian faith more than the facts that men who were recognised in Christian life found it not inconsistent with that life to throw themselves into the work of the city. They owed a debt of gratitude to their friend and to his colleagues who had taken up that work,

Birmingham Adult School Missions

and had given valuable time and earnest unselfish devotion to the promotion of that which was best and good for all.

“ Mr. Frederick Taylor described the attendance as representative of the various aspects of their friend’s life. They represented the work he did in municipal life, the interest he always had in temperance or any kindred work, and some of them had come to represent as best they could the fifty thousand men and women in the adult schools of the country—men and women to whom Alderman White’s name was a household word ; men and women, many of whom had seen him, not once or twice only, for he was unwearied in his willingness to respond to calls for help, which might come from places far off as well as near. They recognised in him one of the fathers of the movement, and one who had given of all that he had in order that he might help his fellow-men ; and of all ways of helping them, none was more dear to his heart than the adult school movement.

“ In the name of those fifty thousand men and women, they united in sorrow with those who sorrowed there that day ; and yet they had joy and thanksgiving in the knowledge that he had entered into a more perfect life of service. They felt intensely the gap made in their ranks. They felt they did not know any in whom dwelt so many of the gifts which were committed to him. At the same time, they did not think that he would have them despondingly look forward. Rather would he bid them know that it was by the Spirit of God that he accomplished the work that he did, and that in that Spirit they must go forward.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

“ The Bishop of Coventry then pronounced the Benediction ; but the last word had not been said, for before bowed heads were raised, the text ‘ And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity,’ was uttered.

“ It was some time before the crowd melted away. The great majority patiently waited their turn to ascend the platform and take a last look at the grave.

“ The friends who bore the coffin to the graveside were : Councillor J. H. Lloyd, Messrs. Wilfred F. Southall, W. Priestman, O. Morland, R. Heaton, and H. Henson, the last two being members of Alderman White’s class at Severn Street. The relatives and close personal friends present were : Mrs. Pike, Mrs. Gallichan, Mr. C. W. Pike, Mr. F. W. Pike, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Pike, Miss White, Mr. T. J. White, Mrs. Fred Pike, Mr. F. Eversley Pike, Mr. W. Gallichan, Mr. P. White, Mr. W. C. Hawkes, and Mr. J. Stirling.

“ The members of Alderman White’s Severn Street Class acted as stewards, and in addition two hundred members who attend the same school rendered similar service. The workpeople of Moor Street and Longbridge were represented by one hundred of their number, all having records of over ten years’ service.

“ The following present and former teachers in connection with Severn Street were also present :—Messrs. C. D. Sturge, J. W. Hoyland, J. H. Lloyd, W. H. King, O. Morland, W. Pratt, W. Darby, H. Barrow, S. Price, W. D. Jeffrey, E. G. Davis, A. J. Cudworth, W. A. Albright, J. Sturge, W. Jones, W. H. Jones, J. Glaisyer.

Birmingham Adult School Missions

G. Kenway, G. Cadbury, A. Little, W. Barrow, C. Butler, A. Southall, C. Southall, B. Cadbury, W. Littleboy, R. W. Littleboy, A. E. Butler, W. H. Sturge, W. F. Southall, W. Priestman, H. Ll. Wilson, and J. A. Shipley.”

There was also present an unprecedented number of deputations and representatives from practically all the public bodies and institutions of Birmingham and the surrounding districts, and from temperance and adult school organisations from Birmingham and the country generally.

The following report and letter are also quoted from the *Birmingham Daily Post* :—

“ AN EXEMPLAR OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP.

“ A united memorial service was held at night in the Temperance Hall, at which the chair was taken by Mr. Isaac Bradley, the City Coroner.

“ The service was opened by the playing of Chopin’s ‘ Marche Funèbre,’ which was followed by the hymn ‘ O God, our help in ages past,’ the reading of a portion of Scripture by Mr. J. Lawson, and the offering up of prayer by Mr. J. Moseley.

“ The chairman, in the course of an impressive address, said it was very difficult to realise that they would not again look on the face of Alderman White, and to think of Birmingham without him. But though there was a sense of loss, he confessed that an undercurrent of another kind surged up every time they thought of the departed. Alderman White had lived for eighty years a beneficent

Glowing Facts and Personalities

and useful life, and was now entering upon the harvest of the spirit. There was, too, the triumph of the conqueror: 'I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith.' He was a conqueror going home to his triumph.

"Continuing, the chairman said he had been asked to speak of Mr. White as a Christian citizen. A Christian citizen must be an active man—not a hermit nor a recluse, abstaining from this and that and the other. He must be an actual force, must take his place as one of the community, and make himself actively useful as well as passively pure. There was not only the social contract, as it had been called, but the infinitely wider ideal of the loving brotherhood taught by Christ.

"It was a great test of that citizenship when a man began to care for others; and in his own way and in his own life he (the chairman) thought they were entitled to say William White realised that ideal. He brought himself into personal individual contact with the people who had the work to do; all knew him, from the greatest to the humblest, and all loved him.

"The chairman proceeded: 'I don't think he is going to be wasted. I don't think God would produce an article like that, to use a common phrase, and throw it away like rubbish to the void. In some way we may not fathom he will be used, and his influence will remain with us. I prefer to believe that, when such a life as his is gathered home, it is gathered for a larger and wider service than he could render with the limitations of that human body which was so familiar to us, and which we loved to gaze upon.'

Birmingham Adult School Missions

“ The solo ‘ I know that my Redeemer liveth,’ sung by Mrs. T. L. Griffiths, was followed by brief addresses from Messrs. J. A. Herrick, J. Derrington, C. J. Whitehead (Sheffield), and S. E. Short. A resolution expressing condolence with the relatives of the deceased gentleman having been adopted, on the motion of Mr. E. L. Tyndall, seconded by Mr. A. H. Barker, the service closed with the hymn ‘ Sleep on, beloved,’ and prayer and benediction by Mr. J. H. Lear Caton.

“ Resolutions of sympathy have also been passed by the P.S.A. service at Hurst Street Domestic Mission, the Baths and Parks Committee, and the Council of the Birmingham Young Men’s Christian Association.”

“ TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Daily Post*.

“ SIR,—Birmingham has lost one of its most widely-known and best-beloved citizens. Hundreds of working-men honoured the name of William White, and have had their lives sweetened and improved by his genial words and Christ-like example. It would be difficult to estimate the value of the service he has rendered Birmingham as a philanthropist, and as a member of her City Council for over twenty years.

“ By the graveside yesterday one felt that devoted service, such as he rendered the community for half a century, would ill be repaid in the passing tribute of a few uttered words over his mortal remains. I trust some step may be taken to have the memory of our respected citizen perpetuated in our midst, to the credit of the present generation and for the example of future ones.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

“ Whilst attending the memorial service, and listening to the inspiring address which our City Coroner delivered, I wondered whether the committee of the society with which he was associated could make the rebuilding scheme commemorative of his memory.

“ Alderman White was well known in our city and throughout the country for his temperance work and sympathies, and one might be confident that he would desire no better way of being preserved in the recollection of his fellow-men, than by having his name associated with a new hall for the old society which he loved so much. Surely the donors who have already liberally subscribed to the Rebuilding Fund would give their approval, and, with the official countenance of our chief magistrate and the civic fathers, a worthy memorial could be thus reared to the familiar figure which will be missed at every turn of our streets.

“ GRATITUDE. September 16.”

ALDERMAN WHITE'S CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE. HIS RULES FOR ADULT SCHOOL WORKERS.

If the influence of Alderman White's life was great in the general community, what was it in regard to those who had learnt to love him through adult schools ?

The following are selections from the many rules and principles which he laid down for the guidance of adult school workers :—

First, strive to induce a man to come to school ; have faith that his coming is evidence of a good desire, and

Birmingham Adult School Missions

that he has placed himself in an attitude to receive ; then be ever alert to notice the slightest sign of the working of the new spirit in his life. The first outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual change is, frequently, the first shilling a man puts into the savings fund. Salvation is restoration, the healing and recovery of dormant faculties. " Sanctified common-sense " was a phrase I first heard from his lips. He often used the Biblical expression of the same truth : " A good understanding." He frequently emphasised the last verse of the 111th Psalm : " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments ; His praise endureth for ever." He urged every adult school teacher to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and thus catch the inspiration of that Great Teacher, Who, he said, was with us to-day : and, just as He opened the understanding of His disciples that they might understand the Scriptures, so He would open ours.

William White ever revealed to us the romance of Christian work. The vilest and most degraded and depraved, were still men and women possessed of potential good qualities. Jesus ever saw the healed man in the diseased, and the sane man in the maniac. We needed to work like the physician or the surgeon. Just as he greets his patients in the hospital or sick-room with a smile or a word of cheer or of hope, so must we. We must avoid any word or gesture that would seem like condemnation. Did not Jesus say to the woman whom the Pharisees accused : " Neither do I condemn thee ; go, and sin no more ? " To Nicodemus He said : " God sent not His

Glowing Facts and Personalities

Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

The keynote of William White's faith is expressed in Robert Browning's poem "Paracelsus" :—

“ There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness ; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in :
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error : and to KNOW
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entrance for a light
Supposed to be without.”

“ Imprisoned splendour ! ” Why, there is real romance in endeavouring to rescue this imprisoned truth and give it room. That splendid poem is full of teaching ; it describes, not only man as fallen, but the method of his restoration. In the concluding part, where he meets his old pupils in the hospital of St. Sebastian at Salzburg, Paracelsus explains why he had failed to do what he set out to do :—

“ In my own heart love had not been made wise
To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope
In ill success ; to sympathise, be proud
Of their half reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,

Birmingham Adult School Missions

Their prejudices and fears and cares and doubts ;
All with a touch of nobleness, despite
Their error, upward tending all, though weak,
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him.
All this I knew not, and I failed."

William White *did* know all this, and ever practised it ;
hence his great success in helping men to " Behold the
Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

IN COMMEMORATION OF ALDERMAN WHITE.

When he was laid to rest, we became conscious of our great loss, and began to think how we might best commemorate so noble a leader. Many of us hoped to see a marble statue erected in some well-frequented part of the city he loved. The Birmingham Improvement Committee pioneered the wonderful transformation which Corporation Street reveals ; and as White was chairman of that committee at the time, it was thought that a monument would remind coming generations of his share in effecting that splendid improvement. He loved to describe his position on the top of a scaffold in New Street, when he removed the first brick in the work of demolition, by which that great thoroughfare, from New Street to Aston Street, was opened. No face would lend itself better than his to the inspiration of a gifted sculptor. The sculptured presentation of the calm serenity of those well-known features and of the silvery locks would remind the busy

Glowing Facts and Personalities

crowds in Birmingham, as the statue of Richard Baxter in Kidderminster has done, of a "self-denying life lived for the betterment of his generation."

We had several meetings to discuss the question. The Society of Friends (to which denomination William White belonged), in keeping with its clear vision of the things that are eternal, unanimously decided that no monument would be more fitting, or more in harmony with his own practical and consecrated life, than a united effort to extend the work he loved. The restoration of men and women, the recovery of ruined homes, the instruction of citizens, the abolition of slums, the value of pure air and water, of cleanliness, and of the knowledge of this wonderful world—the teaching of all these things with increased earnestness, the Friends argued, would enshrine his name and perpetuate his memory far more effectually than would cold marble or bricks and mortar. This proposal was eventually adopted.

The Midland Union of Adult Schools was reorganised on the model of the up-to-date town council, and ten sub-committees were appointed for special departments of service.

The extension committee soon got to work. Social clubs were instituted, individual schools were assisted to start branches; while public-houses which had lost their licences, and had become derelict on account of redundancy, were reoccupied, "under entire new management," though they retained, like converted men, their original names. "The Prince of Wales," in Hospital Street, "The Sportsman," in Icknield Street, "The Coppersmith's Arms,"

Birmingham Adult School Missions

in Rea Street, "The Ivy House," in Brearley Street, and others, became Sunday adult schools and week-night social clubs, from which, as one man put it, "You can leave with a pair of legs that will carry home!"

The clubs proved a real counter-attraction to the public-house, and also feeders for the adult school. A man would often unconsciously take the first step to a new life, as he accompanied a pal to a social room for a game of bagatelle or whist. The fact that he met men of his own class, and that he had known some of them as frequenters of the public-houses he had used, encouraged him to take the next step to the Sunday school.

"FOURPENNY," AND THE TRANSFORMED HOME.

On visiting one of these clubs one week-night, I was accosted by a very happy-looking man, who asked me to visit his home, which was only a few doors away. He said: "You ask my missus what the adult school has done for me." I entered a workman's very tidy cottage. At a table, on which was a good lamp, sat a very comfortable-looking old lady, busy with her needle. The husband, with a face all smiles, introduced me to her as "our president."

Then I put the question suggested by my guide:

"Tell me what benefit you have had from the adult school."

"Oh, sir, I couldn't say! You should have just seen our home! Why, you couldn't call it a home before he took to the school."

Glowing Facts and Personalities

Then said my friend : " Come and see my ' fourpenny.' "

" You what ? "

" My fourpenny."

Then, on his opening a door, I beheld a well-furnished little drawing-room, with a good carpet, pictures on the wall, an American organ, and a suite of useful furniture. He said : " I've bought all that, sir, out of ' fourpenny ' ; the money that used to go in fourpenny beer, at the pub. across the road, is now there. My son, who plays that organ, is the same as plays at the school."

The sight was a treat, and also an encouragement to win men to go and do likewise.



BOOK II

THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE "BEEHIVE" MISSION

The "Beehive"—Branch at Court 12, Bishopsgate Street—Mr. Henry Clarke—Recapturing a redoubt—A unique experience—Sam Allen—Who is he?—A fateful Sunday morning—A rejoicing wife—Opening the Mission—Few unknown to the police—Sam's burning passion—He tells a story—A thrilling Sunday—"Old Sol," and his prison cell—Like a nine-gallon beer-barrel—A real transformation—Anniversary at Bewdley—The new "Beehive"—Starting a social club—Old clothes for new—The story of the new collar—Why he stopped away—The flannel shirt—Story of the first "Beehive"—An answer to prayer—Sam's male voice choir—United summer rally of Birmingham Adult Schools—Town Hall insufficient—The great Bingley Hall—Doctor Torry's stories—The Farmer's Son—The Son of a Widow—Fred Hawkins lends a hand—Bill Everill—The converted murderer—A remarkable letter from Maidstone Prison—Another murderer—"Old Dick," alias "Old Born Drunk"—Dr. Newman Hall on soul winning.

THE most successful of these adult school missions, which were established in response to the desire to extend the wonderful work of William White, is the "Beehive." Its reputation is now known throughout the adult school world, and its story has proved good copy for many journalists interested in social reform. Adult school visitors to Birmingham, if they have not called at the "Beehive," feel they have not seen all there is to be seen. I propose now to tell, from personal knowledge, the preliminary

Glowing Facts and Personalities

events which ended in the establishment of the first "Beehive" Mission.

When called by the Association to be its second president, in succession to Alderman White, I threw my heart and soul into the work of extension, and encouraged the friends in every way possible. They loved to write and interest me concerning their efforts.

BRANCH AT COURT 12, BISHOPSGATE STREET.

Mr. Henry Clarke was the superintendent of the very flourishing adult school held in the then Board School in Clark Street, Ladywood. Mr. E. J. Fullwood, who was then a teacher in this school, but is now in London as one of the organising secretaries of the movement, was enthusiastically moved by the call for a forward movement which the Union had received, and he passionately threw himself into the work connected with the "Beehive."

He has supplied a little fact worth mentioning before I describe the locality selected. At a meeting of his fellow-teachers and of a number of scholars who were interested in the subject, Mr. Fullwood gave an address based upon the epigram: "The true aim of all social progress is, not the survival of the fittest, but the fitting of as many as possible to survive." It proved to be a memorable meeting, and it issued in the carrying of a resolution which pledged the school to go forward.

The members were requested to undertake the starting of a branch in the most depraved locality to be found nearest to their school. So they consulted the police at

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

Ladywood Police Station. From them they learnt that Bishopsgate Street possessed a very unenviable notoriety. It was scarcely considered safe for one policeman to patrol alone.

That was sufficient. The Bishopsgate stronghold must be attacked.

With the Clark Street Crusaders Band they marched down to the district, in order to conduct an open-air meeting and to reconnoitre. They looked in vain for a house or room where they might entrench and commence the fight for God.

The rumour spread as to their intention, and a woman came one day and stated that in a certain court there was a grocer's store filled with packing cases, which had once been a mission room, and in which the Rev. Dr. Dale had preached. That circumstance gave further inspiration. This redoubt, which once belonged to the Lord's army, must be recaptured.

The owner was found and terms were made. All that was needed was cleansing and glazing. Free labour and willing hands from the Clark Street School soon put the room into condition. All this caused some little stir, for the school band, with its school banner, had paraded the streets and entries, whilst scholars from Clark Street distributed invitations for the opening, fixed for the last Sunday in August, 1901. Well do I remember that day, for it was extraordinarily hot. The following week Mr. Clarke related to me this unique experience :—

Headed by the band, a picked company marched to the court in which the converted store was situated. Men

Glowing Facts and Personalities

presenting a variety of disreputable appearances—unlaced boots, unwashed faces, unbuttoned and dirty shirts, trousers held in place by belts—leaned at their doors, smoking pipes and coolly watching the proceedings. With one consent they seemed all determined to remain outside the inviting building. One man excused himself because he had no coat. My friend, the leader, immediately pulled off his own and, handing it to him, said :

“ Here, you shall have my coat.”

“ No, gaffer,” he replied, “ I don’t want your coat.”

“ Well,” continued the leader, “ I want *you*. Never mind coats ; it’s too hot for coats. We will go in our shirt-sleeves. Come along ; let’s make a start.”

The man responded, and others, like sheep following a bell-wether, turned in with a small crowd that was standing at the doorway. The programme was arranged for bright hymns, pithy speeches, and short portions of Scripture.

SAM ALLEN.

One of the speakers was Sam Allen, who to many of the men gathered around had been the subject of some discussion. When he stood up to speak, men were heard to say :

“ I tell yer, it’s ’im.”

“ No, it ain’t.”

“ I tell yer, it is.”

Sam soon settled the dispute.

“ Now, you chaps,” said he, “ let me tell you : I was born in a public-house in yon street ; but I have learnt

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

something in the adult school which I want all you fellows to get. The good I've got I want you to have a share in ; that's why we chaps have come down."

At once knowing looks were exchanged. " I told yer it were 'im," was passed around. A few more pithy words of experience spoken to these wondering men revealed a truth none could deny. For example, here was this Sam Allen, a man born and reared amongst them, who only a few years before had been their " fancy," their hero in running and boxing matches and in every form of rough sport. The last time some of them had seen him was when they laid a wager with him on a race, for Sam was at one time a private sporting " bookie." Even then, as he afterwards confessed, his conscience seemed to condemn him as he took the money which the majority of them were bound to lose. " Here's another fool bringing the price of a child's needed shoes or of a jacket or frock," he would say to himself.

So this man, now appealing to them, was none other than that bright, popular boy of the public-house who used to amuse the company with song or story, or to lead them to a night's spree in the city. The more Sam spoke, the more his voice was recognised ; and the truth of his words told increasingly on their hearts.

The conviction produced was irresistible. The Clark Street superintendent felt that God had raised up and prepared this man for the salvation of many in this very neighbourhood, for whom he and his fellow-workers had often prayed. Turning to Sam, he asked him : " Will you take the work on ? " He agreed. The men were asked

Glowing Facts and Personalities

if they would come if Sam undertook to lead the school. Many hands were immediately held up ; and Sam, with suppressed emotion, vowed he would give his very life for them, if they would only stick to him.

I have now briefly introduced to my readers the hero of this marvellous school. But who is he ? What do we know of him ? Like many young men endowed with Nature's gifts, this good-looking son of the people had grown up a stranger to the " one thing needful." There was no denying his attractive personality, his winsome smile, and the twinkling humour of his eye. Sam had been called by God in a very remarkable manner. For years his faithful and loving wife had prayed for him, only to receive from him curses, as he subsequently confessed.

One Sunday, at the tea-table, they had a few cross words, for Sam had been drinking that morning. He left the house in ill-will, and started for a walk up the Hagley Road, bent on visiting " The Ivy Bush Inn ;" but as it was before reopening time, he continued his walk further up the road.

On reaching the new Church of the Redeemer, he stopped and gazed at that fine block of buildings. There he stood a little time as one riveted. Then he turned back towards the public-house. He had gone only a few steps, when it seemed to him that he was up against an invisible barrier. So he again retraced his steps towards the church, and watched the caretaker open the door.

He then crossed the road and entered the church, and though it had only just turned six o'clock, he was directed to a pew. Like the Psalmist of old, " He thought on his

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

ways, and (finally) turned his feet to the Lord's testimonies." In that church service his ears were opened by the mighty Spirit, for every word read, every hymn sung, every prayer offered, seemed to call him to turn.

When the Rev. Henry Platten unfolded the story of the young ruler who came to Jesus, and pictured the grief of the loving Lord as He saw him turn from the life eternal, the heart of Sam Allen hungered for the peace and rest Jesus alone can give. In the pew that night he surrendered himself to the Lord, Who had for some time been calling him through the prayers of his Christian wife. The following Sunday he joined the Clark Street Adult School.

As he looked around that noted school, he missed the class of men whom he felt specially needed such a school—the type known as "pub crawlers," "peaky blinders," "bottom dogs," men who had never worn a new suit of clothes. Would it not be possible, he reflected, to reach many of that type in Birmingham?

He unburdened his thoughts on the subject to the superintendent, Mr. Henry Clarke, who suggested that he might try his hand in an attempt to gather such a class, and then become their teacher. Sam Allen succeeded admirably in forming a class, but he found the teaching of a Bible lesson a greater difficulty. His rejoicing wife proved such an excellent coach, however, that even teaching became comparatively easy. When, therefore, the call came to him to undertake the teaching and superintendence of this experimental school in Court 12, Bishopsgate Street, Sam felt he was not altogether deficient in training.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

On the first memorable Sunday morning thirty-seven men and youths crowded that dingy little hall. Four long forms comprised the furniture, and every inch of room was occupied. The scholars were certainly a motley gang ; no other adult school had ever started with a company so low down in the social scale. If Sam yearned for the "bottom dog" when he looked round Clark Street, God had given many of that class to him now. As he scanned their faces that morning, he said to himself: "Yes, these are Birmingham citizens, my brothers, for whose salvation my Lord and Master shed His blood, and He has called me to tell them so." Very few of them were unknown to the police, and most of them had seen the inside of Winson Green Jail many times.

Sam lifted his heart to God and prayed for abundant grace and power ; and then, looking straight into their faces, said: "Do you know, you chaps, that God is going to make some of you preachers of the Gospel?" On hearing this they looked at one another with incredulous grins.

Sam was like a missionary suddenly dropped upon some heathen and savage island, and armed only with a mighty faith in the power of God and a burning passion for the souls of the men before him. He realised that his only chance was to be himself, natural and unconventional, and that he must so speak as to make his hearers know and feel that the power which had changed his life, and had inclined him to seek to help them, could be theirs, if they would only seek it.

He felt he must also tell them that, just as he had

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

prayed in faith to the unseen Heavenly Father, and had been heard and answered, so *they* could pray. As he held up their lesson book, God's holy Word, he reminded them that the stories therein, which they would read together, were recorded in order that everyone might learn the way to do right; that the hymns they would sing together would be cheerful and comforting ones; and that, if they sung them at home, they would bring joy and gladness, as they had done in thousands of other homes.

Then why should they not have a male voice choir, whose singing would enliven the neighbourhood and make people think? He did not forget to remind them also that, after they had worked hard for their wages, it was stupid folly to let the publican have the money for his family, rather than keep it for their own. Why should the publican's family live well, and theirs be half clammed?

These and similar homely truths set these thirty-seven fellows thinking. When they turned into their homes that morning, they did not forget to talk about "Our Sam." Wives and mothers rejoiced with tears as they saw the vision of better days.

The next Sunday was equally thrilling. On the fourth Sunday a savings club was started, and several pounds were paid in.

When Sam was leaving that morning, a band of women met him.

"Look here, Mr. Allen," said one of them, "if you can do so much for our men-folk, can't you do sommat for us?"

Glowing Facts and Personalities

“ What do you want me to do ? ”

“ Why, start a meetin' of a Sunday evening.”

“ What sort of a meetin' ? ”

“ Why, like they 'as at churches and chapels.”

Sam said he would think it over.

“ Why not start to-night ? ” they urged.

“ We have no seats, only four benches.”

“ Yes, but we can find some chairs,” they replied.

“ We've no gas or lights.”

“ We'll bring some lamps.”

There was no retreat. Who can deny hungry souls crying for the bread of life ? So Sam said : “ Yes, we will make a start this evening.”

The little place was crammed ; men came as well, but stood apart from the women. The Holy Spirit was present in power. It was a night never to be forgotten. Harry Dowell and his wife, Old Sol, George Chadwick, Bill Everill, Buff, and dozens besides first saw the light that memorable evening.

This evening service, thus started, has continued ever since. But the burden had to be shared. Speakers from other missions were invited, and were glad to help ; but many were too conventional in their methods. Sam soon found there was need of speakers who could adapt themselves to the situation, if they would get a proper grip of his audience. A good brother, one evening, addressed the meeting on the Good Shepherd. The sermon had, no doubt, proved acceptable to many an audience, but it was built up in the conventional style ; and though it would have passed with credit the examiners

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

for local preachers in any denomination, it was not the style for a Bishopsgate 12 Court audience.

Sam was reminded, at the close of that evening's service, that if he invited that sort of preacher, he would soon lose all his sheep; and like another Sam, whose experiences are described in a very original letter in the third chapter of *Mending Men*, he learned how not to do it.

"OLD SOL" AND HIS PRISON CELL.

Amongst the men who were brought to the light that first evening was Old Sol. When I heard his story, I longed to see him, and it was not long before I made his acquaintance. He was a clever workman, but an awful drinker. At the time Sam attracted him, Old Sol, with his short legs and a head like a large melon, strongly reminded one of a nine-gallon beer barrel. His eyes twinkled with humour, and illumined his face like an arc lamp. It was Sam's humour that had brought him in. He found religion possessed a quality of which he had never dreamed. The new and strong affection which awoke in his heart soon expelled the old love for beer and the public-house. It also terminated his many visits to Winson Green Jail.

As a monthly visitor to that establishment, in connection with the Borstal treatment of young offenders—which I shall explain later—I had made the acquaintance of some of the warders.

"Is it true," I asked one day, "that you had a reserved cell for a little fat man called Old Sol?"

"Quite true, sir," was the reply. "We called it Old

Glowing Facts and Personalities

Sol's cell. But he has not been here for a long time now."

His transformation was so real and his influence so practical that a rent collector said to Mr. Allen: "What do you do to the men you gather together at the little hall in 12 Court?"

"Why?" asked Sam.

"Because," said the rent collector, "a man owed me sixteen pounds back rent. He was in good work, so I hoped to get the money some day. Then, to my surprise, he started paying one pound extra. Now he has not only cleared the big balance which was on the wrong side, but is in advance, as he says, 'You'd better get it while you can.'"

That man was Old Sol. The genuineness of his spiritual change showed itself in a desire to accompany his superintendent to some of the meetings which he addressed. No audience was ever tired of hearing from Mr. Allen's lips the wondrous story of the opening of the school in Bishopsgate Street.

I invited him and Old Sol to one of the anniversaries at Bewdley. The teacher and his comical-looking scholar duly arrived. The minute hand went the whole round of the clock while Sam recited those miracles of grace to a most attentive audience. When he had finished, Old Sol was called upon to speak.

He could say but little, any more than could the blind man whose sight had been restored by Jesus: "This one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." It was just the blind man's testimony to the new vision. So was Sol's brief speech.

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

He was about to resume his seat, when his teacher and coach, in a whisper which was audible to all on the platform, said to him: "Tell 'em about the papers, Sol."

With a broad grin he remarked: "Mr. Allen wants me to tell you about the papers; but there ain't nothing about the papers, only I've got the back kitchen papered with the one hundred and twenty blue summonses I've had in my time!"

Men like these, who have been rescued from the Devil's chains, have a great fascination for many of us. I loved to talk with Old Sol, and to introduce him to others as a signal trophy of grace. Dr. Jowett met him, and was impressed by the remarkable change in him. It was not only a transformation of character—his very face was transformed. When speaking of the miraculous power of Divine Love, Dr. Jowett referred sometimes to Old Sol, and quoted this beautiful testimony from an adult school friend:—"You know, that man's face is changing every week. He once had the face of a beast; now it is lighting up, lighting up, like an old cathedral!"

On my visits to the new Beehive, the story of which will be related presently, I generally found Old Sol there; in fact, he was part of the institution. He continued a faithful worker until March, 1911, when he passed away, as naturally and as peacefully as if in sleep.

Soon after the opening of the school at 12 Court, Mr. Allen was passing down Bishopsgate Street one week evening, when he saw a number of men standing at the corner of the street. Two policemen were endeavouring to get them on the move, an operation which, unless very

Glowing Facts and Personalities

tactfully performed, often means a row, for combustible elements are generally present on such occasions. Sam, on recognising some of the men, gave expression to a happy thought in the remark :

“ What do you say to our starting a social club ? ”

“ What’s that ? ” asked one.

“ Why,” said Sam, pointing to the Bull’s Head Public-House, “ one of them, only without the drink.”

“ Well,” was the reply, “ we wants somewhere to go.”

So several followed Sam to the little school, and the subject of a social club was gone into. Sam saw his friends. The very next evening the club was opened, and various games were provided by Sam and others.

“ OLD CLOTHES FOR NEW.”

Our worthy leader soon saw the necessity of starting a savings club. At most schools the bank has been for years one of the institutions, and it was not difficult to explain the advantages and to invite depositors.

After a few weeks two young men, who had regularly deposited their shillings, and had some twenty-eight shillings standing to their credit, asked the superintendent if they could draw the money out. Fearing this meant some injudicious expenditure, he asked what they required it for. They then very confidentially informed him they had each been measured for a new suit of clothes, and wanted the money to pay the tailor.

This was indeed startling, for such an outlay had never before been made in the whole of their history. Fusty,

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

ill-fitting, second-hand toggery had always covered their bodies before. The very thought of new cloth, and of a suit made to measure, was a staggerer. Sam learnt that they had been solicited by a tailor, who showed a bunch of cloth patterns, and that they had actually made a selection of some new cloth! He asked them to show him what they had chosen. The pattern was procured and submitted.

"Excellent," said Sam; "just such a pattern I would be proud to wear myself. Of course, you will have collars and ties."

"No, we never weared them things," said one. (A gaudy scarf was all the neckwear they had ever worn.)

Sam was now thoroughly alive to the possibilities of two new suits of clothes, but realised the effect would be lost without linen collars and ties, so he promised to treat each of them to that portion of their outfit. The offer was accepted, and an appointment made, for the following Saturday, at a certain well-known outfitter's shop in Broad Street. To the minute the young fellows were there, gazing in the window, with their eyes fixed on a row of flashy neckties.

"Them's what we've picked," said they, as Mr. Allen joined them.

All entered the shop. Their mission was explained to the assistant, and he was asked for a joint collar and front (known as a dicky) for each, together with the two ties selected from the window. Now came the dilemma.

"What size do you each take?" was the inquiry.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

Both looked at each other in amazement, one saying :
“ What does he mean ? ”

Sam explained. The neck measurements were ascertained, the purchases made, and Sam paid the bill. Another difficulty now arose as to the way in which they should put the things on. “ You’d better step round to our house,” suggested their mentor, “ and let the missus see if your buttons are all right.” Mrs. Allen was only too pleased to help.

The shirt buttons were fixed, and a dicky and tie were carefully adjusted to each neck ; and the men were then bidden to look at themselves in the mirror. It was a perfect transformation. The finish which a clean collar and new tie give to a man’s toilet is surprising. They were so astonished and well satisfied with the effect that, when asked if they would be able to put the things on in the morning, they both said “ they shouldn’t take them off ! ” “ You cannot sleep in them ; that would never do,” exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. Allen. Sam, therefore, agreed that he would call for them on the following Sunday morning and valet them, which he did.

As they entered their old school hall, the astonishment was like an electric shock. All present saw in these two scholars a visible upward leap into another sphere of social order. Some secretly resolved not to be behind their comrades ; and Sunday by Sunday one and another appeared in new attire. No wonder Mr. Allen, at one of our union committee meetings, urged me to come quickly if I wished to see the ragamuffins as depicted in their first photograph.

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

After a few months the register of the school was overhauled, and a system of visitation was adopted. Calling on a man who had been absent some time, Mr. Allen was at once met by this remarkable excuse :

" Why I've stopped away is because I've not had my suit of clothes. I believes in all being served alike. I've put in my three months all right."

" Suit of clothes, man ! What do you mean ? "

" What do I mean ? Why, I was told, if I went regular for three months, I should have a new suit of clothes ! " Then he mentioned by name several men who had been so clothed, and he claimed like treatment.

When the facts were explained to him, he found it difficult to believe that the men he had seen had really bought their own outfits.

When Mrs. Allen found the wives and mothers of the neighbourhood were not only rejoicing in the Sunday evening meeting, but were eager for instruction in sewing and cutting out, she threw her whole energy into the work. One woman wanted to make her husband a flannel shirt. Mrs. Allen duly cut it out. The next week the woman brought a comical garment, and said : " Look here, Mrs. Allen, you have cut it out wrong." (The poor woman had sewn the bottom to the top !) Then children's frocks were cut out, but in most cases Mrs. Allen and her friend had to make them.

THE STORY OF THE FIRST " BEEHIVE."

It soon became very evident that, without larger premises, the promising work would fail. The inconveniences

Glowing Facts and Personalities

of the damp, ill-furnished, cramped storeroom were too obvious to the workers. They were attempting the work of an institute in a room which had been used for years as a grocer's lumber room. How could they possibly meet the competition of the well-organised and highly attractive public-houses with which the neighbourhood was over-supplied, unless they could have a proper institute?

The burden of this great need was on Sam's heart; he made his want known to his Heavenly Father. The way soon opened. In Bath Row, a main thoroughfare at the western extremity of Bishopsgate Street, there was a large public-house called "The Beehive." It had been well patronised by the neighbourhood; but its reputation was so bad that the licence to sell intoxicants had been refused. It was now tenantless, and the invitation above the sign-board was a mockery:—

" Within this hive we're all alive,
Good liquor makes us funny;
If you are dry, slip in and try
The flavour of our honey."

The more Sam looked at this derelict building, the more he realised its possibilities. He called on Mr. Clarke, his old superintendent, to discuss the matter. The teachers of the Clark Street School were also consulted. All agreed that it was the very spot and the very building for the purpose, but the money needed was the great difficulty.

How wonderfully and surely the Lord responds to the prayers of His faithful servants, as they seek Him in difficulties such as these! There is in Birmingham a

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

well-known solicitor, Mr. Edward Tyndall, now advanced in years. He has laboured quietly for temperance and social reform all his days. Mr. Tyndall had watched with some interest the unique work which Mr. and Mrs. Allen were doing in Court 12, Bishopsgate Street, and realised the possibilities of the mission if larger premises could be obtained. He knew the way to proceed.

The premises in Bath Row were leasehold, with a sub-lease of eleven years yet to run. With a little negotiation, this sub-lease was purchased for £120. A committee was formed, and £150 soon collected. Mr. Tyndall did not wait till the money was raised, but immediately handed the property over to three trustees—Mr. Henry Clarke, Sam Allen, and Mr. E. J. Fullwood.

It was a joy to note the enthusiasm of the King Bee and his merry Bees. Night after night they were at work, under the direction of friends, altering, painting, and beautifying the place. The bar was abolished, the smoke-room made into a good adult schoolroom, and the large club-room converted into an assembly hall capable of holding two hundred and fifty people. The kitchen became the reading-room.

With a little structural alteration here and there, every room was made available for some department of social work, and even a gallery for air-gun practice was provided. A men and women's social club, with no intoxicants, was soon in full swing. Many yarns were told of the place by the men who had visited it in its unregenerate days, when they were themselves steeped in sin and evil. Mr. E. J. Fullwood was most anxious to

Glowing Facts and Personalities

find some good parody of the old rhymed invitation. He succeeded as follows :—

“ Within this hive we're all alive,
 Good nature makes us sunny ;
If life is dry, step in and try
 The Clark Street ' Beehive ' honey.”

With such an institute established, and such a record of rescue work, friends quickly rallied round. A children's school and a P.S.A. were added to the Sunday functions. On calling one Sunday evening, I found a friend gathering, for an article in a magazine, the aggregate numbers of the persons in attendance on one Sunday, from the early morning adult school to the last meeting on the Sunday evening. They proved to be over a thousand, though, of course, they included many individuals who had been at more than one meeting.

Men love singing, and Sam's male voice choir soon became a feature in Birmingham. He sought to give them what they loved, and left it to practice and enthusiasm to work the improvements. This choir supported the preacher at the Sunday evening service. At a well-remembered harvest thanksgiving service which I conducted, I had some thirty sheaves of humanity on the platform, every one of whom had been, at one time or another, an inmate of Winson Green Jail.

UNITED SUMMER RALLY OF BIRMINGHAM ADULT SCHOOLS.

In the early 'nineties, the June summer rally of the adult schools of Birmingham was inaugurated. It was

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

a sight to behold the procession of scholars. Tens of hundreds made their way to the Town Hall, Birmingham. They came from north, south, east, and west, some few headed by their own school bands, playing martial music. The committee had decided to hold a united school gathering once a year. On these occasions the Bible lesson was given to nearly two thousand persons as easily as to a class of twenty.

Alderman White was a most apt speaker at these united schools. What attention these Birmingham men gave as they hung on his words! The lesson was followed by an address from some invited speaker, who took his own topic.

When the grand old man was called to his heavenly home, we had a succession of adult school mayors: Aldermen Edwards, John Henry Lloyd, and Sir Halliwell Rogers. As president, it was my privilege to give the Bible lesson.

We soon found the Town Hall, so famous in its association with historic gatherings, insufficient to accommodate, at one meeting, all the members of the adult schools of Birmingham who wished to be present. The hall was therefore engaged, each year, for two succeeding Sundays in June. It was arranged that half of the scholars should come one Sunday, and the other half the following Sunday.

Again and again the thought was expressed: "What a sight it would be if we could have a mass meeting in the great Bingley Hall!" That hall, situated in Broad Street, was built for the holding of occasional exhibitions

Glowing Facts and Personalities

and for the annual Birmingham cattle shows. Because of its great area, it was generally secured for large political demonstrations. On such occasions seating accommodation had to be provided at a large outlay, which was covered by the charge of a guinea for each reserved seat. At intervals of some years it has been taken for the holding of evangelistic mass meetings, which extended over periods of weeks. Collections and personal subscriptions covered the cost. It was, therefore, quite out of the question for the Adult School Union to undertake the expense which would be incurred in a united demonstration.

The opportunity, however, came. A large united committee of evangelical Christians secured the hall, and fitted it up for the Mission of Messrs. Torrey and Alexander, arranged to be held in January and February, 1904. The mission committee very kindly offered to the Midland Adult School Union Executive the use of the building for Sunday morning, February 7, 1904, for the attendance of the whole of the Birmingham adult schools at nine o'clock.

The offer was readily accepted. Invitations, which stated that the president of the Midland Adult School Union would preside, and that Messrs. Torrey and Alexander would conduct the proceedings, were sent to all the schools.

At nine o'clock that memorable morning over eight thousand men from the Birmingham adult schools took their seats. The hall presented a sight rarely equalled, in the history of Sunday religious meetings, in any part of the world. Mr. Charles Alexander led the singing.

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

Dr. Torrey's address was most appropriate, and went right home to every man present. The subject was, "Heroes and Cowards." He had two Scriptural references, one from John xii. 42, 43: "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Dr. Torrey remarked: "That was said of Jerusalem, but it might be said of Birmingham, or any city, to-day. People don't confess Him, because He is not popular in the crowd. Most contemptible."

The other reference was from 2 Corinthians xii. 10: "Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." The doctor said: "It takes more courage to be a Christian than to be a soldier. Many a man can storm the trenches and face the guns; but he is ashamed, when in barracks, to kneel down and pray." I made notes of many of the doctor's apt illustrations, but especially of the two following stories, concerning which Mr. Alexander whispered to me: "Don't miss these two stories; they are the best he has." Never shall I forget them.

DOCTOR TORREY'S MOVING STORIES.

A poor farmer in the West had a son who did well at the local school. "He shall go to the University," said the proud and loving father. The doting mother agreed. It meant stint and the sacrifice of many little enjoyments, but it was for their beloved boy, the child of their advancing

Glowing Facts and Personalities

years. At last they bade good-bye, and the lad left his home with the prayers and blessings of his parents.

As they sat in the evening, after the day's toil, it was of their boy they talked. What was he doing? What friends had he made? Time passed, and no letters came from him. Their hearts grew sick. At first they made every excuse that love could suggest. The occasional post arrived, but no letter came from the lad. Their hearts grew weary.

At length the old man said he would go and see him. It was a long journey, but he could take produce to the market of the city. The change and the sight of his boy would do him good. So the produce was collected, the wagon was laden, the team of horses duly harnessed and hitched to the old-fashioned vehicle. Very touchingly, and with graphic language, the journey of the old man was described :—

“ The goods were sold, and with a buoyant heart the old man enters the gates of the grounds where the college is situated. Slowly he mounts the gentle slope to the building. Suddenly he beholds three young men, who are laughing as they saunter towards him. Yes, one is his beloved boy. With a bounding heart, and with hands outstretched, he hurries forward and addresses the lad by name. The son draws himself up and, with a scornful look, remarks: ‘ You are not my father ; there is some mistake.’

“ If he had taken a dagger and stabbed the old man to the heart, it would have been a kinder blow. The poor man again attempted to establish his identity, then

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

turned away, smitten to the heart by the laughing sneer, and, as I afterwards heard," said Dr. Torrey, "that father died of a broken heart.

"Whenever I relate that story, I feel as if I must take my coat off and fight someone; but, happily, I have this contrasting story to tell about another student, whose love for his widowed mother, who had sacrificed much for him, was intense.

"His college course was a great success: he had come out top. The day was fixed for the honours to be received.

"'It is graduate day to-day, mother,' said he; 'you must come to the ceremony.'

"'No, my boy, I shall stay at home; you would be ashamed of your poor mother amongst all that grand company.'

"'Mother, I owe everything to you. If you don't come, I shall not graduate.'

"The fond mother eventually agreed to accompany her successful boy. The son helped the old lady to pin on her well-worn shawl; and, taking her arm, he proudly marched her to the front rank in the assembly, and placed her with the well-dressed occupants of the front seats. Then he took his place on the platform.

"After he had made his speech, and had received the honours and the gold medal, amidst the plaudits of the audience, he stepped from the platform to the old lady, pinned the medal on her faded old shawl, and said: 'Mother, it is yours; I owe it all to you.' Men, Jesus has done more for you than that mother had done for her son. Are you afraid to own Him before the world?"

Glowing Facts and Personalities

We bowed our heads in prayer. Men who wished to confess their desire to follow Jesus and accept His salvation were asked to stand up, and they rose up all over the hall. Then Mr. Alexander sang, "Tell mother I'll be there." I learnt subsequently that over one hundred names of men were taken, twenty of them being Bees from the Beehive. Mr. Alexander told me, some two years later, that that glorious gathering was the finest meeting for men at nine a.m. which he and Dr. Torrey had ever had in any part of the world.

FRED HAWKINS LENDS A HAND.

Soon after the commencement of this work at the Beehive, God provided Sam with a splendid helper, in the person of a tall, good-looking young fellow, whom he met at the Swadlincote Adult School Anniversary.

Like many a high-spirited youth, the one thought of this young fellow was of company and amusement after business hours. Sam drew him into conversation, and tactfully compared the seductive amusements of the world, with their hidden dangers and risks, with the delights of the work of reformation in which he was engaged. He told him he had tried both ways of life, and knew well the pitfalls and terrors which the ordinary town life had.

This young man, named Fred Hawkins, listened with keen interest. He felt drawn to Sam, whose happy face was the evidence of his own religious experience, and of his intense joy in helping men to know God and real life. Fred readily accepted his invitation to "come and see."

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

He came, he saw, he conquered, and was conquered. At the Beehive he found true friends, and their fellowship presented the religion of Jesus Christ in a light that won his enthusiasm. By personal religion he has entered into an enlarged and abundant life; business to him is a vocation, where the Christ-life can find its widest sphere. He has already found increased opportunities of service; and, as I write, I know that he gives great promise of a good and useful life. With the help of Fred Hawkins, a good Band of Hope has been started, and also a Good Templar Lodge, which has proved the nursing ground for several excellent temperance speakers.

It is time now to describe some further characters I have seen emerge, from the darkness of sin to the glorious light of the children of God, in connection with this work. In the midst of the unconventionalities of the members of the Beehive, you may discover a naturalness of spiritual life which is very refreshing, while the social instincts and humour of their own class are allowed full play. Best of all is their wonderful display of that true, apostolic missionary spirit which is so evident in the New Testament.

Mention has been made of a man named Bill Everill, who was converted at the memorable first Sunday evening service.

BILL EVERILL.

When I came back from my visit to Australia and New Zealand, I was consulted by many men in regard to opportunities of emigration. Bill Everill was one who

Glowing Facts and Personalities

wrote me for advice. A painter by trade, he found things very hard in the year 1908. He saw the advertisement of the Australian Government, which painted in glowing colours the advantages offered to men of character and determination. I felt Everill to be a man who probably would succeed ; so when he had resolved to bid good-bye to the old land, I helped him with a few introductions to friends in the new land across the seas.

I made notes of two letters from him, which are worth transcribing. In the first, written on Sunday, April 20th, 1913, from Lithgow, New South Wales, he describes his journey out, the good ship, the good food, and the clean sports. He rejoices in meeting on board four young men evangelists, who were on their way to conduct meetings at Adelaide.

He lands at Sydney, where for some time he fails to get work, but is determined not to lose heart. He prays to God, with full confidence that he will be directed. He answers an advertisement. The advertiser sends him a telegram. He goes at once, and is engaged, and in two days settles at Lithgow. He then seeks in vain for an adult Sunday school, and the letter thus continues :

“ I have found two or three young fellows that are, like myself, adult school men, and they are all disappointed at there being no school to go to ; and as we can see the needs of one in Lithgow, as there are plenty of gambling saloons, it makes one's heart bleed to see the young fellows going into them. I do wish we had someone like yourself, or our old friend Sam Allen, to give us a start ; but still

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

we shall pray to God for the time to come quick for us to have an adult school and social club started in Lithgow, and I shall be only too pleased to help them along.

"Out here there is more room to live and breathe; and, with God's help, the time will not be long before I can settle down, with my wife and children, and put my shoulder to the wheel to make the adult school movement go, and see if we cannot have it, like the Old Country, in full swing. Please remember me to all adult school men. Will you ask them to remember us in their prayers? So now good-bye, and God bless you.—Yours,

"BILL EVERILL, one of the old Bees."

That letter reveals the depth of Everill's affection for, and appreciation of, the method that brought him to behold and see visions. Why do good Christian brothers and sisters display such prejudice against this method, and hold so tenaciously to what they call orthodox methods of evangelising? These prejudices do exist, possibly caused by the Evil One; evidence that the Evil One has discovered the power of this method.

During my advocacy of the movement in Australia, I noticed the shyness of lay helpers to come forward; so I wrote Everill, and pointed out that he might find in the churches many men with evangelical passion, and who possessed what we term the "adult school spirit;" and added that, though they might not know the adult school organisation, they might be aiming at the same class of men as he was, for God worked in many ways. I sent him

Glowing Facts and Personalities

my little book called *Mending Men*, which illustrates the adult school process. He writes again from Lithgow :—

“ I have read *Mending Men* with great pleasure, and have showed it to many. It explains the working of our adult school movement. If we cannot get a good school started in Lithgow, I am getting at my old Beehive game ; and, with God’s help, I will do my best to change some of the men I come in contact with. I am pleased to tell you I have come across a young man who came from West Bromwich two years ago. He was throwing his life away in drinking. After I met him I had a talk with him, and made a pal of him, and with God’s help I quietly drew him away from it ; and now, I am pleased to say, he don’t have more than two drinks a week, and I am working with him to leave it alone altogether.

“ With my Beehive sting, and God’s help, I hope to be the means of many more giving up the drink, and let them see the bright light our Heavenly Father gives to all. But to me the church people out here seem to lack the idea of going out to save people. They seem to think the people ought to come in without being spoke to. Well, as the adult school people know, that won’t do without using a little ‘ Jack ’ (reference to the game of bowls).

“ Again, the thing that kills, is to hear the minister tell the people they must give a good collection to-night ; and they are always telling the people they must give silver, and not coppers. While I am busy about, with my ears open, I can hear a good many complaints about it ;

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

so I leave it for you to think what happens. I know you know better than I do ; but when you ask me if I go to any church—well, I do, but only now and then. If I can get with some poor chap, and stay and tell him my life before and after the adult school caught hold of me, and if I can do him a little good in showing him the light, it gives me a better heart and enjoyment than going to a place to hear a man preaching about our sins, and the collection ; so that is how I pass my time away.

" I wish I could do more to pay for the great joy I have received. I was pleased to know you could understand my letter. I know I am a poor writer ; but one thing I do know, and it makes me proud of the adult school teaching—it is that it has made me write as well as I do. I am pleased to tell you I was able to send my wife and children's passage money to the office last Friday, June 13 ; and I am hoping to have them on the water by the end of September."

Once more his pen turns to describe the sweet memories of the Beehive :

" Although I am thousands of miles away, I shall never forget the happy time I have had ; and I do pray the work will still continue going on saving men like myself from the bottom pit, for God only knows how low I had sunk."

He gives a sketch of his work while painting an hotel twenty miles away in the Bush, and says that even there he never is tired of testifying to the blessings of the life in God. He signs himself—" W. Everill, one of the old Bees."

Glowing Facts and Personalities

HERBERT EDWARD —, THE CONVERTED MURDERER.

One Sunday evening, at the Beehive, a young fellow offered me a letter to read. It was from a brother-in-law who was serving a long sentence in Parkhurst Convict Prison, in the Isle of Wight. I at once recognised the prison paper; but the clear and orderly writing, the excellent phrasing, and the subject-matter struck me. I borrowed the letter, in order to get some typed copies. Little did I anticipate the story that was to be revealed in that letter, and how much more I should learn of the height and depth and length and breadth of God's infinite love, as revealed in Christ Jesus, and how great are the miracles wrought to-day through Him. The letter was as follows:—

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,—My chief object in writing now is to ask you whether you have seen a small book, which is being much circulated now, entitled *A Healthy Home, and How to Keep It?* If I could, I would buy one and send it to you; but as I cannot do that, I want you to try and get one for yourself. It is in two parts, and written by Miss Florence Stacpole.

“ We each have one in our cells, and when reading it, the idea occurred to me of letting you know about it. In one sense you will be disappointed in it, as it is not an elaborate and exhaustive essay on the subject of health; but it is something far better, though, and more suited to the general need—a simple, straightforward, plain-spoken

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

pamphlet, which anyone can understand, and anyone can do.

“‘*Do!*’ There’s the rub. If people would read the book, and ‘do’ it, they would be well repaid for their trouble; but for ten who read it, perhaps not half that number will show common-sense enough to forsake their old dilatory, unhealthy habits, to form new ones, and live according to the laws of Nature as laid down for the preservation of health.

“ You know, Harry, in our case, we might have grown up much healthier and stronger if dad had been a temperate man, and had tried to give us as much pure air and physical exercise as needed. Instead of that, Art, Ben, and I were poked behind a dirty, stuffy bar as soon as we left school, improperly fed, taught to love drink before we knew the nature of it, breathing for fourteen and a half hours a day, instead of oxygen and nitrogen, a foul mixture of stale tobacco smoke, fumes of beer and liquors, and the bad breath of drunkards.

“ It is no wonder that two are dead and the other a convict. My opinion is that parents ought to be made to know and feel their responsibility in the bringing up, or mis-bringing up, of their children far more than they are at present. Laws are made to compel people to send their children to school; but the home education of the child is a far more important thing to it and to society at large.

“ Laws should also be made compelling persons with children to attend more to their proper nurture and tuition at home. If children are carefully taught to love cleanliness, and to know the benefit of regular hours for eating

Glowing Facts and Personalities

and sleeping, and the benefit of physical exercises—taught to know what is good for them, and what is bad for them, both in regard to moral health and the health of their bodies—they would have a far better chance of growing up stronger and better men and women. Certainly a man who brings up his children so that they are, when arrived at man's estate, strong, healthy, active, sober, and moral, is the most to be envied in this respect ; and who, when he gets past working for himself, will stand the best chance of being comfortably provided for by grateful children.

“ Bad tempers, aches, and pains, unnecessary worries, and doctors' bills are largely the creation of our own dense ignorance, or the fruits of our antecedents.

“ Nature is ever trying to heal a man, and to make him strong and fit for his lot in life ; but the careless and the evil, and oftentimes criminal, habits of men are more than a match for her generous efforts, and tend to make men unsound, enervated creatures, as many of them are. What sort of children can a man expect if he is in the habit of inhaling large quantities of deadly poison in the form of beer, spirits, and tobacco? Bob's children, wherever they are at present, must be living witnesses of his intemperance ; and so would mine have been, if I had had the misfortune to have any.

“ After all, we are, but as men running a race—some seem to be more luckily handicapped than others ; but I believe that, finally, we shall be able to know that each one of us had been dealt with according to his or her special need, and that God's ways with men are abundantly justified. I think that if men could always be tried by the

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

best and noblest that is in them, life would present few difficulties for them. It is the wilful wandering astray that brings the moral darkness that blots out God, and the brightness and good of our lives from our hearts.

“ One thing I know—to have peace with Him is the true adjustment of our existence here ; without it, all is wrong, nothing right. It is only when we humble ourselves, and sincerely turn to Him, and regain the favour and countenance which we have lost, that the darkness which overshadows us gives place to light ; and the troubles, difficulties, and limitations, assume their true functions and discipline, and in the end elevate and bless us.”

This letter, so full of Christian and natural philosophy, deeply interested me. I learnt from Sam Allen the following particulars of the writer's crime of murder. It took place in the year 1896. In a drunken rage he shot his employer, a publican, and was sentenced to death. After much effort on the part of many who knew of his aggravation, and who were saddened at the thought of a young man of twenty-three being hanged, a numerously-signed petition was presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. The sentence of death was commuted to penal servitude for life, which means twenty years' imprisonment and a ticket-of-leave, if the prisoner's behaviour is satisfactory.

I saw many letters to other relatives, and to Sam Allen, from this convict. They much impressed me. I felt that a man who had such a knowledge of God and of the power of His grace and love, as these letters revealed, would be of more value to society outside than in living

Glowing Facts and Personalities

at the public cost in confinement. I therefore expressed my views to the Home Office, and enclosed in my letter some copies of letters I had read. My letter was sympathetically answered, and a promise was given that the case would be considered. After two more years, the man was removed to Maidstone Convict Prison, and he was informed that his sentence had been reduced, and that at the end of fifteen years he would be released.

Through his brother-in-law I received, at Christmas, 1909, the following letter, in which the criminal gives the story of his early life. Who can doubt the saving power of the Gospel after reading the facts herein recorded ?

“ Maidstone Prison.

“ DEAR SIR,—

“ My brother-in-law, through whom you have heard of me, has asked me to write a few lines to you about myself. I am deeply grateful to you, sir, for your kindly interest in me, and especially for your efforts in regard to my sentence. Through you, I believe I am to be released five years earlier. Please accept my hearty thanks, both for myself and my friends.

“ My history, briefly told, is this: My disposition had always been a melancholy, depressed one. When a boy of twelve, I was placed in the public-house business. My lowness of spirits led me to drink heavily. I had distorted ideas of things; I fancied everybody despised me. This made my life a burden to me, hence my suicidal tendency. For eleven years I worked in public-houses, and became, though only twenty-three, a confirmed drunkard.

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

“ When I married my wife, I was ashamed she should have such a miserable wretch for a husband. My last employer had made my life very wretched, and I thought at last, when he tried to entrap me into doing some of his dirty work, he deserved to be punished, and I wickedly and foolishly, as I see now, took his life, and nearly my own. I was deservedly condemned, but mercifully reprieved.

“ My life for the next twelve months was the most wretched you can conceive, not through outward things, but through agony of mind and hopeless despair. But for one thing, I should soon have gone mad, or else have destroyed myself. I had been visited, while waiting trial, by a Christian lady named Miss Balby, who had tried to influence me for good. But I had no heart for it. I despised religion, and thought religious people mad.

“ When I was sent to Parkhurst, I was in despair. I refused to work, intending shortly to end my miserable existence. But the Governor, Colonel Plummer, a good Christian man, spoke kindly to me. He got me different work to do. A few messages from Miss B., in my wife's letters, made me wish, for their sakes, that I was a better man. I resolved to try to become more worthy of them.

“ For months I tried hard to lead a better life, but miserably failed. I was about to give it up. I had already turned my face backward, when one day, reading a simple story I had received, in my wife's letter, from Miss B., I felt it was really a message from God. It was entitled, ' Hope thou in God.' It came upon me, in a

Glowing Facts and Personalities

flash, where I had been wrong. I had tried to make myself good, and failed.

“ From that moment I trusted in God, and hoped, in spite of everything. Whatever I did, whether I did right or fell into sin, I hoped, and would not be cast down. I studied the Bible, tried to do what it told me, and to learn all I could about God and His ways. I soon grew joyful, strong, and very happy. I had many great troubles about this time, but they only seemed to make me more earnest and sincere in trying to become a Christian.

“ This happened within fifteen months after my trial. During the rest of my time I have tried to love and serve the Lord Jesus as my Saviour and Master ; and I can assure you, sir, that this improvement, long and monotonous though it is, has been of the greatest blessing to me. I thank God daily for giving me back my life, and for the knowledge He has bestowed on me, which enables me to make a right use of it.

“ For years now it has been my longing desire to return to my friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for me. I shall be glad to do anything I can in the work of forwarding the cause of Christ’s religion. With eleven years’ experience of careless life, and fifteen years of prison life, and with a sincere desire to turn men from the bad and draw them to the good, I think I shall be able, with God’s help, to do a little for working-men such as myself. I want to undo, as far as I can, the evil I have wrought.

“ If, when I return to Birmingham, you still feel interested enough to hear me, I will then tell you more.

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

I hope some day to come to the Beehive Mission and help Mr. Allen, if I can, in his work. The last time I was there it was a public-house, and I was half drunk. The next time I set foot in it, it will be to testify to the goodness of God in saving such a poor wretch as I was, and to the power of Christ to save men from sin. I am very grateful to you for all your kindness, and I hope that I shall prove worthy of it. That God may bless you, and strengthen you for the doing of His work, is the earnest prayer of your humble servant,

" HERBERT EDWARD —"

In the spring of 1911 Herbert Edward returned to Birmingham. I invited him, as my guest, to take tea with the delegates of the Midland Adult School Union at their annual council meeting. He came, escorted by his friend Sam Allen. We gave him a hearty welcome. The report, as given by the editor of the Birmingham supplement of the *One and All Magazine*, reads as follows :—

" The annual meeting of the Midland Adult School Union was held at Severn Street on Thursday, the 16th inst., the chair being occupied by the president, Mr. Edward Smith. After the hymn, ' These things shall be,' had been sung, and prayer for guidance offered, the roll-call was taken, disclosing a record number of delegates.

" On rising to open the proceedings, Mr. Smith announced that all present were delegates from schools in the Union, with the exception of one friend, Mr. Herbert Edward —, who had returned to Birmingham after a

Glowing Facts and Personalities

long absence, brought about by peculiarly painful circumstances.

“ The visitor then detailed, amid silence that could be felt, the tragic history of his guilt and punishment. In a moment of passion, on account of a hasty word spoken, he had been guilty of the wilful murder of his master, for which he had been condemned to death. Through the kindness of his friends, however, the sentence had been commuted, and, by further efforts of Mr. Edward Smith, he had been liberated from prison five years earlier than would otherwise have been the case. Mr. Herbert went on to urge the necessity of self-control. His experience, he said, had convinced him that there was only one power on earth that could save a man from sin and self—the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The address created a profound impression.”

One of the first things Herbert did, on his return to Birmingham, was to visit the Law Courts and the dock where he was condemned ; and, in presence of the police officer who accompanied him, he knelt down and offered a prayer of thanks to his Heavenly Father. Herbert soon obtained employment, and after a few months, through the kindness of friends, his ticket-of-leave was cancelled, and he became once more a free subject.

This relief measure for convicts, who put themselves under the care and supervision of some institution managed by responsible individuals, has proved a great boon to many a true penitent. For to place a returned convict, who has obtained work, under the necessity of reporting

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

himself monthly to the police authorities, and to keep him practically always under the critical eye of members of the police force, often has a bad effect, especially upon the most deserving, and sometimes hinders the recovery of men on whom the State has already spent much in the endeavour to secure amendment.

ANOTHER MURDERER.

When at Maidstone, Herbert met another man who had been guilty of murder, but who, like himself, had obtained mercy from the Crown.

This man had nearly completed his twentieth year of imprisonment. He placed himself under the care of the Church Army, which found him lodgings in its Home in Birmingham. There, at Herbert's suggestion, I called and saw him. He had been helped to the knowledge of God, and was striving to live the Christian life. He also found a welcome at the Beehive. I put myself in communication with the central office of the Church Army in London, and reported what I had learnt of his efforts to obtain work and live straight. In due course this second saved murderer received his letter of liberation, and was no longer a criminal on leave, but a free man.

OLD DICK, *alias* "OLD BORN DRUNK."

I must now introduce a man of very remarkable character, whom I occasionally met at the Beehive. His story is another wonderful illustration of the power and

Glowing Facts and Personalities

grace of the Gospel. He died some three years ago, and Mr. Allen invited me to conduct a memorial service on the Sunday evening which followed the man's funeral.

Sam thought it would be fitting for these two converted criminals, who had been for so many years inmates of convict prisons, to assist me in the service. I readily agreed. I shall never forget that crowded hall, the solemnity of the gathering, and the heart-moving prayer in which Herbert thanked his Heavenly Father for the remarkable answer to the many petitions he had offered, in his prison cell, that he might be able to declare the love and mercy of God in this converted public-house. My other helper read well the portion of Scripture.

Surely we were a unique trio! What was I? Who was I but a sinner redeemed by the same marvellous grace, privileged beyond measure as compared with the other two, yet a transgressor because of so many neglected opportunities? "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Oh, the sins of omission: the neglecting to make use of our many gifts, privileges, and opportunities, by which to further that coming of the kingdom of righteousness for which we so glibly pray. How often, by words and deeds, we hinder, rather than further, the cause with which we are identified! I feel sure the testimony given at that memorial service to the triumph of the departed hero, deeply impressed the sorrowing congregation.

Who was he? Every time I visited the Beehive I found him there, and thoroughly interested in all that went on. Older in years than most of the members, he

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

was often referred to as "Old Dick," and sometimes as "D. D.," because his surname commenced with a "D." He was to me quite the "Senior Deacon" of this homely church, and he usually presided at the Wednesday evening service. As Mr. Allen had often spoken well of these services, I promised to attend one of them, and did so, in company with one of the deacons of Carr's Lane Church, who was glad to see the work.

That evening, "D. D." gave out the hymns, read the portion of Scripture, and offered a simple, heartfelt prayer. The Scripture lesson he read happened to be Psalm xix., which I have often used to enforce the marvellous way in which God speaks to men through Nature and revelation. The reader specially emphasised these facts and truths, and then concluded with a prayer for practical consistency in daily life.

When I was called upon to speak a few words, no wonder I felt ready to do so, in the presence of such a living testimony to the power of redemption. As I listened to the pathos of this old man's voice, and caught the passion of his soul, the thought came to me: "Can there be anything more glorious than the bringing of such wanderers home?"

He sang the following solo, and all joined in the chorus:—

"The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin—
The Light of the World is Jesus;
Like sunshine at morning His glory shone in—
The Light of the World is Jesus."

Glowing Facts and Personalities

At the close of each verse came the personal testimony of the chorus :—

“ Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee,
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me ;
Once I was blind, but now I can see—
The Light of the World is Jesus.

No darkness have we who in Jesus abide—
The Light of the World is Jesus ;
We walk in the Light when we follow our guide—
The Light of the World is Jesus.

Ye dwellers in darkness, with sin-blinded eyes—
The Light of the World is Jesus ;
Go wash at His bidding, and light will arise—
The Light of the World is Jesus.

No need of the sunlight in Heaven, we're told—
The Light of that World is Jesus ;
The Lamb is the Light in the City of God—
The Light of that World is Jesus.”

I had heard from Sam Allen that “ D. D.,” who was also named “ Old Born Drunk,” had been an awful character ; but I only knew him as one of the Beehive pillars. His story is told by his leader in the *One and All Magazine*, and is also published in *Tales of the Old Beehive Inn*. With the permission of the editor, I give the story. Sam writes :—

“ A gentleman asked me to go and look after a man they called ‘ Old Born Drunk.’ I went to the house he was supposed to linger in, and I found him sitting in a

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

chair, which was the only furniture left in the house. His wife and family had all left him, and he was sitting there alone.

"When I began to talk to him, he said: 'It's too late; I've made up my mind to go and drown myself in the canal!'

"I invited him to come to the school, but he said he was not fit to go anywhere. I told him it was just the place for men of his sort, and he came. I shall never forget his dejected look. How the others stared when he came in! He said he liked the school, and would come again.

"He kept on coming, but could not give up the drink. He is a hawker by trade, and it is a hard thing for a man of that trade to give up the drink. I never saw him really sober for two years. Many a time I have taken him to the door of the Beehive, and threatened to pitch him out if he came in drunk again.

"I remember taking about twenty-eight of the men to Swadlincote Adult School Anniversary, and among them was poor 'Old Born Drunk;' but alas! he had a black eye, which was given him by his son-in-law for the way he had served his wife. That visit, though, had much to do with the man's subsequent change. I remember the visit was in September, and often the old fellow, when in drink, would talk about it.

"On December 28, 1903, he was at the Beehive, very drunk.

"I said: 'Dick, are you going to finish the old year like this?'

Glowing Facts and Personalities

“ He said: ‘ I think I shall, and make a fresh start in the new year.’

“ ‘ The new year you may never see,’ I said. ‘ Dick, you may never get through to-night. Look here, I don’t ask you to sign the pledge, but I want you to accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour.’

“ Poor chap! He dropped his head and said: ‘ Nobody never asked me to do that before.’

“ I said: ‘ Then do it now.’

“ ‘ I will,’ he replied.

“ There and then we knelt down, and he rose up a changed man. When it got spread about, people said it would not last a week; but, thank God, it has lasted more than ten years. As a hawker, he had to deal with a lot of publicans; but he promised God, on his knees, that he would not touch even a glass of water in a public-house, and that promise he kept from the very time of his conversion.

“ He became a most regular member of our Good Templar Lodge, and vice-president of our Brotherhood and of the Wednesday evening class. He had a photograph taken of himself, wife, and family; and when anyone wanted to know what the Beehive had done for him, he produced the photograph.

“ In his illness, he suffered much, for he was a victim of the terrible cancer disease. It was marvellous to see his patience, and many of his old pals who visited him came away touched by his splendid testimony to the peace and love which Jesus can give to all who trust in Him.

The Antecedents of the "Beehive" Mission

" His son-in-law (who had been a victim of the drink), as the result of this man's wonderful change and consistent life, publicly confessed repentance and faith in Jesus. He said: ' If religion can do for Dick what I have seen it can do, it's good enough for me.' In the spring of 1916, this son-in-law, who has joined the Garrison Artillery, wrote from Salisbury Plain to Mr. Allen as follows :—

" ' Just a line to let you know I am quite all right, in the best of health, and still a teetotaler, thank God ! I oftentimes think of the good old Beehive, and wonder whether we shall ever meet again, and have the enjoyable time we have had together. Sam, there is a lot to put up with, and a lot of temptation down here, and, Sam, you want something above your own strength to say " No " to all of it ; but, thank God, I learnt to say " No " before I was called up. Sometimes, with what you have to put up with, it takes a good will to refuse all the enjoyments, as they call it ; but, Sam, we can always refuse to do wrong if we only believe and trust in the One above.

" ' I can safely and truly say that our God has been a great comfort to not only me, but my dear wife ; and I can say it all came about through the little Beehive, and trying to follow in poor old Dick's footsteps. As you know, he tried all times to lead me in the right road ; and, believe me, it was almost his last words, before he passed away on the Saturday night, that I would not touch the drink again, and, with God's help, I have kept my word.'

Glowing Facts and Personalities

“ ‘ We had the King down at Bulford last Friday, reviewing the troops that were going away. There were over thirty thousand men ; and as I watched them, I wondered how many would come back to the homeland again. There were a lot of Birmingham lads in the Warwicks and Worcesters.

“ ‘ From one who thanks the Beehive and the teachers for what they have done for my welfare.—Your old scholar,

“ ‘ BILL N.’ ”

DR. NEWMAN HALL AND SOUL WINNING.

Nothing is more interesting than the tracing of the guiding hand of God (in past events which have revealed new features in the working of God's grace), in connection with the special department of Christian effort that one delights in. Many years ago, at Scarborough, I listened to a remarkable sermon by the late Rev. Dr. Newman Hall. The subject was the joy of soul winning, and the discourse was based on the words of our Lord in that wonderful fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, verse 10 :—

“ Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

Again and again the preacher emphasised the value of one human soul, and remarked that the very word “ lost ” meant the separation of the owned from the owner ; and also that, as there was a natural delight in

The Antecedents of the “Beehive” Mission

the restoring of some lost article to a seeking owner, so there must be a much greater delight in restoring the lost and wandering child of God (as figured in that pearl of parables, the Prodigal Son), and in sharing in the joy of the Divine Father, as suggested by the words :—

“ For this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found.”

Glowing Facts and Personalities

the case out of the paper, and enclosed it in my letter to the chaplain of that prison. I told him of my feelings with regard to this prisoner, and asked for his help.

He replied most sympathetically, and said he had interviewed the prisoner, and told him of my letter and of my interest in him. The chaplain said he was much impressed by the man's quality, both physical and mental; but much, he informed me, would depend upon my meeting him immediately he was discharged from the prison.

The two months soon passed. I received notice, two days before his discharge, that he would be found at a certain lodging-house in Dudley at about midday on June 5, 1905. Thither I repaired. On inquiry, the man answered to his name. In a few words I introduced myself as a friend sent by God to help him, if he were willing to be helped. I reminded him of his statement before the stipendiary—that he had been a teetotaler five months, but had unfortunately broken his pledge. I told him that drink had been the cause of his madness, and that it was just that fact which deeply interested me. I asked him if he would trust me and tell me something of his early history. I told him that, as a magistrate of Dudley, I had seen his long list of convictions at the Dudley Police Court, and that some of them, I was sorry to see, were for theft.

He assured me that drink, and drink alone, had been the cause, and that he never would have stolen if he had not been in drink—that, in short, he became lost through drink.

Edward the Terror! and Others

“ Now, let us pick up the threads of your life,” I said.
“ Where did you go to school ? ”

He named a good Church of England elementary school.

“ Have you any relatives ? ” I asked.

He mentioned his father, a married sister, and a brother, who was chauffeur to a gentleman I knew well.

“ Now,” said I, “ we shall get on. I have often seen your brother.”

He replied : “ But my family won't own me.”

“ We will soon see,” I continued. “ Let us get you some work and see what can be done to rebuild your character.”
As I looked him over, I remarked : “ You cannot get work in those ragged clothes. Haven't you anything better ? ”

“ Yes, in pawn ! ” he replied, and produced a pawn-ticket.

I saw the name and address, and said : “ We can soon lift these, for the shop is in this street.” So away we marched to the pawnbroker's. With a half-sovereign I redeemed the bundle and gave him start No. 1. No. 2 was, to promise to write to his brother's employer. No. 3, to provide a daily hot lunch at a neighbouring *cafe*, and, further, to send a friend to take him a walk that evening.

Fortunately, I have a loyal lieutenant in my business, an “ out and out ” adult school man, whose religious and business history is as romantic as anything I know, and whose heart overflows with gratitude for what God has done for him. This man gladly undertook the case, and took Edward for a walk that evening, and promised to call for him on the Sunday morning for the adult school.

Meanwhile, I wrote to his brother's employer, and

Glowing Facts and Personalities

sought to interest him in my effort to help. The prompt reply said: "Yes, for your sake, I'll do all I can. His brother is all I could wish, but this man of yours is a terror. I don't know a foreman who will care to have him, but we will fix him up somehow." On the same day I heard from my lieutenant that Edward had attended all the services, and had enjoyed himself thoroughly. At the adult school he met a fellow-workman who was delighted to encourage and pal with him.

The next morning Edward, who was just going to work, appeared at my office, dressed in a good pilot jacket and working trousers. He showed me the letter he had secured, and gave me the pledge card I had asked him to sign. I shook him warmly by the hand, and he left. His work was four miles away, and his lodgings quite as far.

On inquiring some two months afterwards, I was shocked to hear of a sad fall. How often is the bitter experience of the Apostle Peter repeated! Men, through self-confidence, try to compromise with temptation. Edward was working with a gang of navvies. Their wages were paid in a public-house—kept by a relative of the ganger—where each man was expected to spend one shilling in drink. The adult school pal above-mentioned found Edward on the roadside drunk. He acted the Good Samaritan, and took him to his own home till he recovered.

When I learnt about it, I wrote him a loving letter, and showed him how impossible it was to conquer sin without placing ourselves in God's hands, and trusting fully in the keeping power. The lesson was not in vain.

Edward the Terror! and Others

I heard afterwards of Edward's marriage, and of his settling down comfortably in another Black Country town. I obtained his address and again wrote him.

Ten months afterwards, while fulfilling an engagement in that town, I went specially early to visit him. What a fine fellow he appeared! The tears welled to his eyes as he shook my hand with a mighty grip, and said: "I am so proud, sir, you should call. I saw your name printed on some bills announcing the meeting. I am just getting ready to go to it." That evening my heart overflowed as I saw this fine fellow, in the very prime of life, sitting and listening attentively to all that was said. As I had to leave before the close of the meeting, I pushed to the seat he was occupying and gave him another hearty handshake.

Ten years have now passed. I have never seen him since, but I have heard nothing but good of him from one and another who know something of our spiritual relationship. One man, I remember, wrote me: "I often see Edward as he comes home from work, and am struck with the calm, peaceful look he has." I have lingered over this story because it has meant so much to me. A new volume of my life, which for the past eleven years has been so rich in spiritual experience, was opened by this incident.

THE BORSTAL SYSTEM.

The chaplain of Winson Green Jail, Rev. James Blakemore, introduced me to the Birmingham Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, of which I am now the president.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

Subsequently, when the modified Borstal system of treatment, for youths of between sixteen and twenty-one, was introduced, and when the Winson Green Jail became the central prison for the other prisons in the Midlands to which lads were drafted, I became a member, and then chairman, of the monthly sub-committee. We meet in the chaplain's room at the prison, where the lads whose time would expire during the subsequent month are interviewed.

No more interesting or promising opportunities of vital Christian work are possible than those offered by these talks. One by one the prisoners are ushered into the room by a prison warder. A report of each character, and of his or her antecedents, is in the hands of every member of the committee. The chaplain is present to assist, and to give his opinion of each case.

Often there are one or two young women of the same ages as the youths (from sixteen to twenty-one). These are always treated first, one of the lady visitors being present.

When the individuals stand before the chairman, the first step is to make each one feel at perfect ease, and to remind him or her that we are friends who have come there for no other reason than to help. A few kindly words usually put them at their ease.

Those of us who have some experience of Sunday schools, and are concerned at the great leakage of scholars, are able to confirm the usual conjectures. As a lad leaves the day school and goes to work, he thinks it quite correct to finish with the Sunday school as well.

Edward the Terror! and Others

So readily comes the confession that his fall into crime arose through the neglect of the Sunday school, and the forming of friendships with evil lads. The lad's natural love of adventure and sport makes him an easy tool for thieves, burglars, and other criminals. We have met in that room various classes, from the well-educated and spoilt youths of well-to-do families, right down to the lowest types of humanity ; but we seldom fail to reach the heart. A kindly word, or a reference to parents, to prayer, or to the teaching of a faithful Sunday school teacher or friend, often brings tears of contrition.

In the records before us we have the number and nature of previous convictions (though more often it is a first conviction), the occupations of parents, if any, the last employer, and the character of the work, the bill of health from the doctor, the behaviour in prison (supplied by the governor), and a report of the promise and prospect which the case presents to the chaplain.

On these facts we frame our questions and suggestions as to how best we may help the youth or maiden to lead a better life. We then suggest the name of some friend—adult school teacher, clergyman, minister, or priest—to whom we can write and ask to follow up the work that has been attempted in prison. Efforts are made to find work for the discharged prisoners, in a factory, at a farm, or on the sea, and latterly many have been introduced to the Army.

In many cases we are able to bring about reconciliation with parents, often forgiveness from the wronged parties, and sometimes restoration to the work that has been lost.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

In some few cases the chaplain and I (or perhaps some other friend of like sympathy) have found young men deeply penitent, and eager to make the great surrender to Jesus Christ. One young fellow, I remember, was twenty-one years old on the very day of our meeting, and we knelt with him and commended him to God.

Once a fortnight the whole of the Borstal lads are assembled for a special address by some invited visitor. The first few months after the work was commenced, we met some twenty to thirty each month. Happily, each year since the numbers have been reduced gradually, till now they average only about fifteen.

The Probation Act for First Offenders, which considerably lessens the numbers of commitments, is proving of great value.

During the past ten years some fifteen hundred young people must have been interviewed by our Borstal committee. I have received many letters from camp, or trench, or hospital, from lads whom I first met in the chaplain's room in Winson Green Prison. It will be interesting to mention one of these writers, whose remarkable spiritual history is closely associated with the Beehive and its devoted leader.

THE STORY OF "PUDDING."

This sturdy young fellow confessed that his downfall was the result of drink. I urged him to sign the pledge. As his address was not far from the Beehive, I suggested that he should attend it, as he said he knew it and

Edward the Terror! and Others

Mr. Allen. I also wrote and asked my friend to look this youth up, and learnt subsequently that he was attending the Beehive regularly.

Some two years afterwards I was presiding at a temperance meeting at the Birmingham Town Hall, when Mr. Allen pointed to a man sitting in one of the front seats, and said: "Do you see that man? They call him 'Pudding.' He's the fellow you sent from Winson Green Jail, and he has turned out one of the best catches we have ever had—an out-and-out Christian, and fearless with it. He is as keen for the good work as he used to be for any evil game. Poor fellow! I want you to speak to him, for he has had some big trouble; he has lost his wife, and is left with five children to look after."

As I left the platform, I beckoned to the man to come to me, and at once heartily congratulated him on his improved appearance. I gave him all the consolation I could in regard to his trouble, and said that, as the clouds and the night gave us the promise of a clear sky and sunny days, so, if he held on to Jesus, he would soon come to the better days.

"Tell me," I inquired, "why they call you Pudding?"

He replied: "That name has stuck to me ever since I was a kid, when I sold papers in the streets. I suppose it was because I had a round face."

Every time I saw Sam I asked after "Pudding." He said Pudding was "always going strong," and that he was able to furnish me with some new tale about him. One tale was very rich. Pudding was in the militia, and

Glowing Facts and Personalities

went yearly to Salisbury Plain for training. A clergyman there held nightly services in a large hut. Pudding went to him, offered his services, and told him he could help in anything—in singing, or praying, or speaking. The clergyman replied :

“ You sit quietly and listen ; that’s the way you can help me. I think I remember your games last year.”

“ But I am different now,” said the man ; “ I’ve been converted. I help at Mr. Allen’s Beehive Mission, Birmingham.”

“ Let’s see if you can sit still, and listen,” was the answer.

Pudding did as he was told. The next night he was there again, and once more offered to help. The good leader handed to him a bundle of hymn books, and suggested that he should stand at the entrance and invite the soldiers to come inside. Taking the hymn books readily, Pudding went straight across to the canteen.

“ Why, here’s Pudding ! ” some of his old pals shouted. “ What’ll you have to drink ? ” they asked.

“ I have chucked that stuff,” he replied. “ You come along with me to the tent.”

Out of curiosity a great number followed him, and the clergyman noticed his influence, and asked him to speak at the conclusion of the meeting. Pudding had his chance, and gave his testimony ; and every evening the congregation improved through his efforts, till the tent was full. These facts were communicated to Mr. Allen in a letter from the clergyman, who said he had felt deeply interested in a mission that could produce such a man.

Edward the Terror! and Others

THE PROBATION ACT FOR DRUNKARDS.

Subsequently to the inauguration of the Probation Act for Drunkards, for three years I gave, in Dudley, an annual supper to the men on probation. The idea of probation for inebriates belongs to Judge Pollock, of the United States, who had found it so successful in that country. A few years ago it was introduced into England.

The Act provides that if a prisoner convicted of drunkenness is willing to sign the pledge, and to promise to abstain for twelve months from all intoxicants, he shall be liberated and put on probation. Further, he must pledge himself not to enter a public-house, even with a message, or on any business whatever. Also, once a fortnight he must report himself to the probation officer who has charge of his case.

That officer has to furnish the Court every three months with a report of all his cases. Any probationer who proves unfaithful will be punished, not only for breach of the agreement, but for the original offence. Sixty-five per cent. of the cases of drunkenness are successful. Those twelve months' abstinence from alcohol often reveal undreamt-of possibilities.

At Dudley there are three officers—a lady (who is associated with the Dudley Sisterhood) and two men—one the captain of the Church Army, the other the lay pastor of an institutional mission church.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

A "SOCIAL" FOR PROBATIONERS.

Feeling special interest in their work, I proposed a social gathering of the men. The officers agreed that it would be a considerable help, and they undertook to distribute to each probationer the ticket of invitation, which was printed, and read as follows :—

“ As a probationer, you are invited by Mr. Edward Smith, J.P., to meet him and a few friends at the Temperance Institute, High Street, Dudley, on Monday evening, April 29, 1912, at seven o'clock. There will be a meat supper and coffee, to be followed by a pleasant 'Social.' Sam Allen and some of the 'Bees' from the Beehive, Birmingham, have promised to be present. No admission without this ticket.”

A few friends, some of them being leaders of the local adult schools, were also invited, together with the superintendent of the police and reporters of the local papers. Like the two previous gatherings, this one proved most interesting. Some sixty or seventy men of all types responded. Some few were old offenders, who had discovered the value of total abstinence; others were first offenders, who had found in the Probation Act the escape from a first police-court conviction.

Each man, as he entered, was welcomed in proper style. When he glanced round the room, and recognised some old drinking pal, he felt at home. There was no hesitation when the time came for them to sit down to the ample

Edward the Terror! and Others

supper provided for them. A friend played the piano during the meal.

When the tables were cleared for the "Social," cigarettes were supplied for those who chose, while others preferred their pipes. With a few songs and short welcoming speeches, the Social commenced. Several of the guests, who had some reputation as singers, were called upon for solos, and they gave of their best. It was cheering to notice that their songs were pure and wholesome. Mr. Allen and three or four of his "Bees" then related some real, telling experiences, in language which was thoroughly understood. Pudding's words touched many a heart.

About three months after this event I received from Pudding a letter sent from the camp in the south of England. It reveals the man, and it also tells us what a boon the recent Y.M.C.A. huts must be. After describing the place, he says:—

"I am sorry to let you know that we have got no Soldiers' Homes where we can spend an evening. It is very hard to lead a Christian life when there is a lot who do not know anything about Christ. I am pleased to tell you the chaps know there is a difference in my life. They come and say, 'Still on the same tack, Pudd?' and I say, 'Yes, thank God,' and they say, 'Good luck to you!' and some said, 'I wish I was like you.' I am pleased to say I have got married again—as you know, I was left with five little children—and I thank God for making me a better man, and keeping me in the right path. I always think of you, when you came and visited me when I was

Glowing Facts and Personalities

doing three months in prison, and when you asked me to sign the pledge, and I would not. We have got a lot of Dudley chaps up here, and they got to know of me being over there, and they said, if they had known that, they would have come to hear me speak, as they knew there was a difference in me. You can read this anywhere; it might draw someone near to Christ. I ask Him to watch over my wife and children, and also my comrades and their families."

At length the terrible War burst on the world. Pudding, who was a private in the 10th Battalion of the Royal Warwicks, wrote me from the camp at Tidworth. He had grown in experience and in true boldness for the King of kings. He thanks me for a little help I gave him in a sore time of trouble, and says: "But what I can do is to ask God to bless and spare you for many years to come. I think many of us ought to thank the Lord for what He has done for us. I always try to speak a word for the Master. As you know, it is no easy thing in the Army, as you gets with all sorts of men; but it says in the good old Book: 'Who can be against us if God is for us?'

"I went to a meeting on Sunday night, and after the meeting they held a Holy Communion. It was the Lord's Supper, and there was about fifty that took it, and I liked it very much. I had the pleasure of speaking a few words for the Master, and I told them what the adult school had done for me; and I told them of my past life, and what the Lord had done for me He could do for them.

Edward the Terror! and Others

“ The minister gave me a few minutes ; but you know, when I get up, I get wound up, and I ask him if I was taking up too much time, and he said : ‘ No, go on with it ; I am getting interested with you.’ And then I said I had done, and he said he had never heard anything like it before ; and the chaps all gave me a good hearty shake of the hand. I told them I did not want the praise, as the Lord should have it. I will try and wear the Crown.

“ So I think I have said all at present, hoping God will bless you wherever you may go. So I remain, yours truly in Christ.—Your old brother,

“ PUDDIN’.”

From Tidworth the regiment moved to Weston-super-Mare. He had received a visit from his wife, who took her little babe with her, and writes :—

“ Dear Sir,—I am sending you one of my photos of me and my wife and child. I thought you would like one of them. I had my wife and baby down for four days. Sir, I am still praising the Lord for what He has done for me. I have throwed my lot in with the Gospel Hall people, and we are having some good meetings with my comrades, and we get some conversions. I think it is my place to try and help some poor soul to the Lord. Sir, I go from place to place, and tell the soldiers what the Lord has done for me, and what He is willing to do for them if they will only trust.

“ I have never been so happy in my life since I accepted the Lord for my Saviour. It has been five years this month since I have had a drink of beer, and without God’s

Glowing Facts and Personalities

help I should be a drunkard to-day. Sir, this is my wife that I won in prayer. And how I thank God that I met Sam Allen, and went to the Old Beehive! I don't know what would have become of me and my children; but, thank God, I have been born again. So I think I have said all at present. From your sincere brother in Christ, Puddin'. Sir, write back as soon as you can, and write the letter plain, as I cannot understand the writing."

Poor fellow! I felt guilty on hearing that he was eager to get a letter from me, and that he stumbled over my caligraphy. I replied with a well-typed letter, that he might read it to others. What a ministry there is in a letter that will give matter to a soul bursting with love for the wonderful Saviour!

Visiting the early morning school at the New Beehive (the story of which will be given later), I found that twenty minutes were spent in prayer for the soldiers of the class who were at the Front. No one was called upon to pray, but prayer followed prayer.

One prayer caused me to look up; it was the voice of a lad. In simple diction he thanked God for the answer given to his prayer of the previous Sunday, when he prayed for his dear father; and now he prayed again to God that He would keep him safe from the bullets and the sword, and bring him back safe to England. As I listened, the tears came to my eyes; it was simply beautiful.

At the close of the school I said to Sam: "Who is the lad that prayed so nicely for his father?"

"Why, that's Pudding's eldest boy!"

Edward the Terror! and Others

It was a treat to shake hands with such a dear lad. Who would not be in this glorious work for the Kingdom? The last message I heard of Pudding was a quotation from a letter to his teacher: "When they bring me the rum in the trenches, I won't touch it." Bravo, Pudding!

Isaiah said to the righteous Jews of his day: "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord; look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged."

Let us look at a few paragraphs which refer to Pudding's earlier history; they are taken from *Tales of the Old Beehive Inn*, and were originally written for *One and All* by the man who knew him best:—

"We had some rum characters to deal with. One was nicknamed 'Pudding.' He was a terror among all who came in contact with him, and was always drinking and fighting and getting locked up. He seemed a man like the one Christ saw in the tombs—filled with a legion of devils. He would come to school for a time, and then stop away; but I always tried to keep in touch with him. He was one whom people would pay to pick a disturbance. He was the man who led the mob of 'out-of-works' to the Council House, to break in and get at the Lord Mayor, for which he got three months.

"I remember one occasion when his wife's mother came to fetch me to him. He was going to murder his wife. I ran round—for he only lived close by—and found him in the act of doing what his mother-in-law said he was going to do.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

“ I shouted, ‘ Bill ! ’ And he turned round and saw me, and said : ‘ What do you want me to do, Sam ? ’ And I said : ‘ Go to bed. ’ With that, he ran upstairs at once to bed.

“ I remember, when we started at the Beehive, there were complaints made by our friends the publicans. It was said there must be something going on there, or else we could not get and keep the class of men we had got. So Superintendent Moore came down with three detectives. Before he came in, he sent for me outside, and told me what he had heard, and wanted to see the place.

“ I said : ‘ Well, we have no secret bells ; you can go in before me and see for yourself. ’

“ They went in, and the very first two they saw were Old Sol and Pudding. When the superintendent saw them, he said :

“ ‘ Have you got these here ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, ’ I said. ‘ We are trying to make your work lighter. ’

“ He said : ‘ I don’t want to see any more. Go on with your work. If you can hold this sort, you are doing more than all the police in Birmingham can do ; and if ever you want any help from me, let me know. ’ ”

“ FRED, ” THE COUNTERFEIT COINER.

One of the men who accompanied Mr. Sam Allen, on his visit to the probationers’ supper at Dudley, was known as “ Fred. ” I had heard some remarkable stories of the shocking criminality of this man. Though of respectable connections, he had, by his life, put himself

Edward the Terror! and Others

outside all decent society. Yet God, in His abounding mercy, revealed Himself through Jesus Christ to this man and restored him.

Instinctively there rises within us all, when we hear of a great sinner converted, a suspicion as to whether it can be really true. The Tempter is ever ready to suggest such doubts, and if we yield to them, we too frequently find ourselves inclined to act more like the priest and Levite acted towards the man who had fallen amongst thieves, than like the compassionate Samaritan.

But Fred's simple testimony deeply moved me, because it convinced me that another brand had been plucked from the burning. The probationers listened with breathless attention, as Fred told of the power of Jesus to save to the uttermost all who come to God in faith.

Subsequently to that meeting, which was held in May, 1912, I became increasingly interested in Fred, and on several occasions had quiet talks with him. On each occasion I have been struck with the evidence of his full trust, and of his consciousness of the indwelling peace. His face gives every indication of these experiences. The past seems blotted out by the joy of the infinite love he has found.

Fred has steadily prospered in his undertakings. He lives in a nicely-furnished house, and is doing a good business as a cartage contractor; he owns two covered vans and a lorry, and three good horses. But his heart yearns to help the men who are "out of the way."

Often a man, who has a contrite sense of his wrongdoing, fails to recover because everything seems against

Glowing Facts and Personalities

him. The Leicester Adult School has established a Guest House, which is under the management of a man of marvellous character. He has a good wife, and they are both doing wonders. I saw in that house a large photographic group of well-dressed men, and was amazed when reminded that every man in that group had been helped to better ways by the kindness and practical sympathy of these two good people.

We wanted a similar institution in Birmingham, and Fred and his wife were helped to start one in a small way. It has proved already a blessing to many men like Fred. But what is his history? It can be gleaned from one of the stories of the Old Beehive, as told by Sam in the pages of *One and All*. There is no object in relating these early facts, except to again and again emphasise the wonders of God's grace and redeeming power.

"I was at the Beehive one evening," says the narrator, "when a man called to see me. When others present saw him, they remarked: 'It's Charlie Peace come back again!'"

[Charles Peace, it will be remembered, was a noted burglar and a murderer, and he suffered the extreme penalty of the law. I was at Sheffield many years ago, when Peace was brought to that city, and I shall never forget the commotion and the excitement at the long list of the deeds of this infamous criminal as published in the daily papers.]

"'If you don't know him, Sam, keep your eye on him.'

"'He's all right; he only wants trimming up a bit,' I replied.

Edward the Terror! and Others

“ We got him to the adult school, and most nights he dropped into the Beehive Social. At length we missed him, and learnt from his wife that he was very ill. I dispatched a visitor, who came back and said I'd better go myself.

“ I went, and knocked at the door ; but as no one came, I opened the door and entered. I thought at first I was at the wrong house. I went to the foot of the stairs and called, and a feeble voice answered, ‘ Come up.’ I went up, and there lay a man on the floor, on a bundle of old rags. All the furniture in the room was a broken padded chair. The man was very ill.

“ I asked his wife, who had just entered the room, if she had called in the doctor. She said she hadn't the means. I returned to the Beehive and told the fellows. A number of us went round, and sent for the doctor. He said he'd been called too late—the man had gone too far.

“ When the doctor had left, I said to his wife : ‘ Find me a jug to fetch some milk.’

“ She had neither jug, nor basin, nor saucepan—nothing at all. I went myself to a neighbour to borrow one. She declined to lend it till I left some money as security. We lit a fire and made a basin of bread and milk.

“ Turning to the men, I said : ‘ Now, chaps, the doctor says there's no hope ; let's see what the Great Physician can do.’ And we all knelt down.

“ I shall never forget that prayer meeting. It was like as though the very room was shaken. The poor fellow on the bed of rags turned round and smiled. He has since said the change came over him when we were on our knees. We could see he was in for a long illness.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

“ Next day Old Sol brought him a bedstead, and also bed and mattress and blankets, and he was just made comfortable.

“ I have said there was a padded chair in the room. When the poor chap began to get well, he said to his wife: ‘ Rip that chair bottom open, and take the stuff and destroy it.’ It contained about thirty pounds’ worth of counterfeit coin, with the dies. What she did with them has never been revealed; Fred never saw them again. He had been for years a base coiner. He said to his wife: ‘ These are the men for me; I have never had treatment from anyone as I have had from these men.’

“ He fully recovered, and became a member of the Beehive, but could get no work. We applied to a certain society, but as soon as his name was given, a detective said, ‘ Cross that name off.’ I said, ‘ Why?’ The reply was, ‘ He isn’t fit to live; he ought to have been hung long ago.’ I said, ‘ You don’t know the man.’ The detective said, ‘ Don’t I? He was just too clever for us; we could never catch him at his work.’ It was naturally now very hard for him to get employment.

“ I had announced at the Beehive that a certain reformed drunkard would speak one Sunday evening, and begged Fred to come. When I gave him the name of the speaker, he remarked: ‘ I know him, and he knows me, I’ll come and hear him.’

“ When the speaker recognised Fred, he said: ‘ Is that man’s name ——?’ (mentioning his surname).

“ ‘ Yes,’ I said.

“ ‘ He tried to murder me once,’ he replied.

Edward the Terror! and Others

“ At the conclusion of the meeting he went straight to Fred and urged him to follow Christ. He surrendered, and his conversion will ever stand out as the greatest I have known. Fred, I learnt, had been tried for the murder of Jack Metcalf, of the Old Museum in the Bull Ring. His character was so black that none of his brothers or sisters would have anything to do with him. He ventured to call on his brother, a policeman, to tell him of his conversion; but his brother threatened to have him locked up if he saw him hanging about his place.

“ This brother subsequently called at the Beehive, and remarked that, if he were not living so far away, he would throw in his lot with us. His brothers and sisters, I am glad to say, are proud of Fred now. Another detective said to me: ‘ If you can tame such as him, you could tame lions.’ These wonders of grace are just what Isaiah foretold, and what Jesus Himself anticipated when He said to His disciples: ‘ Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father.’ ”

“ FRED ” AND HIS REGALIA.

Fred has now been a most faithful member of the Independent Order of Good Templars for six years, and he acted most of the time as the diligent secretary.- Sam Allen relates an interesting presentation that took place three years ago. He was asked by Fred’s wife to call, as she wanted to consult him about a matter.

He went, but what a contrast to the former visit! He noticed a nice piano and useful furniture, with all the

Glowing Facts and Personalities

little knick-knacks which impart an air of comfort to a working-man's home. The glad wife said to him: "Now, Mr. Allen, it was three years since Fred came to school. I thought I would like to buy him something, so I've bought him a Good Templar regalia, and I want Mrs. Allen to give it to him at the annual meeting next week." She then handed him the following letter:—

"DEAR MR. ALLEN,—It is three years last Sunday since Fred first came to school, and I thank God with all my heart he came, for if ever there was a drunken villain, it was Fred. He has been a teetotaler for three years. We have been married eleven, and these three have been the happiest in my life. Twelve months ago I made up my mind, if God spared me and kept Fred teetotal another year, I would make him a present. So I put a penny each day in the Girls' Bank, and with the money I have bought him this regalia, and I pray he will always wear it, and at the meetings never disgrace the colours."

It was a grand event at that annual meeting when Mrs. Allen placed the regalia round Fred's neck. The cheers that were made that night fairly lifted the roof of the Old Beehive. At the next anniversary his brother, who had been so bitter against him in his evil days, presented him with a silver watch and chain. Cannot such facts as these restore our feeble faith and quicken in us all the passion to

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save!"

Edward the Terror! and Others

“ JACK HALF-PINT.”

Sam Allen is a Divine angler, a true fisher of men. I have watched his methods, and have been surprised at his skill. The Master, when on earth, said to His friends: “ Follow Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” Sam is, in this twentieth century, a friend of that same Lord. He baits his hook with comradeship, for love alone can discover the love faculty in another. Love is the only hook that holds.

Sam strengthens his hold by the co-operation of others ; they all seem to realise at once that any new pal has to be secured for God. The thing that hinders must be got out of the way, but love must be the “ expelling ” force. Professor Seeley once called it “ the expulsive power of a new affection.” That affection, which has to be cultivated with tender care and thought, worked effectually with Jack Half-Pint, as he was nicknamed. He and I are great friends ; the reason will be evident as I unfold the story.

He attended the Beehive, where he enjoyed his pipe in the company of the Bees and their attractive leader ; but he always felt, as he said, that he must have his “ half pint ” either before he came, or immediately after he had left. He worked as a porter and carter, and “ just a half pint ” was evidently his reply when asked if he would have a drink. In this way the craving was encouraged, and if the drink was not offered, he would soon purchase “ just another half pint.” Thus odd coppers always found their way into the publican’s till.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

The summer treat of the Bees was planned to take place in fair Sabrina Valley. Pence had been saved and paid weekly towards the trip. The Saturday half-day holiday was selected, and the tickets purchased. All met at the Birmingham Snow Hill Station for the excursion. The leader had an extra ticket for a tripper who failed to come. "Jack Half-Pint" thought he would like to see his fellow-scholars start, so he suddenly appeared on the scene.

"Come along, Jack," said his teacher; "I've got an extra ticket. Jump in." And he did.

Here was a grand chance of getting something better for him than the everlasting "half pint," and several entered into a conspiracy to find this something for him. Fair Sabrina was reached, and all started for a good walk to the beautiful village of Arley, on the riverside. Somehow Jack managed to slip into a tempting public-house, to have just a half pint, before the start was made. The novelty and beauty of the surroundings, the chaff and fun of his brother Bees, and the exhilaration of the pure air, all contributed to awaken in him long-slumbering feelings.

On arriving at their journey's end they found good quarters. After enjoying a splendid tea, these merry Bees rambled by the river bank till the time for the return walk came. At the Arley quay they crowded into the spacious boat.

At length the wharf of the ancient borough of Bewdley, with its several inns, was reached. Jack's chums were near him at this anxious moment, when he suddenly noticed a public-house with the sign of "The Old Mug Inn." Jack exclaimed: "I reckon there are plenty of mugs

Edward the Terror! and Others

that go in there." But he resisted the temptation to go in himself. The Bees hurried to the station and took their seats in the return train. They all greatly enjoyed the outing, and specially the fact that Jack had been with them.

When they reached Birmingham, it was past the closing time of the public-house, so there was little chance for Jack to have "just another."

"Will you come to school in the morning, Jack?" said Mr. Allen.

"Yes, I reckon I'll be there."

And he was there; but no half pint had passed his lips. Sam recognised the man's new-born will, and encouraged him, and also urged him to have a grand try to do without the drink on the Monday. Again there was victory. He attended the Beehive on the Monday evening, signed the pledge, and joined the I.O.G.T.

That is now ten years ago. There is no more faithful Good Templar to-day than Jack. I occasionally meet him at Snow Hill Station, when he is bringing in a morning load of merchandise. His face always beams with the joy of victory. Whenever I visit the Beehive to conduct a Sunday service, Jack Half-Pint is there, and I generally find an opportunity of reminding him of the blessing of his freedom from the slavery of "just half pint." He is always ready with some cheery story of the encouragement he receives from those who have discovered the change in him; and he tells me that now, instead of the half pint, he often receives a far better "tip," in the shape of a sixpence or a shilling, which he deposits in the savings

Glowing Facts and Personalities

bank. "Each victory will help us some other to win." Jack Half-Pint, out of his own experience, can now help many others who are slaves to the awful drink habit.

IKE SMITH.

There was one man at the Beehive who specially entwined himself round my heart, because he was such a straight, outspoken, fearless type of young fellow. He was no half-and-half sort, but a man made to lead. The Devil had had the first hold on his manhood; but the Beehive company soon enlightened his eyes as to the arch deceiver. The man's name, Ike Smith, attracted me. Pudding brought him one Saturday evening to a free-and-easy concert. Mr. Allen soon button-holed him, and asked him to sing. He came to the Sunday morning adult school, and found it just what he wanted.

It was not long before he became prominent in all the good work. He had a good voice, and was ever ready to sing the Gospel message, and was never backward in giving his testimony to what Jesus had done for him. He was a grand specimen of the self-confident, skilled Birmingham mechanic. His aptitude and skill enabled him readily to secure any job that was going; but before his conversion, his love of drink, and the irregularity it produced, caused him to be the first to be discharged when work fell off.

It was when the glorious Gospel and the Spirit possessed him that the world became new to him. Jesus was his Prince and Saviour. He became a loyal and enthusiastic

Edward the Terror! and Others

follower, and in the fullest degree experienced the educative and enlightening power of salvation. His active brain was receptive ; he attended classes at the technical school, and thus qualified himself for the higher calls of electrical engineering.

But with all the joys of mental culture, his heart was also filled with a passion to save young fellows like himself ; so he, and another adult school brother of a like missionary spirit, suggested the starting of an open-air adult school in the famous Bull Ring, Birmingham, where many open-air speakers on all topics attract congregations. Ike Smith found this venture just to his heart. A little band was soon formed ; a lady bought a hand harmonium, and a well-known navy missionary assisted. At eleven o'clock each Sunday morning a pitch was made, and a listening crowd gathered.

Again and again I heard of this good work, and was invited to "come and see." So one Sunday I appeared. It so happened that David Smith, the navy missionary above-mentioned, spoke first. Another Smith, whose Christian name was Edward, followed. Ike commenced by singing one of his favourite hymns, "Come near me, O my Saviour." I shall never forget the forceful way in which he spoke. He pictured the folly of gambling, drinking, swearing, and of all the wasteful games of devildom ; then contrasted it all with the reality of the Saviour's presence, the joy of the victorious life, and the being upheld with the mighty hand of his Father God. I felt it was good to be there.

It was not long after that Ike was called to the colours,

Glowing Facts and Personalities

as he was a member of the Royal Warwickshire Territorials at the commencement of the War. In December, 1914, he was killed in action. The following notice appeared in the *Birmingham Mail* :—

“ TRIBUTE TO WAR VICTIMS.

“ In memory of two Birmingham men, Corporal Ike Smith and Lance-corporal I. W. Giblen, who had been prominent workers in connection with the religious meetings held in the Bull Ring and lodging houses of the city. Both of them were killed whilst fighting at the Front. A service was held in the Bull Ring. There was a large attendance of representatives of the various adult schools of which the two heroes were formerly members. The speakers were Mr. David Smith, honorary lay chaplain of the town guard, Mr. Robert Danks, and Mr. W. Preece, one of the originators of the Bull Ring adult school open-air meeting. A number of beautiful floral tokens were placed on the platform. The audience included Mr. Joel Cadbury, superintendent of the Floorgate Street Adult School, and Mr. W. Sturge, secretary of the Adult School Social Service Committee.”

The lay chaplain, David Smith, received a letter recently from George E——, a private in the Royal Warwicks, which stated that, through the words and consistent life in the regiment of Ike Smith, he had accepted Jesus as his Prince and Saviour. Who can measure the influence of a true Christian ?

Edward the Terror! and Others

HENRY CLARKE.

As I write, many glowing personalities pass before my mind; but I wish to mention only those who were connected with the adult school missionary advance which immediately followed the passing of Alderman White. Henry Clarke, who has already been mentioned, clings to my memory as one who was ever an embodiment of the bright and happy Christian hero. His personal magnetism influenced all who came within his reach, and it was the adult school which discovered that quality.

In the New Beehive hangs the portrait of Mr. Abraham Knowles, the beloved founder, and for many years the superintendent, of Clark Street Early Morning Adult School. One day Mr. Knowles invited Henry Clarke to join him in one of the school outings. He went, and thoroughly enjoyed the cricket and the fellowship. Mr. Clarke has a keen love of literature, and is a good essayist. As he saw these working-men, and realised his own superior endowments and tastes, he felt he might be able to help them by imparting to them something of his own knowledge about things. So when Mr. Knowles asked him to visit the school, he at once responded, and immediately became an enthusiastic worker.

Mr. Knowles, who was advanced in years, recognised Mr. Clarke's enthusiasm in the work, and retired; and in 1897 Henry Clarke was chosen to take his place. At a conference at Tipton, Mr. Clarke read a paper which dealt with the wonderful scope and potentiality of the adult school movement. It was then that I realised more than

Glowing Facts and Personalities

ever the abundant life which is possible through a whole-hearted consecration to God. Everyone, indeed, as I have already said, who came under Henry Clarke's influence caught his spiritual magnetism.

When, in 1900, at the passing of Alderman White, I was elected to the position of president of the Midland Adult School Union, I accepted the office with some little trepidation ; but it was Henry Clarke who gave me the necessary assurance. With the whole-hearted support of such a man, who could fear? His delightful letters to me generally commenced with the words, "My beloved President," or "My beloved Chief." They discovered to me the mighty power of love in fellowship.

HENRY CLARKE'S SUCCESSFUL METHOD.

When I was leaving that remarkable gathering at Bingley Hall already described, a man introduced himself to me as we walked together towards Carr's Lane Church. He said :

"Let me tell you something, Mr. Smith, that may encourage you in this adult school work. You know Henry Clarke?"

"Oh, yes," I replied.

The man then said : "I owe much to him. I was like a good many more respectable members of society who succeed in business, and who think it right and proper to remove to a suburban villa and enjoy well-earned rest and ease. I persuaded myself that, if I attended the morning service in the city church where I had been a member

Edward the Terror! and Others

for some years, I had paid due respect to the Sabbath; and that I could then, with an easy conscience, enjoy the pleasures and comforts which a bountiful Providence bestowed on the diligent. I had known Henry Clarke for some years, and had admired his business qualities and literary gifts.

“ On meeting him one Saturday, he told me of the joy he had found in the morning adult school, and said that what it had done for him it would do for me, if I joined him on Sunday mornings. In his usual forceful manner he invited me to the meeting in Clark Street, at nine a.m., that I might see for myself. I declined emphatically. His last words were: ‘ You come. I shall be on the look-out for you at nine o’clock; now don’t fail.’

“ When I left him, I was fixed in my resolve not to go; but that night I slept but little. Thoughts of Henry Clarke and the Clark Street School would not leave me. At the dawn of day I realised I must obey, which I did. Henry Clarke greeted me with a warm welcome: ‘ I knew you’d come,’ said he.

“ The sight of those men, the heartiness of the singing of the opening hymn, the well-chosen portion of Scripture, and the direct and earnest prayer, went to my very soul. I surrendered to my mentor, to do whatever he liked with me. I became a teacher, and two years have now passed. I wouldn’t miss that morning school for anything. Henry Clarke was right—the school was a religious tonic.

“ This testimony may be useful to you, for there are hundreds in our churches just drifting, instead of advancing, in spiritual life. I have seen many adult schools, but

Glowing Facts and Personalities

never one with such a 'go' as the one over which Henry Clarke presides, and his enthusiasm seems to inflame every teacher and scholar. When I visited the school, I was asked to enter at a certain door at a fixed moment, when all had reassembled from the various class-rooms after the Bible lesson. Then the signal was given, and I appeared. I was met with tremendous applause, a welcome never to be forgotten, for the men from the branch schools, in all numbering some four hundred, were there assembled."

DIGBETH INSTITUTE.

The story of the Digbeth Institute—a marvellous expression of the missionary enthusiasm of the Congregational Church worshipping in Carr's Lane, Birmingham—would fill a big book. It cost £25,000, which was contributed by friends of the Rev. J. H. Jowett in Birmingham, and in all parts of the country. A strong and passionate evangelical fervour touched every worker, so that, when completed, the institution was opened in 1907 free of debt.

It is rare that one finds such a united body of enthusiastic workers, drawn from all classes of the community. Many come miles to the work on week-nights, as well as on Sundays. Every year since the opening a unique report has been issued; it is filled with evidences of practical effort in all branches of Christian service. The scholars and students range from babes to old men and women.

But all such institutions need a real adult school to capture the men of the households, so that all the good things the institution offers may be talked about in the

Edward the Terror! and Others

homes. When the establishment of an adult school was decided upon, Henry Clarke was at once thought of as the most suitable man to act as superintendent. He was a member of Carr's Lane Congregational Church, and naturally was selected for that important office, though he found it hard to leave Clark Street. With the help of his friend, Mr. E. J. Fullwood, the following printed announcement was freely distributed and posted in the neighbourhood:—

“ THE DIGBETH INSTITUTE ADULT SCHOOL,

15,000
WORKING
MEN
IN
THIS
DISTRICT
ALONE ARE
NOW
ATTENDING
ADULT
SCHOOLS.
IF YOU HAVE
NEVER BEEN
TO AN
ADULT SCHOOL,
TRY OURS
FOR A
FEW WEEKS.

IT WILL BE
ALL RIGHT.

FOR MEN OVER 18 YEARS OLD

Opens next Sunday, 19th Jany., 1908

The Adult School is not going to be a swell affair; we care less for coats, cuffs, and collars than for men.

WE WANT MEN

Come along with us and bear a hand to start this school, and we shall all get a lift in life.

We all might be better and happier men than we are; this *school will help us along the Rough Road.*

In your *institute* you will find everything warm, light, and comfortable; you will be welcomed as a man and a brother.

We will tell you about the clubs, games, and gymnasium at nine o'clock on Sunday morning.”

Glowing Facts and Personalities

Henry Clarke was supported by a good staff of teachers, who gathered during the first year some hundred and fifty scholars every Sunday morning. A Sunday Afternoon Brotherhood followed, also week-evening clubs, a gymnasium for boys and girls, a life brigade, and every form of social effort, in order to brighten and elevate those who lived in this the oldest portion of busy Birmingham. This Digbeth Institute is rich in glowing facts and personalities. Henry Clarke has now removed to the Isle of Man, to spend there the evening of a busy life.

JACK CRUMP.

Jack Crump was always a welcome speaker at the Beehive Sunday evening meetings. At one time he had lived near to Bishopsgate Street, and knew many of the men in their unregenerate days. He seemed ever filled to overflowing with love for his fellows, and was ready at any moment to spend and be spent in their service. He realised that there was but one way in which to express his love to his Redeemer and Saviour, and that was by making known the joys of salvation to those who were living the cramped and stunted life he had lived.

At our adult school gatherings I felt it was always an honour to shake hands with one who had been so faithful and heroic in the work of soul winning. The last time I met him was at our Adult School Spring Conference at Moseley, on Saturday, March 28, 1914. On the Monday morning following I received from his sorrowing wife a postcard, which informed me that he had died suddenly on the Sunday morning. His age was only thirty-nine.

Edward the Terror! and Others

In order that the glow of that Christian soldier's life and character may not be lost to the many who loved him, I will transcribe some of his letters to me, and also record a few interesting facts which I have noted respecting him.

At one of the meetings of the Birmingham Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, a lady suggested to me that Jack Crump possessed the necessary tact and zeal for visiting some of the promising cases we were considering. She said he was an enthusiastic adult school man, and that that ought to be a recommendation to me. It certainly was. I saw and spoke to him, and soon realised our common love for those who are wandering and out of the way.

Since his death I have learnt from the lady referred to how he became known to her. The incident proves again how our Heavenly Father calls His willing children, that they may help and strengthen those who are new-born into His ever-growing kingdom here. Jack, when once suffering imprisonment in Winson Green Jail for drunkenness, was led to read the Bible in his cell. He listened to the kind words of the faithful chaplain, and resolved to seek the new life.

On his discharge he joined the Early Morning Sunday School at Garrison Lane, and soon showed his aptitude. Jack was a navvy. When the Hagley Road tram lines were being laid, a resident in that road, who was the uncle of the lady above referred to, was led to speak and distribute literature to some of these navvies during their meal-times. He thus discovered Jack, and was so interested in him that his niece suggested he should be invited to tea.

One afternoon Jack came straight from the lines, in

Glowing Facts and Personalities

full navy working attire. After a good wash he sat down with perfect confidence, and fully won the hearts of his host and hostess. They subsequently returned the call, and thus made the acquaintance of Mrs. Crump.

They proved friends indeed, for bad times followed, and work was slack. Jack was greatly depressed, and was sorely tempted of the Devil, whose service he had renounced, to go back to the old life. Prayers were wonderfully answered. One of our Birmingham adult school leaders had advertised for a caretaker for his new office premises. The ex-navvy and his wife applied; a glowing reference to his character was given by the Hagley Road Christian friends, and Jack was engaged as caretaker. Fustian garments were no longer his outer clothing, but super broad cloth. His employer was one of the many who attended the funeral to express their love and respect for Jack.

The following letter reveals the spirit of the man :—

“ DEAR MR. SMITH,—I am so overjoyed that I feel I cannot keep the good news to myself. On April 9 I went and met a man named Harry coming out of Winson Green Jail, after six weeks' imprisonment for drunkenness. I went home with him and played the part of a friend to him. I asked him to go to Moseley Road Early Morning School, and just upon its opening his old mate came in. I asked him to still be his mate, and go to school with him on Sunday. He consented to do so, and both have been regular attendants for the last three weeks.

“ My friend is a teetotaler now, and he says the happiest

Edward the Terror! and Others

place in the world to him is his home, and the dearest things are his wife and children. He says the best bit of work he has ever done, was to go to the early morning school. He says he sees things quite different now, and if he had known early morning schools were like they are, he would have been in them years ago, for his wife and children are all the happier for it.

“ Dear Mr. Smith, come and see for yourself ; I should like you to see them. Jesus Christ makes all the difference in a home. Harry is only a navvy, but there is every evidence to show he is a converted man, and that he possesses a strong desire for higher and nobler things. This is another case of ‘ mending men.’ We can see them any evening between six and eight. I am, yours in the Master’s service to raise the fallen,

“ JACK CRUMP.”

A new adult school had been opened at Bracebridge Street. Jack Crump was elected superintendent, and most earnestly did he throw himself into the work.

THE DISCHARGED PRISONERS’ AID SOCIETY.

At the monthly meeting of the committee of the Discharged Prisoners’ Aid Society, each member is furnished by the visiting agent of the society with a sheet containing the names, addresses, age, and all particulars of the prisoners discharged since the last meeting.

The nature of the aid rendered varies : it may be money for railway fares, or food, or clothing, or help to buy tools ; and often hawkers are enabled to purchase some little

Glowing Facts and Personalities

stock for a fresh start. Generally speaking, the list furnished is a sorry record. One passes name after name in review, and when considering those who have had many previous convictions, one almost despairs of our punitory measures of reform, unless they are accompanied by greater efforts to improve the environment and, by personal endeavours, to impart a heart knowledge of the saving power of Jesus Christ.

The chaplain or the visiting agent notes the most promising cases. Names are sent to the secretary of the Adult School Union, who is asked to select suitable visitors. I am generally drawn to the man with the greatest number of convictions, my thought being: Is it not possible to arrest his headlong career ?

“ S. S.”

One day I was struck with the record of a young man, twenty-six years of age, who had had sixteen previous convictions. The initial letters of his Christian and surname were “ S. S.” The chaplain remarked that this man was very promising, and that he was surprised at his every reappearance in prison. He yet hoped he would one day turn right round. I sent the man's home address to Jack ; I asked his assistance in dealing with this puzzling case. He was at once interested, and immediately took the case in hand. On May 19, 1913, he wrote me :—

“ I am writing to tell you we have captured ‘ S. S.’ We have had him now six weeks. I have not written to

Edward the Terror! and Others

tell you before ; I thought I would wait to make sure we had secured our man first. We have had so many that have come for a Sunday or two, and then left us ; but ' S. S.' has still good desires to lead a better life, as he expressed to me that he wanted ' to give up the old clique.' He came with us to Worcester on Whit Monday ; the scholars went there for their outing. He says he never enjoyed himself so much in all his life before. He says it was a lot better than sitting in the ' boozers ' in Birmingham. Since then I have got him to sign the pledge. I believe we are going to mend him and, by the help of the power of God, make a new man of him.

“ I thank God from the bottom of my heart that I was willing to be led, by the Spirit of God, to this work at Bracebridge Street Early Morning School. God has made me the means of leading a few to the path of righteousness. I was sent for, after school yesterday morning, by a broken-hearted wife, whose husband had been drinking for three weeks. Overburdened with the trouble, the poor wife unfolded the tale of sorrow to me. She was not only suffering from the misery the drink had brought, but from the sad fact that her husband had misappropriated some money as well.

“ You should have seen the sight in the front room of the house, after I had spoken to him for eight minutes about what the Lord Jesus could make of him, if he would only let Him : husband and wife in tears, and me on my knees praying the Lord would save the man from the cursed drink, and make him a good husband and a kind and loving father.

Glowing Facts and Personalities

“ I asked him if he would sign the pledge ; he did so, but I told him that was not sufficient. He must not trust to himself; he would only fail. So I got him on his knees, and he asked God to forgive him his sins, and make him a better man in the future, and I believe he rose a saved man. I left the man and his wife in more comfortable circumstances than when I found them. I ask you for your prayers, united with mine, that he may stand firm.

“ Yours, working to raise the fallen,

“ JOHN CRUMP.”

I received, shortly after this, a letter from a teacher in Bracebridge Street, which told me of the success of the school under the indefatigable labours of their superintendent. He described the visit of the school to Worcester, and gave an account of the brave act of John Crump, who jumped into the River Severn and rescued a little girl from drowning.

On July 13, 1913, I was present at the first anniversary of the opening of Bracebridge Street School. It was attended by the members of the Garrison Lane School, who came in procession, headed by a band, and were followed by representatives from eleven other schools. The scholars had subscribed for a solid silver medal, which was presented to their devoted superintendent as a token of their love. Jack was greatly moved by this hearty expression.

At this gathering I saw “ S. S.” who, a few days before, had fallen into evil company and had broken his pledge. Only the month before I met him at the summer assembly

Edward the Terror! and Others

of the schools in the Town Hall, and complimented him on his promising appearance. However, after his fall I determined to get into closer touch with him, and, in the company of a volunteer, I went to his home.

“S. S.” was just leaving as I arrived. The evidence of the drink was in his breath. We had a straight talk, and then turned back to the crowded room of a small tenement. His mother, who was there with two other women and two little ones, welcomed me. “S. S.” confessed he had never prayed, after I had spoken of the need of watching and praying, lest we should enter into temptation. I suggested that we should all unite in prayer; so we knelt in that room where prayer was *not* wont to be made. “S. S.” promised to rejoin the school. Not long after, the following report appeared in the *Birmingham Daily Post*:—

“In the Hotel Bedroom. Prisoner was looking for a Billiard Room. ‘S. S.’ was charged, under the Prevention of Crimes Act, with being found in a bedroom at a public-house, for the purpose of committing a felony. The detective superintendent produced a certificate of previous convictions. The wife of the prosecutor said she was lying down on Monday afternoon, and, in turning, saw prisoner crouching down in the room. She asked him what he wanted. He pulled his coat over his face and left the room. She followed him, and saw him subsequently talking to a man and woman outside. She caught hold of him and called her husband. A constable was fetched.

“The prisoner said he went upstairs to see if there

Glowing Facts and Personalities

was a billiard room. In answer to the solicitor who defended prisoner, she said there was a billiard room in the house. Prisoner said that since his last conviction he had been a teetotaler and had attended an adult class. He went upstairs to see if there was a billiard room.

“ John Crump, superintendent of an early morning school, said that, until three weeks ago, prisoner had been attending the school regularly. Drink was a factor in the case. Until prisoner had broken the pledge, he had been leading a better life. Witness said he would look after prisoner, if the latter was given in trust.

“ The stipendiary said he should convict, but because of the effort prisoner had made, he would not impose the maximum penalty. ‘ S. S.’ would have to go to gaol for six months.”

That made his seventeenth conviction. Again there was time for reflection. The chaplain, who never lost his interest in “ S. S.,” had many profitable talks with him. I wrote to a friend, one of the visiting justices who was well known in Birmingham for his deep interest in young men, and told him “ S. S.’s ” history up to date. He, happily, found an opportunity to talk with him, and, at the expiration of the six months, gave him good employment in his works. In due time I sent “ S. S.” a letter and my little book, *Studies of Men Mended*. He wrote :—

“ In answer to your kind and welcome letter and book, which I am very pleased with, I am very glad to tell you I have had no beer for over six months, and I feel much better without it. I went with Mr. Crump twice up to

Edward the Terror! and Others

Small Heath, and gave a lecture on drink. I done very well. I spoke for about twenty minutes, so it is not bad. I shall read your book to the chaps at the night-school on Wednesday. I am getting on all right at present, and all at home. I do hope I shall go on all right now, for I long to do the right thing ; so God help me to do so.—Yours truly,

“ S. S.”

When War was declared, “ S. S.” joined the Royal Warwickshires, and was sent for his training to the Isle of Wight. He attended regularly the village church near the fort, and sang in the choir. He wrote me from time to time cheering letters. The 4th Warwickcs were at length moved to France. Some months had elapsed, when he wrote me as follows from the Beaufort War Hospital at Bristol :—

“ I have had a very near shave of my life. I was at the battles of Ypres and St. Julien. I got wounded in the neck and gassed. Dear Mr. Smith, it's terrible out there. It is not war—it's wholesale murder. I will tell you all about it when I see you.” (He asked to be remembered to the Rev. James Blakemore, and sent a message for him to read to the men in prison.) “ I often thought of some of the men in Winson Green when I have been in the trenches, If they think of getting rich in a short time by robbery, they have made a mistake ; they are playing a losing game, and the sooner they stop the better for their own selves and their friends. I left a good job at one shilling an hour to fight for my King and all that is dear, in Flanders and the Dardanelles, but I am about beat just now ; but, thank God, I've done my bit.”

Glowing Facts and Personalities

Another letter, from the hospital at Wantage, refers to the kindness he had received. He had been reading the memoir of Joseph Cox, of the brave Worcesters. He remarks: "That book is good. I lent it to a chum that is in the same regiment as Joseph Cox. He knew him well, and was greatly interested in it."

"S. S." had seven weeks in hospital, but he could not forget the inmates of Winson Green Jail, so he sent them this other message: "Tell them, if they want to take anybody down, to try and take a few Germans down. If they want to break into their dug-outs, they will find them at home to receive them." He then refers to Lady Wantage: "She invited twenty-four of us wounded men to tea the other afternoon. I sat facing her at tea, so you see I am getting into decent company at last."

The memory of the devoted kindness and self-sacrifice of tens of thousands of the well-educated and refined women of England, will prove the redemption of many a pre-War social sinner; while the discovery of the inborn goodness of many a jail-bird Tommy will bring about more practical and helpful measures of prison reform.

THE OLD AND NEW BEEHIVES.

When the sub-lease of the Old Beehive public-house expired, it was found very difficult to obtain satisfactory terms for a new lease from the holder of the original one. It was therefore decided, notwithstanding all the tender associations of the Old Beehive, to seek other premises.

The patience and faith of the Bees, under their noble leader, will long be remembered. Offers of property were

Edward the Terror! and Others

continually being received, but after inspection and deliberation they all appeared unsuitable. An old disused chapel in Granville Street had been purchased for conversion into a warehouse. The proprietor agreed to let it for a few months ; but those months would soon pass, and the question arose as to what could be done to secure a permanent home.

The earnest prayers of the faithful Bees, who felt assured that the Lord would not forsake them, were answered in a way which seemed to many of us simply marvellous. Bishopsgate Street, whose evil reputation fifteen years before has already been referred to in these pages, had undergone many improvements at the hands of the energetic Improvement Committee of the Birmingham Town Council. Slums had disappeared, and wide, paved courts, with decent dwellings, had taken their place. Other spaces left were offered for buildings or warehouses, and were quickly secured by land speculators, who, in their turn, were ready to offer them on lease.

One of our adult school leaders secured the first refusal of a site not far from the original home of the Bishopsgate School. When the new trustees saw it, they at once secured it. The brother of the present superintendent of Clark Street Adult School, a well-known city architect, undertook to design a building that would embrace the characteristics of the old building, and also afford good rooms for the social club, class-room, and public hall, with all necessary accommodation for providing refreshments.

Three friends promised a hundred pounds each, and a Surrey friend, who had heard Sam Allen describe how God

Glowing Facts and Personalities

had blessed his efforts, promised another fifty pounds. The Bees set to work in earnest to gather sterling honey. Other friends in various parts of England where Sam was known forwarded donations. Thus financial difficulties soon melted away.

The plans of the architect met with universal approval, and the contract for the erection of the building was accepted. At the time there seemed little doubt that the New Beehive would be opened free of debt; but the Declaration of War, on August 4, 1914, made that consummation so improbable that a mortgage of four hundred pounds was obtained. As the building approached completion, the expectations of the scholars ran high. It was a constant theme. Old scenes were talked over, and prospects of new work discussed.

Mr. Allen wrote me a memorable letter, in which he describes the removal of the adult school from the old to the new home:—

“When we came out of school on Sunday, there was a policeman outside. He said: ‘I am only come to see you out all right.’ He then continued: ‘My word, you have dressed the notches of some of them!’ Then he pointed to some coming out, and said: ‘Look at him, and at him! What he used to be, and look at him now!’ Then to another: ‘Look at him! Goodness! I can scarcely believe it’s the same man, and quite a dozen more of the same sort.’ The ‘Copper Basher’ appeared, and the constable said: ‘If ever a man was glad when you got him with you, it was me, for he was the worst we ever had to deal with.’ Then he mentioned about

Edward the Terror! and Others

twenty more: 'Poor Old Sol,' 'Pud,' 'Dick,' 'Fred,' 'Jack,' 'Half-Pint,' and others.

"I felt quite pleased to hear a policeman talk like that. He asked: 'When are you going to open the new place? I, for one, will be glad. It's not this sort that trouble us now—you have calmed them down—but it's them young uns that trouble us now, from sixteen to twenty years old. The place is all alive with them.'

"We had a good muster on Sunday. We marched down to St. Martin's Church, and had a good turn. All our chaps knew the service by heart; they said they learnt it up at Winson Green."

THE OPENING OF THE NEW BEEHIVE.

When the building was finished and furnished, all the friends were filled with gratitude to the Great Giver. Wednesday, October 14, 1914, was fixed for the first day of opening. Rev. Canon Willink, the Rector of Birmingham (who had shown such a keen interest in the work of adult schools since his coming to the city, and had given a helpful address at one of the summer gatherings in the Birmingham Town Hall), conducted the opening service. The Canon based his address on a beautiful phrase of the late Bishop Wilkinson's: "Work, as if success depended entirely on your own efforts; and pray, as if it depended entirely on God's."

On the evening of Thursday, October 15, the Rev. Arthur Robinson, minister of the Church of the Redeemer, Hagley Road, where Sam was so miraculously called, conducted a service, and dedicated the social room to the

Glowing Facts and Personalities

memory of Mr. Abraham Knowles, the founder of the Clark Street School.

On Friday evening, October 16, Alderman J. H. Lloyd presided, and Mr. E. J. Fullwood (who, at the conception and starting of the work, was one of Sam's greatest supporters,) lectured on the educational work of the Beehive.

On Saturday evening, October 17, there was a crowded hall, and the president of the Midland Adult School Union was in the chair. An excellent concert was given by the Male Voice Choir from Clark Street Adult School.

On the Sunday following, the Adult School was held in the morning. At three o'clock there was a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon meeting; and in the evening a Gospel service was conducted by Mr. Cooke, the superintendent of the Clark Street School.

So hearty and inspiring were all these services, so cheered were Mr. and Mrs. Allen and their family, so delighted were the old Bees in their new hive, and so busy were they in receiving the congratulations of the friends who crowded that evening meeting, that it seemed as though there would be no parting; but finally all moved homewards, their hearts overflowing with gratitude to the loving Father, to the guiding and sustaining Spirit, and to the Son of Love, Whose constant presence had inspired all to work for the Kingdom of God in what was, at the beginning of this century, an evil and dangerous part of the city of Birmingham.

FINIS.

