

George Müller

by E. R. Pitman

Chapter 1.—Early Life.

On Ashley Down, near Bristol, may be seen a cluster of noble buildings, celebrated as the homes of friendless orphans. Five immense Orphan Houses, containing over 2,000 [orphans], are standing witnesses to the piety, philanthropy, and faith of their founder, George Müller.

And yet his youth was not remarkable for either sober or serious conduct. In his own account of his early days, he tells us of frequent offences against the strict law of rectitude and uprightness of life; and narrates, with penitence, many faults which he then committed.

A German—or rather a Prussian—by birth, he first saw the light on September 27th, 1805. It seems that there was an elder son, but the father unwisely preferred George to his brother, "which was very injurious to both boys, and caused the latter to entertain a feeling of dislike both to him and his father."

George's birthplace was the little Prussian town of Kroppenstaedt; and his father occupied an official position there. But when his younger son was between four and five years of age, Herr Müller removed to Heimersleben, a town about four miles off. There he was appointed to a position in the Excise; and, although by no means a rich man, indulged his two sons considerably as far as pocket-money went. Wishing them to know how to possess money without spending it, and by this kind of discipline to practise its right use, Herr Müller gave his boys very liberal allowances. Unfortunately, however, they spent their money in ways not very creditable to themselves, with the natural results of vexation and punishment.

When between ten and eleven years of age, George was sent to the Cathedral Classical School at Halberstadt, in order to be prepared for the University. It was his father's intention to make a clergyman of him as soon as he should attain a fitting age; but, first, he resolved to give him the priceless boon of a good education. Still, it appears, from Mr. Müller's own account of himself, that at this time he was very far from being either studious or prayerful. The father's idea of making the lad a clergyman seems to have been prompted by a desire to see him in a good position of life; while the question of special fitness for the work of the ministry was either ignored or forgotten. But, though he never

became a Lutheran clergyman, as his father desired, God overruled the whole in a most wonderful manner, so that no minister of this generation has accomplished a greater amount of good.

When George was about fourteen years of age, he lost his mother by sudden illness. It does not appear that she exercised any very powerful influence on his life; but, undoubtedly, the boy was worse off, as far as regarded loving guidance, by her removal. For a little time he mourned her loss sincerely, but her death made no lasting impression on him, and, although so young, he sometimes went to taverns, where his health and time were wasted in drinking and card-playing.

The time of George's confirmation now drew on, as he was nearly fifteen, and quite old enough to appreciate serious instruction. Sometimes the solemn nature of this new engagement caused him to be very sad and thoughtful for a few days; but he would be led away by bad companions, and spend his time in such a manner as to lay up very bitter memories. Yet the lad's conscience pricked him, and he looked around for some way of deliverance; believing that, with a new mode of life and new companions, he should be able to reform.

He was confirmed, and partook of the Lord's Supper at Easter, 1820. After this he spent some time in private meditation, and formed many good resolutions. "But," he says, "as I had no regard to God, and attempted the thing in my own strength, all soon came to nothing, and I grew worse."

Just at this juncture, his father was appointed to a Government office at Schoenebeck, near Magdeburg; and George entreated that he might be permitted to leave the school at Halberstadt for that of the city of Magdeburg. Desiring to break off certain friendships he had formed which were hurtful to him, his father acceded to this request, so far as to permit him to leave Halberstadt, and to remain at Heimersleben, under a classical tutor. Some months passed in this way; and during the intervals of study, the young man superintended certain alterations which were being made in his father's house in that town.

One day, when he was about sixteen years of age, he started on an excursion to Brunswick, spending about a week at that place. Going to an expensive hotel, he boarded somewhat luxuriously, although he had previously spent all his money, and was compelled to give up to the landlord his best clothes in lieu of payment. After this he had a similar escapade at Wolfenbüttel, which ended far more unpleasantly.

On attempting to leave this hotel, without having settled his bill, he was followed and arrested. Being taken to prison, he spent three weeks

of the Christmas holidays of 1821 there, awaiting remittances from his father. These coming to hand after some little delay, the debt at the hotel was paid, and George was set free. Going to his father at Schoenebeck, he received a severe beating, which he most certainly deserved.

About this time the intention of placing him at Magdeburg was finally abandoned; but a very satisfactory improvement took place in his conduct. He became very penitent and remorseful for his past follies, and applied himself so diligently to study as to be able to take pupils in French, Latin, German and arithmetic. After some months of exemplary labour, he was sent to Nordhausen, and was admitted into the Gymnasium there. He continued in this school two years and a-half, becoming proficient in Latin classics, French, history, and other subjects, as well as studying Hebrew, Greek and mathematics; and so diligent did the young man become that he rose at four o'clock in the morning, and worked at his books all day until ten at night.

He was now about twenty years of age, and, in some respects, had decidedly "turned over a new leaf." He possessed a very fair library of three hundred volumes; but had not a Bible. He took the Lord's Supper, along with the other young students, about twice a year; but notwithstanding this outward reformation, as his heart remained unchanged, it was not right in the sight of God, and at a later period he says in his journal: "I had now grown so wicked that I could habitually tell lies without blushing. And, further, to show how fearfully wicked I was, I will mention, out of many others, only one great sin of which I was guilty before I left this place. Through my dissipated life, I had contracted debts which I had no means of discharging, for my father could allow me only so much as would suffice for my regular maintenance.

"One day, after having received a sum of money from him, and having purposely shown it to some of my companions, I afterwards feigned that it was stolen, having myself by force injured the lock of my trunk, and having also designedly forced open my guitar case. I also feigned myself greatly frightened at what had happened, ran into the director's room with my coat off, and told him that my money was stolen. I was greatly pitied. Some friends also gave me now as much money as I pretended to have lost, and the circumstance afforded me a ground upon which to ask my creditors to wait longer."

Yet Müller owns that he felt many convictions of conscience over this escapade. The wife of the director of the school had waited upon him in a long illness like a mother; and as he thought of this deception, he

could never afterwards feel easy in her presence. In a short time, however, he exchanged the school for the University of Halle.

After having become a member of this University with very honourable testimonials, he obtained a licence to preach in the pulpits of the Lutheran Church, a permission which led him to consider his mode of life, and to resolve to amend his ways, knowing full well that if he did not, no parish would make choice of him for a pastor; and as in Prussia no minister can obtain a good living who does not pass his examination with some honourable degree, when entering upon this final and important stage of his ministerial training he formed many serious resolutions.

But they all came to nothing. Almost from the day of his entering Halle, he renewed his profligate life. He first spent his money, then pawned his clothes and watch, in order to raise more funds wherewith to frequent taverns and other places of doubtful amusement; so that months passed away, in alternate sin and remorse. Sometimes, for a change, he and a few of his fellow-students would unite to make up a pleasure party, pledge their most valuable books, and travel about the country. One of these journeys lasted forty-three days, and Müller owns that he contrived to lessen his own expenses by pilfering from the common purse. Then, on returning home, he had to tell a number of lies to satisfy his father in relation to the expenses incurred in this long journey. It seems that during those weeks spent at home he experienced much sorrow of heart as well as conviction of his sinful course, and made earnest resolves to do better; but, on returning to the University, these good resolutions faded away once more, and the young man returned with avidity to his evil ways.

It appears, however, that this time was a memorable one in Müller's history, in spite of sins and falls. He tells us that, although a divinity student of twenty years of age, and licensed to preach, he had not read the Bible for years, and indeed did not possess one; yet he owns that God strove with him by His Holy Spirit, and laid bare before him the sinfulness of his life, alarming his conscience so much that he could not rest. He acknowledged, too, that he had never, up till this time, heard the Gospel preached, or met with a person who was determined to fashion his life according to the Scriptures.

Dissipation and study, alternated with serious resolves at times, seem to have made up the greater part of his youthful life. It was a most unpromising one, and to any thoughtful observer it would have seemed impossible that George Müller—the idle and untruthful boy, the thoughtless and dissipated student—could ever have developed into

the pious pastor, the practical philanthropist, and the faithful, prayerful Christian of later days. But Mr. Müller recorded these incidents in his diary, as he tells us, for the encouragement of any like-minded youths who may yet experience serious impressions, and to the praise of that God who so graciously brought him out of darkness into His marvellous light. His whole history is full of instruction to young men, for, from having been a dissipated, careless student, he became remarkable for piety, prayerfulness, and usefulness; and the foregoing particulars may be received as a strictly true account, as the incidents given in this and the following chapters have been gleaned from Mr. Müller's own works.

Chapter 2.—A New Career.

Some time in November, 1825, soon after he had passed his twentieth birthday, he met with another student named Beta, an old acquaintance. This young man had formerly been quiet, and even serious; in his old schoolboy days he seemed to have had convictions of sin and a desire to serve the Lord, but the associations and influences of University life had made him as careless and prayerless as his comrades. Müller joined him now, however, hoping to find that the serious thoughtfulness respecting divine things which he formerly remembered in his friend was still existing, and would be helpful to him; but he found that Beta was a backslider, though there still remained in him some desire after good things, and a faint desire to live a better life. Müller also experienced enough of this feeling himself to sympathise with his friend; so that when Beta told him he was in the habit of meeting with a few friends at the house of a Christian man each Saturday evening, for the purposes of prayer and Bible study, his heart responded to the invitation. He says: "He told me that they read the Bible, sang, prayed, and read a printed sermon. No sooner had I heard this than it was to me as if I had found something after which I had been seeking all my life long." He begged to go to the meeting at once, and Beta took him to the house in question on the next meeting night, where a tradesman named Wagner, who was a good Christian man, was the head of the household.

That evening was the turning-point in Müller's life. It was only a simple meeting for prayer, praise, and the reading of a printed sermon; yet by means of it he saw for the first time his lost and ruined condition by nature, and was enabled to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ *alone* for salvation. A young man, who afterwards went out to Africa in connection with the London Missionary Society, read a chapter and the sermon, and doubtless could have given an address, but at that time "no regular meetings for expounding the Scriptures were allowed in

Prussia, except an ordained clergyman were present." The impression made on Müller's mind was so great that he went to the house for three or four succeeding evenings to study the Bible with Wagner, and from that time lived a new life. He says of himself: "Now my life became very different, though not so that my sins were all given up at once. My wicked companions were abandoned, the going to taverns was entirely discontinued, the habitual practice of telling falsehoods was no longer indulged in; but, still, a few times after this I spoke an untruth. At the time when this change took place I was engaged in translating a novel out of French into German, for the press, in order to gratify my desire to see Paris. ...At last, however, seeing the whole was wrong, I determined never to sell it, and was enabled to abide by this determination."

Müller was sometimes laughed at by his fellow-students because of his changed habits. They could not understand a man who read the Bible, prayed often, went to prayer-meetings, avoided open sins, and stood out on the side of Jesus Christ. But he cared not for this. He loved Christ because He had saved him from his sins; and the love of Christ, as a constraining power, was strong enough to keep him courageous and steadfast; for he was prepared to sacrifice any company, to forego any indulgence, and to perform any task, if only he might "win Christ" and live a Christian life.

After George Müller once understood the plan of salvation himself, he desired to become the instrument of saving others. He could not endure the thought of being an *idle* Christian, but looked about for some means of benefiting and instructing others. He became much interested in missionary work, and circulated many papers bearing on this subject. Further, he desired to enter the missionary field himself, and sought out those young people of his acquaintance who were really like-minded. Dr. Tholuck, a sincere and evangelical Christian, entered the University of Halle at this time as Professor of Divinity; and this circumstance proved of much help to him.

Very soon he sent a letter to his father and brother, telling them of the great change which had passed over him; but, to his astonishment, received only an angry letter in reply. After this, it was not very surprising that his request to be allowed to engage in missionary work should meet with no encouragement. Müller says: "My father was greatly displeased, and particularly reproached me, saying that he had expended so much money on my education in the hope he might comfortably spend his last days with me in a parsonage, and that he now saw all these prospects come to nothing. He was angry, and told me he would no longer consider me as his son. But the Lord gave me

grace to remain steadfast. He then entreated me, and wept before me; yet even this far harder trial the Lord enabled me to bear. Before I went away, I took an opportunity of reminding my brother of my former wicked life, and told him that now, having been blessed by God, I could not but live for Him. After I had left my father, though I wanted more money than at any previous period of my life, as I had to remain two years longer in the University, I determined never to take any more from him, for it seemed to me wrong, so far as I remember, to suffer myself to be supported by him, when he had no prospect that I should become what he would wish me to be, namely, a clergyman with a good living. This resolution I was enabled to keep "

Now began that remarkable life of faith which has been one of the wonders of the religious world during this century. Müller had to look about him for supplies of money, and just at this juncture some American gentlemen came to Halle to pursue their studies. Dr. Tholuck recommended young Müller to their notice, as competent to teach them German, and to write out for them the lectures of certain professors in the University not translated. He did this, and so handsomely did the Americans remunerate him, that he had enough money and to spare.

After this, he was recommended to renounce all idea of engaging in missionary work; but still the desire lingered in his heart. He spoke seriously to some of his former companions, not only confessing his own sins and shortcomings, but urging them to seek the same Saviour that he had found; and in one or two cases was instrumental in the conversion of these companions. Then, his mind still inclining to missionary work, he endeavoured to decide the matter to the best of his own judgment, but afterwards, upon obtaining clearer light, he felt that it would be right to seek guidance by waiting only upon *God*. He records that the providential leadings of his life did not seem to point distinctly to missionary work in foreign lands, although at one time he earnestly longed to labour among the heathen in the East Indies; and although he relied on his own judgment concerning different matters, when puzzled to know how to act, he invariably found that on each occasion he went wrong; whereas, by cultivating a spirit of humble, believing prayer, his course was marked out rightly. Thus was developed a spirit of simple, trusting, childlike confidence in God.

After this, with the instinct of a truly converted soul, he looked about for opportunities of usefulness. He visited sick people, gave away many hundreds of tracts, and spoke to persons whom he met walking in the fields about their souls. Then he began to preach. His first sermon was delivered just before he attained the age of twenty-one.

After writing a sermon he committed it to memory, and delivered it before two audiences, and desiring to preach a third time, but having learned no other sermon by heart, he began to expound Matt, v., when he was exceedingly helped and blessed in doing so. After this he preached in both ways to different audiences, and observed that while those sermons committed to memory were more praised, those delivered as extempore addresses were the means of doing the most good. This encouraged him to adopt the extempore plan.

About this time, through particular circumstances, he was glad to live in free lodgings, provided for poor divinity students in Franke's Orphan House at Halle, where much of his time was spent in attending meetings, studying the Bible, and preparing for public ministrations. When he did not preach himself, he frequently walked fifteen miles to hear some godly clergyman preach.

After another year had passed by in this manner, Müller applied to Dr. Tholuck for a recommendation to a post at Bucharest as minister under the Continental Missionary Society, and, quite unexpectedly, his father consented to this step, although Bucharest was over a thousand miles from his home; but as circumstances turned out unfavourably, on account of the war at that time raging between Russia and Turkey, the purpose was given up. This opening being closed, Dr. Tholuck asked the young man whether he would like to be employed as a missionary to the Jews; and on receiving an answer in the affirmative (as Mr. Müller greatly loved the Jews, and was very fond of Hebrew), opened negotiations with the London Society on Müller's behalf. At last, after some delays, an offer was made that, if he would come to London and become a missionary student for six months, on approbation, the Committee would be happy to treat with him. This answer was somewhat disappointing, seeing that it postponed his time for active service indefinitely; but Müller went.

Before he could leave the country, however, he had to encounter an obstacle which every German male subject has to meet on leaving his native land. In speaking of this difficulty, he says: "Every Prussian male is under the necessity of being for three years a soldier, provided his state of body allows it; but those who have had a classical education up to a certain degree, and especially those who have passed the University, need only to be one year in the army, but have to equip and maintain themselves during that year. Now, as I had been considered fit for service when I was examined in my twentieth year, and had only been put back at my own request till my twenty-third year, and as I was now nearly twenty-three, I could not obtain a passport out of the country till I had either served my time, or had been

exempted by the king himself. The latter I hoped would be the case; for it was a well-known fact that those who had given themselves to missionary service had always been exempted. Certain brethren of influence, living in the capital, to whom I wrote on the subject, advised me, however, to write first to the Government of the province to which I belonged. This was done, but I was not exempted. Then these brethren wrote to the king himself; but he replied that the matter must be referred to the ministry and to the law; and no exception was made in my favour."

Müller was now placed in circumstances of much difficulty. He dared not leave the country, and he longed to be actively engaged in Christian service. Illness came on, probably induced, either wholly or partially, by anxiety of mind, and he suffered much weakness, consequent on breaking a blood-vessel in the stomach. After his recovery, he received a letter from the American Professor to whom he had been indebted before, inviting him to come to Berlin; offering him employment in teaching, and suggesting that by residing near the Court, he would be more likely to obtain exemption from military duty than if he remained at Halle.

January, 1829, drew on, and Müller was in his twenty-fourth year. It seemed that there was no help for it, but he must become a soldier. A Christian officer, who knew of the circumstances, proposed that the young man should offer himself for military service, so that on examination, he being manifestly too weak for the army, would by this means gain his full discharge. This suggestion was entertained. Müller was examined, and to his joy was declared unfit to serve. With a medical certificate to this effect, Müller went to the chief general, who passed him on to a second physician, enjoining a second and strict examination. This took place, but the opinion of the first surgeon was confirmed, and Müller was free. The chief general made out his papers with his own hands, exonerating the young man from all army service, *for life*, and spoke kindly to him respecting his prospects of usefulness among the Jews. Thus he was at liberty to accept the offer of the London committee, which he did as soon as the winter weather admitted. But his time at Berlin had not been lost; each week he had visited, and preached in the wards of the poor-house and the cells of the prison, doing good, as he found opportunity, to all men.

He first paid a short visit to his father, and then departed for London, arriving in the metropolis in March. He soon found the regulations of the seminary in which he was appointed to study rather irksome; insomuch that he owns that had there not been a degree of grace in him, he could not have submitted to them. Still, for the sake of his

chosen work, he plodded hard at Hebrew, Chaldee, and German-Jewish, alternating these studies with prayer that God would bless and prosper them. After some months of study, however, varied by occasional labours among the Jews in London, Mr. Müller dissolved his connection with this society from conscientious motives. After this, he went into Devonshire, and preached to different congregations of Christians belonging to the Plymouth Brethren. This step ultimately led to his settling at Teignmouth as minister of a small church there.

He tells us that by this time his views had undergone a very decided change in relation to the support of the ministry, and the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He had not long been in this position before he informed the Church to which he ministered that he should decline to receive any stated salary, but should accept only that which each hearer felt voluntarily inclined to contribute towards his support. As he married just at this juncture, and his total salary amounted only to about £55, it may be supposed that both his wife and himself were people of faith and prayer. Pew-rents were abolished ; and Mr. Müller adopted the principle of believers baptism only, although by this step he lost £30 of his annual salary. From October 1830, however, he received only those voluntary offerings contributed by Christian people towards his support.

This new manner of life sometimes brought him into straits and difficulties, but they were only temporary. Sometimes he and his wife would be reduced to their last penny, or their last piece of bread, but in answer to prayer abundant supplies would be forthcoming in a few hours. For instance, on one occasion, they had only a little butter left for breakfast, but within a short time £1 8s. 10 1/2d. were given him out of the contribution-box at the chapel. Speaking of these experiences Mr. Müller says:—"Whilst we have often been brought low, yea, so low that we have not had one single penny left, or so as to have the last bread on the table and not as much money as was needed to buy another loaf, yet *never* have we had to sit down to a meal without our good Lord having provided nourishing food for us." Sometimes while he was praying supplies would come, and these supplies were either money or food or clothing necessary *just at that time*. On principle, he never contracted bills, preferring to suffer privation than to live in debt. If they had not the money to buy supplies, they waited until the Lord inclined some friend to send the means, and in no case were they disappointed.

On commencing this life of faith, Mr. Müller records that he gave up to the Lord all he possessed, amounting to about £100 a year at most, but that God so blessed the sacrifice, that on reviewing the first four

years of this kind of life, he found that he had received from all quarters, for the first year, £130; for the second year, £151; for the third year, £191; and for the fourth year, £261. Thus his wants had not only been supplied, but God had greatly honoured the faith of his servant; while by this mode of life he experienced less anxiety as to temporal things than when taking a regular salary and managing accordingly.

After about two years and a-half spent in Teignmouth, Mr. Müller went to Bristol, feeling guided thither by providential leadings, and commenced preaching in company with Rev. Henry Craik, whose acquaintance he had made while residing in Devonshire. These gentlemen occupied the pulpits of two chapels, named respectively Gideon and Bethesda Chapels, and soon gathered large congregations of hearers and professed believers. Mr. Müller, together with Mr. Craik, made the condition on accepting the invitation to preach there "that pew-rents should be done away with, and that he should go on, respecting the supply of his temporal wants, as in Devonshire." The people assented, and Mr. Müller commenced his life among the Christians of Bristol.

Soon after settling there cholera broke out in the city, and numbers of persons were anxious about their souls. Many were added to the Churches, so that the word of God seemed to prevail mightily; while the life of simple faith which Mr. Müller and his friends lived became a striking witness to the truth of God's promises. But greatly increased mercies seemed to point to increased responsibilities. It was not in George Müller to be an idle or indifferent worker in the Master's vineyard; accordingly, as soon as possible, he looked about for more work to do on behalf of both the bodies and souls of those around him.

That this work was needed was very evident. Hundreds of destitute children were running about Bristol, cared for by no man. When Mr. Müller saw them, his mind reverted to the institution opened at Halle by Francke, the German philanthropist, for orphan children; and he desired greatly to be able to do something for them. But he knew that if supplies came they must come through the same channels as those made use of for the satisfying of his own wants. It seemed difficult to attempt to feed, clothe, and educate poor destitute children while from day to day he himself was dependent upon those gifts sent only in answer to prayer. But faith reasoned, that if by this means he could strengthen and establish the confidence of his fellow Christians, it was his duty to try the experiment. He judged that if he should be enabled thus to provide everything for the orphans by waiting habitually upon God, *indisputable* proof would be given, both to the world and the

church, that He is not only able but willing to provide for His children, and to honour the faith and reward the confidence of those who put their trust in Him. In this way Müller's Orphan Houses have become standing witnesses to God's faithfulness.

Chapter 3.—Beginnings of Work for the Destitute.

The first entry in Mr. Müller's journal relative to his special work for orphan and destitute children, is dated June 12, 1833, and runs thus:—

"I felt this morning that we might do something for the souls of these poor boys and girls, and grownup or aged people, to whom we have daily given bread for some time past, in establishing a school for them, reading the Scriptures to them, and speaking to them about the Lord. As far as I see at present, it appears well to me to take a place in the midst of the poor streets near us, to collect the children in the morning about eight, giving them each a piece of bread for breakfast, and then to teach them to read, or to read the Scriptures to them, for about a hour and a-half."

This plan was carried out for some time, but the beggars of the city, to the number of sixty or eighty each day, infested the street and caused such complaints to arise that the practice was dropped, and for some time Mr. Müller was led to pray about the right course to pursue. Ultimately he formed a new society for this and other objects, called "The Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad."

This institution was different from most other religious and benevolent societies in many ways. Mr. Müller decided that it should have no patron but the Lord, no workers but believers, and that no debts should be contracted. The special *objects* of the institution were to assist day schools, Sunday schools, and adult schools; to circulate the Holy Scriptures; to aid missionary work; and to board, clothe, and educate scripturally destitute children who have been bereaved of both parents by death. This institution has been so successful, that from the time it was originated until the year 1884, it provided for the education of 95,143 children or grown persons in its schools; circulated over one million copies or portions of God's Word; spent £196,633 12s. 5d. on missionary work; and trained up 6,892 orphans at a cost of £661,186 9s. 2d. All this was accomplished by prayerful waiting upon God. Not a single person had ever been asked for a penny; but He who owns the gold and silver of all the earth had inclined people to send donations from all parts of the world. It is remarkable that the *largest* donation ever given for the orphans was nine thousand one hundred pounds, and the smallest *one farthing*.

But this was the day of small things. Müller had neither a place wherein to house the children, nor a farthing to commence with. He prayed frequently over the matter, asking God to give them a suitable house, assistants for the work, and a thousand pounds in money, so that he might distinctly see the hand of God in the matter. The first donation he received was the sum of one shilling from a missionary who was staying with him. A few days later, a poor young needlewoman brought the large sum of £100 wherewith to help forward the project. Mr. Müller at first declined to take it, feeling the sacrifice to be too great for her. After the donation was declined, however, she came again, and urged him to accept it. Upon inquiry as to how she came by so large a sum, it appeared that this was part of a legacy left to her by her grandfather, and that she desired to devote this portion to the Lord. This young woman was very infirm, and sickly in body, and was unable to earn more than about three-and-sixpence weekly; but so charitable was she, that Mr. Müller records various other gifts besides this £100, to poor and sick people out of her little fortune of £480. Other contributions followed, together with articles of household furniture and wearing apparel, until he felt justified in believing that the Lord had answered his petitions, and was pleased at the thing which was in his heart to do. Among these early donations of furniture and useful articles we find named, a wardrobe, three dishes, twenty-eight plates, three basins, one jug, four mugs, three salt-stands, one grater, four knives and five forks. Just afterwards, another brought three dishes, twelve plates, one basin and one blanket; while a third individual unexpectedly sent £50.

Mr. Müller felt convinced by this time that he should go forward, and establish a home for orphans, which should be a standing witness to the power of prayer and the faithfulness of God in answering prayer. He strictly adhered to his decision respecting solicitation for money or help, sternly setting his face against the practice, and preferring to test God's promises in earnest continued supplication.

Writing at this time, he says, "All this money and all these articles have been given, and all these above-mentioned offers have been made, without my asking any individual for anything; moreover, almost all has been sent from individuals concerning whom I had naturally no reason to expect anything, and some of whom I never saw. Upon the consideration of these facts, therefore, I am clearly persuaded that it is the will of the Lord I should proceed in the work." For Müller to see a thing was to do it.

Accordingly, he laid his plans. He would commence by renting a house at about £50 per annum, make it fit to accommodate thirty

orphan girls, between the ages of seven and twelve years, and keep them in the house until they were old enough to go to service. This was the germ of the great Orphan Houses on Ashley Down—the beginning of a great enterprise.

A house of the requisite size and rent was secured in Wilson Street, two helpers volunteered their services, and then Mr. Müller appointed a time for interviews with any person desirous of recommending children for the benefits of the home. These interviews were to take place in the vestry of his chapel. Marvellous to say, however, after waiting two hours on the morning in question, no applicants appeared. Müller began to examine himself to see if he had been remiss on any point, and he found he had never prayed *for children*, taking it for granted that plenty of applications would be made, once the provision was known.

"So far as I remember," says he, "I brought even the most minute circumstances concerning the orphan-house before the Lord in my petitions, being conscious of my own weakness and ignorance. There was, however, one point I had never prayed about, namely, that the Lord would send children, for I naturally took it for granted that there would be plenty of applications. The nearer, however, the day came which had been appointed for receiving applications, the more I had a secret consciousness that the Lord might disappoint my natural expectations, and show me that I could not prosper in one single thing without Him. The appointed time came, and not even one single application was made. I had before this even repeatedly tried whether I might not, after all, against the Lord's mind have engaged in the work."

He now made earnest prayer that God would manage even this part of the matter, and bring the project to nought, or send children, just as it seemed good to Him. The *very next day* an application was made, and this was followed by numerous other applications.

The house in Wilson Street became filled with motherless and fatherless orphans, the matrons were busily at work, and assistance came from all parts of the United Kingdom, and even from other countries. Some of the gifts and offers of help were of a curious character. One man offered to make a bedstead if anybody would give the wood; while his wife, a straw-bonnet maker, offered to make the girls' bonnets gratuitously if any other friend would give the straw. Some sent necklaces and brooches to be sold for the good of the orphans; others sent articles of food, coal, clothing and furniture. As samples of the whole, the following gifts may be mentioned as having come to hand at the time of the opening of this first house: six yards of

calico, one ton of coal, plates, cups and saucers, jugs, tin plates and dishes, two waiters, two candlesticks, a tin kettle, a fire-guard, a teapot, a grater, two saucepans, fifty-five thimbles, a clothes-horse, a coffeepot, a washing-tub, a coffee-mill, two dozen bodkins, 300 needles, six pots of blacking, a pound of thread, a deal table, thirty-four yards of print, one dozen pocket-handkerchiefs; four pairs of stockings, twelve yards of gingham from Switzerland, two large iron pots, ready-made garments of various sizes, and many donations in money.

The house was opened on April 11th, 1836, and a few days afterward a special day was set apart for prayer and thanksgiving.

The applications increased in number until it became evident that a new home must be opened for younger children. Several applicants pressed claims of young children between the ages of four and seven, and Mr. Müller felt that it would be doubting the Lord if he refused them. He reasoned that infancy constituted the most tender age, that its very helplessness created a stronger tie upon Christian philanthropists, and that if left to itself would almost certainly be a time wherein much evil could be communicated, and many bad habits learnt. Beside this, there were at that date scarcely any institutions in the kingdom open to infant orphans; while, in addition, many friends had urged the claims of infant orphan *boys*. Looking at the matter all round, Mr. Müller resolved on another bold venture of faith, not, however, without prayerful consideration. "Partly on account of these considerations," he says, "and partly because the Lord has done hitherto far above what I could have expected, I have at last, after repeated prayer, come to the conclusion in the name of the Lord, and in dependence upon Him alone for support, to propose the establishment of an infant orphan house."

Mr. Müller looked about him for suitable premises and fitting helpers, two things without which it would have been useless to begin. He decided to receive into this home boys and girls from the earliest ages to the seventh year, when they would be eligible for the other orphan houses; for it is no secret that he contemplated the growth of this enterprise. Both the homes were to be open to any orphans living in any part of the United Kingdom, as far as the accommodation permitted.

This second orphan house was opened about eight months after the first. Another house was taken in Wilson Street, with a nice piece of playground attached. Mr. Müller says that had he laid out many hundred pounds in building a house, he could not have obtained better

premises. Some of the elder and stronger girls belonging to the first orphan house were employed in the infant orphan house, under the direction of the matron and governess, thus inducting these girls into household and nursery work, and indirectly fitting them for service. In this way, Mr. Müller and his assistants had, in the two houses now occupied, sixty-six orphans under their care. So he proceeded until the whole of his money was expended.

Then was the time to put his God and Father to the test. It became a struggle with him whether he should go on with the work to which he had voluntarily set his hand, or faint and grow despairing. But George Müller never knew defeat in the Lord's work. He judged it impossible that God could fail of keeping His promises, provided His people were only earnest and persevering in prayer. Besides, he had received too many answers to prayer in the past to sit down despondently now, because of the apparent lack of means. His feeling was:—

"Why should we ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious, or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And strength, and joy, and courage are with Thee?"

Chapter 4.—Trials of Faith and Prayer.

In commencing his labours on behalf of destitute orphans, Mr. Müller had prayed that £1,000 might be given to him as a token that the Lord looked favourably upon his enterprise. By June, 1837, every penny of that sum had been sent to him, without one single individual having been asked for any contribution. This fact so encouraged him to pray and trust for further supplies, that he determined to proceed in his chosen mission to the friendless. He decided to open a third orphan house. "As an orphan house for boys above seven years of age seems greatly needed in this city, and as also without it we know not how to provide for the little boys in the infant orphan house when they are above seven years of age, I propose to establish an orphan house for about forty boys above seven years of age."

He accordingly rented a large and commodious house which he intended to serve as the boys' orphan home; but some persons living in that part of the city threatened the landlord with an action on account of his having let the house for a charitable institution. Mr. Müller at once gave it up to avoid litigation, feeling sure that the Lord would soon provide other premises; and shortly after a house was offered in Wilson Street, near the others, while a sister sent £50 to assist in furnishing it. This house would accommodate thirty boys, so that when filled, as it soon was, Mr. Müller's whole number of orphans was

ninety-six. A pretty large family this.

But at the end of twelve months he was penniless. All the money which had come in by subscriptions had been expended; and unless the same One who "feeds the young ravens when they cry," sent supplies of money, or food, or clothes, the enterprise would come to an end. What was to be done? Summoning his co-workers to meet him, Mr. Müller commenced united meetings for prayer, beseeching the Lord to grant supplies to those who were so manifestly looking up to Him for their next meals. Sometimes it happened that they actually came to their last bit of meat, or loaf of bread. The barrels of treacle were empty, wages were unpaid, and no money remained wherewith to purchase milk for the young children. As under no circumstances were bills contracted, it may be imagined how constantly recurring was this trouble. Mr. Müller had laid down the rule that no purchases were to be made beyond those sufficient for the week, or day, or month, as the case may be; that the rent was to be put by weekly, and that no credit was to be asked for. As the consequence, he was brought into innumerable straits and difficulties; but *invariably* the Lord sent him deliverance upon all these occasions. Sometimes he would receive a large donation of fifty or a hundred pounds. At other times, only a few shillings or a box of jewellery, clothes or books, which could be turned into money; but it was always sufficient to tide over the existing distress.

Speaking of these early years of trial, difficulty, faith and prayer, Mr. Müller tells us that in his supplications for the orphans and their needs, he pleaded the following arguments before God:—

1. That as he set about the work for the glory of God, there might be a *visible* proof to the world that God did supply answers to *prayer only*.
2. That as God is the Father of the fatherless, He would be pleased to provide for these fatherless orphans.
3. That having received these children in the name of Christ, and therefore, in a measure, Christ Himself, He would be pleased to consider and own this.
4. That the faith of many of God's children having been strengthened by this work, and its manifest support, those who were weak in faith would have been staggered by the withholding of the blessing.
5. That many enemies would laugh were the Lord to withhold supplies.
6. That many of the children of God would feel themselves justified in continuing their alliance with the world, so far as the obtaining of means for the support of similar institutions were concerned, if He would not help them.
7. That the Lord would graciously pity him, and not cast all the burden

upon him long without sending relief.

8. That the Lord would likewise remember all the workers who trusted in Him, but who would be sorely tried were supplies withheld.

9. That in case supplies did not come, the children must be dismissed to their former evil associations.

10. That Providence might show those to be mistaken who said that although help might be looked for while the *thing was new*, it could not be expected afterwards; and also that if answers to prayers failed now, he would be at a loss to understand what construction to put upon the many remarkable answers to prayer he had experienced in the past.

Most remarkable interpositions of Providence were manifested in answer to these supplications. Sometimes an orphan child would be sent in, and a £5 note with it from some generous donor. Another time, a friend would sell a number of trinkets and devote the produce to the orphan houses. Sometimes one of the assistants would give a donation from his or her own pocket. Sometimes the matrons of the houses would send to him for supplies, and he would request them to come tomorrow, depending only on God to send the means to give them. Occasionally, Mr. Müller would remain late overnight at one of the orphan houses, praying unitedly with the helpers that means might be sent before breakfast next morning, and in some way the breakfast always came. *Never* was he disappointed.

One morning when everything was finished and no food remained in the house, a brother sent twenty-nine pounds of salt, forty-four dozen of onions, and twenty-six pounds of groats.

Another time there was no money wherewith to take up bread for the next day's consumption. Mr. Müller and his associates prayed, and £1 10s. 6d. came in wherewith to take up sufficient; another day they had only £1 8s. to spend, but after spending it and laying the matter before the Lord in prayer, a lady called and gave £3 2s. 6d. for the houses.

At another time Mr. Müller raised £7 by selling ten pairs of new blankets, which had been given to the institution either for sale or use.

One or two extracts from Mr. Müller's journal will prove the trials and extremities of this time:—

"Never were we so reduced in funds as to-day. There was not one single halfpenny in hand between the matrons of the three orphan houses. There was a good dinner, and by managing to help one another by bread, &c., there was a prospect of getting over this day also; but for none of the houses had we the prospect of being able to take in

bread. When I left the brethren and sisters at one o'clock, after prayer, I told them that we must wait for help, and see how the Lord would deliver us at this time. About twenty yards from my house I met a brother who walked back with me, and after a little conversation gave me £10 towards providing the poor people with coals, blankets, and warm clothing; £5 for the orphans, and £5 for the other objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution. This brother had called twice while I was gone to the orphan houses, and had I now been one half-minute later I should have missed him."

On the next day more help arrived, and two days afterward, three sacks of potatoes, and a watch, which sold for fifty shillings. Four days later, the funds were gone, and although there was everything needful for dinner, there were no means to provide bread or milk for tea. Meeting his co-workers in prayer, at mid-day, Mr. Müller felt that help would surely come. And come it did; for while they were bending in prayer, a letter containing £10 was put on the table, and the donor followed up this amount with a second gift of £10, for new clothes for Mr. Müller and Mr. Craik. Two days after this arrived a gift of £80 from a lady in Suffolk, £50 of which were meant for the orphans, and £30 for the pastor. About a week later £100 were received from a friend, who, while earning her bread with her own hands, chose to give away the whole of a legacy which she had received.

"There was to-day the greatest poverty in all three houses; all the stores were very low, as the income throughout the week had been so small. In addition to this it was Saturday, when the wants are nearly double in comparison with other days. At least £3 were needed to help us comfortably through the day; but there was nothing towards this in hand. My only hope was in God. The very necessity led me to expect help for this day, for if none had come, the Lord's name had been dishonoured. Between twelve and one, two sisters in the Lord called on me, and the one gave me £2, and the other seven-and-sixpence for the orphans. With this I went to the boys' house, where I found the children at dinner. There came in still further this day several shillings, by sales and donations, so that we had £3 6s. 6d. to meet all necessities, and were brought to the close of another week.

"There was not one penny in hand when the day commenced. Last evening, the labourers in the orphan houses, together with the teachers in the day-schools, met for prayer. This morning, one of the teachers, who had money of his own, brought £1 5s. 6d. Thus as we had hoped, we were able again to provide for dinner. In the afternoon, all of us met for prayer. Another teacher of the day-schools gave us 2s. 6d., and 1s. came in beside.

"But all this was not enough. There was no dinner provided for to-morrow, nor was there any money to take in milk to-morrow; and besides this, a number of little things were to be purchased, that there might be no real want of anything. Now, observe how our kind Father helped us.

"Between seven and eight this evening, a sister, whose heart the Lord has made willing to take on her the service of disposing of the articles which are sent for sale, brought £2 10s. 6d. for some of the things. The sister stated, that though she did not feel at all well, she had come because she had it so laid on her heart that she could not stay away."

Within six days after this, nearly £100 were received from various parts of the country, either in money, or in the produce of articles sent for sale. Many ladies sacrificed jewellery in order to aid the project. One lady sent from Scotland, at this very juncture, two clasps, one ring, two pairs of ear-rings, a slide, a pin, a cross, and two bracelets, all of gold. From Leeds, two Christian ladies sent a box containing two silver dessert-spoons, one pair of silver sugar-tongs, one silver caddy-spoon, six plated forks, four knife-rests, a cream-spoon, six metal tea-spoons, one silver watch, one metal watch, a small telescope, three purses containing money, one silver pencil-case, two silver pocket-knives, besides a large number of articles of clothing.

And these boxes of goods are only specimens of the presents Mr. Müller and his friends were constantly receiving, in answer to prayer. His own opinion was, that in leaning upon God alone for supplies, he was beyond disappointment, and beyond being forsaken because of death, want of means, or decay of love.

One morning, after breakfast, there had been a prayer-meeting among the workers, to ask the Lord for means to get a dinner. This came in, and then there was a second prayer-meeting to ask for means to supply a supper. But only just enough came in response to provide these two meals; consequently, it became necessary late in the evening to entreat the Lord again, to send the means for the support of the orphans next day. After this was over, Mr. Müller returned to his own house; he found that no money had come in, so he retired to rest, leaving the matter in God's hands. Early next morning he went over to the orphan houses, to see if God had sent anything, and found that £3 had just come in: so that supplies of food sufficient for the orphans had been secured. Some time afterward it came out that a merchant of Bristol was so worked upon by the recollection of the orphans, and their needs, on that particular morning, that he could not rest. He set out to go to his counting-house, expecting to receive some important letters,

but could not proceed until he had gone to the orphan house and left the three sovereigns referred to above as a donation.

On reviewing these experiences, Mr. Müller remarks that though very often reduced to the greatest extremity, the orphans had really lacked nothing; for they had always good nourishing food and necessary clothing. He also declared that this mode of living by faith entailed less anxiety, and less worry upon himself and his helpers, than if they had adopted the more usual course of soliciting subscriptions from the public, inasmuch as the burden of support and care was laid upon a Heavenly Provider, and not carried at all by them. As surely and as regularly as the wants recurred, God sent the means to supply those wants. "Perhaps you may say, 'But how would you do in case there were a meal-time to come, and you had no provisions for the children? or they really wanted clothes, and you had no money to procure them? Our answer is, such a thing is impossible, as long as the Lord shall give us grace to trust in Him, and as long as He shall enable us to carry on the work in uprightness of heart. But should we be ever so left to ourselves as to forsake the Lord, and trust in an arm of flesh, or should we regard iniquity in hearts, or wilfully and habitually do any thing, either in connection with the work or otherwise, which is against the will of God, then we may pray and utter many words before Him, but He will not hear us."

The principle of self-renunciation was carried out most fully, by both Mr. Müller and his associates. *On principle*, they laid up nothing for a "rainy day," throwing even that emergency on the Lord. One of the Christian sisters, on receiving a legacy, sold out every penny, it being invested in Consols at different times, and gave it to the orphanages and schools, preferring to lay up "treasure in Heaven" rather than in stocks and shares. Mr. Müller put by nothing against illness or misfortune; believing it to be his duty to live, day by day, a life of simple faith upon the loving care of the Heavenly Father. Such an instance of childlike confidence and unaffected piety could not but have its influence upon those with whom he came in contact. Indeed, the whole matter affords an illustration of simple faith which is scarcely to be paralleled in this century, if in any other.

Regarding Mr. Müller's large family of orphans, it may be literally said "The eyes of all these wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season." But of the faith which produces such wonderful fruits, which stands firm, amid all the assaults of unbelief and the chances of failure, it may also be truly said that it is of the kind which removes mountains, which

"Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries 'It shall be done.'"

Chapter 5.—Extension of His Work.

These labours were not always pleasant. In addition to the care of all these orphan houses, the schools, and other departments of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, Mr. Müller was subject, like most other servants of the Lord, to misrepresentation and slander. False reports were spread about by the enemies of the work, to the effect that the orphans had not enough to eat, and that they were cruelly treated; while others tried to discredit the undertaking, by representing that Mr. Müller's chief object was money-getting. But he took these matters, in common with his other anxieties, to the Throne of Grace. He never shrank from meeting the accusations and refuting them: at the same time, he looked upon painful trials of this sort as circumstances adapted to try his faith. He laid down two good rules for his own guidance in respect to these painful experiences, rules which might be equally advantageous to other Christians. They were—first, that believers should not shrink from situations, positions and circumstances, in which their faith may be tried; and second, that they should let God work for them when the hour of the trial of their faith came, and not work out a deliverance of their own. It is not wonderful that he was kept in "perfect peace" amid all emergencies and anxieties, sustained as he was by these principles.

Strengthened by experience of the past, Mr. Müller opened a fourth orphan house, in Wilson Street, in March, 1844. He had, not long before this, received £500 for the funds of the Institution; and with a part of this money he resolved to furnish a house for the reception of thirty additional orphan girls above eight years of age. The house was quickly filled; but about a year and eight months afterwards some complaint was made by people living in the same street that the noise of the children in their play was a serious inconvenience to them. These complaints raised the question of removal to another locality.

It appears, that for ten years Mr. Müller had been looking about in different places for accommodation for the children, but not finding any, had allowed the matter to remain in abeyance. Now, however, the necessity appeared imperative; even works of benevolence could not be suffered to interfere with the comfort of other residents. But to contemplate building a large house, when only money sufficient for present need came in, appeared to some to be the height of madness. From calculations which he made, he found that to secure land and build a suitable orphanage fit for accommodating 300 children, which

was the lowest number he intended to commence with, he required a sum of £15,000. Whence could this be obtained? It seemed ridiculous to entertain the project. But Mr. Müller felt convinced that he must build, or give up the orphanage part of his enterprise; for, to whatever locality in Bristol he might remove, the same objections were liable to arise; while the construction of ordinary dwelling-houses was such that complete isolation could not be obtained in outbreaks of infectious disease, or even suitable accommodation.

This point being settled, Mr. Muller debated within himself whether it would really tend to the honouring of God to give up a work which had so marvellously been blessed by Him. And having prayed much over it, he came to the conclusion that the increased and sustained dependence upon the Almighty alone, which would be requisite in carrying forward such an undertaking, would be far more to the praise and glory of God than if he resigned the work. Assured that the Lord would provide, Mr. Müller decided to build a house capable of accommodating 300 children, so providing room for the 126 already in Wilson Street, and for many other applicants who were waiting for admission. He then applied himself to prayer that money for the building fund might come in.

During the first fortnight not a penny was sent for this purpose.

Thirty-three days passed by, and still only a few small amounts had come to hand. At last, on the thirty-fourth day, he received a large donation of £1,000 for this purpose—the largest donation, in fact, which had ever reached him. Other contributions followed, and soon, a second £1000. After this, he prayed for a piece of land on which to build. Some weeks passed in this way, when he heard that a suitable site was for sale on Ashley Down, and he promptly sought out the owner.

After two or three unsuccessful efforts to see this gentleman, who was a merchant of Bristol, he secured an interview. To his delight, he found that although the land was worth £200 an acre, yet he might have it for that particular purpose at £120 an acre. A contract was immediately signed for the purchase of seven acres, so saving £560 upon the market price. After this, little by little, the money for building came in, so that in two years Mr. Muller felt himself justified in giving orders for the erection of the first orphan house. It was finished and fitted up for the reception of 300 boys, girls, and infants, under eight years of age; and when all was done and paid for, more than £600 remained in hand. The training of the children and household arrangements remained just the same as in Wilson Street; while the

means for the support of this enlarged home came to hand in reply to the prayers of faith.

No. 2 orphan house followed, because admission was sought for hundreds of children who could not possibly be accommodated in the first house. Indeed, Nos. 2 and 3 were erected next; but the undertaking involved the purchase of additional land, so that the total expense amounted to about £40,000. Some friends discouraged Mr. Müller from such a gigantic task, representing to him that it savoured of presumption, and some enemies said that he had already £30,000 in hand toward this matter, thinking thereby to deter subscribers and donors from sending any money.

Six years were spent, however, in praying and looking to God for the means, when the second house was finished, and opened, with 400 girls. No. 3 house was built upon the newly-purchased portion of land, and accommodated 450 girls. Thus, altogether in the three houses, homes had been provided for 1,150 children. This last was opened in March, 1862, and at this date £1,400 remained in hand.

Still, 900 orphans requested admission, for whom no room could be found; and Mr. Müller, in his large-hearted dependence on God, determined to do something more for them. He thought of his old text—"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it"—and resolved to put the promise to a fuller test. After laying the matter fully before the Lord in prayer, he came to the resolution to build two more orphan houses, large enough to hold together 900 children; one house to be reserved for girls of all ages, and the other for boys. The total number of orphans, therefore, when the scheme should be carried out, would amount to 2,050, while these would require 110 assistants, in the shape of matrons, masters, mistresses, and nurses.

It was a long time before his desire was accomplished; seven weary years passed by in patient waiting; but at length, in 1869, the last house was opened.

Amid the thankful rejoicing at the completion of the labours, Mr. Müller experienced sorrow. His wife, who had been the faithful friend of the orphans for so many years, died in February, 1870. The funeral took place at Arno's Vale Cemetery, Bristol, when many hundreds of these children followed her to the grave. They, together with many who had left the homes to go out into life, erected a simple monument over the grave, testifying by this act their loving esteem for her. The work went on, however, though it had lost so unwearied a friend, and has so gone on until this day. All the branches of the Scriptural

Knowledge Institution have continued in vigorous activity, supported entirely by voluntary contributions, and managed according to the rules of God's Word.

It is interesting to peep inside one of the orphan houses, and observe the daily routine. The education includes reading, writing, arithmetic, history, grammar, geography, music, needlework, domestic economy, laundry, and household work; the elder girls taking their turns at the household duties, in order to become efficient as domestic servants. The girls are also taught to make and mend their own clothes, as well as how to nurse properly younger children. Boys learn to knit their own socks, make their own beds, scrub the floors, go errands, assist in the garden, and pick up many other useful ideas. They are generally apprenticed to various trades, when the school course is ended; but in the case of both girls and boys, where any special aptitude of talent, or delicacy of constitution exists, these children are educated for the profession of teachers. Every boy and girl is expected to read the Bible, *privately* each day; while systematic instruction in Scripture knowledge forms one of the school subjects.

The holidays consist of a week at Whitsuntide, a week in September, a week at Christmas, and a few days at Easter. These holidays are spent in play and recreation, or in visits to friends. A day in July is also granted for an outdoor picnic and excursion, when the children take their meals in the open air, and much enjoy the ramble.

From the beginning of the work in 1836, up till May, 1884, 6,892 orphans had been received. The conditions required for their acceptance are, 1st, that they must have lost both parents by death; 2nd, that the marriage certificate of the parents can be produced, and 3rd, that they must be left in destitute circumstances. The girls are retained until they are seventeen or eighteen years of age, and then being fitted for domestic service, are dismissed to situations; while the boys are apprenticed at fourteen or fifteen years of age to those trades which they express a preference for; an outfit being provided, and a premium of £13 being paid with each lad. After apprenticeship, or going out into situations, correspondence is kept up with the orphans, by teachers and friends at the orphan houses, so that the tie between them and their benefactor is not broken.

These orphanages have had their dark days also. At one time 526 children were ill with fever; at another time, small-pox entered a house, and while large numbers were ill, two teachers and several children died. Sometimes a boy or girl behaves so badly that reproof fails; and proving incorrigible, he or she is sent away, sorrowfully, and

this for the sake of the evil influence which such a one would have on all the rest. But Mr. Müller casts all these matters on the Lord, as well as all cares connected with the maintenance of the houses. His life is most emphatically one of faith.

Speaking of his absolute dependence upon God, as far as it concerns the time to come, and the future of the orphanages, he says: "Through grace we have learned to lean upon the Lord only, being assured that if we were never to write or speak one single word more about this work, yet should we be supplied with means, as long as He should enable us to live on Himself alone. ...I have given instance upon instance, I have brought before you, not this particular case, nor another particular case, but I have purposely shown you how we have fared day after day in our poverty, in order that you may adore the Lord for His goodness to us, and that you yourself may be led to depend upon Him for everything, should you not have done so before. Suppose, now, all is gone. Suppose the expenses are great, but very little, comparatively, is coming in. What shall we do, now? If we took goods on credit, or if we made known our necessities to the liberal Christians who have means, and who are interested in the work in our hands, then, humanly speaking, there might be little difficulty; but we neither take goods on credit, nor do we speak to any one about our need, but we wait upon God. He always helps us, and has done so for more than forty-five years with reference to the orphans. ...The first and primary object of the work was, to show before the whole world, and the whole Church of Christ, that even in these last evil days, the living God is ready to prove Himself as the living God, by being ever willing to help, succour, comfort, and answer the prayers of those who trust in Him. From the beginning when God put this service into my heart, I had anticipated trials and straits, but knowing, as I did, the heart of God, through the experience of several years previously, I also knew that he would listen to the prayers of His child who trusts in Him, and that he would not leave him in the hour of need, but listen to his prayers and deliver him out of the difficulty."

Chapter 6.—Missionary and Evangelistic Work.

Although pre-eminently a worker for the benefit of orphans and destitute poor, Mr. Müller had also been very successful as a preacher of the Gospel. The congregations to which he has ministered have increased in numbers, while their faith and charity have been manifested by deeds. The companies of believers meeting at Bethesda and Gideon chapels increased until they were counted by hundreds, so that the cares of these churches formed a heavy burden. Mr. Müller has dealt with these things, however, in the spirit of simple prayer and

faith during a long series of years, in which he has acted as a beloved, painstaking, and faithful "teacher in Christ" to his people, instructing them, and imparting to them much of that light which has irradiated his own soul.

His interest in mission-work has been constant and intense. At different times of his life he was moved to work personally in the foreign missionary field; indeed, it was the inspiration which first animated him when he experienced a change of heart; but events have combined to point out both to him, and to his friends, that his chosen sphere of usefulness lay in England. Part of the influence and funds of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution have been given to the support of missions and missionaries in all parts of the world. From the time when this branch of work was commenced, the total amount spent upon missionary operations down to May, 1884, was £196,633 12s. 5d. It would be impossible even to conjecture the amount of good accomplished in this direction only.

Mr. Müller has also taken long missionary journeys, with the avowed objects of stirring up the Lord's people to greater activity and faith, and to see for himself those Christian friends in whom he felt an interest. After a long ministry of fifty-seven years, he felt that he could speak words of help and cheer to those with whom he should meet, and possibly, lead them to exercise a more simple, unquestioning faith in that same God who had so marvellously helped him in his varied career. In these objects he has been singularly successful, having addressed students, professors, ministers, missionaries, and Christian workers of all grades, ages, sects, and opinions.

And this he has done in many lands, having visited Switzerland, Germany, Holland, France, Spain, Italy, Canada, the United States, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Turkey, Greece, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, Russia, and India. It will be interesting to our young readers to give a few incidents of travel and labour on these missionary tours.

In Holland, during the spring of 1877, he visited an orphan asylum, established at Nimeguen, after the pattern of those on Ashley Down, and capable of accommodating 450 children. Mr. Müller addressed the children, and afterwards visited each department of the asylum. From this place he passed to Amsterdam. The diamond industry of this city is the most extraordinary in the world, and gives employment to about 10,000 workmen. Here he preached in German; an interpreter, however, sometimes translated his sermons into Dutch.

In the autumn of 1877, Mr. and Mrs. Müller (for he had married a second time), sailed for America. They visited Niagara, New York, Charleston, Boston, Jersey City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and many other towns and cities, discoursing to large congregations, of the "old old story" of Christ's love. At a missionary college at Amherst, the following story, related by the Principal to Mr. Müller, seems to have made a deep impression on him.

One of the former students was a young Japanese. While in his native land, many years previously, the young man had grown dissatisfied with the old system of idolatry pursued by his countrymen, but found nothing to substitute for it. One day, however, he happened to meet with a primer for children, written by a missionary, in Japanese, and which contained these words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis i. i. From that time he worshipped this great Creator, though ignorantly. Desiring to learn more about God, he left the country, secretly, and went to China, hoping to find instruction there. At Shanghai, somebody gave him a Chinese New Testament, and the first verse that claimed his attention on opening it was that glorious epitome of Gospel truth in John iii., "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Taking that word "whosoever" to include himself, he believed what he read, and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, became a decided Christian. But he desired to know more of Christ, and obtained a passage to America, on board a ship bound for Boston. A Christian gentleman of that city became so interested in the young man that he sent him to school for three years, and afterwards to college, where he became fitted for the Christian ministry. He then returned to Japan, as a missionary; and was the instrument of the conversion to Christianity of his parents, brothers, and sisters.

In April, 1878, Mr. and Mrs. Müller went to San Francisco. "Soon after leaving Omaha," he writes, "we entered upon the prairies, which consisted of millions of acres of wild, barren, uncultivated land, stretching away for hundreds of miles in all directions, with scarcely a bush, tree, or plant of any size among them, and covered only with short, dry, stunted grass. ...Some idea could be formed of the wilderness through which the children of Israel passed on their way to Canaan." At Sherman, the highest railway station in the world (8,235 feet above the level of the sea, and higher than the summit of the Righi), the cold was intense, and the snow several feet deep. When they reached California, however, they found the "fields covered with grass, intermingled with brilliant masses of wild flowers, lupines, wild roses, geraniums, and millions of Californian poppies, of an intense

yellow, deepening into orange colour."

At San Francisco, Mr. Müller preached to overflowing congregations, and among the rest of his hearers, met with a waiter at an hotel, who was the brother of one of the orphans at Ashley Down. Among the sights of the city, they were shown some immense trees growing in the neighbourhood, one of which was 62 feet in circumference, and 296 feet high.

At Chicago they were spoken to by several orphans, who had gone out to America, to make their new homes, but who remembered and honoured the benefactors of their youth.

Near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, they visited the soldiers' cemetery, famous for containing the remains of 32,000 soldiers who fell in the Civil War. They returned to England safely, after having travelled over nineteen thousand miles, and conducted 308 public services.

In the winter of 1878-79, they visited the continent of Europe, going by way of France into Spain and Italy. At Montpellier, a gentleman descended from the Huguenots gave Mr. and Mrs. Müller some interesting incidents of the past persecutions. In front of the hotel where they lodged was a piece of ground—then laid out as a public garden—but formerly used as a place of execution for Protestants. Some were hung in chains till dead; others had both legs and arms broken only, so that they might suffer hours of excruciating agony, and then, in mercy, a blow on the chest, from an iron bar, terminated their agonies. These cruelties took place in the reign of Louis XIV.

At Barcelona, they visited ten day-schools, which were supported entirely by the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, and saw some hundreds of Spanish children who were being educated in the religion of Jesus Christ. Mr. Müller spoke to them through an interpreter. In Madrid, they visited five schools sustained in the same way. Both teachers and children were delighted to see their benefactor.

In 1881 Mr. and Mrs. Müller visited Egypt, Palestine, Turkey, Asia Minor, and Greece. He preached habitually in English or in German, and the services of an interpreter were called into requisition in order to reach the audiences of native Christians ministered to by him. Speaking of the streets and people of Alexandria, Mrs. Müller says: "In going to and from the meetings we noticed the great variety of costumes worn by persons who passed us in the streets. Loose, white garments and red turbans with gold ornaments were worn by the Turks; most of the women were closely veiled, so that their eyes only could be seen, and a few had veils arranged in such a manner that one

eye alone was visible. Brass ornaments, too, fixed between the eyes were generally worn by unveiled women, which disfigured their countenances much. Most of the poor walked about barefoot, and some Arabs, in thin clothing, slept soundly as they lay stretched at full length by the side of the pavement in the street." Beside this interesting little peep at the social customs of the city, Mrs. Müller tells us that they had some nice conversation with several Jewish school-girls, by means of an Arabic interpreter.

From Alexandria and Ramleh they proceeded to Jaffa and Jerusalem. "In the streets of Jerusalem, day after day, we saw numbers of men, women, and children standing about half-naked or clothed in miserable rags; and strangers cannot walk a short distance without being besieged for alms by the beggars that abound, not a few of whom are lepers. They hold up their disfigured hands and arms, and, pointing to their dreadful sores, follow visitors, persistently entreating them, in piteous and lamentable tone of voice, to have compassion on them and help them."

At Constantinople, Mr. Müller addressed a congregation of 500 Armenians by the aid of a Turkish interpreter. At Athens, he spoke to 257 Greek boys—scholars of the Ragged School there under missionary care, and a few days later to 700 children belonging to Mrs. Hill's mission school. These addresses were translated as delivered, into Greek.

Another Continental journey was undertaken in 1882. While at Brunn, in Moravia, the travellers were shown over the dungeons of the Spielberg, a gloomy castle, in which Baron Trenck, Silvio Pellico, and other notable prisoners had been confined. Mrs. Müller writes of these gloomy abodes: "One of these dark vaults contained a stone figure representing a man stretched out at full length upon a rack, with his arms drawn up above his head to show the manner in which the limbs of victims used to be gradually torn from their bodies by means of machinery, which ruptured their blood-vessels and dislocated their bones. Then on the walls were iron rings, to which, with outstretched arms, condemned criminals were fastened in such a way that it was impossible to move, and there, without food or water, they were left to perish. In another of the dungeons was a second figure of a man in chains, standing upright, but fettered so cruelly that if he had been a living human being, the agony occasioned by the bonds would have been excruciating. Some of the prisoners not killed by cold and hunger were partially devoured by the rats, whilst others were slowly put to death by atrocities that rivalled even the dread punishment of the Inquisition.... Many of the Lord's people had in time past to pass

through trials such as these."

On this visit Mr. Müller visited his native place, together with some other spots familiar to his youth, and preached "the unsearchable riches of Christ" to crowded assemblies.

After returning from this tour, he visited India, and much encouraged the hearts of numbers of devoted missionaries who were eager to see him. Many schools and missionary workers in India are supported by the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, consequently his visits to them partook of a fatherly character, being calculated to inspire with fresh vigour each servant of the Master who labours in the same "word and doctrine." Quietly but prayerfully he is helping to win that vast land for Christ.

For nearly sixty years now, the principles of which George Müller is the cheerful saintly embodiment, have inspired his life and urged him to new deeds of faith—deeds which have been the wonder of the age. Let the sceptic point to the Orphan Houses on Ashley Down, and say whether they do not afford incontrovertible proof that there is a God, and that He answers fervent, believing prayer.

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