

# THE GIPSIES;

BEING A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THEIR  
HISTORY, ORIGIN, CAPABILITIES, MANNERS  
AND CUSTOMS,

WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR THE  
REFORMATION AND CONVERSION OF THE ENGLISH  
GIPSIES.



BY HENRY WOODCOCK.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL. AUTHOR OF "POPERY UNMASKED."



"Is the conversion of Gipsies impossible? If not, why, having them at our doors, have they been so long neglected there? Their former hardy and vagrant habits would admirably prepare them for some department of Missionary service. Most likely a Gipsy Missionary would ramble with peculiar pleasure in Cabool, Beloochiston, Bokhara, and Khorassan."—*The late Dr. Kitto.*

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM LISTER,

SUTTON-STREET, COMMERCIAL ROAD, ST. GEORGE'S-IN-THE-EAST.

MAY BE HAD OF ALL BOOKSELLERS, OR OF PRIMITIVE METHODIST  
MINISTERS.

ALSO FROM THE AUTHOR, 8, SHEPPEY-PLACE, GRAVESEND, KENT,  
ON RECEIPT OF 18 STAMPS.

1865.

223. k. 77.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

ALFORD :

PRINTED BY JOHN HOBNER.

## P R E F A C E .

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AN epitome of the following pages was first delivered, as a Lecture, in connection with the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society, Clowes' Chapel, Jarratt Street, Hull, and afterwards at Gravesend, Kent. The lectures were well attended, and seemed to give considerable pleasure to the audiences; and on the last occasion three pounds were collected towards the formation of a Free Circulating Library. The writer has frequently been requested to give the Lecture, at different places, but the state of his health would not allow him to comply.

While gathering materials for the following pages, many people have said, with a sardonic smile, "Who would trouble themselves about Gipsies? Is it not puerile to do so?" I have invariably answered, in the words of Terence, an ancient philosopher, "I am a man, and whatever concerns humanity concerns me." Or in the still nobler words of Paul:—"I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise." The Gipsies are a people I have thought a great deal about from childhood; during fourteen years of itinerant life I

have often met them encamped in green lanes and on the verge of barren moors, and have, on many occasions, spoken to them about things spiritual and eternal. I have never met with either insult or impertinence from them ; but often their upturned faces and tearful eyes have bespoken their readiness to listen to the word of life.

The writer acknowledges his obligation to the following works : — “ The Gipsies of Spain,” by George Borrow ; “ Hoyland’s Survey of the Gipsies ;” “ The Gipsies’ Advocate,” by Rev. James Crabb ; “ Notices concerning the Scottish Gipsies,” contributed to the *Edinburgh Magazine*, 1817-18 ; “ Life of the Rev. James Crabb ;” “ Memoir of the Rev. John Baird ;” “ English at Home,” by Alphonse Esquiros ; “ Researches into the Physical History of Mankind,” by S. C. Prichard, M.D., &c. &c. From these works the author has drawn many of his *facts* ; though he is not aware of having quoted any sentence without using the recognized insignia of literary theft, namely, inverted commas.

Whether our work excites the curiosity or prompts the religious zeal of the reader, we commend it to his careful attention, and trust he will find it worthy of something more than a mere passing glance or cursory perusal.

HENRY WOODCOCK.

8, Sheppey Place, Gravesend, Kent,  
July 28th, 1865.



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# THE GIPSIES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THEIR CLAIMS.

“ Are they not men, though knowledge never shed  
Her quickening beams on each neglected head ?  
Are they not men, by sin and suffering tried ?  
Are they not men, for whom the Saviour died ? ”

THERE are but few tribes of the human race which have not received more attention from the thoughtful and benevolent than the Gipsies. They have been in Europe more than four hundred years, during which time they have mingled with its varied inhabitants and been subject to its different governments ; and yet, by the majority of the people, less is known of their intellectual, moral, and religious condition, than of the tribes who traverse the mountains of Circassia, the jungles of India, or the deserts of Arabia. By many people the Gipsies are held in derision and contempt. Their minds are fully made up to brand them as irreclaimable vagabonds, and having formed their opinion they naturally lay stress upon those facts which support their own views, and totally ignore those which are opposed to them. They have one unvarying shade of black for setting forth the

character of these wandering tribes. Even professing Christians know but little about their "brethren," the Gipsies, and hence, their sympathy for them is very weak, and their efforts to benefit and save them few and infrequent. With a more accurate knowledge of their origin, character, and the peculiar and untoward circumstances in which, for ages, they have been placed, there would assuredly arise new opinions concerning their character and claims, and more urgent efforts to bless and elevate, to christianize and save them. Every heart ought to throb with compassion for them, and be filled with regret on account of the neglect, scorn, and sufferings which they have so long endured. And it is refreshing to know that a few *savans*, moralists, and Christian philanthropists have pushed their way into the Gipsies' camp to decipher the life, manners, and customs of those we knew not before, and who have truthfully rendered an account of their researches and adventures. Amongst these, the Rev. James Crabb, Grellman, Hoyland, Borrow, and the late Rev. Mr. Baird, occupy a prominent place, and to their works we shall be largely indebted in the following pages.



## CHAPTER II.

THEIR HISTORICAL EPOCHS:—THE CONTINENTAL  
GIPSIES.

“Hast thou not noted on the by-way side,  
Where aged saughs lean o’er the lazy tide,  
A vagrant crew, far straggled through the glade,  
With trifles busied, or in slumbers laid;  
Their children round them lolling on the grass,  
Or pestering with their sports the patient ass?  
—The wrinkled beldame there you may espy,  
And ripe young maiden with the glassy eye—  
Men in their prime—and striplings dark and dun,  
Scathed by the storm and freckled with the sun:  
Their swarthy hue and mantle’s flowing fold  
Bespeak the remnant of a race of old:  
Strange are their annals!—list and mark them well—  
For thou hast much to hear and I to tell.”—*Hogg*.

It is almost incredible how numerous these people are, and how widely dispersed through Asia, Africa, and most of the countries of Europe. According to the lowest calculation, in England they amount to 12,000; in Spain 40,000; in Hungary 53,000; in Transylvania 17,000; in Wallachia and Moldavia 200,000; in Southern Russia about 17,000; and in other countries 50,000. On the continents of Asia and Africa there are said to be 300,000 of these wanderers. So that could the Gipsies be brought together in one vast body they would form a kingdom of 700,000 inhabitants;—a number equal to the entire population of the united provinces of Holstein and Schleswig.

for the possession of which Austria, Prussia, Germany, and Denmark, are sacrificing thousands of lives and millions of treasure.

In Sir Thomas Brown's famous work, "Vulgar Errors," we meet with the following account of their arrival in Europe, about 400 years ago.—"They were first seen in Germany in the year 1409. In 1418 they were found in Switzerland; and in 1422 they made their appearance in Italy. They were first seen in France on the 17th of August, 1427."

Their first appearance and pretensions were somewhat remarkable. "They travelled in numerous hordes, under leaders who assumed the titles of *Kings, Dukes, Counts, or Lords of Lesser Egypt*, and they proclaimed themselves Christian pilgrims who had been expelled from that country by the Saracens for their adherence to the true religion."

"The Bologne Chronicle states, that the horde which arrived in that city, on the 18th of July, 1422, consisted of about one hundred men, the name of whose leader, or duke, as they termed him, was Andrews."

Grellman learnt from many old writers, and from the various edicts respecting them still preserved in the archives of every state in Europe, that the people believed that they were real pilgrims and holy persons; and this procured for them not only toleration but safe conducts in many places. Indeed, they carried about with them passports and seals from the Emperor Sigismund, and other princes, and especially from the Pope of Rome, by means of which they were empowered to travel through the papal countries, under his patronage for the space of seven years.

"On August 17, 1427," says an old French Chronicle, "they came to Paris twelve penitents, as they called themselves—namely, a duke, an earl, and ten men—all on horseback, and calling themselves Christians." ... They had been wandering five years when they

came to Paris; first, the principal people, twelve in number, as above narrated, and soon after the commonalty, about one hundred, or one hundred and twenty, reduced from one thousand or twelve hundred, which was their number when they set out from home, the rest being dead, with their king and queen. They were lodged by the police out of the city at Chapel St. Denis. Nearly all of them had their ears bored, and one or two silver rings in each, which they said were esteemed ornaments in their country. The men were black, their hair curled; the women remarkably black, all their faces scarred, their hair black; their only clothes a large old shaggy garment, tied over the shoulders with a cloth or cord sash, and under it a poor petticoat. In short, they were the poorest miserable creatures that had ever been seen in France; and notwithstanding their poverty, there were among them women, who, by looking into people's hands, told their fortunes; and, what was worse, they picked people's pockets of their money."

Soon after their seven years pilgrimage came to a close they began to be watched with a jealous eye, and it soon became manifest that instead of holy pilgrims, they were a set of profligate and thievish impostures who had often under pretext of safe conducts, committed all kinds of excesses among the people who had fostered them. Their presence came to be dreaded; they were looked upon as the pests of society and as too dangerous to be allowed a place in civil communities.\* Regarding them as hordes of Canaanites, deserving neither consideration nor mercy, the various

\* There were exceptions to this state of things. In Hungary many of them seem to have had recourse to legitimate means of subsistence, being employed in the working of iron. "This occupation," says Mr. Grellman, "appears from old writings, to have been a favourite one with them." In proof of this, he quotes the following law issued by the king of Hungary in 1496:—"That

governments were suddenly filled with a mistaken zeal against their obliquities and sent bodies of men, armed with the instruments of destruction, to drive them from all the principle states of the continent.

King Ferdinand of Spain, issued an edict for their *extermination* in the year 1492. In France, an edict for their expulsion was passed in 1561, and all governors of cities were ordered to drive them away with *fire and sword*. In 1572 they were forced to retire from the territories of Milan and Parma. They were not permitted to remain unmolested in Denmark; for the Danish law specifies:—"The Gipsies, who wander about everywhere doing great damage to the people by their thefts, lies, and witchcraft, shall be taken into custody by every magistrate." In Sweden an imperative order for their banishment was issued in 1662, and repeated with additional severities in 1723, and again in 1727. They were excluded from the Netherlands, under pain of death by Charles V., and afterwards by the United States in 1582. But the greatest number of sentences of exile have been pronounced against them in Germany. The first was issued in the year 1500 and reads thus:—"By public edict to all ranks of the empire according to the obligations under which they are bound to us, and the holy empire, it is strictly ordered that in future they do not permit the said Gipsies, since there is authentic evidence of their being spies, scouts, and conveyers of intelligence, betraying the Christians to the Turks, to pass or remain within their territories, nor to trade, neither to grant them protection nor convoy. And that the said Gipsies do withdraw themselves before Easter next ensuing, from the German

every officer and subject, of whatever rank and condition, do allow to Thomas Polgar, leader of twenty-five tents of wandering Gipsies, free residence everywhere, and on no account to molest him or his people; because they had prepared military stores for the bishop Sigismund of Funfkirchen."

dominions ; entirely quit them, nor suffer themselves to be found therein : as in case they should transgress after that time, and receive injury from any person, they shall have no redress, nor shall such person be thought to have committed any crime." (Hoyland, p. 65.) Similar laws were issued in 1530, 1544, and in 1577.

But in consequence of the inefficient state of the police and the favour with which the Gipsies were regarded by the poor with whom they mingled, and who helped them to evade the public edicts, they continued to increase ; nor was any country that had once admitted these wanderers again able to get rid of them. When vigourously prosecuted by any government on account of their crimes and depredations, they generally withdrew for a time to the remote parts of the country, or crossed the frontiers of a neighbouring jurisdiction :—only to return to their accustomed haunts and habits as soon as the storm passed over.

It was not until the reign of the Empress Theresa, and in the year 1768, that there was adopted a more humane and conciliatory policy :—a policy which sought to humanize and elevate these wandering outcasts, and qualify them for the enjoyment of the rights and privileges of good citizens. According to the laws she issued, they were prohibited "from dwelling in huts or tents ; from wandering up and down the country ; from dealing in horses ; from eating animals which died naturally, and carrion, and from electing their own judge. They were to cease conversing in their own language and to use that of the countries in which they had chosen to reside.—A few months were allowed them to quit their Gipsy manners and life and to settle like other inhabitants, in cities and villages ; to build decent houses and to follow some reputable business. They were to secure Boors' clothing ; to commit themselves to the pro-

tection of some territorial superior, and live regularly." (See Hoyland, p. 68.)

These regulations were well calculated to ameliorate the condition of the Gipsies, and to promote the welfare of the state; but they were not put into execution; nor were the Gipsies in the smallest degree benefited by them. Hence, in the year 1773, more rigid measures were adopted for their reformation.—No Gipsy was allowed to marry unless he could prove that he was in a condition to support a wife and children. Those who had families had their children taken from them by force, and removed from all intercourse with the Gipsy race. And these severe laws were in two or three instances carried into execution. At Fahlendorf, and elsewhere, all the children of the Gipsies, above five years old, were carried away in waggons, during the night of the 21st of December, 1773, by overseers appointed for that purpose, in order that at a distance from their parents or relations, they might be usefully educated, and become accustomed to work. The inhabitants who were willing to receive and bring up these children were paid eighteen guilders yearly from the government. Early on the morning of the 24th of April, 1774, the children of the Gipsies which had been growing up from December of the foregoing year were again removed from the same places, for the purpose of being put under the same course of discipline as the others. Among those taken away on this occasion was a girl fourteen years old, who was forced to be carried off in her bridal dress. She tore her hair for grief and rage, and was quite beside herself with agitation; but she recovered a composed state of mind, and two years after obtained permission to accomplish her marriage.

There was something unnatural in the attempt of the government to tear the children from their parents, and compel them to associate with and be

educated by strangers. Hence, the reader will not be surprised to learn that there were not more than two or three places, where an attempt was made to put these laws in execution.

In the year 1782, the emperor Joseph issued a law for the reformation of the Gipsies in Transylvania. That the provisions of this law were at once humane and judicious in no ordinary degree is evident from the following abstract:—With respect to religion, 1. "They must not only be taught the principles of religion themselves, but early send their children to school. 2. Prevent, as much as possible, their children running about naked in the roads and streets, thereby giving offence and disgust to other people. 3. In their dwellings, not to permit their children to sleep promiscuously by each other, without distinction of sex. 4. Diligently attend at Church, particularly on Sundays and holidays, to give proof of their christian disposition. 5. Put themselves under the guidance of Christian teachers, and conduct themselves conformably to the rules laid down by them. With regard to their temporal conduct and better mode of living, they were bound, 1. To conform to the custom of their country in diet, dress, and language; consequently to abstain from feeding on cattle which have died of distempers; not to go about in such unseemly dresses, and to discontinue the use of their own particular language. 2. Not to appear any more in large cloaks which are chiefly useful to hide things that have been stolen. 3. No Gipsy, except he be a gold washer, shall keep a horse. 4. Also, the gold washer must refrain from all kinds of bartering at the annual fairs. 5. The magistrates of every place must be very attentive that no Gipsy waste his time in idleness; but at those seasons when they have no employment, either for themselves or any landholder, to recommend them to some other person with whom they shall be compelled to work for hire. 6. They

are to be kept particularly to agriculture; therefore, 7. It is to be observed, where possible, that any territorial lord, who takes any Gipsy under his jurisdiction do allot them a certain piece of ground to cultivate. 8. Whoever is remis in his husbandry shall be liable to corporal punishment. 9. They shall be permitted to amuse themselves with music, or other things, only when there is no field work for them to do."

"Such," says Grellman, "were the regulations adopted by the Emperor Joseph II. for the purpose of civilizing and rendering good and profitable subjects, upwards of 80,000 of miserable wretches, ignorant of God and virtue."

#### THE ENGLISH GIPSIES.

The Gipsies seem to have made their appearance in England about one hundred years after they were known on the Continent, or about the year 1512. In a book, published in 1612, to detect and expose the art of juggling and legerdemain, we meet with this description of them.—"This kind of people, about a hundred years ago, beganne to gather an head, at the first heere, about the southerne parts. And this, as I am informed, and can gather, was their beginning:—Certain Egyptians, banished their country, (belike not for their good conditions,) arrived heere, in England, who for quaint tricks and devices, not known heere, at that time, among us, were esteemed, and had in great admiration; insomuch that many of our English *Loyterers* joined with them, and in time learned their craftie cozening. The speach which they used was the right Egyptian speach with whom our Englishmen conversing at last learned their language. These people, continuing about the country and practising their cozening art, purchased themselves great credit among the country people, and got much by palmistry, and telling fortunes; insomuch they pitifully cozened poor country girls, both of



money, silver spoons, and the best of their apparelle, or any good they could make. They had a leader of the name of *Giles Hather*, who was termed their *King*; and a woman of the name of *Calot* was called *Queen*. These riding through the streets on horseback, and in strange attire, had a prettie traine after them."

At first no official notice was taken of these wandering bodies, and they were tacitly allowed to increase and extend at will. But in process of time their numbers and deeds attracted the attention of government, which passed several restrictive laws against them. According to the statute of the 22nd of Henry VIII. "they were commanded to quit the realm and not to return under pain of imprisonment and forfeiture of their goods and chattels, and upon their trial for any felonies which they may have committed they shall not be entitled to trial by jury." But these laws, like many issued by the continental sovereigns, seem to have been powerless; for the Gipsies continued to increase both in numbers and crime. Hence, the severity of the law against them was increased in the twenty-seventh year of the same reign. It reads thus:—"It is hereby ordered that the said vagrants, commonly called Egyptians, in case they remain one month in the kingdom, shall be proceeded against as thieves and rascals; and on the importation of any such Egyptian, he (the importer), shall forfeit forty pounds for every trespass."

From this it is evident that the Gipsies were so much in request in our land as to "induce some of our countrymen to import them from the continent, or at least to encourage their imigration to this island. The importation of this people must have been prevalent from some cause, to require parliamentary interference, and even a fine to prevent it, of such an amount as forty pounds, which, according to the relative value of money would, at the present time be equal to a large sum." (Hoyland p. 81.)

During the same reign, the Gipsies were so dangerous to the morals and comfort of the country that many of them were sent back to Calis. In the roll of expenses of the 25th of Henry's reign there is an entry of thirty-seven pounds, ten shillings and seven pence having been paid for one shipment of Gipsies to Calis.

The above pains and penalties, however, did not effect the end proposed. "What numbers were executed on these statutes you would wonder ;" says the quaint writer we have quoted above, "yet, notwithstanding, all would not prevail, but they wandered as before uppe and downe, and meeting once in a year at a place appointed ; sometimes at the Peake's Hole in Derbyshire, and other whiles by Ketbroak in Blackheath."

The following regime was introduced during the early part of Elizabeth's reign :—"If any person, being fourteen years old, whether natural born subject or stranger who had been seen in the fellowship of such persons (the Gipsies), or had disguised himself like them, should remain with them one month at once, or at several times, it should be felony without benefit of clergy."

These laws, however, failed to suppress the Gipsies ; for during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign their number is said to have exceeded 10,000, and they afterwards increased to 18,000.

"Eighty years ago the Gipsies had their regular journies, and often remained one or two months in a place, when they worked at their trades. And as access to different towns was more difficult than at the present day, partly from the badness of the roads, and partly from the paucity of carriers, they were considered by the peasantry, and by small farmers, of whom there were great numbers in those days, as very useful branches of the human family ; I mean the *industrious and better part of them*. At that period

they usually encamped in the farmers' fields, or slept in their barns; and not being subject to the *driving system*, as they now are, they seldom robbed hedges; for their fires were replenished with dead wood procured, without any risk of fines or imprisonments, from decayed trees and wooded banks."

The aristocracy and the middle classes, no less than the farmers and peasantry, showed themselves kindly disposed towards these tawny wanderers. Towards the close of the eighteenth century their establishment at Norwood excited so much curiosity that, according to Mr. Doddington's Diary, "on June 28th, 1750, the Prince and Princess of Wales, Lady Middlesex, Lord Bathurst, Mr. Parcton, Mr. Doddington, and Lady Torrington (lady in waiting), went in private coaches to Norwood Forest to see a settlement of Gipsies."—(*Gentleman's Mag.* 1801.)

It is not easy to ascertain their exact number in England at the present time. Some say there are not more than 9,000, while the Editor of "*The Book and its Mission*" raises them to 18,000. The truth probably lies about midway between these figures. The chief tribes now existing in our land are the Stanleys who are found in the New Forest; the Lovells who traverse the suburbs of London; the Coopers who have selected Windsor Castle as their rendezvous; the Hernes who make the northern counties, and especially Yorkshire, the scene of their peregrinations; and lastly, the Smiths, who occupy East Anglia.

The conduct of our government towards these poor wicked wanderers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was such, that neither humanity nor piety can look upon without a blush. For the right of society to punish those whom it has not sought to instruct and reform admits of doubt. And within the writer's recollection, they were regarded as outcasts and vagrants, whom children were wont to hoot, and constables drive from the parish bounds. But it is now too late to rebuke those deeds of un-

kindness, for the actors—most of them, at least, have gone where the censures of the living reach them. We can only hope that the conduct of our countrymen towards them in the future will some compensation for the scorn, neglect, and treatment of the past.

### THE SCOTTISH GIPSIES.

It is probable that the Gipsies entered Scotland a short time after they had first pitched their tents in our country. "The northern mountains, which protected the Gallic races from the sword of invaders, could not raise an obstacle to the new nomadic invaders." For awhile they appear to have enjoyed some degree of indulgence, owing, doubtless, to the stratagem by which the authorities were completely deceived. In the 28th year of James V. (1540), a writ† under the privy seal was issued in favour of "*Johnne Fua, Lord and Earl of Little Egypt*." It enjoined all magistrates and officers to support his (Johnne Fua) authority in compelling "his clan to conform to the laws of Egypt," and in punishing them if they rebelled against him. Despite these laws, several of his followers revolted from his jurisdiction, "robbed him of divers sums of money, jewels, claiiths, and other goods, and on nae wise would pass hame with him; howbeit he was bidden and remained of lang time upon them (waited for them long), and is bounden and obliged to bring hame with him all them of his company that are alive, and ane testimonial of them that are dead." Johnne pretended

\* "On Tuesday morning seven Gipsies were charged, before the Rev. Uriah Tonkin, at Hayle (Cornwall), with sleeping under tents, and were each committed to twenty-one days' imprisonment in the county gaol, with hard labour. The party consisted of mother and six children, aged 20, 16, 15, 13, 10, and 8 years." —*Manchester Examiner*, May, 1864.

† A copy of the original writ in the Scottish language may be seen in the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* 1817-18.

that some of his rebellious followers were countenanced by the "king's officers," on which account he could neither apprehend them nor induce them to return, complaining at the same time that he had already sustained "heavy damages" and run the risk of "losing his heritage" if he returned to Egypt without them. The government was imposed upon by this pretence,\* and the magistrates were enjoined to support the authority of the "Count of Egypt" and lend him an hand in "reducing his refractory subjects to order." A charge was given to all the "king's lieges, not to molest John Faa or his company in their lawful business, within the realm, in their passing," while masters of vessels and mariners were specially ordered to receive them when they shall be ready to go "*forth of the realm to the parts beyond the sea.*" Johnne and his clans did not go beyond the sea. For during the next year this self-styled "*Earl of Egypt and Captain of the Gipsies*" was found guilty, with twelve of his men, of a murder committed at Tyntown; yet so effectually had he impressed the government with the idea of his being "Lord and Earl of Lesser Egypt" that he obtained pardon for himself and his accomplices. We hear no more about the return of "Earl Johnne" and his company to their own country. But from an act issued from the lords of the council ten years after

\* In Germany they succeeded in imposing upon the people the belief of their very apocryphal dignity, which they assumed during their lives, and recorded upon their tombs, as appears from three epitaphs quoted by Dr Weissenbruch. One is a convent at Stambach, and recorded that on St. Sebastian's eve 1445, "died Lord Panuel, Duke in Little Egypt and Baron Thrschhorn in the same land." A monumental inscription at Bautmer records the death of "the noble Earl Peter of Lesser Egypt, in 1453," and a third at Pfery as late as 1498, announces the death of the "high born Lord John, Earl of Little Egypt, to whose soul God be gracious and merciful."—*Edinburgh Monthly Mag.*, 1818.

(1551), it is evident that the Gipsies had lost credit with the Scottish government. The privileges formerly granted are revoked, and the act pronounces a sentence of banishment upon the whole race at thirty days warning, and under the pain of death. During the next fifty years, the Gipsies spread themselves, like a swarm of locusts, over the mountains and glens of Scotland, and neither property nor life was safe. Severe laws were from time to time issued for their suppression, but in vain. Their crimes and depredations continued to increase, and in the year 1603, the lords of the privy council deemed it necessary to issue a proclamation banishing the whole race out of Scotland for ever, under the severest penalties. This law commanded the "vagabonds, sorcerers, and commonly called Egyptians, to pass forth out of the realm and never to return to the same under pain of death." The same law empowered any of his majesty's subjects to apprehend, and execute them "as notorious and condemned thieves." But in the face of this law, and in spite of repeated reprehensions from the privy council, many people, the rich as well as the poor, continued to afford shelter and protection to the proscribed Gipsies, and several officers of justice were severely reprimanded for delaying to execute justice upon them, and for troubling the council with petitions on their behalf. While these laws were being issued, the Gipsies took refuge in obscure places in the country, committing thefts, murders, deceiving the peasantry, by telling fortunes, using charms, and other juggling tricks. The government became more stringent and merciless in its rule, and many Gipsies were driven to exile, imprisonment, torture, and death. In the space of five years twelve men and eight women were put to death simply because they were Gipsies. And in 1636 an act was issued empowering the sheriff of Haddington to pronounce sentence of death against as many of the Gipsies as

were men, and against as many of the women as had no children. The men were to be hanged and the women drowned, and such of the women as had children were to be scourged and burnt on the cheek. These are fair specimens of the sanguinary proceedings adopted against the Gipsies. Still they flourished, multiplied, and became more desperate in their deeds. Like their partners in calamity, the Jewish people, they derived a more intense nationality from their sufferings. It is well known that the Jews have always found a kind of contraband protection from the higher classes of society to whom they have made themselves useful. But the Gipsies, on the contrary, connected themselves, for mutual defence, with the outcasts of the community, from whom they received sympathy and help, and whom famine, oppression, or war, had deprived of the ordinary means of subsistence. For many years a band of 100,000 beggars, led on by Gipsies, went prowling about Scotland. These gangs were much the same sort of rendezvous as the cave of Adullam in the old Jewish times. It might have been said of the Gipsy leader as of David,—“Every one that is in distress, and every one that is in debt, and every one that is discontented, gather themselves unto him.” The peasantry were exposed, for years, to all the raids and violence of these confederated vagabonds. In bands of from fifty to one hundred they used to visit villages and hamlets, and forcibly rob and plunder houses, rookeries, barns, and stalls, or extract from the people pecuniary or other considerations. A piece of coin, a pewter dish, a silver spoon imprudently exposed at a village fair, or a fowl running about a farm yard, sometimes drew upon the owner the hand of the assassin. A gang of these Gipsies once broke into a house at Pennycook while the greater part of the family were at church. Sir John Clerk, the proprietor, sought to protect himself by firing from one of the windows upon the robbers,

who fired in return. By a kind Providence one of them while straying through the house in search of plate and other portable goods, began to ascend the steps of a very narrow torret. When he had got some height, his foot slipped, and to save himself from falling, the nimble Gipsy caught hold of a rope which hung convenient for the purpose. It proved to be the bell rope, and the fellow's weight in falling set the alarm bell ringing, and startled the congregation, who were assembled at church. They instantly rushed to rescue the proprietor, and succeeded in capturing some of the Gipsies, who were executed. A written account of this daring assault is kept in the records of the family. They also revelled in the wildest excesses. At country weddings, markets, burials, and other public occasions, gangs of them, women as well as men, might be seen perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting.

"The progress of time and increase both of the means of life and the power of the law, gradually reduced this dreadful evil within much narrower bounds. These wandering hordes became few in number and many were entirely rooted out. Still, however, enough remained to give occasional alarm and constant vexation. Some rude handicrafts were entirely resigned to them, particularly the art of trencher making, of manufacturing horn spoons, and the whole mystery of the tinker. To these they added a petty trade in the coarser sort of earthenware. Such were their ostensible means of livelihood. Each tribe had usually some fixed place of rendezvous which they occasionally occupied and considered as their standing camp, and in the vicinity of which they generally abstained from depredations. They had even talents and accomplishments which made them occasionally useful and entertaining. Many cultivated music with success; and the favoured fiddler or piper of a district was often to be found in a Gipsy camp. They understood all out-



door sports, especially otter hunting, fishing, or finding game. In winter the women told fortunes; the men showed tricks of legerdemain, and these accomplishments often helped many a weary or a stormy evening in the circle of the favoured house. The wildness of their character and the indomitable pride with which they despised all regular labour, commanded a certain awe, which was not diminished by the consideration, that these strollers were a vindictive race, and were restrained by no check, either of fear or conscience, from taking desperate vengeance upon those who had offended them. These tribes were in short the *Parias* of Scotland, living like wild Indians among European settlers, and like them, judged of rather by their own customs, habits, and opinions, than as if they had been members of the civilized part of the community. Some hordes of them yet remain, (1818) chiefly in such situations as afford a ready escape either into a waste country, or into another jurisdiction. Nor are the features of their character much softened. Their numbers, however, are so greatly diminished that, instead of 100,000 it would now, perhaps, be impossible to collect above 500 throughout Scotland." (Edinburgh Magazine.)

About seventy years ago great numbers of Gipsies, in small parties of twos and threes, used to cross the Forth at Queensferry. People knew not from whence these stragglers came. Indeed, these banditti were pledged to tell no one whence they came or with whom they were connected. They seldom returned at the passage at which they crossed northward. They were in general well dressed, carried cudgels in their hands, and their pockets generally contained sharp pen knives of the keenest edge, with which they used to cut out pocket books and purses of the people in the fairs, when they could not secure these articles by slight of hand. With these knives they used sometimes to fight in close combat.

They used to stay at a public house in North Queensferry, at that time well known for its excellent accommodation, and which was eagerly thronged by all classes of society. Here, as many as fourteen would meet after their depredations at fairs, to divide their plunder. They would eat and drink the best in the house, and were regarded by the landlord as amongst his best customers. They were perfectly inoffensive and remarkably civil. They never robbed the keeper of the inn, nor any of its lodgers, nor did they plunder in the immediate neighbourhood. Anything on the premises might have been safely entrusted to the care of these Gipsies. The servants welcomed their arrival as they generally paid them more liberally than the travellers for mercantile purposes were accustomed to do. Tam Gordon, who was the captain of this clan, used to hire small boats and visit the islands in the Forth and adjacent coasts like a gentleman on pleasure. On one occasion he gave a guinea, and as much brandy, and bread, and cheese, as the three boatmen could take, for rowing him to Inchcolm, a distance of four miles. The female Gipsies, during the depth of winter would sometimes hire horses at North Queensferry, and ride with no small pride and pomp to Lochgellie. So liberally did these vagrants pay for what they bought, that the boatmen in the neighbourhood gave them the endearing appellation of "*our frien's*." Indeed, some would heartily shake them by the hands and wickedly wish them "a good market" as they landed on the north shore on their way to pick pockets.

The Scottish Gipsies were also in the habit of training their children to theft and robbery from childhood. Some of them were exercised in this diabolical art under the most rigid discipline. A pair of breeches would be made fast to the end of a string suspended from a high part of the tent, kiln, or out-house in which they happened to be encamped. The

children were required, by slight of hand, to extract the money from the garment hanging in the position, without moving it. Sometimes bells were used in this discipline in the same way as we are informed the London sharpers\* train themselves to rifle the pockets of the people. The children who were most expert in extracting the cash in this manner were rewarded with presents and applause ; while on the other hand those who were awkward and committed blunders by ringing the bell or moving the breeches, were severely chastized by the superintendent of this Gipsy school. After these youths were considered perfect in this slight of hand branch of their trade, a purse or other small object was laid down in an exposed part of the tent or camp in view of all the horde. While the ordinary business of the Gipsies was going forward, the children again commenced their operations, by exerting their ingenuity and exercising their patience in trying to carry off the prize without being perceived by any of the family. If detected they were again dreadfully beaten, but when they succeeded unnoticed, they were caressed and liberally rewarded. This systematic training of the Gipsy youth was the duty of the chief females of the bands. These wanderers had great authority over their children. Ann Brown of the Lochgellie tribe, could, by a single stamp of her foot, cause the children to crouch to the ground, like trembling dogs under the rod of their

\* It is worthy the reader's remembrance that the Gipsies were not alone in their evil work. During the seventeenth and down to the close of the eighteenth century, organized bands of robbers went prowling about England. The Duke of Wellington in his speech in the House of Lords, on the passing of the Metropolitan Police Bill, in 1829, said :—" Many of your Lordships must recollect what used to take place on the high roads in the neighbourhood of this metropolis some years ago. Scarcely a carriage could pass without being robbed ; and frequently the passengers were obliged to fight with and give battle to highwaymen who infested the roads."

angry master.—See Blackwood's Edinburgh Mag., April 1818, p. 18.

Such is a brief glance at the history of the Gipsies from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Laws more severe and more ineffectual than those we have seen levelled at the Gipsies by the several countries in which they sojourned, cannot be imagined. Banishment, imprisonment, death, and almost all conceivable tortures were employed with a view to destroy their distinctive character and existence; and yet, their language, their dress, their customs, are all cherished with a fondness and resoluteness, unsurpassed in the history of any people, save the Jews. But though for ages they have thus been regarded as black spots upon the face of the earth which mankind ought instinctively to shun, yet they have souls as precious and immortal as our own. And if their personal vices, aided by the scorn, neglect, and cruelty with which they have been treated, has sunk them lower in the scale of society than many others of the great family of man, there is all the greater reason why we should co-operate, heart and soul, in seeking to raise them, as far as possible, to virtue, happiness, and God. But we will not anticipate what properly belongs to a future chapter of our work.

## CHAPTER III.

## THEIR ORIGIN.

"I am not very willing that any language should be totally extinguished; the similitude and derivation of languages afford the most indubitable proof of the traduction of nations, and the genealogy of mankind: they add often physical certainty to historical evidence of ancient migrations, and of the revolutions of ages which left no written monuments behind them."—*Dr Johnson.*

WE cannot, like the discoverer of the sources of the Nile, hope to immortalize our name by pointing out, with infallible certainty, the origin of the Gipsies. Still, the question, Whence did these tribes originate? is of considerable importance and demands a brief investigation. More than thirty different opinions have been held on this point.

Some historians believe that the Gipsies are a fragment of the two lost tribes of Israel. That the fate of the Gipsies is, in some respects, similar to that of the Jews, we admit. Both are dispersed among the Gentile nations with whom they occasionally form matrimonial alliances, but from whom they have received measureless insults and hurricanes of persecution; and both speak a language strange to those among whom they sojourn. Here, however, the resemblance ceases. *Scarcely fifty Hebrew words are spoken by the Gipsies, nor have they a single ceremony peculiar to the Hebrew nation. The Jews believe themselves to be under the special protection of the*

4

"God of their fathers," and to be waiting for the manifestation of his power in their deliverance and restoration. How different with the wandering Gipsies? They have, as we shall have occasion to show, no God, no religion, no traditions. The Jews have the noblest and most authentic national histories; the Gipsies have only a vague and unfounded report of the country from whence they sprang. The Jews are a profoundly learned people, possessing the most ancient literature in the world; the Gipsies, on the contrary, are grossly ignorant, and seem, to use the words of another, "a relic of a wandering caste which has never shaken off the darkness of ignorance." The Jews are the wealthiest people on the face of the earth, the Gipsies are the poorest. "Rich as a Jew," "Poor as a Gipsy," are proverbs which express the extremes of poverty and wealth. The Jews seek towns, the centres of population, where they can trade, but the Gipsies love to traverse the highways and bye-ways, the dirty lanes and barren moors, and inhabit towns only when necessity compels them. Lastly, "The Jews are becoming daily more attached to Christian society; the Jews of our own land feel an honour in being under the flag of Britain; but the Gipsies are of no country; they are found everywhere, and everywhere as strangers."\*

\* "Some have observed that the preservation of the Gipsies is as extraordinary as that of the Jews; but this is thrown out by way of *jest*, which like gravity and solemnity in another sort of writers, often supplies the want of argument. For what comparison between the Jewish nation and a collection of strollers of various countries, who perhaps have not existed as a body more than 400 years; who, far from dogmatizing, seem to be of no religion at all; who never appeared in arms, and made themselves formidable; whom rags and contempt have screened from violent persecution, and who at the worst have been only driven from place to place, which to them was no great punishment for *frauds and petty larceny*."—*Jordin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iii. p. 329.

But no account of their origin has been so widely adopted as that which the Gipsies gave of themselves; namely, *that they came from Egypt*. Who has not heard them boast of the noble blood of Egypt that flows in their veins? And could we believe the legend current in some Papal countries, the origin and dispersion of the Gipsies would be at once explained. It is this:—Their ancestors, who were Egyptians, refused asylum to the mother of our Saviour and her infant child when those exiles withdrew into Egypt to escape the massacre of the innocents by Herod. It is even added that they refused to draw a little water from the Nile for the thirsting mother and her infant. As a punishment for their inhospitality God sent them, poor, and wandering, and wretched, among all the other nations of the world. But one fact is fatal to this theory, namely, that the Gipsies have a language of their own, and not only is this language different from the Coptic and the Gipsy manners different from those of the natives of Egypt, but what is still more decisive, travellers have found bands of Gipsies encamped under the palm trees of Cairo, and in the villages bordering on the Nile,\* and there treated as foreigners just as with us. Besides, their physiognomy and mode of life, are widely dissimilar from those of the local population.

But the reader may be ready to ask, How came they to proclaim themselves Egyptians? I answer, that according to the best historians, some of them had passed *through Egypt* on their way to Europe; and secondly, that this pretension was well adapted to establish their reputation for the arts and deceptions which they intended to practice in England. "The

\* "When we were at Cairo, and the villages bordering on the Nile, we found troops of these strolling thieves (the Gipsies), under the palm trees; and they are esteemed foreigners in Egypt."—*Bellonius*.

fame of Egypt in astrology, magic, and soothsaying was universal, and they could not have devised a more artful expedient than the profession of this knowledge to procure for themselves a welcome reception by the great mass of the people."

The rapid progress of geographical and ethnological discovery, and the knowledge acquired of peoples and languages formerly almost unknown to our countrymen, have rendered the old theory of their Egyptian origin utterly untenable, and led historians, linguists, and ethnologists to look for their origin elsewhere. *That the Gipsies were originally one of the lower casts of India called Suders, and were driven out of their country some 400 years ago is now established almost beyond a doubt.* Much of the Indian features is visible in the countenance of the Gipsy, and there is a strong resemblance in his mode of living, his wandering habits, and general character. "A real Gipsy," says Grellman, "has a countenance, eye, mouth, ankle, and quickness of manners strongly indicative of Hindoo origin. This is more particularly the case with females," "The testimony of the most intelligent travellers, many of whom have long resided in India, fully supports this opinion.\* And, indeed, persons who have not travelled on the Asiatic continent, but who have seen the natives of Hindostan, have been surprised at the similarity of manners and features existing between them and the Gipsies.

This opinion will be strongly confirmed by the following comparison. (1.) The Suders are a filthy people; indeed the very dregs and refuse of Indian society, thievish in their dispositions, &c. It is well

\* The Rev. Charles Pickering, speaking of the Suder tribes, says, "They exercise the profession of *chatty men*, or *tinmen*. I fell in with one of their encampments, which consisted of low wooden tents. This, I think, is the class of people to which the origin of the Gipsies has been sometimes referred."—*The Races of Man*, p. 279.



known that the Gipsies are in the highest degree filthy and disgusting, accustomed to theft, &c. (2.) The Suder delights in horses, tinkering, &c. "He carries his tools, his shop, and his forge about with him, and works in any place where he can find employment. He has a stone instead of an anvil, and his whole apparatus is a pair of tongs, a hammer, a bettle, and a file. How exactly does this accord with the Gipsy tinker, who is often to be seen in our villages and hamlets? (3.) The Suder tribes dwell principally in huts and tents, and when they wander about from place to place they take with them their scanty property. And the reader knows how the Gipsies resemble these erratic tribes in this particular. They are often to be met with carrying their small tents with them, which consist of a few bent sticks and a blanket. (4.) Suder girls go about the villages of India singing, dancing, and playing music. Gipsies, before we got a vigilant police, were our chief street musicians, dancers, &c. (5.) The Suders in India are fond of horses, and are commonly employed as horse keepers by the European residents in that country. We all know how famous the Gipsies are for their traffic in horses, &c. (6.) Fortune telling is a favourite employment with the Suders. So it is with the Gipsies. (7.) The Suders eat the flesh of nearly every unclean creature; nor are they careful that the flesh of such creatures should not be putrid. How exactly do the Gipsies imitate them in this abhorrent practice. They were formerly in the habit of eating many kinds of brutes, not even excepting dogs, and cats, and when pressed by hunger, have sought after the most putrid carrion. And when one of them was asked why they did so he repeated what has long been a proverb among them:—"Those that have died by the hands of God, are better than those that have died by the hands of man."

*Another—and shall I say infallible—argument in*

favour of their Indian origin arises from the strong resemblance between the language of the Suder tribes and that spoken by the Gipsies. Charles Pickering, in his work already referred to, says :—"Some combined association of individuals, some clanism seems requisite to the preservation of a language in the midst of a foreign nation. Thus it may be inferred that the *Hebrews* retained their language during their sojourn in Egypt, while in their present dispersed condition they speak the language of their several adopted countries, to the very common neglect of their own. The Gipsies, who are almost as widely spread, though less individually dispersed, retain everywhere something of their original language."\* And what was that language? Undoubtedly, *Hindustanee*. For many years it was believed that the Gipsy language was like the jargonish effusion of the London thieves and pick-pockets, and invented for similar purposes. This, however, is a mistake, as could be very conclusively shown. This language is used, not merely by one or a few of the tribes of Gipsies wandering in different European nations, but is adopted by the vast numbers who inhabit the earth. "In the

\* "The strong attachment of the Gipsies to their own language, for such it is, is one of the most striking features in their character. The moment they are addressed in it, their excitable temperament is roused at once, and they pass from their habitual sullenness to strangers, or their artificial loquacity when aiming at deception, into the most unrestrained expressions of pleasure and confidence. Mr. Hoyland, having picked up a few words from Grellman's vocabulary of words, went to a Gipsy encampment, and began to use them in conversation. They gave way to immoderate transports of joy, saying, 'we will tell you everything you wish to know of us.' And by the same talisman Mr. Borrow succeeded in captivating the Spanish Gipsies, whose hearts seem to have been wrapt up in impenetrable hatred and distrust of strangers. They took him for one of themselves and in that confidence they gave him full insight into their policy, their manner of life, and their savage principles of independence."—*Edinburgh Magazine*.

streets of Moscow and Madrid, of London and Constantinople, in the plains of Hungary and the burning solitudes of Brazils, the wind scatters the strange sounds of this idiom, which has everywhere a character of unity in its principle features." Mr. Borrow, who is well acquainted with the Gipsy dialect, believes it to be a degraded and mutilated offshoot of the Sanscrit, one of the languages formerly spoken in India. He says:—"During the latter part of the last century, the curiosity of some learned individuals, particularly Grellman, Richardson, and Marsden, induced them to collect many words of the Romanian (Gipsy) language as spoken in Germany, Hungary, and England, which, upon analyzing, they discovered to be in general either pure Sanscrit or Hindustani words or modifications thereof; these investigations have been continued to the present time by men of equal curiosity and no less erudition, the result of which has been the establishment of the fact, that the Gipsies of those countries are the descendants of a tribe of Hindus who for some particular reason had abandoned their native country."\*

Many facts might be adduced in confirmation of the above statements. (1.) Bishop Heber found Gipsies encamped in Persia where they lived exactly like the Gipsies in England, and they all spoke Hindostanee, the same as in our country. (2.) A Missionary from India, who was well acquainted with the language of Hindostan, had a conversation with a Gipsy, and he afterwards declared to Mr. Crabbe that her people must once have known the Hindostanee language well. (3.) About the year 1763, a Missionary at Leydon, being intimately acquainted with three young Malabar students, whose parents were Brahmins, took down 1000 words which he fancied corresponded with the Gipsy language. He repeated these

\* *Gipsies in Spain.* By George Borrow, p. 220.

words to a number of Gipsies, who explained them without trouble or hesitation. (4.) A nobleman who had resided many years in India, once took shelter under a tree during a storm near a camp of Gipsies, and he was surprised to hear them use several words he knew was Hindostanee; and going up to them he found they were able to converse with him in that language. (5.) Lord Teignmouth once said to a female Gipsy, in Hindostanee, *Tue burra tschur*; that is, *thou art a thief*, to which she indignantly replied, *No, I am not a thief; I live by fortune telling.*" (6.) Dr. Knox mentions a curious fact within his own knowledge. A gentleman from India had two native servants who married and settled in the south of Scotland, and had families of mulattoes. When the Gipsies came to the neighbourhood they preferred encamping near these families whom they styled "*our own people.*"\* Did they recognize *our people*? asks the Eclectic Review. (June 1859, p. 598.)

Mr. James C. Prichard, M.D., who has long been regarded as the oracle of Ethnologists, says:—"The origin of the Gipsies was long unknown, till their real affinity was proved by Grellman. They call themselves Roma, men; Kola, black; and Sinte, perhaps from the river Sind, or Indus. The Persians term them Sisech Hindu, or black Hindoos, and that they really sprang from the Indian race has been ascertained by the comparison of languages.

But it remained long a question from what tribe of Hindoos the Gipsies came. This matter has in a great measure been cleared up by Capt. D. Richardson, who has proved that a great affinity subsists between

\* Sir Walter Scott says, "I recollect having heard some Gipsies converse, in what has been generally regarded as a mere slang, but which was in fact a real language, and whether it was an imaginary resemblance I know not, but the first time I listened to Hindoos spoken fluently, it reminded me of the colloquies of the Gipsies."

the Gipsies and a sort of people in India termed Baycegurs, who are divided into seven castes. It is very probable that from some of these the Gipsies originated. Pallas remarks, that the language of the Gipsies very much resembled that of the Hindoos, resorting for the purposes of trade to Astrachan, from the Indian province of Multan. Adelung has exhibited a collection of words of the Multan dialect, in comparison with as many corresponding terms in the idiom of the Gipsies. The result is, that a very near affinity certainly exists between these languages.

With respect to physical characters, Capt. Richardson says, that there is no peculiar feature which distinguishes the Baycegurs from other nations of India.

The Gipsies had, doubtless, at the period of migration from Hindoostan, a complexion and bodily conformation resembling those of other Hindoos; so that whatever difference subsists between the present Gipsies and the Hindoos, must be regarded as a variation from the original character, occasioned perhaps by climate. . . . . However, as the breed is not free from admixture with a foreign blood, we cannot draw any conclusion (adverse to their Indian origin) on this subject with positive certainty."p

Grellman states (and the opinion is confirmed by Mr. Borrow), that *twelve* out of every *thirty* words of the Gipsies' language are either pure Hindostanee, or nearly related to it. And this statement will be strongly confirmed by the following words, which show the close resemblance between the Gipsy and the Hindostanee language, and which we have selected from the vocabulary of Grellman, Hoyland, and Mr. Baird:—

p *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind.* By James Cowles Prichard, M.D. Second Edition, vol. 1., pp. 521-3.

Yetholm.*	Continental.	Hindostanee.	English.
Yack	Taok	Ank	The eye.
Nak	Nak	Nak	The nose.
Kan	Kan	Kan	The ear.
Rate	Ratti	Rat	Night.
Shan	Schon	Chand	The moon.
Pawne	Panj	Pance	Water.
Devas	Diwes	Dewus	Day.
Mas	Mas	Mas	Flesh.
Gnae	Gee	Ghora	A horse.
Balo	Balo	Barah	A pig.
Yag	Jag	Ag	Fire.
Mul	Mol	Mool	Wine.
Sungo	Sunjo	Soonna	Hearing.
Sung	Sung	Soongh	Smell.
Sik	Sik	Chik	Taste.
Rook	Ruk	Rookh	A tree.
Lon	Lon	Lon	Salt.
Barc-panne	Baro panj	Bura panee	The sea.
Ranne	Ranj	Ranee	A lady.
Tikne	Tikno	Tuigna	Little.
Bare	Baro	Burra	Beautiful.
Tchorran	Tschar	Chorana	To steal.
Peevan	Piava	Peena	Drinking.
Doga	Doga	Dugha	An affair.
Sewashe	Schoschi	Sussa	A hare.
Ratte	Rat	Rakt	Blood.
Thud	Tud	Dhoon	Milk.
Klegan	Klidan	Kileed	A key.

Assuming as true, the theory of their Indian origin, let us take a glance at the state of Hindostan at the period when the Gipsies made their first appearance in Europe, and let us ask:—"Was there any occurrence in Indian history that will account for the appearance of them among western nations?"

The Gipsies first appeared in Germany in 1409,

\* Yetholm is a village in Scotland where resides a colony of Gipsies. We shall devote a subsequent chapter to their history and character.

and, according to Brand,<sup>r</sup> it was in the year 1408, that Timur Beg, one of the most fanatical of the Mohammedan conquerors of Hindostan, ravaged India for the purpose of spreading the Mohammedan delusion. "Not only," says Mr. Hoyalnd, "was every one who made any resistance destroyed, and such as fell into the enemies' hands, though quite defenceless, made slaves, but in a short time those slaves, to the number of 100,000, were put to death."<sup>r</sup> The inference is, that numbers, whose lot it was not to be overtaken by an enemy so dreadful, would save their lives by flying from their native land, and become wandering strangers in another. But the reader may be ready to ask :—Why did not some of the other casts of India, accompany them? I answer in the words of Mr. Crabb :—"This objection has no weight at all when we consider the hatred and contempt poured upon the Suder by all the other casts of India. The Bramins, Tschechteries, and Beis, were as safe, though menaced with destruction by Timur Beg, as they would have been along with the Suder tribes, seeking a retreat from their enemy in lands where he would not be likely to follow them. Besides, the other casts, from time immemorial, have looked on their country as especially given them of God; and they would as soon have suffered death as leave it. The Suders had not these prepossessions for their native soil. They were a degraded people; a people looked on as the lowest of the human race; and, with an army seeking their destruction, they had every motive to leave, and none to stay in Hindostan."

The tract along which the Gipsies found their way from Hindostan, cannot now be ascertained with any degree of accuracy. A writer in Chambers's Miscellany says :—"Quitting India, we can suppose these

<sup>r</sup> See his Popular Antiquities.

<sup>p</sup> Brand says that 500,000 human beings were butchered by Timur Beg.

wandering outcasts, speaking a dialect of Hindoostanee, tinged with Persian, to have slowly persued their route westwards towards Europe; at first, perhaps in a compact body, but afterwards in straggling bands. Proceeding along the south of the Caspian, or the north of the Persian gulf, they would pass into Europe, through Asiatic Turkey, some of their number, possibly enough, penetratiag first into Egypt. Once arrived in Europe, their route most naturally would coincide with that which the Crusading armies had persued in a reverse direction, when marching into Asia several centuries before, and this would account for their early appearance in Hungary, Wallachia, and the Slavonic parts of Europe."



## CHAPTER IV.

## THEIR GENERAL HABITS.

“ With loitering steps from town to town they pass,  
Their lazy dames rocked on the panniered ass.  
From pilfered roost or nauseous carrion fed,  
By hedge-rows green they strew the leafy bed.  
While scarce the cloak of tawdry red conceals  
Their fine-turned limbs which every breeze reveals.  
Their bright black eyes through silken lashes shine,  
Around their neck their raven tresses twine,  
But chilling damps and dews of night impair  
Its soft sleek gloss and tan the bosom bare.  
Adroit the lines of palmistry to trace,  
Or read the damsel’s wishes in her face.  
Her hoarded silver store they charm away,  
A pleasing debt for promised wealth to pay.”—*Leyden*.

“ A great deal has been written on the subject of the English Gipsies, but the writers have dwelt too much in generalities ; they have been afraid to take the Gipsy by the hand, lead him forth from the crowd, and exhibit him in the area.” Thus wrote Mr. Borrow twenty years ago. But would not that be a false delicacy and an unwise reticence which, from a fear of outraging the feelings of our readers, or an impression of the utter impossibility of reforming and saving the Gipsies, should lead us to hide their true state and character ? Nor need the purest heart fear contamination when positive duty or painful necessity requires that the most repulsive features in their character should be brought to light. Besides, it is a universally admitted axiom that no man can properly remove an evil which he does not understand. Can that man remove disease and restore health, who

is ignorant of anatomy and physiology, and who treats his patients as though no disease existed? And before we can do much good among this class of the human race we must understand the sort of men with whom we have to deal; the peculiar forms of evil prevalent among them;\* the difficulties and temptations that stand in the way of their conversion, and the best means by which they are to be won over to knowledge, purity, and God. And in calling the reader's attention to these topics, we may adopt as our motto the words of the Spanish poet :—

“ I do not see,  
The most remote necessity,  
To dress up what I have to say,  
In any round about fine way.”

It is not necessary to occupy much of our space in pointing out the physical peculiarities of the Gipsies. They are about the middle height, assuming that standard to be about five feet, seven inches. They possess robust and well-knit frames which impresses the beholder, instantly, with the idea of strength and activity combined; and, according to Mr. Borrow, a deformed and weakly person is rarely found amongst them. Their hair is long and black; their teeth white; their lips ruddy, and their complexion generally tawny or brown; and in Spain countenances are to be met with as dark as those of Mullattoes, and in some few instances of almost Negro blackness. This discolouration of their skin arises, partly, from the smoke of their camp fires; from the fumes of tobacco, rum, and onions,—three favourite articles of Gipsy luxury; from their alternate exposure to the extremes of heat and cold; and from their habitual filthiness; for they seldom wash either their persons or their

\* The reader must bear in mind that many of the remarks made in this chapter will apply only to those Gipsies who continue their wild and wandering habits.

clothes. The most remarkable characteristic of the Gipsy is the eye, the comical expression and almost unnatural brilliancy of which differs from that of all other human beings. Mr. Borrow says :—"The Jew is known by his eye, but then in the Jew that feature is peculiarly small. The Chinese has a remarkable eye, but then the eye of the Chinese is oblong, and even with the face, which is flat ; but the eye of the Gipsy is neither large nor small, and exhibits no marked difference in its shape from the eyes of the common cast. Its peculiarity consists in a strange staring expression, which to be understood must be seen."

Diseases are not common among the Gipsies. They enjoy a more robust and perfect state of health than those who are accustomed to the luxuries of refined society. The alternations of heat and cold, sunshine and shower, which succeed each other with such rapidity in our land do not injuriously affect the constitution of the Gipsy. Typhus fever, that dreadful scourge of our nation,\* and the frequent attendant on famine and starvation, occasionally makes its appearance in their tents, and becomes fatal. "The small pox and measles are disorders they very much dread ; but they are not more disposed to rheumatic affections than those who live in houses." Many of them live to a great age. There died a short time ago two Gipsies, husband and wife, aged respectively, more than one hundred years. As the husband was being consigned to the "house appointed for all living," his widow grew frantic with grief, and tearing her hair, begged to throw herself on the coffin that she might be buried with him who had been the sharer of her sorrows for upwards of five score years.

\* "In 1846-7 the Irish famine produced our last great typhus epidemic. In those years there were 300,000 cases of the fever in England. In Liverpool alone the number of deaths from this disease was 100,000."—*Christian World*, January 9th, 1863.

“ Danger, long travel, want, or woe,  
Soon change the form that best we know  
And blanch at once the hair;  
Hard toil can roughen form and face,  
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace,  
More deeply than despair.  
Happy whom none of these befall,  
But this poor Gipsy knew them all.”

A woman of the name of B. . . lived to the advanced age of one hundred and twenty years, and up to the time of her death was accustomed to amuse spectators by her brisk step, her bright smile, and merry song.

Their dress is generally scanty, rugged, and fantastic in the extreme; indeed, we have seen a company of them pass through a village when it seemed as though “ Joseph’s coat of many colours” had been amplified so as to cover twenty or thirty persons. The women mostly wear, as their distinguishing dress, a scarlet cloak, a black beaver bonnet, and a gorgeous kerchief knotted under their chin; and yet, they manifest a childish fondness for jewelled bracelets, glittering chains, golden ornaments, large ear-drops, collars of false pearls, and dresses of the richest texture and gaudiest colours, especially if these articles have been worn by persons of rank and distinction. A young Gipsy persuaded three maiden ladies, to give her a large sum of money, promising that it should be doubled by her art of conjuration. She at once hastened to another district, where, mounted on a black horse, and wearing a round beaver hat, a silver-mounted whip, and a handsome riding habit, she figured away in her ill-gotten finery at the fairs. The men are equally fond of gay clothing when it suits their interest to exhibit it.

During a recent trial of a Gipsy at Lincoln, the court was crowded with Gipsies, male and female, who came to sympathize with their kinsman. Con-

spicuous amongst them appeared the "Gipsy chief," clad in a high collared coat, full shirt frill, knee breeches, and shining buckles,—the style of dress worn by gentlemen of fashion towards the close of the last century. Sandie Brown, a famous Gipsy of sixty years ago, when in full dress, wore a hat richly ornamented and trimmed with beautiful gold lace, a style of dress then fashionable among the aristocracy of Scotland. The coat was made of superfine cloth of a light green colour, and was adorned with gilt buttons. His shirt, of the finest quality, was ruffled at the breast and hands, with a stock and buckle round his neck. He also wore a pair of handsome boots with silver plated spurs, all in the fashion of the day. Indeed, he had the appearance of a gentlemen in his habit, and assuming the manners of one, which he imitated to a wonderful degree, few persons took him for a Gipsy.

Their mode of life is highly nomadic. In England, during the last fifty years, many of our waste lands, and wild and uncultivated spots, formerly frequented by the Gipsies, have been turned into corn fields and pasture lands. Besides, the police has become yearly more efficient, and the Gipsies have not been allowed to encamp, for any length of time, on the green lanes and commons of our country, as they once were. Hence, like birds of passage, they are here to-day and gone to-morrow. At evening you will find them at the suburbs of a village as active as though they had found a permanent resting place, but during the night, beneath the silent stars and silver moon, they will have travelled to a distance of twenty, thirty, and in some instances, forty miles. The birds of the air do not feel a keener necessity for the bright atmosphere and all the rich variety of out-door life, than do the Gipsies. "You are a wild set," I observed to a young Gipsy. "Open air and liberty make us so," was

her reply. "But would you not like to live in a house?" "No," said she, "I should pine away and die, just as would that lark" (pointing to one that was singing in the mid-heavens)," if put in a cage. I was born in a tent, I have lived in a tent, and I hope to die in a tent. I am of the true Stanley blood, and love to hear the winds whistle round my tent and the rain patter on it, and feel myself warm and snug within. Besides, I love to feel the mornings' sweet fresh air, and to see the smoke of the camp fire ascend. No one who has a drop of the real Romney blood in him ever yet willingly took to the life of the house-dweller. No, no." Shut them up in a house and they are like an encaged eagle—restless, and melancholy, having no real relish of life left in them. Two of their children, having been cleanly washed and neatly dressed, were taken one morning to the house of a benevolent gentlemen, who had kindly offered to feed, clothe, and educate them, for awhile. During the day they amused themselves with running up and down stairs, and through the rooms of the house, like wild cats in a wood. But when night came and they were put to bed they cried piteously for two hours, saying, "the house will fall and crush us to death." They had never spent a day in a house before, and were at night like birds that had been decoyed, and then robbed of their liberty. And who has not heard the Gipsies pour forth this wild song:—

"Farewell—farewell—I leave you now,  
My foot springs light o'er mountain brow,  
O'er heathery plain—through mossy glen—  
To join my wandering tribe again.

How freshly now this lightsome air  
Wantons in my streaming hair,  
My naked foot the streamlet laves;  
I love, I do, its dancing waves.

I come, my people, wild and free,  
To your desert homes right joyously,  
The voice of your hills has been with me long,  
The care-worn dwellings of men among.

The sound of your streams has filled mine ear,  
When nothing I cared for or loved was near,  
It has solaced—supported—through care and pain,  
Till I burst my bonds to join you again."

And it is a well-known fact, that such is their attachment to their migratory life, and the music and mirth of their camps, that they have often left wealth, and pleasure, that they might rejoin their former associates, away from the hum of cities, civilization, laws, and restraints. A chief of the Northamptonshire Gipsies, who married the servant of a wealthy family, obtained a farm some years ago, but though it was advantageous, he left it to resume his liberty, and his profession as a muscian. "A lady of rank and fortune, who happened to have no children, had taken so great a liking to a beautiful little Gipsy girl, that she took her home, had her educated, and at length adopted her as her daughter. She was called Charlotte Stanley, received the education of a young English lady of rank, and grew up to be a beautiful, well-informed, and accomplished girl. In the course of time a young man of good family became attached to her, and wished to marry her. The nearer, however, this plan approached the period of its execution the more melancholy became the young Hindostanee bride; and one day, to the terror of her foster mother and her betrothed husband, she was found to have disappeared. It was known there had been Gipsies in the neighbourhood; a search was set on foot, and Charlotte Stanley was discovered in the arms of a Gipsy, the chief of a band. She declared she was his wife, and no one had a right to take her away from him, and the benefactress and the bridegroom returned *inconsolable*. Charlotte afterwards came to

visit them, and told how, as she grew up, she had felt more and more confined within the walls of the castle, and an irresistible longing had at length seized her to return to her wild Gipsy life, nor could she, although suffering many cruelties from her gipsy husband, ever be induced to abandon the roving life to which she had returned. I saw the portrait of Charlotte Stanley, which was preserved by the friend of her youth." <sup>r</sup>

Most people think it a disgraceful thing to live upon the labour of others, but among the Gipsies no such scruples appear to be felt. They are like the cuckoo, very indifferent who builds the nest if they can only acquire, for their own ease and enjoyment, undisturbed possession. The men have an instinctive aversion to what may be termed hard work, and would much rather wander about from village to village, mending chairs, grinding razors, tinkering and basket making than occupy themselves in the ordinary pursuits of active life. Fifty years ago, they were reputed to possess a singular knowledge of the properties of plants and herbs, and were celebrated for their skill in curing diseases of cattle. The farmers placed great faith in them, and their wives were wont to consult them in cases of illness, for themselves and children. A cake they used to make of herbs was long famous as a specific for the ague, a form of disease very common among the fens of Lincolnshire and the marshes of Yorkshire. But, like the Suders in India, the support of their families depends chiefly upon what the women produce by begging, swindling, and fortune telling. Their gains from the sale of baskets, spoons, besoms, clothes pegs, nets, &c.—the ostensible articles of their trade—are small indeed; a few pence per day being the utmost they receive. But, the sale of these articles serve as a pass-port into houses, and introduce them to the



servants of families, from whom they sometimes reap a rich contribution for professing to fore-tell the events of the future, and bestowing the favours of fortune, like the sunshine and shower, equally upon the worthy and unworthy, the just and the unjust. Their resources, however, are sometimes so scanty that they suffer the most severe extremities of hunger. A number of them on being executed many years ago declared they had not eaten a morsel of bread for four days previous to their apprehension. Mr. Vanderkiste, the London city missionary, mentions a Gipsy who was in extreme distress, and who, in describing the effects of three days compulsory abstinence from food, said :—“The *first* day 'taint so *werry* bad if you has a bit of 'bacca; the second its horrid, it is *sich* gnawing; the third day it aint so bad again, you feels sinkish like, and *werry faintish*.” Hunger is a sharp thorn. And under its pinchings the Gipsies have often been compelled to eat acorns, the refuse of dead animals, snails, hedgehogs, and other creatures not generally eaten as food.\* This peculiarity is thus described by the poet Cowper :—

“ I see a column of slow rising smoke,  
O'er-top the lofty wood, that skirts the wild.  
A vagabond and useless tribe, there eat  
Their miserable meal. A kettle  
Slung between two poles, upon a stick transverse,  
Receives the morsel : flesh *obscene* of hog,  
Or *vermin*, or, at best, of cock purloined  
From his accustomed perch. Hard faring race,  
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,  
Which kindled with dry leaves, and wood, just saves  
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide  
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,  
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.”

\* Towards the close of the last century the Hungarian government charged the Gipsies with the crime of cannibalism, and in the year 1782, a gang of them were put to death, charged with having devoured the flesh of eighty-four persons in the space of twenty-one years. This atrocious deed was done, though no plausible evidence of the crime could be adduced by the government.

The Gipsies have the unenviable reputation of being the greatest horse stealers in Europe. Certain it is, that some of the earliest collisions between them and the people, of which we read in the annals of our own country, arose from their depredations on the horses, cattle, and flocks of the country farmers. To enter a field, farm yard, or stable, and selecting the best animal, carry it off in safety, was the greatest feat a Gipsy could perform, and imparted at once a patent of nobility.

They used to carry on a systematized traffic in horses between the north of the Tweed and England. The horses stolen in England were at once sent to Scotland, and sold there; while, on the other hand, the Scottish horses were disposed off in London and its suburban fairs. The crime of horse stealing alone brought great numbers of them to an untimely death on the gallows.

When a horse had been secured, their first care was to clip and trim it by their dexterous scissors and certain chemical mixtures, so that its owner could not recognize it. Unhappily, there is some thing about wit, skill, and daring which commands respect even when engaged in doing mischief, and the dexterous manner in which the Gipsies sometimes avoided detection, excited admiration instead of merited punishment. We give one instance. Sandie Brown, mentioned on a former page, on one occasion stood in great need of butchers' meat for his tribe. He had observed grazing in a field in Linlithgow, a bulluck which had, at one period, by some accident, lost about three-fourths of its tail. He bought from a tanner the tail of a skin of the same colour as this bullock, and, in an ingenious manner, made it fast to the remaining part of the tail of the living animal by sewing them together. Disguised in this way he drove off his booty; and as he was shipping the beast at *Queensferry*, in his way north, a servant, who had

been dispatched in search of the depredator overtook him as he was stepping into the boat. An altercation commenced; the servant said he could swear to the ox in his possession were it not for its *long tail*, and was accordingly proceeding to examine it narrowly, to satisfy himself in this particular, when the ready-witted Gipsy, ever fertile in expedients to extricate himself from difficulty, took his knife out of his pocket and in view of all present, cut the false tail from the animal taking in part of the real tail along with it, which drew blood instantly. He threw the false tail into the sea, and with some warmth called out to his pursuer, "Swear to it now, you scoundrel." The servant quite confounded, said not another word on the subject; and being thus imposed upon by this bold stroke of Brown's, returned home to his master, and the unconscionable thief prosecuted his journey with his prize."

The plan adopted in this instance was ingenious in its rascality, and constitutes, we fear, but an ordinary specimen of the Gipsies' art, as practised fifty or seventy years ago.

The English Gipsies, down to a recent period, were in the habit of mixing a poisonous drug called the "*Draco*," the preparation of which was known only to the heads of tribes. The possession of this is said to have been a principle source of authority and influence with these wandering outcasts. We have known them throw a poisoned pellet into the mouth of a mad dog, which, in a few moments, lay panting and dying. They would sometimes visit the homesteads of country farmers, and secretly casting their deleterious compositions amongst the provender, the animals soon after became sick. In a few days they would visit such farmers, and offer to cure their sick cattle for a certain sum, and if their proposal was accepted, the animals were soon well. By the same means they frequently obtained food; they would poison swine

and sheep, and these, having been cast aside by their owners, the Gipsies, who have no objections to eat creatures that die in their blood, would beg them, or buy them for the merest trifle. By the use of this "*Drao*," they would often avenge themselves of their enemies by destroying their cattle without incurring a shadow of suspicion. "Revenge is sweet," says the proverb, and the Gipsies, though remarkable for the kindness with which they treat all who befriend them—of which more anon—are, perhaps, the most revengeful people on the face of the earth. A farmer in the neighbourhood of Pocklington, in Yorkshire, having forbidden some of them to encamp about his fields, soon after lost several sheep by death. He at once suspected the Gipsies, and, having one of the animals opened, discovered a piece of stick with some wool wrapt round it, in its throat, by which means it had been suffocated. In this way the revengeful Gipsies had killed this man's sheep. Indeed, they have a favourite song called "*Poisoning the Porker*," of which the following is Mr. Borrow's translation:—

"Listen to me, ye Roman lads, who are all seated in the straw about the fire, and I will tell you how we poison the porker, I will tell you how we poison the porker.

We go to the house of a poison monger\* where we buy three pennies' worth of bane, and when we return to our people, we say, we will poison the porker, we will try and poison the porker.

"We then make up the poison, and then we take our way to the house of the farmer, as if to beg a bit of victuals, a little broken victuals.

"We see a jolly porker, and then we say in Roman language:—'Fling the bane yonder amongst the diet, and the porker soon will find it, the porker soon will find it.'

"Early on the morrow we will return to the farmer, and beg the dead porker, the body of the dead porker.

"And so we do, even so we do; the porker dieth during the night; on the morrow we beg the porker, and carry to the tent the porker.

"And then we wash the inside well, till all the inside is perfectly clean, till there's no bane within; not a poison grain within.

\* The Apothecary.

"And then we roast the body well, send for ale to the alehouse, and have a merry banquet, a merry Roman banquet.

"The fellow with the fiddle plays; he plays, the little lassie sings, she sings an ancient Roman ditty; now hear the Roman ditty." P

The Gipsies invariably frequent fairs, markets, and races, where they carry on their diversified trades, especially that of horse dealing. Many a bright sovereign have they carried off from amateur dealers in horse flesh, by their superior skill in the art of metamorphose, at our most noted provincial fairs. A person who had formerly been a P. M. P. but who married the widow of a Lincolnshire farmer, went to Spilsby fair, and sold an old horse to a Gipsy to whom he expressed a wish to purchase a horse of a similar size and colour but a few years younger. The Gipsy at once declared that he had a horse of that description grazing a few miles away, and if the man would wait, he would have it on the spot in a few hours. He waited. The horse was bought. On entering the yard the next morning, his wife, who was particularly fond of old Jack, having been a great favourite with her former husband, said, "I'm glad you've brought him back again." "Back," said the husband, "what do you mean?" "Why, that's Jack," replied the wife. "You've lost your eyes," was the answer. "That may be," rejoined the wife, good naturedly, "but that's Jack, and only get off and you'll see where he'll go." The husband sprang from the animal, and, shaking his head and shrugging his shoulders, said, with an air of triumph, "and where will he go?" When lo! and behold! Jack gave one of his usual snorts, and then trotted off to his accustomed stall! The truth was, the Gipsy had, in a few hours, metamorphosed Jack into a bright skinned and sprightly horse, and then sold him to his original proprietor, who paid ten pounds for his bargain.

P "*The Romany Rye*," pp. 86. By G. Borrow.

## CHAPTER V.

## THEIR FORTUNE-TELLING PRETENSIONS.

“To heaven, oh, Gipsy! raise thine eye,  
 A Heaven thou never yet hast sought,  
 Where dwells the “Star of destiny,”  
 In brightness, past the reach of thought.

Oh, Gipsy! take, ere yet too late,  
 Embracing truth—renouncing pride,  
 The Bible for thy “book of fate,”  
 The “Star of Bethlehem” for thy guide.

Before the Cross thy science lay;  
 There, bid thy mystic dreaming cease,—  
 That book shall cheer thy pilgrim-way,  
 That STAR shall light thee home, in peace!”

THE female Gipsies have, from the earliest account we have of them, been addicted to and famous for the art of fortune telling; indeed, as we have just seen, it is their principle means of livelihood. Whether they practised this art previous to their departure from the East, or adopted it after their appearance in Europe, is, with some, a disputed point; the mass of evidence, however, is immensely in favour of the former opinion. As though gifted with a prescience quite super-human, they profess, like the witches in *Macbeth*—

“to look into the seeds of time  
 And say which grain will grow and which will not.”

*Eager as wild animals who have tasted blood, they beset the young and the credulous, and by their in-*

sidious caresses, their spell-like arts, their winning tongue, and specious promises, they almost invariably charm forth a new supply of coin. Their practice lies chiefly among females, the portion of the human race most given to curiosity and credulity. Maid servants and love sick country girls form their principal victims, but the circle of their deceptions is by no means restricted to the lower and more ignorant classes. They seem to know, instinctively, what key will the readiest unlock the human heart; hence, to the young they promise a husband of fair complexion and handsome features, and rich withal; to wives who are childless, they promise a numerous offspring, and to the aged they promise vast riches, well knowing that avarice is the strongest passion of the human heart, and the last that becomes extinct. Perhaps the reader's experience will endorse the truth of these lines by Rogers :—

“ As o'er my palm the silver piece she drew,  
And traced the line of life with searching view  
How thrilled my fluttering pulse with hopes and fears,  
To learn the colour of my future years.”

They possess extraordinary self-possession, and can readily adapt themselves to almost any circumstances in which they may be placed. “ Their speech is as fluent, and their eyes as unabashed, in the presence of royalty, as before those from whom they have nothing to hope or fear; the result being that most minds quail before them. There were two Gipsies at Madrid,” says Mr. Borrow, from whom we now quote, “ Pepita and La Chicharona, the first a shrewd, witch-like female, about fifty, was mother-in-law of La Chicharona, who was remarkable for her stoutness. These women subsisted entirely by fortune-telling and swindling. The son of Pepita, and husband of Chicharona, having stolen a horse was sentenced to ten years' hard labour in prison. The wife and

mother became inconsolable, and resolved to make every effort to procure his liberation. They sought an interview with the Queen regent, Christina, believing she would at once pardon the criminal, if they could only assail her with their Gipsy discourse; for, to use their own words, 'the knew well what to say.' I at that time lived close by the palace, in the street of Santiago, and daily, for the space of a month, saw them bending their steps in that direction. One day they came to me in a great hurry, with a strange expression on both their countenances. "We have seen Christina," said Pepita. "Within the palace?" I inquired. "Within the palace," answered the sibyl. "Christina at last saw and sent for us, as I knew she would. I told her *bahi* and Chicharona danced the Gipsy dance before her." "And what did you tell her?" "I told her many things," said the hag; "many things which I need not tell you: know, however, that amongst other things, I told her that the *chabori* (little queen) would die, and then she would be Queen of Spain. I told her, moreover, that within three years she would marry the son of the King of France, and it was her *bahi* (fortune) to die Queen of France and Spain, and to be loved much and hated much." "And did you not dread her anger, when you told her these things?" "Dread her, the Busnee?" screamed Pepita: "No, my child, she dreaded me more; I looked at her so—and raised my hand so—and Chicharona clapped her hand, and the Busnee believed all I said, and was afraid of me; and then I asked for the pardon of my son, and she pledged her word to see into the matter, and when we came away, she gave me this *baria* of gold, and to Chicharona this other, so at all events we have hokanched the queen." (*Gipsies in Spain*, p. 179.)

There is a proverb which says, "Fortune does not withhold her favours from the foolish," and the Gipsy fortune-teller has sometimes come in for a large share



of her bounties. Some years ago, a young lady in Gloucestershire wished to form a matrimonial alliance with a gentleman of handsome person and large fortune, and an old Gipsy having been informed of the fact, assured the lady that she could so influence the object of her affection that he would reciprocate her love. The bargain was made, the Gipsy receiving has her fee, all the plate the lady had in her house, a gold chain and a locket, with no other security than the promise that they should be restored at a given period. As might be expected, the wicked woman fled with her booty, and the articles being of great value, the lady was compelled, publicly, to expose her folly. About the same time, other parties were duped to the extent of four hundred pounds by a number of fortune-telling Gipsies.

It was only the other day, August 16th, 1863, that a female Gipsy was placed at the bar charged with having obtained ten pounds from the wife of a respectable tradesman at G . . . . This old hag professed to be a "ruler of the planets," and promised that if this woman would give her the sum stated, she would reveal to her the events of her future life. You might as well try to extinguish a fire by sprinkling gunpowder upon it, as, by giving money to the Gipsy Sibyl, try to satisfy her greed of gain. Hence, this old deceiver was not satisfied with ten pounds; for, seeing a costly table cloth in the room, and a blanket on the bed, she declared she must have "*them*" or her charm would not act. Other parties, all highly respectable, were in the course of a few weeks, duped by the same woman to the extent of fifty pounds.

We never hear of these attempts to regain money from fortune-telling Gipsies, without being reminded of the old legends or stories of those, who, having sold themselves to "the father of lies," afterwards sought to evade the performance of their part of the bargain.

*Nor have the "Lords of creation" been proof against*

the wily tongue and specious arts of the professed fortune-teller. A few years ago, a British officer who was daily expecting to be raised to the high position of an admiral, and who hoped soon to wed a lady of rank, heard that a Gipsy, who was notorious as a fortune-teller, was in the neighbourhood, and sent for her to his residence. Before going she made some prudent and searching inquiries (as they invariably do in such cases), respecting the Captain's expectations and wishes, resolved, if possible, to turn her visit to profitable account. On being introduced, her acute wit and quick observation, enabled her to carry her victim captive. She ordered a large glass of spring water to be brought, into which, while her withered features worked and her dark eye dilated, she poured the white of a new laid egg. The sun shone most beautifully on the glass, and the woman worked so successfully on the imagination of the officer that he afterwards declared to the lady, with whom he resided, that he saw in the egg and water, the ship in which he should hoist the admiral's flag, the church in which he was to be married, and his bride going with him into the church. Indeed, so flattered and duped was this officer, that he gave the arch deceiver three sovereigns, which was all the money he had about his person at the time.

One form of deception practiced by the Gipsies is called "*Hokkano*," or the great trick. It consists in persuading some simple individual to place in the hands of the Gipsy, or deposit under ground, a sum of money, with the promise that it will be increased manifold. Mr. Borrow tells us of a Gipsy who persuaded the Queen of Spain and her Cabinet that a hoard of gold was secreted in a church at Santiago. A man was sent there to find it, and, accompanied by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, proceeded to open the soil in broad day-light, rendering all parties a laughing stock to Europe! A gentleman's groom,

in the south of England, was promised vast stores of wealth by a female Gipsy, if he would first deposit with her all the money he had. He at once gave her five pounds and his watch, and soon after added ten pounds more which he borrowed of two friends. They were to meet at midnight in a lonely place, a mile from where the bargain was struck, and there the man was to dig up out of the ground a silver pot full of gold, covered with a clean napkin. No papist ever put more faith in his patron saint than this young man placed in the truth of this woman's mysterious art. With pick axe and shovel, at the appointed time, he appeared at the supposed lucky spot, his confidence having been strengthened by a dream about money which he considered as a favourable omen of the wealth he was about to receive. Of course he met no Gipsy; she had fled another way with the property she had so wickedly obtained. While waiting her arrival, a hare started suddenly from its resting place, and so alarmed him that he as suddenly hastened from the spot, and, like the bishop of Hereford, when seized by Robin Hood, "glad that he could so get away;" nor did he stop till he reached his master's house, where he awoke his fellow-servants, and told them his disasters.

"This woman, who had made many dupes, rode a good horse, and dressed both gaily and expensively. One of her saddles cost more than twenty pounds. It was literally studied with silver; for she carried on it the emblem of her profession wrought in that metal; namely, a half-moon, seven stars, and the rising sun."

At Rosherville and Springhead gardens, two favourite places of resort, in the neighbourhood of Gravesend, Kent, and about thirty miles from London, several notorious fortune-tellers have carried on their deceptions for years. In these gardens they have hired spots, where they are consulted by thoughtless crowds, who furnish pitiable illustrations of the

old proverbs,—“Birds of a feather flock together.” “Fools and their money are soon parted.” In the former of these places, AVIS LEE has practised her art for more than quarter of a century. In the latter are to be seen two sylvan tents, on one of which we read, “*Here is the old original Peggy. No connexion with the other;*” whilst the other holds out to the credulous, this bait, “*The Norwood Gipsy.*”

These rival queens are very good friends; their thrones are nearly opposite, and they chat merrily to each other in the Gipsy dialect, across the stream which picturesquely intersects the gardens.

A living authoress—Miss Brabazon—giving an account of several conversations she had with these Gipsies, says:—“In a circular tent, of wooden walls and roofing, sat AVIS LEE, the Rosherville Gipsy, by courtesy called the Queen of the Gipsies; her crown, a red cotton handkerchief, pinned, not unbecomingly, around her black corkscrew curls; her robes, a gown of green stuff, and a cross-barred woollen shawl. She is one of the genuine, unlettered daughters of her tribe; really believing in her power of foretelling the future, and lamenting with the rest of the *sylvan seers*, that their ‘day’ has sadly gone by. She told me she had been twenty-six years at Rosherville, ‘when it was but a chalk-pit, with a few huts hard bye,’ said she, ‘and I told fortunes at twopence a head. I made more than I do now; for I then paid no rent, and I took about five or six shillings daily.’ “And now?” I asked. “Now I count it doing well when I put so much as that weekly; for though of a good week I take about two pounds ten shillings, I pay thirty pounds for the season’s standing. It was in vain that I urged her to try some lawful and honest calling. No, no, my lady, she said, it would never answer. Every one to their calling; *you were reared to the pen and the book,—the only book I can read is the starry sky, I’ll not give up those pages.*” . .

.. "It was difficult to look at her embrowned features, and listen to the foreign voice speaking the language of her mysterious tribe, without feeling a touch of compassionate romantic interest for the unlettered, misled—alas! too often—*misleading* Gipsy."

Describing an interview she had with Peggy, Miss Brabazon remarks:—"I found her no common person. Having considerably assured me that I need not fear her "in the least," and having seemed to measure my capacity, with her piercing eyes, she opened a curious and interesting conversation, informing me that when young she had absconded with a young Gipsy who she said, had been to her the best of husbands. "I suppose from him or his friends you learned to tell fortunes?" said Miss B. "Never, said she," with a flash of scorn from her blue eyes, "I never learned that from *man*; I learned it from the stars. I bought books that taught me how to read their language—it was believed in then. Ah! the world is a deal too wise now, ma'am." "But give me more of your history, Peggy." "I soon began to make a pretty little sum by telling fortunes; though I never did so well as a Gipsy I stopped with a long time. I stood beside her when our Queen and her mother, the Duchess of Kent, visited the gardens she kept in; that Gipsy made seven pounds a week! She was a real lucky one. The Rosherville Gipsy, again, often makes four pounds weekly." But Peggy does not grumble; she pays her way, and can give two shillings and sixpence a day for her standing here, and pays three shillings for a cab morning and evening besides, for recently she has hurt her foot, and is unable to walk. "Do let me tell your fortune, ma'am. Don't be superstitious!" And seizing my hand before I was aware, she rapidly proceeded:—The line of life shews that you have been happy and prosperous while lately, then it suddenly breaks off. Ah! you have just had some misfortune, or, at least,

some great anxiety ; and you have used this little hand to help yourself—but with no rough work either. Could it be with the needle, I wonder ?” “ Perhaps with the pen, Peggy,” I suggested. “ Yes,” she said, with eager delight. “ Now I will tell you what is *before* you.” “ No,” I said, steadily, “ since God has thought fit to hide it, I have no desire to attempt to find it out.” Though she pretended to be very indignant at my “ cowardice,” *that she did not believe in her professed art, was evident to me ; she only practised upon those who did.* However, on my saying, “ Peggy, I am certain you do not believe that you *can* look into the future,” she suddenly took alarm, and answered quickly, “ I see my dear, it would not suit me exactly to tell *you* what I believe or what I don’t ! You seem one of the sharp ones !” † r.

It seems almost incredible that amid the blaze of scientific and religious light by which our age is distinguished, a single word should be required to show the folly and wickedness of fortune-telling, witchcraft, charms, and all the delusions of a similar kind. Fortune-tellers and pretended prophets do not now form a recognized profession, it is true. Royalty in difficulties does not now, as in day of old, summon astrologers and magicians and soothsayers to its aid. And yet we are often reminded of superstition as abject as ever possessed our ancestors during the dark ages.

During the American war the turning of what are called “ wheels of fortune,” by blind men in the public streets of New York, attracted vast crowds of spectators, and received the countenance and patron-

† A month at Gravesend. By Elizabeth Jane Brabazon, pp. 77, 115, 117.

r We may add, to the honour of Miss Brabazon, that she felt a deep interest in Peggy’s spiritual welfare, which found expression in personal conversation, to which Peggy listened with *mingled* pleasure and emotion. The beautiful verses with which *we* commenced this chapter, formed part of Miss B’a. address to *the aged Gipsy.*

age of all classes of the great commonwealth. And even in England, there exists no small amount of secret belief in the occult arts of the necromancer and in the horoscopes of the astrologer.\* Strange facts have been brought to light on this subject recently. One "seer" was paid ten pounds for revealing the future, and the oracle obliged the applicant with a printed horoscope headed, "Answer to Capricorn and Saturn," and containing various nonsensical predictions and warnings. But the most startling disclosures were made during the recent trial between Mr. Morrison, editor of "Zadkiel's Prophetic Almanack" and Sir Charles Belcher. "The defendant

\* Acts xix. 17—20, "Ephesus, like the Syrian Antioch, was conspicuous for its superstitions, its soothsayers, astrologers, fortune-tellers, wizards, and sorcerers. The banks of the Cayster, like those of the Orontes, swarmed with them; and it would seem that in the former city it had been reduced to a regular science, and was taught and learned in all its mystic characters by professors of the art; that they had their books of initiation as well as maturer science, in which both the tyro and the adept might study. Amulets and charms, engraved with mysterious symbols, were openly sold and traded in, and many a legend from earliest times recorded the power and efficiency of these "Ephesian Letters." And one can only feel humiliation and sorrow that even at this day, in Christian England, in this age of enlightenment and civilization, the same miserable jargon is often employed by supposed wizards, or "wise men," as they call themselves, to entrap the credulous and ignorant. Solomon, long ago, long before Ephesian charmers or English wizards, said there was nothing new under the sun; and England and Ephesus alike illustrate his saying: or, perhaps, we should more truly say that the heart of man, unrenewed by the grace, and unilluminated by the knowledge of God, and groping its own way in the midst of darkness, is just as weak and corrupt, and as easily led away of satan, now in the nineteenth century as it was from the very first; and that without the teaching of the Holy Spirit, it is as ignorant of the truth of God, and as ready and willing to believe a lie, as when the King of Moab sent for Balaam to come and curse Israel for him or Saul sought of the Witch of Endor to divine unto him by her familiar spirit."—*Manna in the House*. By Rev. Barton Boucher, A.M., pp. 437-9.

has long been known to the scientific and naval public as an Arctic discoverer, and a scientific man of eminence in his particular line. In a letter to the *Telegraph* he had denounced Mr. Morrison, the editor of *Zadkiel*, as a rogue and impostor, founding this charge upon the alleged revelations of a crystal globe which was exhibited by Mr. Morrison to many of the gentry and nobility a few years ago. It was for the alleged libel in this letter that Sir E. Belcher was sued.

The reader may recollect that it was in *Zadkiel's Almanack* that the death of the Prince Consort was foretold, in these words: "The stationary position of Saturn will be very evil for all persons born on or near the 26th August; among the sufferers I regret to see the worthy Prince Consort of these realms. Let such persons pay scrupulous attention to health." And in another part, under the head of "Prince of Wales," "1861 is evil for the father." The singularity of the coincidence,—as the Prince Consort was actually born on August 26, 1819,—may at once be admitted. It appeared, however, in the course of the trial, that this famous prophet has also predicted evil to Lords Palmerston and Brougham, both of whom have hitherto escaped the influence of the malignant stars which have threatened them. In the almanac for 1862 is an account of a "magic crystal," which reveals the most astounding things. This is the crystal which has been exhibited at the houses of the nobility and others in London. In the course of his examination, Mr. Morrison deposed to some most wonderful statements of the revelations which had been secured by persons looking into this glass globe. Judas Iscariot had been seen in it in hell, and was heard to ask to be let go from the crystal, but it was ascertained by the seer that he would be happier next Sunday. The prophet's son *had seen* the Arctic regions in it, and Franklin's *expedition*. A servant girl had looked into it, and seen



a brother of her master ill in a foreign country. A boy employed by Morrison received five pounds from a noble lady for looking into it to ascertain what her ladyship's son was doing in the Mediterranean. Several of the nobility had consulted this oracle, some in seriousness, others for amusement. A Bishop had seen it exhibited at a party. It is not every one, it seems, but only certain gifted persons, who possess the faculty of discerning spiritual visions in this magic glass. One seer had actually seen our mother Eve, with a legend coming out of her mouth, stating who she was; the legend was expressed in English! St. Luke also had been seen, and Titania in a chariot, both of whom spoke English. A middle-aged lady, who was called during the trial as a witness, declared that she had seen in the crystal her mother who had been dead fifty years. "Then she saw a man, clad in full armour, with a brass helmet on his head; then a lady in a pink dress, who leant on his shoulder." "The scene," she said, "would never pass from her memory," and she declared her firm belief in these magic powers, and that it was too solemn a thing to be trifled with.

It is within the range of possibility that some persons, startled by the resemblances of fulfilment which sometimes occur, and which are certain to occur occasionally when predictions are uttered by the thousand, may have been induced to yield an assent, more or less implicit, to these astrological pretensions. It will be sufficient, we imagine, to have seen in the brief statements of this trial, the fooleries and the ineffable absurdities with which such pretensions are associated. It is worthy of remark that these occult arts are patronised, and their professors resorted to, more by people of rank than by any other class. When a servant girl crosses a Gipsy's hand with silver to be told who will be her future husband, we

think we have made out a case for the spread of elementary education, and we lecture away in public and in private on the ignorance of the masses; but what shall be said when highly educated and well-born ladies have recourse to the same arts—the only difference being that the housemaid consults a witch or a Gipsy in dirt and rags, while the countess consults a genteel wizard who requires a five-pound fee? The imbecility is the same in both cases, or rather is greater in proportion to the advantages of rank and education.”

So long as the public demand for secrets is so loud and imperative such revolting disclosures as the above will be practised. There will be found men and women bad enough to gratify the taste, as Ezekiel said of old, “for handfulls of barley and for pieces of bread.” (xiii. 19.) This mischievous craving after excitement is one of the most crying evils of the day and needs all the influences which can be brought to bear upon its extinction. The pulpit ought to raise its voice in this emergency, and to render efficient aid in the correction of this widespread vitiated taste and sentiment.

The folly and wickedness of having recourse to fortune-tellers, diviners, charmers, and all such like deceivers, will appear from the following considerations:—(1.) It is imitating the heathen and giving countenance to the foolish superstitions and absurd practices of pagans. (2.) Such characters are held in abhorrence by the Lord, and their very existence forbidden. “A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.” (Lev. xx. 27.) Hence, the Israelites were warned against these practices:—the great condemning sins of the nations of Canaan. “*There shall not be found among you one that useth*

divination,\* or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord : and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." (Deut. xviii. 10, 12. See also Lev. xix. 31.) (3.) Fearful punishments are denounced against such as consult those deceivers. "The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards—I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people."—(Lev. xx. 6.) Balaam and Balak were cursed of the Lord of Hosts ; the former for using enchantments, and the latter for employing Balaam in this wicked work. (4.) It is wrong to have anything to do with such arch deceivers, as it is setting an awful example to others. A person who tempts another to utter falsehoods by offering rewards is equally guilty before God. "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." "The destruction of the transgressors and the sinners shall be

\* *Divination*: one who endeavours to find out futurity by auguries, using lots, &c.—*Observer of times*: one who pretends to foretell future events by present assurances, and who predicts great political or physical changes from the aspect of the planets, eclipses, motion of the clouds, &c.—*Enchanter*: one who inspects the entrails of beasts, observes the flight of birds, &c. and draws auguries therefrom.—*A witch*: one who by drugs, herbs, perfumes, &c., pretends to bring certain celestial influences to their aid. *A charmer*: one who uses spells ; a peculiar conjunction as the term implies, of words or things, tying knots, &c. for the purposes of divination. *A consulter with the spirits*: one who inquires by the means of one spirit to get oracular answers from another of a superior order. *A wizard*: a knowing one, generally considered as the masculine of *witch*. *A necromancer*: one who seeks from or enquires of the dead. Such was the witch of Endor, who professed to evoke the dead, in order to get them to disclose the secrets of the spiritual world."—See Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary.

together." (5.) Lord Bacon, having visited an old professed charmer, wrote :—

" This is a charm  
That can neither do good nor harm."

But many, with money in their pockets and evil passions in their hearts, by consulting the fortune-teller, the charmer, and such like deceivers, have been plunged into discord, disappointment, insanity, and death. In one of the principle lunatic asylums in France, one-third of the patients own their infirmity of mind to the effects of spirit-rapping delusions. A few years ago, two married women fell in love with the same man, and they several times gave large sums of money to a Gipsy woman in order to get from her philters, enchantments, &c. Encouraged by this base woman, they succeeded in captivating the common object of their affections. The husbands' had scarce learned of the intrigue ere they both were poisoned by their wives ! (6.) It is the exclusive prerogative of God to know futurity, and to declare the end from the beginning. " Shew us the things that are to come hereafter," says he, " that we may know that ye are gods." We know not, and no human prescience can foretell, what a day may bring forth. " And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter. Should not a people seek unto their God ? (Isa. viii. 19.)

" I do not ask to see the *distant scene*,  
One steps' enough for me."

And why should you, dear reader, indulge in vain anticipations, or be oppressed with groundless fears ? Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof ; why then distress yourself about future disasters ? Or why deceive yourself with the hope that your's is going to be a life of cloudless sunshine and unbroken prosperity ? Strength according to our day is promised

by Him who "sees the end from the beginning," and in that strength we may safely meet the varied scenes of our future existence. "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee."

#### AN INTERESTING NARRATIVE.

"*Fortune-telling*," says Mr. Vanderkiste, "is an evidence of ignorance that prevails to a considerable extent, and is patronized not by any means alone by the lowest classes. I am acquainted with four fortune-tellers, who lived within the limits of a single street, and who appeared to be visited by persons of a character that would hardly be supposed to place confidence in such delusion.

It is a great pleasure to be enabled to record the hopeful conversion of one of these fortune-tellers, Mrs. T——. When first I visited her, and reproved her for the wickedness of pretending to usurp the prerogative of God, she constantly contended that there was no harm in it. "It was an honest bit of bread," she said, and made other excuses, all of which could not for one moment be entertained. On one occasion, another fortune-teller being present, I read the account of Elymas the sorcerer, and also of the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination (Acts xvi.) showing that the influence was infernal, and enlarging on the consequences. The younger fortune-teller could not bear this, and jumping up darted out of the place before I could attempt to stop her for prayer. Mrs. T., who was an aged woman, always listened respectfully to my reading in the Scriptures, instructions, and prayers; and regarding her as one of my special cases, I had up to the period of her decease, about a year since, paid more than ordinary attention to her case. At length the Word of God appeared to produce some effect, and she professed to feel herself a sinner—previously she always maintained the contrary. I told her it was useless to talk about repent-

ance, unless she broke off her sins, and urged her to desist from "*fortune-telling*." She would not promise, she said. A favourite phrase with her was, "I likes to speak my mind, and shall tell no lies." After a further lapse of time, however, she professed to begin to feel the sinfulness of fortune-telling, through, as she said, "my being always at her." She, however, failed in her good resolution to practice this evil no more, several times, and admitted to me that she had so failed—"It was for a bit of bread," she said. "What am I," added she, "but a poor old widow? Maybe I'll be sitting here without a morsel of fire, or a bit or sup in the place, or a bit of 'bacca, (she smoked), well, just then the silly fools will come to have their fortunes told to be sure; I suppose the devil sends them just then to tempt a poor old creature; but, please the Lord, and the blessed Jesus you tell me about," said she, clasping her hands, "I'll wash my hands of it altogether, for there's no luck in it, and I see now, bless the Lord, *its wickedness*." I had a strict watch kept upon Mrs. T., and I have every reason to believe she kept her promise to the end of her life, under circumstances, too, of great temptation.

The parish would not allow Mrs. T. any *out-door* relief, and she declined going into the house for the following reason. Her only son is a pedlar, and has been in the habit formerly of enacting the part of the "*Wild Indian*" at fairs. Some of my readers may possibly have seen the "*Wild Indian*," surrounded by fairies, robbers, etc., in front of the shows at fairs, dancing a hornpipe in fetters. I have expostulated with my poor friends upon the subject. I believe this man to be a strictly honest person. He returns to London for a day or two from his peddling tours in the surrounding counties about once in three weeks. The business is extremely bad, but he has always *managed* to pay his poor old mother's rent, and leave *her a loaf of bread* and one or two other necessities

when he goes away; and Mrs. T. would say, "I likes to keep a roof for him, and to see his face when he comes to London, if I am half-starved, so that he may not have to go to any of them low lodging-houses and bad places; for I'm his mother, you know, though he is sixty years old." I must not dilate upon this case, but will just mention one circumstance to show the altered condition of my poor old friend, whom I have a very good hope of meeting in a better world.\* Said she, "I sees the benefit of praying now, Mr. Vandicum, and may the Lord Almighty bless you for coming to teach a poor old sinner, and I knows," she said, "my prayers is answered. You may believe me or believe me not, but the other day I was hungry and starving, I hadn't a bit of fire in the place, and I didn't expect *my* son home for weeks; but has I sat at the door, very faint and low, I says, 'Oh! God Jesus Christ, I wish you would send my son home to his poor old mother;' and I kept on saying that ere, it seemed so strong on me, and as I'm a living sinner," (said Mrs. T., formerly she *never* would own she was a sinner,) "I looks up, and I'm blest if there wasn't Jim a-coming up the court. So he throws down his pack, and, says he, 'So I've come home, mother.' 'Yes,' says I, 'so I see.' Says he, 'I shouldn't, but I've been thinking very much about you, but,' says he, 'I'm very hungry, so let's have some victuals as quick as you can.'"—Then followed an exact account of what my friend Jim sent out for, down to half an ounce of 'bacca—"And we sat down to a nice cup of tea and a good fire," said Mrs. T., "and wasn't I thankful to the Almighty, for it was His doings, and Jim said the same."

This was all Jim could do, to pay his mother's rent,

\* I think it right to state that Mrs. T. was a woman of remarkably independent spirit: such expressions as these might mean little upon some persons' lips, but they meant a great deal (those who knew her would consider, I think) upon hers.

and when he came to town, leave her perhaps the value of eighteenpence; and a beggar woman who lives close by, I have often found washing her out, as she expressed it, "a few bits of things because the poor old crittur couldn't," and giving her a bit of bread sometimes, and a few tea leaves she had collected now and then. Jim would, I believe, have supported his mother like a lady, but he had not the means.

Had a person entered Mrs. T.'s little dark cell in B—— alley, in the corner a little pallet would have been seen, which might have been mistaken for a stump bedstead, and as a piece of cotton over it looked tolerably clean, it might have been said, as I once did, to Mrs. T., "I'm glad to see you sleep pretty comfortable." It was winter time, very keen, and she looked at me with surprise, and after musing for a while, said, "Well, you shall see; but," added she, "I don't make no complaint." On her lifting up the piece of cotton and an old gown, I saw a little straw on an old shutter, and a few bricks supported this at each end. "My bones," said she, "I'm so thin, gets very sore *a-laying* in winter, with scarcely any food, often none." The wonder is she was not perished; as it was, there can be no question but that the distressing asthma from which she laboured was much increased for want of food, as such invalids require warmth internally and externally. The gnawings of hunger she relieved by "a smoke of tobacco." I should have felt very happy to support Mrs. T., but surrounded constantly by a mass of sick persons daily, whose complaints, by the admission of the parish doctor, as often required food as medicine, and by hundred of persons in extreme destitution in addition, I could not do so.

For several years previous to her decease it was an immense toil to attend my meetings for prayer and exposition, although she lived close by. She walked



a step and stopped, her breath being very bad, and when she entered was frequently obliged to be led to her seat, gasping for breath very painfully. "But," said she, "if I *can* crawl I likes to come, for it's an hour's happiness to me, a little heaven." I should suppose few persons who heard the impressive manner in which she would utter this, coupled with her remarkable appearance, would soon forget it.

She was a woman of exceedingly strong mind, and being totally uneducated, she would often say, in lamentable tones, "*Oh! if I could read my Bible!*"

As her end drew near, she appeared to wish to have me constantly with her. That, however, could not be; but the strong manner in which I hung upon her memory may be aptly illustrated by a little incident that occurred shortly previous to her death.

One of the most affecting attendants upon a dying bed is that delirium which so frequently is the precursor of dissolution. It is our lot sometimes to hear the lips that have instructed others in wisdom utter dark and foolish sayings. Delirium in a dying hour, and perhaps for a lengthened period previous, is not the lot alone of the poor and ignorant. Mrs. T. was delirious, and I was told would not know me, and knew no one. I addressed her, to which she replied, wildly, "I don't know you; who are you?" and then looking very hard at me, her countenance underwent a great change; she smiled, and said, "Oh yes! bless you; it's Mr. Vanderkiste;" and gave me, considering her feebleness, a very pleasing account of the dependence and faith she was exercising in our Saviour, and the good hope she possessed of being happy in the world to come. So she died.

Jim did not at all like the idea of his mother being buried by the parish, but poverty prevented his being able to raise funds needful to bury her. Under such circumstances, some undertakers perform the last offices for the poor on condition of being paid at the

rate of eighteenpence a-week ; so he went to one of these tradesmen, and buried his mother, as he termed it, "respectable."

Jim, the "Wild Indian," is only an occasional attendant on public worship ; but I pray the careful burier of his mother may be himself buried with Christ in that baptism, from which he shall rise a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.\*

\* *Notes and Narratives of a Six Years' Mission, principally amongst the Dens of London.* By R. W. Vanderkiste, pp. 66-69.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THEIR SOCIAL ECONOMICS.

"It has been the lot of Gipsies in all countries to be despised, persecuted, hated, and have the vilest things said of them. In many cases they have too much merited the odium which they have experienced in continental Europe; but certainly they are not deserving of universal and unqualified contempt and hatred in this nation."—*Rev. J. Crabb.*

The Gipsies are not destitute of those capabilities and talents, affections and attachments, which would fit them for the most refined circles of society. In proof of this we might refer to their reason, their wit, their gratitude, to the fervour and tenderness of their parental, filial, and conjugal sensibilities, and the tender care manifested by all towards the aged, infirm, sick, and blind among them. Indeed, some of them, when brought under the influence of education and religion, have, as we shall have occasion to show, manifested qualities as loveable and capabilities as great, as are possessed by those who have been blessed with the advantages of the most polished circles of English society.

We have sometimes heard the Gipsy mother spoken of as a mere termagant to her offspring. And, possessed as they are of very lively temperaments and quick passions, we may expect occasional ebullitions of cruelty. But these are but of few moments' duration, and when over, they cling to their children with the fondest affection.

"I went," says a pious gentleman, "the other day

into a Gipsy's tent ; there was a poor woman there. I saw hanging up a little bag made of beads, and thinking the woman might want money, I said, 'I'll give you five shillings for that.' "No," she replied, with tears in her eyes, "I can't sell that; my little girl made it, who is gone to heaven, I hope." The children are equally kind to their parents. One who witnessed a band of the Stanley's start on there peregrinations says, "I was especially struck by their attention to the old and weak; the aged woman who alone enjoyed the privilege of a chair in the camp, was placed with all possible tenderness on a donkey. For sixty years she had not slept in a bed, and she was known to all the farmers around, who readily gave her straw and food. As she was blind, a lad undertook to lead the donkey and watch over "the mother" as he called her."

It is said, with some degree of truth, that it is a point of honour with the Gipsies never to prey upon each other. Indeed, their statute book consists of three articles:—

"Separate not from *the husbands*.

"Be faithful to *the husbands*.

"Pay your debts to *the husbands*."

By the first of these laws the Gipsy is enjoined to live with his brethren, here styled, by way of endearment, "husbands;" to reside in a tent, as it becomes a Gipsy: and to observe the manners and customs of his ancestors. We have seen that for ages they clung to each other and their migratory habits with a pertinacity that, with few exceptions, yielded to no inducements to embrace a better life. Their love of kindred is very strong. A few years ago a Gipsy was siezed, tried, and found guilty of the crime of murder. His friends and relatives sought to influence the government in his favour and offered enormous sums that the punishment of death might be computed to perpetual banishment. One Gipsy, named Truito, offered

a large sum as his share of the ransom price, while the poor contributed according to their means. All was of no avail; the murderer was executed. On the day previous, the Gipsies, seeing the fate of their brother was irrevocable, quitted the town where they resided, shut up their houses, and took with them their mules, horses, tents, wives and families, and the greater part of their household furniture. No one knew whither they had gone; nor were they again seen in the place till many months had elapsed. A few of them never returned; and those who did were so struck with horror at what had occurred, that they were wont to declare the place was cursed for evermore; nor would they on any account pass the place which had witnessed the disgraceful end of their unfortunate brother. "During the Spanish war of independence Gipsies fought in both armies. One day a furious encounter took place between the two parties, which ended in a hand to hand fight. In the midst of the confusion two soldiers, one of whom wore the British, the other the French uniforms, fought desperately. At length the French soldier got his knee on his opponents chest, and was about to prod him with his bayonet, when his hat having fallen off, the two champions recognized each other. "A Gipsy!" the one about to die exclaimed; "A Gipsy!" At these words the victor trembled, loosed his hold, passed his hand over his brow and wept; then kneeling by the side of his conquered enemy, he took his hand, called him brother, poured wine into his mouth, raised him up, and helped him down the hill, the two armies still continuing to murder each other. "Let those dogs fight and tear each other," said the one who had saved the other; "they are not our blood; their affairs do not concern the Gipsies." They remained talking together till sunset, when, embracing each other, they separated to join their battalions.

*The second law of the Gipsies' is chiefly directed to*

the women, and enjoins upon them an absolute fidelity to their husbands. And this compels us to mention one of the most remarkable and pleasing characteristics of this singular people, and one which the reader will scarcely expect—I refer to the strict honour of their women. Superficial observers and careless travellers have often stigmatized the Gipsy women as prostitutes, &c. Nothing, however, can be further from the truth. They will sing lascivious songs and indulge in wanton dances, but *there* they stop. *The birth of an illegitimate child is a rare event among the Gipsies.* Besides, had the charge to which we have referred been true, where would the Gipsy race have been now? Does not the mere fact that the race remains distinct, its blood rarely mingling with that of the lower classes of the European population with which it has been in constant society for four hundred years, speak of itself strongly against such a charge? The Gipsy mother guards, with watchful vigilance, the chastity of her daughter. Mr. Crabb tells us that he wanted to engage, as servant, the daughter of a Gipsy, who was anxious to give up her wandering life; but her mother refused for a time. Urged to explain the motives of her resistance, she confessed she was alarmed at the danger a young girl's virtue would incur in a large town, far from the eyes of her mother. Mr. Crabb promised to watch over the morals of the girl, and the anxious mother at last entrusted her to his care.

Occasionally, these singular "waifs and strays" of humanity unite themselves in the "Holy Estate of Matrimony," after the form of the Established Church of this country, but more commonly, according to a long established usage of their own, of which the following is a brief account.

A Gipsy girl is generally betrothed to the youth, *whom her parents deem a suitable match, two years previous to marriage.* During this period they are

expected to act as common acquaintances, and are strictly forbidden to enter the camp in each others' company, or have any meeting place beyond the city, town, or village, in which they sojourn. To violate these rules is to run the risk of having their union broken off, and of being branded with an evil reputation by the rest of their tribes. The wedding festival is an expensive affair. If the man is rich, he often becomes poor before it is terminated, and if he is poor, he will not only spend the last farthing, but involve himself in pecuniary difficulties through life, as an expensive festival is thought to give validity to a Gipsy marriage. The whole time is spent in singing, dancing, fiddling, eating, and drinking. A cart load of sweetmeats—all of the best quality—has sometimes been taken to the tents on such occasions. The festival lasts three days, during which time the tents are thrown open, and all, rich and poor, are welcome to enter, and eat and drink to their hearts' content.\* We may remark, *en passant*, that the visits of our countrymen to their camps on these occasions, instead of being the harbinger of a higher civilization, have often been the prelude to renewed drunkenness, revelry, and crime.

\* The Queen of the Gipsies.—Her comfortable and neatly-kept palace has been visited by a considerable number of tourists, some of them occupying distinguished positions, and many having gone to Yetholm for the special purpose of paying their respects. Even proud Republicans from the other side of the Atlantic have sought a queenly smile in the palace of the Gipsy Queen, and other foreign visitors have also been graciously received by the accomplished ruler of the wandering tribes. We understand that the Mayor of Newcastle paid her a visit one day lately, and he did not quit the royal abode without testifying his friendly feeling towards her by presenting her with a beautifully engraved "work of art" in the shape of a five-pound note. We also understand that she is not without some hope of receiving a visit from Prince Alfred on the occasion of his sojourn at Floors Castle next week.—*The Kent Pioneer*, Oct. 29th, 1864.

When the wedding takes place the union is irrevocable and only death can dissolve it. "The mutual attachment which subsists between the nominal husband and wife is so truly sincere, that instances of infidelity, on either side, occur but seldom; and when otherwise, the parties are deemed very wicked by the Gipsies." These facts ought to go some way towards rescuing the Gipsies from the brand of licentiousness under which they have so long laboured.

The third law refers to the payment of debts. To be in debt is looked upon by the Gipsies as a great evil; and formerly the man who did not extricate himself from that state was deemed infamous, and was often expelled from the camp. "For the payment of a debt which is owing to one of their own people, the time and place are appointed by them, and should the debtor disappoint the creditor, he is liable, by their law of honour, to pay double the amount he owes; and he must pay it by personal servitude, by hewing wood and drawing water, if he wishes to be considered by his friends honest and respectable. They call this law *pizharris*."

From these laws it is evident they are alive to a sense of justice among themselves, however numerous the depredations they may have committed on the public at large. It is a species of honour amongst them not to betray each other. They also scorn to keep what they get, like the dog in the manger, to themselves, and make no division of their spoils. The slightest infringement of their laws on this point will often cause the most fierce and desperate battles to take place. Those quarrels among them, which we sometimes witness at the outskirts of our towns and villages, generally arise from a feeling of jealousy, or supposed act of injustice in invading each others territories, or the division of their spoil. These quarrels have often ended in death. A gang of Gipsies were once encamped near Ettrick. The musician



quarreled with another of their tribe, about a girl. Weapons were instantly drawn, but the piper finding he was no match for his antagonist, fled, the other persuing close at his heels. For a full mile-and-a-half they continued to strain most violently,—the one running for life, and the other thirsting for blood, until they came to Cossathill. The family were gone out, save one servant girl; when the piper rushed breathless into the house, she screamed and asked what was the matter. He answered, “No harm to you, no harm to you, for God in heaven’s sake hide me.” He then sought to hide himself in a barrel that stood in a corner, but alas, his ruthless pursuer entering, saw him. He at once dragged him by the hair into the middle of the floor, and ran him through his body with a dirk. The piper never asked for mercy but cursed the other as long as he had breath. Scarcely had he expired, when several of the gang arrived bringing a cart with them in which they conveyed his body to the spot where the quarrel began, and there buried it. The grave was marked by one stone at the head and another at the foot, which the Gipsies themselves placed, and it was till recently looked upon by the rustics as a dangerous place for a walking ghost. Dr. Pennycuck, in his history, gives the following account of a skirmish which took place between two clans of Gipsies near his house at Romanio, Scotland:—

“Upon the first October, 1677, there happened at Romannio, in the very spot where the dovecot is built, a memorable battle betwixt two clans of Gipsies the *Fawes* and the *Shawes*, who had come from Haddingtoun fair, and were going to Harestains to meet with two other clans, the *Baillies* and *Browns*, with a resolution to fight them; they fell out at Romanio amongst themselves, about dividing the spoyle they had got at Haddingtoun, and fought it manfully. Of the *Fawes* were four brethren, and a brother’s son;

of the *Shawes* the father with three sons, with several woman on both sides. Old Sandie Faw, a bold and proper fellow, with his wife were both killed on the spot, and his brother George was dangerously wounded. February 1678, old Robin Shaw, with his three sons were hanged for the above murder, and John Faw was hanged on the following Wednesday for another murder. Dr. Pennycuck built a dovecot upon the spot where the affray took place, which he adorned with the following inscription :—

“ A.D. 1682.

THE FIELD OF GIPSIES’ BLOOD WHICH HERE YOU SEE,  
A SHELTER FOR THE HARMLESS DOVE SHALL BE.”

Their blood is hot and temper quick, and internal quarrels are frequent amongst them ; but as soon as one party yields, the breach is healed, and they generally repair to a public house to renew their friendship. By-gones are by-gones with them. This forgiving spirit, says Mr. Crabb, is a pleasing trait in their character.

Notwithstanding all the dissoluteness of manners and professed roguery, to which we have referred, the Gipsies, when trusted, are strictly honest. A Lincolnshire farmer, who had sheltered them for many years, says, “ I could have left every chest and bin about the premises open with the certainty that nothing would be missing.” I have inquired of many shopkeepers, both in towns and villages, with whom the Gipsies have dealt for years, and they declared, without an exception, that they have been some of their best and most honest customers. One grocer said, “ I don’t think there is now a thief among them. I have never lost a farthing by them, and some of them have traded with me for twenty years.” Nor can there be a doubt but that the stories told about *their petty thefts* are, in many instances, pure fabrications or gross exaggerations. They have often

been made the stalking-horse for adepts in larceny. Burglers have been known to cast some of their stolen goods near the Gipsies' tents, and these, being picked up by their children and found upon them, have been the cause of much unjust suffering and punishment among them.

An old Gipsy, was charged, many years ago, with stealing a horse, and was condemned and executed, although the farmer of whom he bought it swore at the trial that the horse was the one he had sold him. His evidence was rejected on account of some slight mistake in the description he gave of it. When under the gallows, the Gipsy exclaimed, with tearful eyes and quivering lips, "*Oh God, if thou dost not deliver me, I will not believe there is a God!*"

They often visit the pawnbrokers' shops; though not for the same purposes as the improvident poor in our large towns. A pawn-shop is their bank. Having acquired money, they will often purchase valuable plate, and sometimes in the same hour pledge it for safety. Such property they have in store against days of adversity and trouble, which, on account of their irregular habits, often overtake them. "At other times they carry their plate about with them, and when visited by friends, they bring out from dirty bags a silver tea-pot, and a cream-jug, and spoons of the same metal. Their plate is by no means paltry. Of course considerable property in plate is not very generally possessed by them.

Shakespeare says:—

"I hate ingratitude more in a man  
Than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness  
Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption,  
Inhabits our frail blood."

But amongst the numerous bad passions that inhabit the dark breast of the Gipsy ingratitude cannot be reckoned as the most prominent. Indeed, those who have spent the greater part of their time

among them assure us that but few instances are known of those who have treated them with kindness receiving insult or injury from them. We could record many instances of their grateful sense of favours bestowed, and of their tender remembrance of the kindness shown to themselves or their relatives. We give the following characteristic anecdotes of the Scottish Gipsies.

#### SAMIE ROBISON

was an excellent musician, and was in great request at fairs and country weddings. He was reputed to be a strictly honest man. One of his neighbours, Robert Gray, often lent him sums of money to purchase ox horns and other articles in the east of Fife. He always paid him on the very day he promised with the greatest punctuality and civility. One day as Robison lay on the grass, warming himself in the sun, a man who was an entire stranger to him, came past singing to himself, with a merry heart, a Scottish song, the chorus of which runs thus :—

“Old Robin Gray was a kind old man.”

when the hot blooded Gipsy sprang on his feet, and, with his bludgeon, accompanied with a volley of oaths, brought the poor fellow to the ground, repeating the blows in a violent manner, telling him, in his ungovernable passion that “Auld Robin Gray was a kind man to him indeed, but it was not enough for him to make a song on Robin for that.” He had nearly put the innocent traveller to death in the heat of his indignation, thinking that he was satirizing his friend to a scurrilous song. Never did Robison pass Gray’s house, even though it might be midnight, but he drew out his instrument and serenaded him with a few of his best airs, in gratitude for his kindness.”

#### GLEID-NECKIT WILL,

*so called because of some peculiar twist in the shape of his throat, was a noted chief of the Yetholm Gip-*

sies, seventy years ago. Of this man, the following anecdote is related. The late Mr. Leck, minister of Yetholm, when riding home one evening, found himself likely to be benighted, and for the sake of a near cut, struck across a wild and solitary track. He had not gone far before a man sprang upon him, and, seizing his horse by the bridle, demanded his money.

Mr. Leck, though it was now dusk, at once recognised the gruff voice and great black burly head of his next-door neighbour, Gleid-neckit Will, the Gipsy chief.

'Dear me, William,' said the minister in his usual quiet manner, 'can this be you? Ye're surely no serious wi' me; ye wadna sae far wrang your character for a good neighbour for the bit trifle I hae to gie, William?'

'Saif us, Mr. Leck,' said William, quitting the rein, and lifting his hat with great respect, 'whae wad hae thought o' meeting *you* out owre here-awa? Ye needna gripe ony siller for me; I wadna touch a plack o' your gear, nor a hair o' your head, for a' the gowd o' Tividale. I ken ye'll no do *us* an ill turn for this mistak; and I'll e'en see you through the Staw. It's no reckoned a very canny bit, mair ways than ane; but *ye'll* no be feared for the *dead*, and *I'll* take care o' the *living*.' Will, accordingly, gave his revered friend a convoy through the haunted pass, and notwithstanding this ugly mistake, continued ever after an inoffensive and obliging neighbour to the minister, who on his part observed a prudent secrecy on the subject of the encounter during the lifetime of Gleid-neckit Will.

#### ANN Mc'DONALD

was the wife of Captain Mc'Donald chief of the Linlithgowshire Gipsies. A gentleman received the following treatment from this woman, she having been befriended by himself, and especially by his father. He was at a fair at Dunfermshire, where he

purchased a horse. Putting his hand into his pocket, he found to his astonishment that his pocket book and all his cash were gone. The man from whom he had bought the horse would not trust him. In his distressing situation he had recourse to his friends, the Gipsies. Ann McDonald was in the fair. He knew her power and authority among her tribe. She had often been in his father's house, and knew him well. He told her, with a very long and melancholy face, that he had lost his pocket book, bills, and money, to the amount of seven pounds. Putting his hand upon her shoulder, in a kind and familiar manner, he requested her friendly advice and assistance in his afflicting circumstances. "Some o' our laudies will hae seen it, Davie, I will enquire," was Annies' answer. That he might not trace her path, she took him into a public house, called for brandy, saw him seated, took the marks of the pocket book, went out to the crowd in the street, and in about half-an-hour returned from her temporary deposit of stolen articles with the pocket book and all its contents."

JEAN GORDON.

Sir Walter Scott thus describes this remarkable woman. "My father, says he, remembered old Jean Gordon of Yetholm, who had great sway among her tribe. Having been often hospitably received at the farmhouse at Lochside, near Yetholm, she had carefully abstained from committing any depredations on the farmer's property. But her sons (nine in number) had not, it seems, the same delicacy, and stole a brood sow from their kind entertainer. Jean was mortified at this ungrateful conduct, and so much ashamed of it, that she absented herself from Lochside for several years.

"It happened, in course of time, that in consequence of some temporary pecuniary necessity, the good man of *Lochside* was obliged to go to Newcastle, to raise *some money to pay his rent*. He succeeded in his

purpose, but returning through the mountains of Cheviot, he was benighted, and lost his way.

"A light, glimmering through the window of a large waste barn, which had survived the farmhouse to which it had once belonged, guided him to a place of shelter; and when he knocked at the door, it was opened by Jean Gordon. Her very remarkable figure—for she was nearly six feet high—and her equally remarkable features and dress, rendered it impossible to mistake her for a moment, though he had not seen her for years; and to meet with such a character in so solitary a place, and probably at no great distance from her clan, was a grievous surprise to the poor man, whose rent (to lose which would have been ruin) was about his person.


"Jean set up a loud shout of joyful recognition—'Eh, sirs! the winsome guidman of Lochside! Light down, light down; for ye mauna gang farther the night and a friend's house sae near.' The farmer was obliged to dismount, and accept of the Gipsy's offer of supper and a bed. There was plenty of meat in the barn, however it might be come by, and preparations were going on for a plentiful repast, which the farmer, to the great increase of his anxiety, observed was calculated for ten or twelve guests, of the same description, probably, with his landlady.

"Jean left him in no doubt on the subject. She brought to his recollection the story of the stolen sow, and mentioned how much pain and vexation it had given her. Like other philosophers, she remarked that the world grew worse daily; and, like other parents, that the bairns got out of her guiding, and neglected the old Gipsy regulations, which commanded them to respect, in their depredations, the property of their benefactors. The end of all this was, an inquiry what money the farmer had about him, and an urgent request, or command, that he *would make her his purse-keeper*, since the bairns, as

she called her sons, would be soon home. The poor farmer made a virtue of necessity, told his story, and surrendered his gold to Jean's custody. She made him put a few shillings in his pocket, observing it would excite suspicion should he be found travelling altogether penniless.

"This arrangement being made, the farmer lay down on a sort of *shake-down*, as the Scots call it, or bedclothes disposed upon some straw, but, as will easily be believed, slept not. About midnight the gang returned with various articles of plunder, and talked over their exploits in language which made the farmer tremble. They were not long in discovering they had a guest, and demanded of Jean whom she had got there.

'E'en the winsome guidman of Lochside, poor body,' replied Jean. 'He's been at Newcastle seeking siller to pay his rent, honest man, but deil-belicket he's been able to gather in, and sae he's gaun e'en hame, wi' a toom purse and a sair heart.'

'That may be, Jean,' replied one of the banditti, 'but we maun ripe his pouches a bit, and see if the tale be true or no.' Jean set up her throat in exclamations against this breach of hospitality, but without producing any change in their determination. The farmer soon heard their stifled whispers and light steps by his bedside, and understood they were rummaging his clothes. When they found the money which the providence of Jean Gordon had made him retain, they held a consultation if they should take it or not; but the smallness of the booty, and the vehemence of Jean's remonstrances, determined them in the negative. They caroused, and went to rest. As soon as day dawned, Jean roused her guest, produced his horse, which she had accommodated behind the *hallan*, and guided him for some miles, till he was on the high road to Lochside. She then restored his  whole property; nor could his earnest entreaties pre-



vail on her to accept so much as a single guinea.

"I have heard the old people at Jedburgh say, that all Jean's sons were condemned to die there on the same day. It is said the jury were equally divided, but that a friend to justice, who had slept during the whole discussion, waked suddenly, and gave his vote for condemnation in the emphatic words, '*Hang them a'!*' Unanimity is not required in a Scottish jury, so the verdict of guilty was returned. Jean was present, and only said, 'The Lord help the innocent in a day like this!' Her own death was accompanied with circumstances of brutal outrage, of which poor Jean was, in many respects, wholly undeserving. She had, among other demerits or merits, as the reader may choose to rank it, that of being a stanch Jacobite. She chanced to be at Carlisle upon a fair or market-day, soon after the year 1746, where she gave vent to her political partiality, to the great offence of the rabble of that city. Being zealous in their loyalty when there was no danger, in proportion to the tameness with which they had surrendered to the Highlanders in 1745, the mob inflicted upon poor Jean Gordon no slighter penalty than that of ducking her to death in the Eden. It was an operation of some time, for Jean was a stout woman, and, struggling with her murderers, often got her head above water, and while she had voice left, continued to exclaim at such intervals, *Charlie yet! Charlie yet!* When a child, and among the scenes which she frequented, I have often heard these stories, and cried piteously for poor Jean Gordon."

Of course there are exceptions, and occasional acts of ingratitude mark the Gipsies as they do all other people, but we are describing their general conduct towards those who befriend them.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THEIR IRRELIGIOUS CONDITION.

“ O they have telescopic eyes  
That see the smallest speck of distant pain,  
While at their feet a world of agonies  
Unseen, unheard, unheeded, writhes in vain.”

The Gipsies, with rare exceptions, are utterly without religious impressions, and care only for that which directly ministers to their appetites. “ If,” says Mr. Borrow, “ the Gipsies trusted in any God at the period of their exodus from India, they must have speedily forgotten him. Coming from India, as they most assuredly did, they must have been followers (if they followed any) of Buddha or Brahma; but they are now ignorant of such names. They brought with them no Indian idols, as far as we are able to judge at the present time, nor indeed Indian rites or observances, for no traces of such are to be discovered amongst them. All, therefore, which relates to their original religion, is shrouded in mystery, and is likely so to remain. They may have been idolaters, or atheists, or what they now are, totally neglectful of worship of any kind; and though not exactly prepared to deny the existence of a supreme Being, they are as regardless of him as if he existed not.”

In England they sometimes call themselves “ members of the Established Church,” and are generally *anxious* to have their children baptized, and to obtain *a copy of the register*. Members of their own clans

generally stand as sponsors, who speak of their god-children with pleasure, who in return manifest a high feeling of respect for them. "Some of their baptismal papers, which they carry about with them, are highly curious, going back for a period of two hundred years."

But as to all that constitutes scriptural and saving religion, they are, as a class, in a state of deplorable ignorance. They find no rest in religious faith, no succour in religious teaching, no consolation in religious hope, but are, to use the words of Paul, "without God and without hope in the world;" many of them being as ignorant of the God who made them and the Saviour who died for them as the heathen in distant lands. They possess no Bible, nor do they ever enter a place of worship, but spend the sacred hours of the Lord's day in the suburbs of our towns and villages. "Where no vision is the people perish." Take the following anecdote from the pen of Mr. Tait, schoolmaster at Yetholm. It relates to a female Gipsy whose education had been neglected in her youth, and who had spent the greater part of her life in the country, "thus both evading the private monitions of the minister in the discharge of his pastoral duties, and neglecting the public ordinances of religion." She was at the time of this narrative about thirty years of age, and had been several years married, during which period she seldom resided in Yetholm. "One Sabbath evening," says Mr. Tait, "while the minister was from home assisting in a neighbouring parish, an elderly Gipsy female called upon an elder of the church, requesting him to go and see her daughter, who, she said, was dying. He went with her and found the sick woman in great agony. She was in the last stage of consumption, occasioned by being exposed to the weather while sleeping in the moors. She was aware that death was near, and her mind seemed filled with the most

gloomy apprehensions respecting her eternal state. Her visitor began to converse with her. She said, "I am a sinner, but God will forgive me. He is a merciful God." He asked her if she knew how God could forgive any sinner. She said, "No." "Do you know," he again asked her, "what has been done for sinners that God may forgive them?" She replied, "No." He kindly asked her, "What do you know of Christ?" She looked, but made no answer. "What do you know about Jesus Christ?" he again tenderly inquired. Fixing her eyes, full of anxiety, on him, she replied, "Oh! sir, I'm nae scholar." The account here given of the death-bed scene of this poor Gipsy female, is said, by Mr. Baird, to be a counterpart to that of several others he had witnessed among the same tribe. "Generally," he says, "such visits to the house of mourning and death are not among the least interesting of the pastor's duties. But it is with feelings often amounting almost to fear and horror, that I have been called to attend the death-bed of the dying Gipsy.

The female above described I had seen on two former occasions. It was on her death-bed that she began for the first time to know and feel that there is a reality in religion, and she had then everything to learn. Anxiously she seemed to listen, and to endeavour to understand what was said to her; but her mind appeared incapable of comprehending, or at least of retaining the knowledge of the simple and saving truths of the gospel." P

They have no clear notions of a future state. "We have been wicked and miserable enough in this life, why should we live again?" said one of them. Generally, however, they believe in the transmigration of souls, and, like the followers of Buddha and

Brahma,\* imagine that their souls, by passing through an infinite number of bodies, both of men and beasts, attain at length sufficient purity to be admitted to a state of perfect rest and quietude. A Gipsy lad was one day beating an animal, when his father stopped him, exclaiming, "Hurt not the animal, for within it is the soul of your own sister." Conscience, however, is a busy power within the dark breast of the poor Gipsy, and when roused it speaks in terrible tones. Charlie Graham, a noted Gipsy, was hanged in Perth, about fifty years ago, for horse stealing. He was in the habit of robbing wealthy individuals and giving the booty to the poor. On one occasion a widow, with a large family, at whose house he had often been quartered, was in great distress for want of cash to pay her rent. Graham lent her the money required; but as the landlord was going home with the cash in his pocket, he robbed him, and without loss of time, returned and gave the woman a full discharge for the sum she had borrowed. When this wretched man, just before his execution, was asked, if ever he had performed any good action during life to recommend him to the mercy of his offended God, this of giving the widow and fatherless children and robbing the factor, was the only instance he adduced in his favour, thinking thereby he had performed a virtuous deed.

On the morning of his execution, he sent a message to one of the magistrates of Perth, requesting a razor to take off his beard, at the same time, in a calm and cool manner, desiring the person to tell the magistrate

\* The Hindoos are taught to believe that through eternal transmigrations they will never rise higher than jackals. Lord Glenelg thus alludes to this miserable belief:—

"At Brahma's stern decree as ages roll,  
New shapes of clay await the immortal soul;  
Darkling condemn'd, in forms obscure to view  
And swell the midnight, melancholy howl."

"that *unless his beard was shaven he could neither appear before God nor man.*" This extraordinary expression warrants the opinion, that at this moment of his life, he imagined he would appear in his mortal frame before the great Judge of the universe, and that he believed the Almighty was a being composed of flesh and blood like an ordinary earthly judge. A short while before he was taken out to the gallows, he was observed very pensive and thoughtful, leaning upon a seat. He started up all at once, and exclaimed in a mournful tone of voice, "Oh can any o' ye read, sirs! will some o' ye read a psalm to me?" at the same time regretting much that he had not been taught to read. The fifty-first psalm was read to him by a gentleman, which soothed his feelings and gave him much ease and comfort of mind. But when he ascended the platform with agitating breast and trembling knees, his inveterate Gipsy feelings returned upon him with redoubled violence. He kicked from his feet both his shoes in sight of the spectators, and it was understood by all present, that this strange proceeding was to set at nought some prophesy that he would die with his shoes on.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

This was an extraordinary case; but, generally speaking, the principle anxiety of the Gipsies, when dying, is not about the soul, but the body. A handsome coffin and a grave in a quiet church-yard are invariably among their last requests; and it is thought their observance of the right of baptism arises, principally, from a desire to enjoy the privilege of burial in a consecrated ground.

A Gipsy has just been interred at the village of S. . . . , near Hull. There stood a weeping widow surrounded by her helpless children; then a grey-headed father and mother, and next distracted brothers and sisters. Convulsive sobs rent the hearts of all present as the body of their relative was lowered into the yawning grave which gaped at their feet.

They retain an affectionate remembrance of their deceased relatives, and any request of the dying individual is attended to, especially with regard to interment; so much so, that they have been known to convey a corpse a distance of one hundred miles, because the deceased expressed a wish to be buried in a particular spot.

They generally visit the graves of their departed relatives once a year, and on these occasions, the living renew their attachments and friendships, and give and receive assurances of continued good will. These graves are generally kept neat and in very good order; for which many sextons receive yearly remuneration. A case is recorded by Mr. Crabb of a Gipsy sending seven shillings and sixpence, a distance of seventy-five miles, to pay a sexton for repairing the graves of three of her children. They always burn the clothes of the dead, not so much from any apprehension of infection being communicated by them, as the conviction that the very circumstance of wearing them would shorten the days of the living.

A proof of their attachment to their dead took place after the execution of Charlie Graham, to whom I have just referred. A number of Gipsies attended his execution, and when his body was returned to them, they kissed it with great affection, and held the usual late wake over it. His sweet-heart put his corpse into hot lime, then buried them, and sat on his grave till his body was rendered unfit for the use of the medical gentlemen, it being reported he was to be taken out of his grave for the purpose of dissection. Some years ago, another Gipsy, noted for his great height and muscular strength, died of consumption. A medical gentleman, who knew little of the strong attachment of the Gipsies for their dead, applied to them for his body for dissectional purposes. But the tribe, filled with indignation at his request, rushed upon him, and would have done him personal injury.

had he not hastened from the camp. Fearing, if they buried him in the neighbouring church-yard, the surgeon might steal him, they formed a conspiracy, and took the body, with all speed, a distance of thirty miles, where they buried it. And fearing lest in that remote spot, the object of their solicitude should be disinterred, a large body of Gipsies, with weapons in their hands, guarded it for ten whole nights.

Such is a brief description of the moral, social, and religious condition of the Gipsies. And yet, strange to say, in England—a land confessedly the richest in the world and professedly the most Christian—we have twelve thousand of these poor outcasts, the majority of whom are as ignorant of the truths of Christianity as were our heathen ancestors at the time of Augustine's landing, and chiefly because no distinct efforts have been put forth for their conversion. What a fearful satire there surely is in the existence of a people of such ignorance and brutality, upon our boasted civilization and religion! And how loud are the calls which they make upon Christian men and women to labour for their moral elevation and salvation. To this subject we shall invite the reader's attention in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THEIR CAPABILITIES OF IMPROVEMENT, ETC.

“ Oh ! sinn’d against and sinning,  
 How wails my heart for ye,  
 While, all in vain, I strive to reach  
 Your fate’s sad mystery !  
 Abject, and lost, and trampled on,  
 With snares and death around you sown.

Why am I here ? Why are ye there,  
 With such alyssa between,  
 Parting our mutual destiny ?  
 Here foliage fresh and green,—  
 Around your path the scorice drear,  
 And sultry lava, all the year.

Here young fresh violets, roses, bloom,  
 With fruits of heavenly taste,  
 While deadly nightshade hedges in  
 Your upas—growing waste ;  
 And rank things shelter slimy things  
 That crawl about the water-springs.

Why am I here in full sweet peace,  
 With deathless hope within,  
 Borne up by all-prevailing love  
 Far from the wastes of sin,—  
 While ye, alas ! I weep to see  
 Your footsteps chain’d to misery ?

Why am I here ? O Father, God !  
 My spirit calls to Thee ;  
 These are Thy children, let me go  
 And share their misery ;  
 So I may lift one brother up

*To drink from Love’s o’erbrimming cup.”—Farquhar.*

The late Dr. Kitto asks, "Is the conversion of the Gipsies impossible? If not, why having them at our doors have they been so long neglected there?" To these questions many answers might be given. Some persons have looked upon them as utterly incapable of reformation. A recent poet has said :—

" Say, can it be, that while this world was young,  
While yet Heaven's glory round her childhood hung—  
In lonely splendour walked upon the earth  
The swarthy sires whence these derive their birth—  
Of giant power—of eagle's piercing ken—  
Wisest and mightiest of the sons of men?  
What if in yonder chief of tattered vest  
Glowe the same blood that warmed a Pharaoh's breast?  
If in the fiery *cy*, the haughty mien,  
The tawny hue of yonder Gipsy queen,  
Still dwells the light of Cleopatra's charms,  
The winning grace that roused the world to arms,  
That called Rome's legions to a watery grave,  
And bound earth's lord to be a woman's slave?  
Lo, Mizraim's king-craft, of its glory reft,  
Is shrunk to petty deeds of midnight theft!  
Lo, Egypt's wisdom only lives to pry  
Through the dark arts of paltry palmistry!  
The salt that lacked all savour from above,  
The daring pride that knew no humble love,  
The priestly lore that worshipped all save God,  
*Beneath the foot of man must evermore be trod!*"

We shall waste no words upon those who can thus maintain the blasphemous doctrine that the Gipsies must, inevitably,

• "beneath the foot of man *evermore* be trod."

The man who can outrage the great and beneficent author of all good, by supposing that these people are in a condition of ignorance and vice, from which they cannot escape, is beyond the reach of argument. "God wills that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." The outcast Gipsies *that traverse* our streets, whether they flaunt in *finery* or shiver in rags, have hearts to be renewed,

minds to be elevated, intellects to be improved, and souls to be saved.

But, say some, they are utterly incapable of rising to an equality with the more civilized and refined people with whom they have chosen to sojourn. That the Gipsies in their present circumstances are inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race, it would be the merest affectation to deny. But if this inferiority were still greater, it would be no reason why we should treat them with scorn, contempt, and indifference. However brutish they are not brutes. They do not belong to a different species. God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. And though we cannot claim for the Gipsies the highest forehead and largest brain, yet, the inferiority of which we have just spoken is much less than is generally represented. That they possess reason, wit, gratitude, imagination, and cunning in a very high degree, none who have made themselves acquainted with their past history, will deny. When they have been taught they have rapidly improved, and in many instances where they have been paid like others, they have proved themselves as able to handle a spade, hold a plough, wield a hatchet, strike with a hammer, or perform any other function essential to develop the material wealth of the countries in which they reside, as any other class of men. An Hungarian author, who was an attentive observer of these people, says :—"The Gipsies have a fertile imagination in their way, and are quick and ready at expedients ; so that in many serious and doubtful cases, they soon recollect how to act, in order to extricate themselves. We cannot help wondering when we attend to and consider the skill they display in preparing and bringing their works to perfection, which is the more necessary from the scarcity of proper tools and apparatus." Dr. Clarke, in his *Travels*, gives the following description when speaking of the

same individuals. "The Wallachian Gipsies are not an idle race. They might rather be described as a laborious people; and the greater part of them honestly endeavour to earn a livelihood. It is this part of them who work as gold washers" And when placed in the same circumstances as other men, they acquire property and rise to social consideration, as in Russia, where many of them occupy civil offices, and move in the higher circles of society. Indeed, Mr. Borrow informs us that the Gipsies of Moscow, in large numbers, inhabit stately houses, go abroad in elegant equipages, and are not behind the higher orders in Russia, neither in appearance nor mental acquirements. It is well known that for ages the female Gipsies of Moscow have been famous for their vocal art, and bands or choirs of them have sung for pay in the halls of the nobility or upon the boards of the theatre. Some first-rate songsters have been produced amongst them, whose merits have been acknowledged, not only by the Russian nobility, but by the most fastidious foreign critics. Perhaps the highest compliment ever paid to a songster was paid by Madame *Catalani*, the famous Italian singer, to a female Gipsy. *Catalani* having displayed her noble talent, before a brilliant audience in Moscow, was succeeded by a Gipsy girl who sang one of her national airs. The noble Italian stepped forward, and taking from her shoulders a Cashmere shawl the Pope had presented to her, and kissing the Gipsy, said to her, "This shawl is yours. It was intended for the first singer in the world. I now perceive that that singer is not myself."

I know that ages of neglect and ignorance have so degraded the intellect of the Gipsies that they have but little appetite for mental pursuits. But when they have had equal opportunities with other people, *they have shown that they possessed great intellectual powers, and some of them have displayed a*

fertility of invention, a keenness of intellect, and a logical acuteness, truly surprising.

Mr. Vanderkiste, who superintended the London city mission for some years, gives some interesting accounts of certain reformed Gipsies. One young Gipsy was inclined to infidel sentiments for many years, and lived utterly regardless of the Sabbath and of public worship. But he began to attend religious services, and deeply studied his Bible. Although totally uneducated, he possessed considerable shrewdness, and would sometimes startle Mr. Vanderkiste, by asking, "Have you seen this work," generally alluding to some very expensive issue from the press, from which he would repeat some sentiment or extract. The missionary often wondered how he could gain access to such expensive works, knowing that being a poor cripple, he could not obtain even a sufficiency of bread by his occupation of chair-caning. One day he quoted from "Humbolt's Cosmos," and Mr. Vanderkiste pointedly asked him how he gained access to such expensive works, and found that he hobbled on his crutch to St. Paul's Churchyard and Paternoster Row. "And there" said he "the books is all of a row, and they turn over fresh pages, and I reads like anything. Why," said he, "I picks up a deal." This Gipsy often argued with infidels, and gave some interesting accounts of his discussions. One day a respectable young man, a stranger, declared there was no God, and asked the Gipsy if something could come out of nothing. "But, sir," said the Gipsy, "will you have the kindness to tell me what is nothing? What do you know about nothing? Why, says I, don't talk so foolish, young man, there is no such thing as nothing; the very smoke in the chimbley don't go to nothing; there aint no nothing. And pray, said I, could you or any man place the sun where he is, or the moon, or the stars? If there was no Almighty, who placed them

there? Why, says I, look at a blade of grass, look at a flower, and don't talk such stuff to us, young man, as to say there is no God; for we knows better." One day a person said there never was such a person as Jesus Christ upon earth. "But pray," replied the Gipsy, do you believe there *vos sich* a man as Julius Caesar? Yes, said he, I does. And pray, said I, do you believe their ever *vos sich* a man as Alexander the Great? Yes, says he. And Homer? says I. Yes, says he. And pray, says I, *vy* do you believe in them, when you wont believe there *vos* a Jesus Christ.

"When he is met by objections he cannot reply to, he falls back on those impregnable arguments of which he is master, and lays the objections before me for elucidation at our next interview. Our last conversation consisted principally of a dissertation upon the Hebrew *Elohim* (Gen. i.), and the argument in favour of the *plurality* in *singularity* of the Divine Being to be deduced therefrom, in connection with other passages. He had met with some objection upon the subject."

Besides, there is a grand remedial system in operation in the corrupt heart of humanity, suited to mankind in every age, colour, condition, and clime. We are told that when the first Emperor Constantine the Great, whose domestic history resembled that of our notorious Henry VIII., had murdered his nephew, son, and wife, he applied, in his remorse, to a heathen priest for pardon, and was told that paganism had no purification for crimes like his. But there is no description of need or form of sin for which the gospel does not provide a remedy. There is no sinner, however polluted, for whom it does not provide a healing, nor is there any difficulty, however apparently invincible, which will not yield before the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that *believeth*, to the Jew first, and also the Greeks. The *Negro*, the *Hottentot*, the *Caffir*, the *Bushman*, the

ori, the Fijian, and the Gipsy, have all been conceded. True, the visible fruits which Christianity has reaped amongst the degraded Gipsies, have been great in quantity, though a few sheaves, & precious in quality, have been gathered in.

Why," to return to the question with which we began this chapter, "why having the Gipsies at our feet, and the means of their reformation and salvation in our hands, have they been so long neglected? why this neglect? How is it, that while the churches are sending the glad tidings of salvation to distant lands, 12,000 wanderers in our own country, plunged in the profoundest ignorance, the most complete misery, and the most terrible debasement, are left to perish without any distinct agency being employed for their conversion?"

Some time ago a lady dreamt a dream, and in that dream she fancied herself before the "Great White Throne," surrounded by those objects of compassion whom she had thoughtlessly neglected. She says:—

"For the blind and the cripple were there,  
And the babe that pined for food,  
And the homeless man and the widow poor,  
Who begged to bury her dead.  
The naked, alas! I might have clad;  
The famished I might have fed.

Each pleading look that long ago  
I scanned with heedless eye;  
Each face was gazing as plainly then  
As when I passed it by.  
Woe, woe, for me, if the past should be  
Thus present when I die.

The wounds I might have healed,  
The human sorrow and smart,  
And yet it never was in my soul  
To play so ill a part.  
But evil is wrought by want of thought;  
As well as want of heart."

And it is to this "*want of thought*" more than to want of heart, that the past neglect of the Gipsies is to be attributed. For ages they have been an overlooked, forgotten, destitute, and forlorn people, yet with souls to be saved just as if they lived in palaces. And even at the present day thousands of them are going down to the grave and onward to the judgment seat, saying, "No man careth for our souls." I have asked hundreds of Christians in our rural districts, frequented by these poor outcasts, "Did you ever seek to save the souls of the Gipsies? Did you ever visit them and converse with them with a view to their instruction in righteousness?" and I have almost invariably received this reply, "Oh! no. The fact is, I never thought about them." Have you, dear reader? And yet it is as much our duty to care for them and instruct them in the way of peace as to multiply Bibles in China and send out missionaries to India. "The Divine Spirit of Christianity deems no object, however unworthy and insignificant, beneath her notice. Gipsies lying at our doors, seem to have a peculiar claim on our compassion. In the midst of a highly refined state of society, they are but little removed from savage life."

The reader may be ready to ask, "*How* are the Gipsies to be elevated and saved? No hope of mere personal advantage will move beings whose supreme felicity is in idleness. And how are the motives of religion to be applied to hearts which seem never to feel their need of religious hope, which is the first spring of religious feeling? Surely these people are like the Irishman's horse, immensely difficult to catch, and when caught, entirely useless."

Now facts are of far greater weight than assumptions and fictions, and therefore, we direct the reader to the following chapter for an answer to his questions.



## CHAPTER IX.

## HOW THEY WERE RECLAIMED AT SOUTHAMPTON.

“What could be done, my suffering brother,  
If men were wise and loved each other?  
Oppression’s heart might be imbued  
With kindling drops of lovingkindness,  
And knowledge pour, from shore to shore,  
Light on the eyes of mental blindness.  
All slavery, warfare, lies, and wrongs,  
All vice and crimes might die together,  
And fruit and corn, to each man born,  
Be free as warmth in summer weather.  
The vilest wretch that ever trod,  
The deepest sunk in guilt and sorrow,  
Might stand erect in self-respect,  
And share God’s teeming world to-morrow.  
What might be done? This might be done,  
And more than this, my suffering brother,  
More than the tongue ere said or sung,  
If men were wise and loved each other.”—*Muckay*.

To the late Rev. James Crabb, of Southampton, belongs the honour of being the first to discover the best mode of enlightening the ignorance, overcoming the prejudices, and of reforming the manners of the Gipsies, and thus preparing them for the reception of the gospel. With the love of God for his magic and the gospel for his wand, he did what Ethurial’s spear is represented by Milton as doing in Eden, when touching the repulsive toad which stood before Eve, it started up in all the grand proportions of a man. In like manner, Mr. Crabb touched the crouching

wretches who seemed debased beyond the hope of recovery, and many of them were found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in their right mind.

It is calculated to send a thrill of gratitude and a flush of exultation through the heart to read the records of his labours amongst them.

The circumstances under which Mr. Crabb's attention was first directed to this interesting people made a deep impression upon him. During the Winchester assizes of 1827, he had occasion to visit the criminal court. As he entered, the Judge was, according to the Draconic code of that day,\* passing sentence of death on two criminals, to one of whom he held out the hope of mercy, but to the other, a young Gipsy, who was convicted of horse stealing, he said no hope could be given. The youthful culprit instantly fell on his knees, and with uplifted eyes, as if unconscious of any person being present but the Judge and himself, exclaimed, "*Oh! my Lord, save my life.*" The Judge replied, "*No; you can have no mercy in this world: I and my brother judges have come to the determination to execute horse stealers, especially Gipsies, because of the increase of the crime.*" The suppliant, still on his knees, imploringly said:—"Do my Lord Judge, save my life; do for God's sake, for my wife's sake, for my baby's sake!" "No," replied the stern Judge, "*I cannot; you should have thought of your wife and children before.*"

\* The practice of affixing death penalties to minor offences, prevailed in our country up to a comparatively recent period. Indeed, it is not more than one hundred years ago that a child of thirteen years was hanged for stealing ten pence half-penny out of a till. It is but right to add, that soon after this event, the growing humanity of the age mitigated the savage ferocity of the law, and out of every ten criminals condemned to death probably nine were reprieved. Still, so late as the year 1829 no fewer than twenty-four persons were hanged in London alone, and amongst these there was not one murderer. The year 1832 witnessed the abolition of capital punishment for horse stealing, sheep stealing, and burglary.

This made a deep impression on Mr. Crabb's mind, and on leaving the court he found, on the outside, a number of Gipsies, wild with grief, for they had just heard of the mournful fate of their companion. Seated upon the ground was an old woman, and a very young one, the wife of the condemned criminal. There were two children with them, the eldest three years and the youngest but fourteen days old, which the old woman was holding in her arms, while she endeavoured to comfort its weeping mother. "My dear, don't cry," said she, remember you have this dear little babe." This scene, together with the reading of 'Hoyland's Survey of the Gipsies,' led Mr. Crabb to resolve to put forth efforts to ameliorate their wretchedness and promote their social, moral, and religious happiness. An opportunity of doing so soon presented itself, and Mr. Crabb quickly availed himself of it. About a week after he had witnessed the scene just referred to, he saw the old woman sitting on the ground in the suburbs of Southampton, with the widow's infant on her knee. He asked where the widow of the condemned criminal (who had in the interval been executed) was, and being told that she had gone into the town, he requested the old woman to call at his house, and bring the young widow with her. About an hour after they called upon Mr. Crabb, when he kindly offered to take the widow's children, and be a father to them, and educate them, and when old enough, apprentice them to some honest trade. "Thank you, sir," said the widowed mother, "but I don't like to part with my children. The chaplain at the prison offered to take my oldest, and to send her to London to take care of her, but I could not often see her." Mr. Crabb, who knew a parent's feelings, replied:—"I commend you for not parting with her; unless you could occasionally see her; for I suppose you love your children dearly. "Oh, yes, sir," said the widow, to which the old aunt added,

"Our people set great store by their children." "Well," replied Mr. Crabb, "I do not wish you to determine this business hastily; it is a weighty one. You had better take a fortnight for consideration, and then give me another call." Now, dear reader, how great a fire a little spark kindleth. In about a fortnight the widow and aunt again appeared, when the former said, "I will now let you have my Betsy," and the latter, pointing to her own grand-daughter, said, "I will let you have my little deary if you will take care of her. Her father! she continued was transported for life, and her mother now lives with another man." The proposal was accepted, and in three days, these two children, clean washed and dressed in their best clothes, were entrusted to the care of Mr. Crabb. He put them to his infant school, where they were properly disciplined and taught to read. The eldest, a lovely and affectionate girl, was soon taken seriously ill, and at the request of her grandmother, she was removed to the tent, with the hope that the fresh air and bright sunshine of heaven might rebuke disease. But, alas! her sickness was unto death. When she laid dying on her bed in the tent, and suffering much pain, her medical attendant said: "Although you love Mr. Crabb so much, would you rather live with him, or die and go to Jesus?" When, all bright with hope and full of consolation, she replied: "I would rather die and go to Jesus."

Mr. Crabb's efforts to benefit these and other children having proved successful, his yearning pity and glowing love led him to devise some plan by which, under the Divine blessing, the adult Gipsies, for whose souls no man seemed to care, might be effectually and savingly benefitted. Being unable, however, by means of his own to accomplish this benevolent design, he opened his mind upon the subject to several gentlemen, both ministers and laymen, and in November, 1827, the first committee was formed.

They at once sought such information as might throw light on the character and habits of the Gipsy tribe, and engaged a man, well acquainted with the Gipsies, and capable of imparting instruction to children and adults, to visit their encampments, and the result of this movement was, that in about a year and a half twenty adults and children had been brought up by the committee under moral and religious instruction. Six women of the number were induced to take up their residence at Southampton, and were employed in such work as they were found most capable of undertaking, with a view to assist in supporting their families, and diminish the expenses incurred in defraying their rent, and in clothing them. Four boys were apprenticed to different trades, and the younger children placed at school. It was a leading object in every arrangement to endeavour *gradually* to overcome their early, deep-rooted habits of restlessness, sloth, and inactivity, and the evils arising from *gratuitous* charity, by stimulating them to industrious and provident habits, and inducing them to contribute small weekly deposits out of their earnings for their maintenance and clothing; thus raising the tone of *self-exertion*, and giving suitable encouragement when their personal efforts entitled them to some testimony of approbation."

Mr. Crabb was in the habit of having a yearly meeting of the Gipsies at his own house, to which all their families were invited, and such others of their tribe as were disposed to hear what had been done, and what was designed to be done for the improvement of their race. On these occasions crowds of Gipsies wended their way to Southampton from all parts of the country with caravans, carts, and rude vehicles, drawn by broken down horses, ponies, and donkeys. At an early hour they might be seen in long processions winding up the hill to Mr. Crabb's residence. On arrival they were admitted into a field,

where a camp, consisting generally of about one hundred and fifty persons was formed for religious service. Portions of scripture were read and expounded to them, after which an address was given to them, couched in plain and simple language, adapted to their comprehension. "In these addresses he preached to them Jesus, set before them the mercy of God in Him, the fullness and freeness of that mercy, the resurrection of the dead, the solemnities of the judgment, the consequent danger of slighting the gospel, and the blessed privileges and prospects of those who fled for refuge in Christ." On these occasions many hearts melted, many a tear started to the eye, and many a tongue instinctively exclaimed, "God bless the Gipsies."

After this service a dinner of roast and boiled beef and plum-pudding was provided, and the aristocracy of the neighbourhood generally waited on the swarthy guests, who, with "magnificent appetites," observed the most perfect good order, and thankfully expressed their enjoyment. In this field they spent many a day of intense enjoyment, the remembrance of which still lives in the recollection of many of the elderly Gipsies, as bright spots in their dreary pilgrimage of poverty, neglect, and scorn.

"As letters some hand has invisibly traced,  
When held to the flame will steal out to the sight,  
So, many a feeling that long seemed effaced,  
The warmth of a meeting like this brought to light."

A lady on one of these festive occasions asked a Gipsy how she enjoyed herself? "I never was so happy," she replied. "The dinner we had last year was better than that we have had to day, but what I heard then of the ministers address was only the word of man to me; but to day it has been the word of God: I am sure it has."

*The oak was once an acorn, and Rome was not*

built in a day. All good enterprises are small in their beginnings, and the commencement of Mr. Crabb's efforts to benefit the Gipsies were small, and beset with many difficulties. Many spoke of his scheme as a "poet's fancy," a "dreamer's dream," a "barren speculation" that would never produce any beneficial results. And a fear that success would not crown his efforts seems to have depressed the hearts of some of his staunchest supporters. But

"Give me the dauntless man,  
Who flinches not from labour or fatigue  
But moves right on upon the path of duty.  
God will stand by the man who boldly stands  
By God's command; will give him energy  
And courage now, and afterwards success."

And so it was with Mr. Crabb. In spite of prejudice on the part of the public, and ignorance, debasement, and frequent deception on the part of the Gipsies, he persevered in his novel enterprize, and though it cost him years of exertion and sometimes not less than one hundred pounds annually, yet he saw his efforts and those of his coadjutors, crowned with encouraging success.

In five years, not fewer than forty-six families were induced to abandon their predatory lives, and pursue occupations of honest industry in the town and neighbourhood of Southampton. One lad, a coach-maker by trade, behaved so well in his situation, that his master advanced him to a higher branch in his business. His work-fellows at first regarded him with foolish and bitter aversion; but soon their antipathies melted like snow wreaths before the sun, and at length they subscribed money to enable him to buy some additional tools, to which the foreman added five shillings and the master one pound. This youth became a good scholar, a diligent apprentice, an expert mechanic, a sincere Christian, and an effi-

cient teacher of a Sunday school. Indeed, Christianity became a vital force, a genial fire in the hearts of many of these swarthy wanderers of our rural wastes; and its benign and blessed influence guided and controlled them amid their ordinary routes, their daily toils, and their commonest transactions. Considering the previous condition of those whose honesty, simplicity, gratitude, and love, Mr. Crabb records, more marvellous illustrations of the word of truth and the power of grace, are rarely to be found in the annals of Christian biography. I will give a few examples.

The young widow mentioned on a former page, entered the service of a kind and benevolent lady in London, and continued there till the lady's death. She afterwards acted as a servant in other families, and invariably proved by her spotless character, earnest piety, and obliging deportment, that she was a sincere servant of Christ.

A woman, who had been a notorious fortune-teller, and had done much harm to society, was happily convinced of the error of her ways and at once abandoned them. One day, she entered a cottage she had been accustomed to visit, when on her fortune-telling expeditions. The old lady of the house began to speak of certain future events which another Gipsy had foretold. "*Don't believe her dame,*" exclaimed the reformed Gipsy. "*It is all lies. She knows no more about it than you do.* If you trust to what she says you will be deceived." The old lady enquired with surprise, "How can you who used to tell us our fortunes, and promise us such good luck, talk so?" When the reformed Gipsy, taking a New Testament from her bosom, replied:—"I have learned from this blessed book and from my kind friends, that all liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with *brimstone* and fire, and rather than tell fortunes *again* I would starve. She then began to read a



chapter, and endeavoured in her own simple way to explain what she read, at which the old woman and her husband began to weep. "I know," said she, "I have been a great sinner, and am one still, yet I never felt so happy as I do now." "I am not happy," said the old woman, "but I should like to know what I must do to feel happy." The Gipsy replied:—You must leave off selling on Sundays, and go to a place of worship, and learn to read the Testament, and pray, and *then* you will become happy." This woman was plunged into deep poverty, and many were the temptations to renew the practice of fortune-telling. Rich parties would sometimes offer her gold to induce her to repeat her former sins, but to her credit, she resolutely refused all such unholy gain. One day, some gay young women called to have their fortunes told. Pointing them to a Bible which lay on the table, and which she had just been reading, she said:—"That book, and that only, will tell your fortunes; for it is God's book; it is his own word." She reproved them for their sin, and said:—"The Bible has told me that all unrighteousness is sin." On being requested not to tell Mr. Crabb, should he call upon her, she replied, "Oh, you fear man more than God." On another occasion she was sweeping a crossing when two females came up and asked for the house of a fortune-teller, who resided in the neighbourhood. "My dears," said the indignant woman, she cannot tell your fortunes. I have been a professed fortune-teller, and have deceived hundreds." Before her reformation this woman often quarrelled with some Gipsies of another tribe. They met her one day, beat her severely, tore the ear-drops from her ears, and sneeringly called her "a methodist." But instead of burning with rage, and pouring vengeance upon her persecutors, (as she would once have done), she bore all with Christian meekness; and when some one said, "Why didn't you bring your

persecutors to justice?" she replied, "How can I be forgiven, if I do not forgive? That is what my Testament tells me." This woman and her family were at length placed in comfortable circumstances; for her youngest child, on seeing a number of Gipsies one day, said, "Who are all these folks?" "They are Gipsies," replied the mother. "And was I ever like 'em?" asked the child. "Yes," replied the mother, "you was once a poor little Gipsy, without stockings and shoes, and glad to beg a half-penny of anybody."

2. Another instance is that of William Stanley. William was a soldier, and having to attend divine service as part of his duty, he often heard some of his comrades speak of the text, on their return to the barracks. One day he resolved to bring home the text the next time he went to church. He listened with attention, and on his return to the barracks, said, with an air of triumph, "*I've got the text now.*" "What is it, Stanley," asked one of his comrades. "The nineteenth day of the month, and the ninety-fifth psalm." Stanley's mind, however, did not long remain in this dark state. One day he took up a Testament that lay on the barracks table, and read a portion, which powerfully impressed his mind, and he said, "I will buy that book if I can." He bought it for thirteen pence half-penny. Soon after he went to the Wesleyan chapel, Exeter, and while listening to a faithful sermon, the spirit of God shone into the gloomy dungeon of his dark and desolate heart; he saw his sinfulness, and that there was no prospect of his dying happy unless he obtained pardon and purity. This sermon led to his conversion. Soon after, he was employed by the Southampton committee to visit the Gipsies three or four times a week, and to spend his Sabbaths among them. He went with *them* from tent to tent, conversed with them on religious subjects, read and explained the word of God

to them, as far as he was able, and prayed with them. They received his visits with every token of thankfulness, and on many occasions tears of gratitude would run down their cheeks, when they thought of the interest taken in their welfare.

In a letter which Stanley wrote to Mr. Crabb, he says :—

“ Sir,

“ As you wish me to give you some account of the Gipsies, I gladly comply with your request. I am a poor individual of that wandering race called Gipsies; yet, by the mercies of God, I was *rescued* from that wandering life. In my *youthful days* I entered into the Wiltshire militia, when it pleased God to bring me under the preaching of the Gospel at Exeter; and it was the means of awakening my conscience. *From that time I have often been led to bewail the sad state of the people whereof I made a part.* I have given them the best instruction that lay in my power, and have frequently read the Scriptures to them; but with very little visible effect for many years. Neither did I think till lately that there were any of them in the world that cared for their souls, till the year 1827; when I was quite *overcome with love to God, to find that the Lord had put it into the hearts of his dear people at Southampton, to pity them in their forlorn condition*; and now wonder not if I am at a loss for words to speak the feeling of my heart; for since that time I have seen *seventeen or eighteen*; nay, *from twenty to thirty*; nay, *from forty to fifty, attend divine worship*; and add to this the many happy hours I have spent with them in their tents near Southampton, in reading and praying with them; and some of them that six months ago would not stay in their camp on my approach to them, but go away swearing, will now receive me gladly, and produce a Bible or a Testament, which had been given to them, and desire me to read it to them, saying, this book was given to me by our dear friends in Southampton. But, *dreadful to relate*, I find some children, *from three years old to fifteen*, who never said a prayer to their God; who never heard any one pray, and who was never in a church or chapel, nor have heard of the name of Christ, but in blaspheming; and these are the inhabitants of England! Oh, England! England! they are living and dying without God: no wonder if they draw down the divine vengeance of Heaven on the land!

“ Many of these poor ignorant mortals do not know that they are doing wrong by fortune-telling; and being informed that it is displeasing to God, and ruinous to their own souls, they will say, *it is of no service for me to give attendance to religion, for I am*

forced to ruin my soul for every morsel of bread I eat; but if God spares my life I will leave it off as soon as I can; while others who are both ignorant and hardened in their crimes, have told me it was the gift of God to them, by which they were to gain their living. Surely they call *darkness light*! Many of my people who join in talk with me declare, that if the Bible which I read to them be true, there cannot be many saved. But they say that a reformation is needful, and this is promised by them, and I am in great hopes that the time is at hand. Oh, Lord! work for thine own glory, and stir up the minds of thy people in all parts of the land, that they may help forward this good work amongst these poor wanderers!

"Their ignorance and their crimes seem to have increased of late years. When I was a boy, I well recollect their parting expression, which was so common amongst them—*Artmee Devil-lesty*; which is, *God bless you*. But now it is *truly awful*; it is *darkness itself*, for they now ask God to send them good luck in their crimes. I myself thought for many years, till I heard the Gospel, that God was like some great gentleman, living at a great distance from us; but I had not thought that he was everywhere present to notice the conduct of his creatures, or to hear prayer. The ignorance of my people is a loud call to Christians to assist; and, blessed be God, they find that assistance in Southampton. The Bible has often been taken away from Southampton in the Gipsies' pack, and I have seen it when they have returned, preserved with a great deal of care, and produced for me to read, with delight on their part.

"Surely this blessed book will not be idle, but will do wonders amongst them through God's grace. I see the effects already. Do you say how? I answer, *Was it ever known till now that Gipsies assembled on the Sabbath-day on the common and in the lanes for divine worship? Did you ever see them come to town on a Sabbath-day in such great numbers as they now do, when encamping near Southampton? Some of the most ignorant of them are now learning to read the Scriptures. This is the beginning of good days. Oh! the good this will do to my people at large!* Nothing of importance took place in the camp all last summer, and I almost fainted under the discouragement; but of late it shows another face; and I make no doubt but it will spread, and I shall soon see greater things than these.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obliged and humble Servant,

"WILLIAM STANLEY.

"P.S.—On examining the different branches of my family, I find upwards of two hundred of us in different parts of England."

The gospel turned many a lion into a lamb, and carried joy and sunshine into many wretched camps. Drunkards became sober; thieves honest; liars learned to speak the truth; and men notorious for their crimes, became steady, honest, and deserving workmen. At one of the annual gatherings, Mr. Crabb stated that "among the Gipsies who have been in the habit of visiting Southampton, robberies have almost, if not entirely, ceased;—that among the committals for horse-stealing, once so frequent a crime among them, no Gipsy ever figures in the calendar; nor are the minor crimes committed by them; even the depredations upon the hedges have lessened, and a Gipsy present at the festival, from a great distance, was not the only one known to purchase coals for his evening fire. Their habits of living have undergone an entire change, and cleanliness in diet and person have succeeded to the opposite qualities by which the Gipsies were characterised. The Bible is treasured up with sacred care by them, and when the encampment for the night is made by the hill-side or solitary lane, many a Gipsy child is now called on to read the Word of God to its parents."

On one of these occasions thirteen reformed Gipsies spent the whole day in reading the Scriptures to their relatives who had come from a distance to visit them. Mr. Bourne, the county magistrate, declared that for many years he had not known a quarter session or assizes held in the county in which there was not a Gipsy amongst the prisoners, but that since the labours of Mr. Crabb and his companions for their amelioration, there had not been one for trial.

The effects of Mr. Crabb's labours were not confined to Southampton and its neighbourhood. Fifty Gipsy families, travelling through Hants and the adjoining counties, had each a copy of the Scriptures, which they often got read to them in their tents. In many remote hamlets and scattered villages the re-

sult of these labours were seen in raising many of these wandering outcasts to the advantages of civilized life, and to a knowledge of the true God. A gentlemen writing to Mr. Crabb, says :—

Dear Sir,—About three weeks since, on my return from Bridport, I saw as I passed up Chid-Cock Hill, several weary asses straying in quest of something to eat, and near to them a number of ragged Gipsy children. Upon my asking a fine boy if he could read, he replied, “Many thanks, good gemman, my grandfather can, and we can a little.” On this I asked where his grandfather was? To which the boy, rising from the ground, said, “Only in the lane above the hill; please to go and see him—he wants to see a gemman about here.” With pleasure I hastened to the spot, for the shades of evening were coming on a pace. As I approached the place, I recognized the aged Gipsy to whom, in 1832, I presented a Bible. The old man rose, uncovered his hoary head, bending under the weight of fourscore years, and thus accosted me: “You be the gemman who gave me my Bible; thank you, Sir, for the blessed book; I shall never part with it, as you said.” Then opening a book, he took it out. “It is here; thanks—many thanks—that I have it, and can read it.” I desired him to get the people together, and that I would speak to them from the blessed book. The invitation was cheerfully met; in a few minutes twenty-two poor wandering Gipsies were assembled round the fire: they appeared to pay marked attention, and to feel as well as hear. When I had spoken to the swarthy group, of our state by nature, and of the love of Jesus, we all knelt down upon the grassy sod, and I felt assured that I was praying to Him who was able to take the rudest and most unworthy, and make them kings and priests unto God. Who can tell that this word spoken under a hedge by the way-side, may, by the sovereign power of God, and the grace of Jesus Christ our Saviour, be abundantly blessed? I left these interesting families amidst their thanks and blessings. The venerable old man followed me, and told me that Robert, some years since, was very much afflicted, and during his affliction was taught to read by the writer. Robert then taught his sister Matilda, and since that time their conduct has been much improved. Robert and Matilda (for whom we are so much interested) are his relations, adding, I promised Matilda to ask you for a Bible for her; she can read, and would be greatly thankful for your kindness. She was then near Shipton, and he should soon see her. Next morning, very early, the aged Gaffer came for the Bible; the Lord make it useful. *Your imagination must paint the lovely sight of men, women, and children, kneeling before the Lord our Maker upon*

the green grass; you must picture a fine tall, hoary headed Gipsy with his silver locks, bowing to the ground in thankfulness for a copy of the Word of life. I remain, &c. &c.

Again, he says :—

“ I take this opportunity also to relate to you a circumstance which occurred here, thinking it may afford you some encouragement to proceed in your Christian effort for ameliorating the condition of the Gipsies. Some young ladies, while taking a sketch of my church, were accosted by a Gipsy woman, who was passing by, and upon entering into conversation with her, they asked her to tell their fortunes, offering money. The Gipsy immediately expressed her sorrow that ladies of their station and intelligence should thus tempt her to commit such a sin, telling them that she had laid aside such profane pretensions to knowledge, having happily been taught a better wisdom, even the knowledge of God, and his salvation in Christ, and that she was now enjoying a content and peace in pursuing a life of honest industry she had never known before. In short, she spoke in a manner that left a lasting impression on the minds of these young ladies, and gratefully named you as having been the privileged means of producing this salutary change. Such an instance of the good influence of your instructions, occurring at a distance from the sphere of your personal observation, affords, I trust, a sure earnest of a real and permanent benefit, and should not, I think, be withheld from your knowledge, furnishing to you, as it may, a good hope that your labour is not vain in the Lord.”

The anniversary meetings held by Mr. Crabb were productive of much good, by breaking down the prejudices of the Gipsies, and leading them to discover that those whom they formerly looked upon with suspicion were their true friends. Those of them whose children had been placed at school had an opportunity of seeing the advantages which had accrued to them from the instruction they had received ; and as several of them had been placed out to trades, or other occupations in the town, those advantages were the more apparent. These meetings, moreover, had the effect of stirring up other Christian men to “ go and do likewise.” The Rev. John West, Rector of Chettle, in Dorsetshire, was so struck with what he saw at the first anniversary, that, in order to test

the practicability of carrying out the plans of the Southampton committee in his own parish, he erected two cottages, in each of which he placed a Gipsy family; and that they might be kept from idle habits, and help to maintain their children, whom he placed under instruction in his parochial school, he allotted to each family an acre of ground for cultivation. Similar efforts were made by Christian men in various parts of England and Scotland, the results of which gave great encouragement to those by whom they were made. Great difficulty, however, soon arose in placing the Gipsy children in the parochial schools, the townspeople objecting, and not without reason, to the association of their children with those of the Gipsies. Mr. West felt the force of the objection, and suggested to Mr. Crabb the importance of having a school for Gipsy children exclusively; a suggestion which was immediately embraced by Mr. Crabb, as a beginning at the right end. Mr. West forthwith issued a short publication, entitled "A Plea for Educating the Children of the Gipsies," dedicated to Lord Ashley, and addressed to the nobility, gentry, and magistrates of the county of Dorset, in which he urged the formation of an institution for the maintenance and education of at least twenty-four orphan Gipsy children, under six years of age; or boys and girls, not older, from the largest and most destitute Gipsy families. The subject was soon taken up by many of the clergy, and by persons of influence in the counties of Dorset and Hampshire, amongst whom were the Rev. Dr. Marsh and the Rev. C. B. Coney, of Kimmeridge. An appeal having been issued by those two gentlemen, in conjunction with Mr. Crabb, on behalf of the proposed institution, a sum of about £1,200 was soon subscribed, of which £100 were given by the Committee of Council of Education, by whom the object was justly regarded as one in which the country itself was interested. A suitable site



having, through the liberality of Francis Archibald Stuart, Esq., been obtained at Farnham, near Blandford, on July 24th, 1845, the first stone of the Gipsy Asylum and Industrial School was laid. A large assemblage was gathered together to witness the ceremony, amongst whom were many of the Gipsy people, who looked on with wonder at so novel a movement on their behalf. The foundation-stone was not laid by one of the great or rich, but by one of the meanest and poorest—as regards this world—present at that assembly; and he was an aged and reformed Gipsy. Previously to the ceremony, with great simplicity and deep emotion, he said:—

“Kind friends, ladies and gentlemen, I am come here as a true Gipsy, to take part in this good work; and I will do it as well as I can, if not so well as I could wish. My father died many years ago, but some time before he went out of this life he cursed God, and from that time he never had any rest. He was attended by a doctor, and what I have told you was the cause of his weeping to the day of his death: he could not rest, but I hope, through God’s mercy, he repented. We children would often catch him weeping, and we would ask him what he cried for; but he would say that we could not understand, and tell us never to curse the Lord. This is the true account of my father who is dead and gone. I acknowledge that I have been a very wicked man almost all my life; but I hope the time came for me to alter. I am come here, in sincerity of heart, to lay the foundation-stone for the good of the poor Gipsy children; and I hope the building will be raised, and that the work will stand till the end of the world. I hope the Gipsy parents will place their children here willingly, under the care of the good Christian gentlemen and ladies. I have no more to say; only I hope that God will bless our Queen and all the royal family, and all the good Christians who support this school.”

Indians. In the year 1821 he pitched a gospel-tent at the Red River Settlement, which has been the means of bringing many a wandering Indian to the feet of the Saviour. Mr. West met with people in the dreary wilds of that part of the world, whose wandering habits of life very much resembled those of our Gipsies, and therefore he is peculiarly adapted for the work he has undertaken. From what he has seen in his labours abroad, and from his general knowledge of mankind, he is aware that nothing permanently good can be done unless the children are instructed. The great evil in the Gipsies, and bar to their conversion, is their wicked practice of fortune-telling, particularly among young women and girls: there are a great many now present; but I hope none who encourage this wicked abomination, which leads to a train of evils but little considered. What is it, but a 'refuge of lies' and deceit, the encouragement of which tends to undermine religious faith, and to peril the immortal soul?.....

"As to the tale told by Charles, the aged Gipsy, he has not told the whole story about his father. As might be supposed, he feels this matter deeply; and I can tell you there is this about Gipsies which he did not like to state,—they never desert their aged parents: such is their dutiful affection, that if their parents get old and too infirm to walk, the children carry them about from place to place, and never leave them till they are no more, and their bodies have been decently interred. There are many fine feelings about the despised Gipsies, which it would be well for many who call themselves Christians to imitate. But to return to the poor old departed Gipsy, the father of Charles: his history will be found in a tract called 'The Dying Gipsy,' which will be found well worth reading. I will not enter *into the particulars* of this history, further than to *say, that he gave a guinea to a person to read the*

Scriptures to him. This was a large sum, which I do not think any person ought to have taken for such a purpose. He also gave a reward for some one to pray for him ; and he said that, all the long years he had lived, no one had said a word to him about his soul, or about the gospel of Christ. Was it any wonder, then, that the Gipsies were so dark, when, although they were wandering about in a Christian country, no one cared about their souls? Such, however, is not the case now ; for clergymen and ladies, as well as other pious persons, will go into their tents, and read the word of God to them.

“ I have been long labouring in this cause, almost alone : at one time it cost me at least £100 a year ; and I have been asked why I continued to go on with this object. My answer was that I had set my hand to the plough, and, by God’s assistance, did not intend to look back. My good friend, the rector of this parish, has come forward, with other Christian people ; and the Lord has already much blessed their exertions, and He will no doubt continue His blessing. I could tell you many instances of the conversion of Gipsies to Christianity, who have brought up their children in the right way.”

This speech will serve to show the largeness of Mr. Crabb’s benevolence, and how truly he was “ the servant of sinners for Christ’s sake.” He knew the value of a soul, whether it belonged to a prince or the meanest of the human race.

The annual meetings were continued by Mr. Crabb down to the year 1847, when, in consequence of the failure of his health and the infirmities of age, he could no longer continue them ; and from this time the work was transferred from the Southampton committee to the gentlemen who had the management of the Farnham Institution. The last anniversary (being the nineteenth) was held in the grounds attached to the mansion of William Betts, Esq., of

Bevois Mount, in Southampton, in the month of December, 1848; on which occasion Mr. Crabb sent an address to the Gipsies from his sick room, in which, as a dying man who loved their souls, and was concerned for their salvation, he besought them to flee from the wrath to come, and exhorted them to place their children where they might be instructed both for time and for eternity.

It is proper to record, that during the eighteen anniversary meetings held by Mr. Crabb, the Gipsies conducted themselves in a most becoming and grateful manner, and were never known to commit an act of depredation upon his premises. It may be added, that the name of Mr. Crabb was known and revered, as it still is, amongst the people throughout the kingdom.

The committee of the Farnham Asylum employ a missionary, acquainted with the habits of the Gipsies, to visit their camps at Norwood, Barnes, Putney, Bow, Wandsworth, and other places; and, judging from the report of the committee for the year 1852, he appears to be doing the work of an evangelist among them with some success. But there has evidently been a retrogression since Mr. Crabb's days; and it may be questioned whether the interest which his labours excited will not die away altogether.\*

The Rev. Carr Glyn, rector of Witchampton, has also taken a lively interest in the Gipsies, and in a recent communication, he says, "The children are clever and interesting; they come into our schools like heathens, but often derive great benefit; they are most desirous to hear the Bible, very quick in apprehending its meaning, much interested in anything about Jesus, and they have voluntarily subscribed pence to the Bible Society, 'to send the good book to others.'"

\* See Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1854.

We have had sixty of them in our Asylum, a great many of whom learned to read the Bible; and when they have returned to their friends, they had the New Testament given to them, and have often been seen under a hedge reading it.

“ Our Missionary, Axford, was listened to by hundreds near London, and the reading and preaching of God’s word to them was blessed to many. It often quieted them when rude, and noisy, and quarrelsome. The Holy Book made evidently a deep impression on their poor heathen ignorant minds. It is the true means, as we have found, to bring the Gipsy to the Saviour—as it has proved to the Bechuana. We are going, God willing, to have another missionary for them near London, and schools as they are wanted. The Gipsies are chiefly found at Wandsworth, Bow, Witcham, and other suburban places, and at the hopping and pea-picking time in the counties of Kent and Surrey. In the winter some of them settle in London, Westminster, Bristol, and other large towns, when a good opportunity is presented for teaching them to read. In the spring they find work in the market-gardens.”\*



\* *The Book and Its Mission.* Vol. i. 1856, page 126.

## CHAPTER X.

HOW THEY WERE RECLAIMED AT KIRK-YRTHOLM,  
SCOTLAND.

“ But if a soul thou would’st redeem,  
And lead a lost one back to God,  
Would’st thou a guardian angel seem,  
To one who long in guilt hath trod—  
Go kindly to him, take his hand,  
With gentlest words, within thy own,  
And at his side a brother stand,  
Till thou the demon sin dethrone.

Scorn not the guilty, then, but plead  
With him in kindest, gentlest mood,  
And back the lost one thou may’st lead  
To God, humanity, and good.  
Thou art thyself but man, and thou  
Art weak, perchance, to fall as he,  
Then mercy to the fallen show,  
That mercy may be shown to thee.”

KIRK-YRTHOLM, a small village in the county of Roxburghshire, has been long known, and greatly celebrated as the favourite haunt of the Scottish Gipsies; and at the present time it is their most important settlement, and head quarter of their principle clans. The secluded situation of this parish, and the facilities which it afforded for their roaming and predatory habits, and for the evasion of legal restraints and penalties, were doubtless the reasons why the Gipsies *first choose it as their favourite rendezvous.* For *this village* is situated only a mile from the boundary

which separates the two kingdoms of England and Scotland. When pursued by the hand of justice it was the work but of a few moments, to cross from the one kingdom to the other ; or if the local magistrates on both sides of the border were on the alert, the nimble-footed Gipsies could soon evade their pursuit by escaping to the wild and unfrequented by-paths of the neighbouring mountains. "The hills and waters, also, teemed with game and fish, and the upland farms and hamlets required a constant supply of tinkering, crockery, and horn spoons, and abounded with good cheer, while magistrates and constables, and country towns, were 'few and far between.' All these were advantages of no trivial nature to the vagrant community and they seem accordingly, to have been neither overlooked nor left unimproved by the colonists of Kirk-Yetholm."

The precise period when the first Gipsy colony fixed their residence at this village cannot be ascertained. They seem gradually to have retreated to this village as their last strong hold, on being successively expelled from their other haunts and fastnesses upon the borders. From the life of Mr. Baird we learn that the Gipsy population of the place is very fluctuating. In 1797 they amounted to fifty ; in 1818, one hundred and nine ; in 1845, one hundred and forty ; and the number at present comprising the colony is one hundred and twenty-six. The following are the principle surnames of the clans who have during the past one hundred years formed these numbers :—"Faas, Bailleys, Gordons, Shaws, Browns, Keiths, Kennedies, Ruthvens, Youngs, Taits, Douglasses, Blythes, Allans, Mongomeries."

Mr. Bailie Smith, of Kelso, who had known them intimately for a period of fifty years, gives the following account of them :—

"At my first acquaintance with them," he says, "they were called the *Tinklers* of Yetholm, from the

males being chiefly employed in mending pots and other culinary utensils. Sometimes they were called *Horners*, from their occupation in making and selling horn spoons, called *cutties*. Now (1815), their common appellation is that of *Muggers*, or, what pleases them better, *Potters*. They purchase at a cheap rate the cast or faulty articles at the different manufactories of earthenware, which they carry for sale all over the country, in groups of six, ten, and sometimes twelve or fourteen persons, male and female, young and old, provided with a horse and cart, besides shell-ties and asses. In the country they sleep in barns and byres, or other outhouses ; and when they cannot find accommodation in such, they take the canvas covering from the pottery cart and squat themselves below it, like a covey of partridges in the snow. The residence of those who remain at home is in the *Tinkler Row* of Kirk Yetholm. Most of them there have leases of their houses granted for a term of nineteen years, for payment of a small sum yearly. Most of these leases were granted by the family of the Bennets of Grubet, the last of whom was Sir David Bennet, who died about sixty years ago (1755). The late Mr. Nesbit of Dirleton then succeeded to the estate, comprehending the baronies of Kirk Yetholm and Grubet. He died about the year 1783 ; and not long afterwards the property was acquired by the late Marquis Tweeddale's trustees. Mr. Nesbit was a great favourite with the Gipsies ; he used to call them his body-guards, and often gave them money. I remember," continues Mr. Smith, "that, about forty-five years ago (1770), being then apprentice to a writer, who used to receive the rents as well as the small duties of Kirk Yetholm, he sent me there with a list of names and a statement of what was due, recommending me to apply to the landlord of the public-house in the village for any information or assistance which I might require. After waiting for



a long time, and receiving payment from most of the feuars or rentallers, I observed to the landlord that none of the persons of the names of Faa, Young, Blythe, Fleckie, &c. who stood at the bottom of the list for small sums, had come to meet me, and proposed sending to require their immediate attendance. The landlord, with a grave face, inquired whether my master had desired me to ask money from those men. I said, 'Not particularly; but they stand on the list.' 'So I see,' replied he; 'but had your master been here himself he dared not ask money from them, either as rent or feu-duty. He knows that it is as sure as if it were in his pocket. They will pay when their own time comes, but do not like to pay at a set time with the rest of the barony, and still less to be craved.' I accordingly returned without the money, and reported progress. I found the landlord was right. My master said with a smile that it was unnecessary to send to them after they had got notice from the baron officer; it was enough if I had received the money if offered. Their rent and feu-duty were brought to the office in a few weeks. I need scarcely add those persons were all Gipsies.

When Mr. Smith first knew the Yetholm Gipsies, their king was old Will Faa, a contemporary, and probably a relative of Madge Gordon, Jean's granddaughter. Will never forgot his descent from the "Lords of Little Egypt," and was in the habit also, it is said, of paying an annual visit to the Messrs. Falls of Dunbar, with whom, as has already remarked, the Gipsy Faas claimed kindred. Will seems to have been a great favourite in the district: he had twenty-four children, all of whom he had christened in great state, in the presence of his assembled clan and some of the neighbouring farmers, who humoured him. At these christenings Will always appeared dressed in his wedding robes. He is said to have maintained his kindly sway with a very rigorous

tentive and ready to learn as the other children ; and they seem as easily impressed with the solemn and affecting truths of divine revelation as the others are."

In 1844 a Sabbath morning school was commenced, for the purpose of bringing these children more immediately under religious instruction. About thirty attended. Though they had many difficulties to encounter, yet their efforts were attended with encouraging success. We give an instance. Having read a scripture lesson they were asked to put questions to one another on scripture doctrine, when a Gipsy boy said to a Gipsy girl, "What has Christ done for us?" She hesitated for a moment as if trying to recollect some apt scripture expression, when he answered, "He died for us," and then, taking the girls place, she turned and asked him, "But what did he do in dying for us?" He replied, "He bore our sins." She then again asked, "What is meant by Christ bearing our sins?" And he not answering, she said, "He bore the wrath which our sins deserved." Her teacher then said to her, "Now what effect should this have upon us?" She made no reply. He then said, "If you were condemned to die, and if one put himself in your place, and died for you and set you free, what effect would this have upon you towards him?" She said, "I would love him." And if he left word that you should do something, what would you do?" She answered, "I would do it." "Now what, he again asked, should you do through love to Christ?" She replied, "Keep his commandments."

Mr. Baird having begun with the children, ended as did Mr. Crabb, with the adults. He sought to induce the grown up Gipsies to renounce their wandering life and settle to regular employment at home. For awhile, his scheme was almost an entire failure. Several individuals who for a time had relinquished *their* idle wandering habits, soon returned to *their* former occupation. Still he was enabled to say, "one

man, with his wife and family, has remained at home for now three years, and continues to conduct himself honestly, soberly, and most industriously. He has wrought at farm work during the whole of this period, with the same master, and given ample satisfaction." Indeed, some dozen persons soon renounced their wandering mode of life, and became respected for their general good behaviour, their industry, their attendance on religious ordinances, and the outward regularity of their lives. Some of the men became farm servants; a few became mechanics, while the young women entered into service, and some of them married well.

In consequence of increasing inability and age, Mr. Baird was not able to devote that attention to the Gipsies he had been wont; and for some four or five years the interest manifested in their behalf, seemed to languish. On November 29th, 1861, this devoted servant of God died; but his name had become fragrant to the Gipsies by the kindly words, and generous acts, and Christian spirit, he had manifested towards them for upwards of thirty years, and is still cherished as a household word throughout their habitations and their homes. His successor in the vicarage, the Rev. Adam Davidson, has succeeded in reanimating the friends of this despised people. In a letter I received from him eighteen months ago, and in answer to certain enquiries I made concerning these objects of his care, he says:

Yetholm Manse, Kelso, N.B.  
February, 23rd, 1864.

Rev. Henry Woodcock,  
Rev. Sir,

I duly received your note of the 18th, and am sorry I have been kept so long from answering it.

I was much surprised to find our Gipsies have such kind friends at such a distance, and to all your enquiries it gives me much pleasure to reply, were it for nothing but your good wishes and sympathy.

Any information I possess is very meagre, being derived

solely from my own observation and experience among the "Yetholm Gipsies," as they are called. I say *as they are called*, for I am proud to tell you they are almost extinct here. At this moment there are only six families of them—practically Gipsies—that is, hawkers; and of these four have children, of whom those fit to attend school number twelve or fourteen.

All the young generation, without an exception, have be-taken themselves to farm service, so that there is not one preparing to fill the position of a wandering father or mother. And the great difficulty that my good predecessor had to contend with is now narrowed down to this: the old will continue to follow their Gipsy occupation until they are unable; and the young, in the course of, say, six years, will be amalgamated with the surrounding population. Seeing this as the result safely to be counted upon, I undertook the support of a female teacher in our Kirk Yetholm, or Gipsy school; I put her there to teach them knitting, sewing, &c., in order to fit them for the world. They were much pleased with the scheme, and sent their children. It is another strong blow given to an old bad habit of never *mending* or taking an interest in their clothes. The teacher was appointed at Whitsunday last, and the scheme is working well. Through the kindness of friends in the neighbourhood, I have raised a year's salary for her. And another plan which I intend to adopt shortly also promises well. This is to prevail on the old people to leave their children behind them when they go to the country in summer; and I will give each child so much bread or meat per week for his attendance at school. Mr. Baird, my predecessor, did much good in this way; and I am confident it will aid much in dispersing the Gipsies among the farm-labourers. The whole system is clearly doomed here: its age now, is just the time the present heads of the families will live.

This is the result of measures adopted long ago: such as education for the children; police regulations, prohibiting all encampments in by-paths, &c.; and all hawking, but for those legally licensed.

I should like much to see your articles now preparing. At your convenience, you would do me a favour to let me know when they appear.

I need not say how heartily I wish you *God speed* in your labour. May you soon see them in your district as near their dissolution as they are here.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Yours very sincerely,  
ADAM DAVIDSON."

In another communication Mr. Davidson states that a great religious awakening has taken place among them. But I will quote his own words:—

“Of the spiritual state of the Gipsies much can be said. A religious movement, which began in the villages last year, seemed to quicken the latent seeds of *the truth* which had been sown in their hearts. Very many of them were deeply impressed, and the reality of their impressions was seen by all in their outward conduct. The Bible was read by most of them; religious books were anxiously perused: meetings, public and private, were attended; from every source within reach they sought after the knowledge of Him “whom to know is life eternal.” The first-fruits of such a change were seen at our Communion in August last. On that occasion there were admitted to the Lord’s Table for the first time, *three* who are grandparents, *four* who are parents, *two* who are young and unmarried; others had been admitted before. At present, they are steady in their attendance at church; private meetings have not ceased among them; and a member of one of their most exemplary families has, within the last few weeks, become a teacher in our Sabbath-school.

Every one who wishes their improvement will rejoice to read such an account as the above, and will see what a bright prospect is opened up, of our Gipsies at length taking their place among the most intelligent and trustworthy of our peasantry. Especial calls are made upon them at this time; but, in the present peculiar circumstances of the Gipsies, “to make no sign” would be little less than thwarting the aims of Heaven. A new power has now made itself felt among them—the power of God’s love in their heart. Never before has such a weapon for “pulling down the strongholds of Satan” been put into the hands of those attempting their improvement. No such opportunity for good has ever occurred in the whole history of their reformation. With the power of the Gospel within, anything or everything may be done to improve them by the judicious use of means: but that power, if left alone, with no attempt to open and strengthen and expand the mental faculties by education, will become isolated, then encrusted, then crushed with evil. School instruction to the children of such parents, as many of them now are, coupled with that which they are likely to receive at home, will soon, it is fondly hoped, remove the distinction of *Hind* and *Gipsy*, and make both one in character as many of both already are “one in Christ.”—*Adam Davidson*.

Thus have we furnished conclusive evidence of the

improvability of the Gipsies; their better feelings only require to be developed, and those of an evil tendency suppressed in youth, in order that they may assume their proper place among the ordinary population of the country.

## CHAPTER XI. .

## REMARKABLE INSTANCES OF REFORMATION AND CONVERSION AMONG THE GIPSIES.

"St. Clare at this instant dropped the curtain. 'It puts me in mind of mother,' he said to Miss Ophelia. 'It is true what she told me: if we want to give sight to the blind, we must be willing to do as Christ did—call them to us, and *put our hands on them.*'"—*Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

## MATILDA HARRISON.

On Sunday morning, June 9th, 1844, a pious gentleman was leisurely walking in Sherwood Forest, previous to entering on his duties as a Sunday-school teacher. He had not proceeded far, when he saw, at some distance, a Gipsy camp. Just at this moment, these words, "be instant in season and out of season," came with great power to his mind, and the nearer he came to the camp the more powerful the impression became. As he drew near he saw two female Gipsies; one appeared to bend beneath the weight of seventy years, while the other seemed to be about seventeen, and of very interesting and prepossessing appearance. He spoke to the elder one first, but could not understand a word she said in reply. He then addressed the younger, who replied in a modest and becoming manner, but with a searching and inquiring countenance, which showed she was on her guard. He retired a few paces, as though about to withdraw, when the girl perceiving this, and finding that his conversation

was correct and chaste, assumed more confidence, and advanced towards him a few steps. He renewed the conversation, and on looking steadfastly at the girl, saw an hectic flush and other omens of a consumptive constitution. He made some kind inquiries about her health, and her replies only served to confirm his suspicions. While making these inquiries, she was tastefully assorting and arranging a bunch of beautiful wild roses, which she held in her hand. He observed that these flowers were lively emblems of man, which led to the following conversation :—

GIPSY.—Do you think they are?

SUPERINTENDENT.—Yes, most certainly I do, for the Book of God expressly declares of man, that “He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down : he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” (Job xiv. 2.) Again the Book of God says, “As for man, his days are as grass : as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ; and the place thereof shall know it no more.” (Psalm ciii. 15, 16.)

G.—O what full and great words ! and how true. I never heard such words before.

S.—They are, indeed, great words ! and, my young friend, if I am not greatly mistaken, I fear your own health is sadly drooping ; and will soon, very soon, like these flowers, wither and decay.

G.—Do you really think so ?

S.—I do, indeed, think so. Permit me seriously to counsel you

“To set your heart on better things  
Than those on earth that bloom ;  
The fairest earthly flowers that springs,  
Will find an early doom.

“And though you wander where you will,  
Believe me, while you live,  
*A something will be wanting still,*  
This world can never give.”



G.—O what sweet words these are. How they suit my feeling and condition ; and how true they are.

S.—Well, as you admire them so much, I have the little book with me in which the lines are contained, and you shall have it. I have also some other little things which will afford you some instruction. Here they are—accept them ; you are welcome to them all.

G.—O, thank you ; you are very kind. I am sure I shall love these little books. I am so glad you spoke to me. I have been very unhappy a long time ; but, I have never said as much to any one before.

S.—Your present mode of life, I think, is not the best to make you happy.

G.—Nor any other. It is not because I am a gipsy that makes me unhappy. I feel as if no condition in the world could make me happy. I have no desires after the world ; indeed my heart and feelings are dead to the world. I have never before opened my heart to any one in this way.

S.—May I be allowed to ask what it is that makes you unhappy, and dead to the world ?

G.—O, it will make me sorry and ashamed to tell you—but I will tell you. I am wicked. I feel very wrong. I am sure, were I to die, according to my feelings, I could not be with God, for God cannot be wicked. It is true that I am a very dark and ignorant girl, and know very little of what people call religion.

S.—My dear young friend, take encouragement. God has taught you much, and is teaching you now ; and I believe, and am persuaded, that he will, in a short time, reveal himself unto your soul, as a God of love and mercy, through Jesus Christ. Almost every body will confess that they are sinners, and wicked ; but I am afraid very few are unhappy, or have any godly sorrow in consequence thereof. You say you are dark, and know but little about religion. I rejoice that you know so much. Your Heavenly Father

has already caused the light to shine upon your understanding, which makes manifest your darkness, and leads you to lament and deplore your ignorance and condition : and, therefore, you should be encouraged. Your knowledge of heavenly things will increase, "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." May I ask do you ever feel a disposition to pray ?

G.—I really do not know how to answer that question. If, at any moment, I feel a little happy, or anything like prayer in my heart, it is when I am all alone, and looking up at the blue sky, and thinking about the great God, that made me and all I see. I think I should like to know more about Him ; and to love Him, and to be with Him, and to tell him all I feel ; but I cannot think this is prayer.

S.—My dear young woman, I am happy to hear you say what you do, and to inform you that there is prayer in what you say. Our Heavenly Father does not only listen to the cry of the needy, and regard the prayer of the destitute, but he understands our plaintive breathings and broken accents.

G.—That is very pretty. What you say does make me very lightsome.

S.—You admire the streams, and they are sweet, but let me lead you to the fountain itself. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. viii. 26.)

G.—That is very encouraging, and makes me feel very lightsome and blithe. O, how surprising these things are to me ! I am so glad you spoke to me.

S.—I am pleased also ; and I hope our Heavenly Father will impart unto you the spirit of prayer, and the grace of supplication. I have found a very encouraging word here to every poor broken-hearted sinner. Permit me to read it to you :—"Come unto

me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) It is Jesus Christ, God's Son, that gives the invitation; and it is addressed to all such poor, heavy-laden, sin-burdened creatures as you feel yourself to be. Jesus encourages us to come to him, and to rest upon him, as our only refuge; and to confide in him, as the rock of our salvation. Jesus Christ is the good Shepherd of the sheep, that goeth into the wilderness, seeking out and bringing back that which was lost.

G.—O, they are very sweet words, and full of comfort. I am so glad!

S.—Hear me read another precious word:—"This is worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief." (1 Timothy i. 15.)

G.—O, what words are those you have just read!! They do go to my heart and make me blithe. Did you really read them out of the Book?

S.—Most certainly. Look over me, and I will point out every word with my pencil.

G.—I am not a very good reader.

S.—Well, then, this Testament will just suit you; and you shall have it. Every syllable is divided, and every hard word is explained at the foot of the page. You will soon be able to read it well.

G.—You are very kind and good. I am so glad you spoke to me. I shall love this blessed Book; there are so many kind things in it.

S.—Yes, there are, indeed, many kind things in it—it is a blessed Book.

G.—Will you be so kind as to mark the places where you have been reading?

S.—All the passages I have read to you are marked with pencil; but, lend me the Book, and I will mark a few others. Let me recommend you to read all the Book; and I hope it will please our Gracious Father to convey the truths it contains to your mind with

power. My time is spent, and I must leave you.

G.—I am sorry to part; but I am sure I shall never forget the things you have said to me. Will you stay and take some breakfast? it shall be ready in a trice.

S.—I thank you, but I cannot stay another minute. I have a long way to go home, and then I have to go to Nottingham to my Sunday school.

G.—O, a Sunday school. I have heard talk of Sunday schools. I should love to see one, for they must be delightful places.

S.—They are indeed, and I think you might see one.

G.—O no, I cannot. We leave here early in the morning for Cumberland.

S.—Pray how did you learn to read?

G.—An old man that was with us learnt me to read; but he is now dead. He had an old Bible, but they buried it with him in the coffin, which I thought wrong.

S.—Is that aged person your mother? What is the reason that she appears so cross?

G.—O, never mind. She thinks we are talking about religion, and nothing can offend her more. She's a fortune-teller.

He now took leave of this interesting wanderer, but not without much feeling on both sides; indeed the poor girl was all in tears, and heartfelt. He now hastened towards home, full of thought, and hoping and believing that the few things spoken to her would be useful. When about three hundred yards from the camp, he thought he heard her voice; and, on looking round, beheld her running swiftly towards him. He felt greatly excited, wondering what was her reason for running after him. In another moment she was with him, and hoped he would not think her rude. A thought came into her mind, how she *should like* to write to him, if he would allow her to *do so*. He answered, "I should be happy to hear

from you ;" and encouraged her to write a few lines at any time. He then took the Testament out of her hand, and, with his pencil wrote his name and address ; after which, they shook hands, and bade each other farewell.

Many months passed away without hearing from her. He often had anxious thoughts concerning her, and much regretted he had no means to make her out. He often visited the spot where they held their conversation ; and frequently had his mind engaged in humble prayer, at the throne of grace, on her account. He at length began to despair of ever hearing from her any more. He says, "on the evening of February first, 1845, I had many thoughts about her ; and on the second, to my surprise and satisfaction, I received a letter from her, of which the following is a correct copy.

"Blackwood, Maidstone, Feb. 1, 1845.

"Dear Friend,—Perhaps you have forgotten the young woman you discoursed with on the Common, near Nottingham, several months ago ; but, if you have forgotten me, I have not forgotten you. Since that time I have been very ill, and in great trouble and distress ; and I am now informed that I cannot live many days, being in the last days of consumption. I feel as if I could not die happy without letting you know how precious Jesus Christ has been to my soul. The precious words you spoke to me, on the Common, have been more precious to my poor soul than a thousand worlds could possibly have been. By night and day I have almost thought I could hear your sweet voice declaring, again and again, '*This is worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief.*' O blessed—a thousand times blessed—have those words been to poor me, since you pointed them out to me on the Common. O, how good and gracious was the Divine goodness of God, to lead your feet to the Common that blessed Sunday morning, and to speak to me, a poor wandering Gipsy. For the sake of the cross of Jesus Christ, I have suffered many things from the old woman you saw ; but God's Spirit has comforted me in it all. The little books and Testament you gave me have been made very precious to me ; I could almost say they have been my meat and drink by night and day. O, what has God not done for me, a poor orphan girl ! I can truly say, when my father and mother forsook me,

then the Lord did take me up. My blessed Jesus has been father, and mother, and brother, and friend, and every thing beside. O, my dear father Hervey, I hope to see you in heaven, where we shall sing together *'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us, from our sins in his own blood.* (Rev. i. 5.) I cannot write any more. Good bye, my dear Mr. Hervey.

“MATILDA HARRISON.”

In reply to the above letter he sent the following :—

“Carrington, near Nottingham, Feb. 2, 1845.

“My dear Matilda,—I have received your letter of the first instant; and its contents have so wrought upon my mind, that I scarcely know how to address a few words to you. I exceedingly regret that the distance is so great; for, were it otherwise, I would soon be with you, to receive your dying testimony from your own lips, and to sooth your dying pillow. But my absence is of little moment. I know one will be with you—even your blessed Saviour—who will administer all that grace and consolation which your present circumstances require. I rejoice, with you, that we met on the Common that ‘blessed Sunday morning.’ There was no accident or chance connected with it—but all according to Divine arrangements and infinite love. Oh let us, then, admire and adore the goodness and wisdom of God! I rejoice that the little books I gave you were made useful to you; they were little things of themselves—but nothing can be little when accompanied with Divine power. I am sorry that the old woman should persecute you; but I am sure that the enlightened and gentle spirit of my Matilda would indulge in no resentment; but pity, forgive, and pray for her.

“My dear sister in Jesus; you are now passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death; but your blessed Jesus is with you—the light of his countenance shines upon your soul, and his presence dispels all the gloom and darkness. You lean upon the arm of your Jesus, and find him strong to support and deliver.

‘Unshaken as the sacred hill,  
And firm as mountains be,  
Firm as a rock the soul shall rest,  
That leans, O Lord, on thee.’

“I am writing under great excitement. I have had a hard day at my Sunday school. I read your letter to the friends, and teachers, and children; and also related the particulars of our interview on the Common. Great love and sympathy were manifested toward you by the friends and teacher, and by many of the children. My dear Matilda, farewell. May it please Almighty

God to gently untie the cords of nature, and minister an abundant entrance to you into the realms of eternal day.

"I am, yours affectionately,

"In the ties of the Gospel,

ANTHONY HERVEY."

On March 23, he received the following letter, announcing the death of Matilda.

"Blackwood, Maidstone, March 20, 1845.

"Dear Sir,—Matilda Harrison, our dear sister in camp, is no more. I am instructed to give her dying words and affections to you. She received your letter of the 2nd of February on the 27th. I am sorry you had not a correct direction; which was the reason it did not find us sooner. Matilda was dying when we received your letter, but she was sensible to hear it read, and was very happy to hear it. She then directed me to send you ten shillings, which was all she was worth in the world; and then said, 'O my blessed Jesus, take care of dear Mr. Hervey, and bring him safe to heaven. And now, Lord, let thy handmaid depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, and all my desires are fulfilled!'

"We are overwhelmed in sorrow at the loss of Matilda. She was more like an angel than a mortal being. She was always speaking about you, and praying to Almighty God to bless you. We hope we shall not forget the good counsel she gave us. Should we come again to your town, we shall try to see you. A few hours before Matilda died, she sung, very sweetly, a verse out of one of the little books you gave her:

'The Saviour sought me wand'ring far  
From happiness and God;  
And to redeem my guilty soul,  
He shed his precious blood.'

"Hoping you will receive this,

"I am, your obedient servant,

"GEORGE TINDAL." \*

## THE GIPSY FAMILY.

BY MRS. BAYLY.

The number of Gipsy families living in the Kensington Potteries, varies from ten to forty, according to the time of year. One of their favourite encampments has long been in an open yard, with a narrow entrance between two houses. Here they pitch their tents around three sides of the square. This might be called Gipsy-square. At the farther end of the square is a cabin, considerably more substantial than the usual tent residences. This abode was formerly an advertising van for Astley's theatre. A portico is formed in front, composed of flexible hazel sticks, and tarred canvass. A little plot of ground, about two yards square, has been dug up in front to receive a few flowers, and a Virginia creeper is planted under one of the windows. The furniture consists of a bed, a stove, a German clock, a low seat, a candle socket suspended by a wire from the roof, that the mice may not gnaw the tallow, an old unfinished oil painting (master unknown), and something like a gallery of pictures from the "British Workman." The chimney is an old tin pail, inverted, and on one side of this habitation a respectable sign-board is to be seen—

THOMAS HERNE, BRUSH AND CANE CHAIR BOTTOMER.
--

The veteran who thus advertises himself and his calling, is now about ninety years of age. His descendants, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren now number upwards of fifty.

*Intemperance* was for many years the besetting *sin* of this man. Often was he to be seen staggering



home, or led along, and as he termed it, "chucked into the cabin, like a log of wood." He joined the Temperance movement in this neighbourhood, at an early stage in its history, and for the last three and a-half years has been a total abstainer. His natural strength instead of abating seems rather to have increased, and his swarthy face brightens up as he tells what he was, and what he is. His tall military figure, clothed in a respectable fustian, and rendered still more conspicuous by a showy red plush waistcoat, with bundles of cane under his arm, may be constantly seen in the early morning as he paces the streets, crying, "*Cheers to mend, cheers to mend.*"

The old man is a frequent attendant at the various meeting held at the Workmen's Hall, and being a little deaf, he usually occupies a front seat, and by the varied expression of his countenance, manifests his intelligent interest in what is passing. A silver medal, stamped with the device adopted by the Workmen's Hall Temperance Society, was presented to him a short time ago, in consideration of his being the oldest member connected with this society.

The recollection of past sins seems still at times to trouble him much: he said to the missionary, "When I think what I've done, I don't seem to know what to do with myself, but I begs the blessed Lord to forgive me, and I bless him I'm a good deal happier than I used to be." Gipsies are not in the habit of speaking of praying; "begging" is the term they invariably employ. A Gipsy-woman said to the missionary a few weeks ago, "My sins troubled me very much, but one morning I was begging to the Lord, and all at once I felt lightened, and I've been happier ever since." This poor woman could not read, and probably had never heard of "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress," but in thought she was one with him. "So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosened from off his

shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome."

In the early days of our Mother's Society, the missionary requested the loan of our room for one evening, that he might invite some of his Gipsy friends to tea. On entering the room I was much struck with the appearance of the party, and thought I had never before seen so many handsome people assembled together in one room. It was a hot summer afternoon, and I found pouring out the tea no light task, as each drank at least eight large cupsful. At first, our attempts at conversation failed almost entirely. Direct questions were answered with reserve and caution, and at last my only resource seemed to be to keep talking about myself; what I had seen and done, &c., until presently they caught the infection, and seemed fired with the ambition of relating their adventures, shewing that they also had travelled and knew something about the world. Our table was placed near the window, and the hot rays of the sun shining in, added considerably to our discomfort. I asked one of the men if he would kindly draw down the blind. He gave a kind of shrug of the shoulder and shake of the head, but did not offer to move. My second application was not more successful, so I said, "have you any reason for not liking to pull down that blind." "Yes," he said, "I have. It's just here, I was so 'took to' with the cold last winter, and one day I made a vow that I'd never stand out of no sunshine as long as I lived, and I won't." "That was an unfortunate vow." I said, "it was like saying that because you had been so uncomfortable through the winter, you would be uncomfortable *through* the summer also." But neither logic or *persuasion* availed anything, and the others so respected his vow, that I had to pull the blind down

myself. In the course of conversation, our conscientious friend said to me, "I s'pose when you drinks your port wine you think you have a lot of the juice of the grape in it, don't ye?" I replied, "I was not in the habit of taking port wine, and therefore the process of making it did not personally affect me, but I should be glad to learn anything he could tell me about it." He then told us that for years he had been at work in a wine-making establishment in the south of France, and if people only knew as well as he did, the stuff which was put into the bottles they would not think so much as they now seemed to do about their wine.

Amongst the varied efforts which have been put forth for the improvement of the locality, these interesting people have not been forgotten. One kind lady has interested herself much on their behalf. An evening school has been established for them during the winter months, many of them attend and some have conquered the difficulties of learning to read and write. Their habits of life are not favourable to the reception of the principles and practices of the Christian religion. Many of them depend for their livelihood upon fortune-telling, and other immoral practices, and have literally to forsake all before they can follow Christ. But some have been enabled to pass through this "straight gate and narrow way." The name of a Gipsy-woman might be added to the goodly number of faithful ones mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews—who "through faith" refuses to earn money by telling fortunes, and who will rather "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day" than accept a golden bribe.

"And they who do such things, declare plainly that they seek a country."

## WILLIAM STANLEY AND HIS GRANDSON :

## A CONTRAST.

Forty years ago, a pious gentleman heard that a dying Gipsy was lying in a camp two miles off; that his mind was greatly distressed at the prospect of death; that he had offered a sum of money for a person to read to him a portion of the Bible; and further, that he had declared he could not endure the thought of dying till God had forgiven him. In consequence of this information a visit was paid to the dying man who gave the following account of himself:

"My name is Stanley; my ancestors were once respectable, my great-grandfather was a principal officer in the army of the commonwealth; but the family falling to decay, my father took up with the wandering life of the Gipsies; among them I was born, and have continued to the present time. I am now in my eightieth year, and have led a long and wicked life; but there is one thing that troubles me above all the rest. About forty years ago, in the course of conversation with a brother of mine, I cursed the Almighty to his face! From that time, sir, I have been a stranger to peace; the recollection of my blasphemy has followed me ever since; I cannot forget it; it haunts me from place to place; alone or in company, it is the same. I get no rest; my wickedness fills me with horror; I am indeed a monster; often have I tried to remove the impression, but it is impossible. O, sir, my sin is too heavy for me to bear! Such has been its influence upon my spirits, that the bare mention of God's name would bring a trembling upon me, and fill my mind with anguish. As long as I could, I concealed the cause of my uneasiness, till it became too painful to bear, and I was at length induced, about two years ago, to reveal it to my family; from that time I have earnestly sought for God's for-

givenness, but I still feel his hand heavy. O might I but be pardoned! I could then die in peace; but, sir, with this burden upon my soul, death will indeed be dreadful.

Having heard his affecting relation, the visitor immediately spoke of Jesus Christ—of his death on the cross for the salvation of sinners, and exhorted him to believe in the son of God, who died for the sins of the world; assuring him that there was mercy with God to pardon him; that the Divine compassion was like the boundless sea; that the arms of Christ's mercy were still extended to embrace and welcome all that come to him, even the vilest; that many great sinners had been pardoned upon repentance, and were now shining in glory; that there was room still for more, and that if he repented and believed in Christ as the only Saviour, salvation was as free for him as for others. At these words his countenance brightened; but as speaking had by this time greatly exhausted him, the visitor bade him farewell for the present.

The next evening he visited him again in company with a friend; a small tilt pitched upon the ground, enclosing room just sufficient for a bed, contained the sufferer. As we drew near, a young woman of about twenty, in features, dress, and manners every way the Gipsy, came forward, and (as is frequently the case with unenlightened relatives) wished us not to introduce the subject of eternity any more. She said he had felt much more composed in consequence of my friends preceding visit, but still she feared if we mentioned the subject then, it would again disturb him; besides he was already much fatigued. However, on our replying that the tidings we brought were calculated to soothe, instead of disturb, a person in his circumstances, she drew the curtain from the front of the tent, and the object of our attention lay before us gasping for breath.

I confess I was much struck with the affectionate attention the family appeared to pay to their aged father; however careless of their own persons, they did not neglect him—there was every thing that could be expected under such circumstances—a feather bed, bolster, and pillows, supported the limbs of the dying man—the sheets and pillow cases were white and clean, and a patchwork counterpane, equally clean, covered him outside.

He immediately noticed us; and though nearly breathless made an effort to speak; he replied to some of my friend's questions concerning the subjects they had discoursed upon; said that his mind was easier than it had ever been before, that he felt as if a great weight had been lifted off from him. We asked, "What has been the practice of your past life?" He replied, "Nothing but sin." "What do you deserve at the hands of God?" "Eternal Punishment." "Would God be just, if he were to refuse you mercy?" "O yes!" "If you should be spared and recover, would you live as you have done?" "O no! not for the world." "What do you now desire? what do you most need?" "Mercy! mercy!" "What, if you might be pardoned?" "O I would give the world to obtain it!" "Are you then really desirous of pardon, that you may join the redeemed in glory?" To this he signified his full assent, not indeed in so many words, they were too feeble to convey his meaning; but with eyes and hands uplifted, and a countenance remarkably animated, he seemed at once to collect all the remaining energies of body and spirit to say, "O yes! indeed I am!" This assent was accompanied with a force of expression, which I apprehend none but a dying man could give to it.

I again stated to him the plan of salvation, through the redemption of Jesus Christ; the necessity of a *change of heart* to render us meet for heaven; to all *which* he replied as intelligibly as we could expect

from his weak state and previous ignorance, for he could not read a letter. I then stated to him some of the invitations of Divine mercy, as, Isa. lv. 7; John vi. 37; Matt. vii. 7, 8; Rev. xxii. 27. I asked him if they were not sweetly suited to the case of a penitent? He replied, "O yes!" "Do they suit your case?" "O very well!" By this time he was so much spent, that speaking appeared almost impossible; I therefore kneeled down by him, and endeavoured in a short prayer to plead the promises which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, on which we are encouraged to hope. We then left him, and he expressed the sincerest gratitude for our attentions, as did his family also.

The next day our penitent (for so we considered him) was again visited by some of our friends, but was nearly speechless. He lingered for a few days longer, and then died, we trust in peace, through the infinite mercy of Christ. We learnt, that for the last twelve years of his life he had been a very altered man; and his family declared that since he had unbosomed his sin and grief, they had often seen him under the hedges in secret, as they thought, praying fervently for mercy."



Let us now visit the grandson of the above-named individual. He was sixty years of age, when the following interview took place, twelve years ago. "I was forcibly struck with his attention to Divine truth," says the visitor, "during previous visits, but on this occasion there was evidently deep feeling. When I went into his tent he was making butchers' skewers, and on sitting down, my subject was the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus Christ. After a time he looked me full in the face, and said, earnestly, "I love you, sir, because you are the friend of the Lord

Jesus, and you come to read to us and tell us about him." On being told that Jesus was at God's right hand pleading for HIM, his heart heaved at the glad intelligence, and unable to restrain his feelings, he threw down his knife, went on his knees, and wept like a child, while he poured out his cries to Him who never disappoints a seeking soul. Wishing to illustrate the connection between faith and works, the visitor said, "You love your wife very much, but what would you say if she were to do every thing to vex you?" He replied, "There now, that is right, that is a good word, and that's how we should love Jesus." Just so should we show our love to Him by leaving off every wicked way. At the next interview he said, "I want to hear about that wicked woman you read about." What wicked woman? He replied, "I can't remember it all, but she was a very wicked woman, and came to Jesus, and washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them dry with her hairs, and the Lord forgave her." On hearing Luke vii. read, he often exclaimed, "*I've been a very wicked man in my time*; but I hope if she was forgiven that I may be too." Eight days after, on seeing the visitor approach his tent, he said, "I'm glad to see you, sir." Why? "Because you do my heart good." How so? "You come to try to get my heart up to heaven." "What do you think God calls his children?" "I don't know." If you will listen a few minutes I will tell you. He then read Mal. iii. 16, and said, "You see that here he calls them jewels. Jewels, you know are precious things. Watchmakers use them and are very careful over them. Now, suppose one had a number of them, and word was brought to him that at such a day his house would be burned down. He would be very careful to have all his jewels gathered up and placed in safety; that done, the house might be burned up, and all the rubbish with it. Just so, this world is a great house, and in it are



a great number of jewels, and a day is coming when it will be burned up; but before that day God will gather up his jewels—his people—and place them in safety; and then the wicked, like stubble or rubbish, will be burned up.” “*That’s right,*” he replied, “You know what stubble is?” “Yes, it is what is left when the harvest is done.” “Well, you know how that will burn?” “Yes.” “Just so, the wicked will be destroyed with God’s wrath.” “You see that one mark of being a child of God is, that they often speak one to another about it. If you had a child or a friend that you loved dearly, and that friend or child was absent from you, you and your wife would be often talking about it,—would you not?” “Yes, my gen’lman that is right; and you mean that we should talk about Jesus.” “Yes, those who love Jesus love to talk about him. Do you love him?” “I hope so.” And what would you do to him were He to come into your tent as I have done? “What could I do,” he said, with much emotion. “*I would be willing to crawl on my face and kiss his feet; if all this world were made of diamonds, and all the trees; and if I had it all, I would rather give it all up to him for his love in my heart, and for him to take me along with him, even though I should have but a piece shavings left, than have all without him.*” One object why Christ came into this world was, to make us clean in God’s sight; for we are covered with sin, and there is nothing so bad in God’s sight as sin. Have you ever seen a pit full of mire? “Yes.” If you saw a child in a pit, would you not try and get it out? “Yes.” But you would not like that child to be with you in your tent with all that mire upon it? “No, I shouldn’t like that.” What would you do in such a case? “Why, wash the child.” Just so, and the same is true of God, though in a bigger sense. His nature is so holy that it cannot allow sin to enter his presence, therefore if any of us go to heaven we must be made holy; for

were a sinner allowed to go there with all his sins upon him, he would make all the rest unhappy, like the child, of whom you have spoken, would make all about him feel uncomfortable; and therefore Jesus came into the world to make us clean. "*I see it,*" he replied, and putting his hand upon his heart, added, "*but I want to know how I can get it, that's what I want you to tell me.*" Well, then, I will tell you in God's words, reading Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27, adding, "You see it is a gift and may be had for asking." Here tears began to flow down his swarthy face, and falling on his knees, he began pouring out broken petitions for mercy.

At the next interview, the visitor read, "The Dying Gipsy," an epitome of which we have given above, and recognizing it as the history of his grandfather, he ran out of the tent to collect his sons together that they might hear it also. He often interrupted the reading, and tried to explain it in his own simple way to his sons. Mention having been made of conscience, it was asked, 'Do you know what is meant by conscience?' 'No, sir.' 'Did you ever see any one blush?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Well, that is conscience at work in the person, and *telling in the face* that he has done wrong. I have known cases in which persons after they have done wrong have felt very unhappy, and to get rid of their feelings they have gone to the public house.' One Gipsy said, 'That's true, for I's done it myself,' when the old man, turning to his sons said, "When you feel this you had better go and give yourselves up to the Lord, and ask him to forgive you." Having asked the old man, on another occasion, some questions about the Jewish High Priest, he replied, 'I've got it in my heart, sir, but I has'n't the gumshun to put it out.'

Weeks passed away before the next visit. The old man was sitting in his tent, but on seeing the visitor at a distance, he sprang upon his feet, and, hat

in hand, and with tears rolling down his smoky cheeks, ran to meet him, exclaiming, 'Here's my dear gen'lman come to see me. I'm so glad to see you once more.' "I held out my hand to shake hands, which he seized in his joy and covered with kisses. He then led me to his tent and introduced me to some of his friends. Having held a religious service, I said to my old friend, "Why did you so like to see me?" 'Because you tell me about Jesus who died for me. I want Jesus Christ to link my heart to God, I have been a very wicked sinner in my time, and I hope he will forgive me.' On asking him, 'If you and I ever get to heaven, which of us do you think will sing the loudest?' he said, "I think I shall sing as loud as you," and having mentioned the Psalmist's words; "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness," he said; "Yes, I shall be satisfied when I see Jesus, and I shall not be satisfied till I see him;" adding, as the tears started from his eyes, "I do love him, and long to be with him." Having read Mal. ch. iii., I said, 'Who will be able to stand on that day when the world is in a blaze?' He replied, 'They that love the Lord.' True, but the wicked will try to hide themselves in holes and corners from the face of the Judge. No rat was ever so anxious to get into the hole away from the dog, as the sinner will be to hide from his God. 'That's true,' was the reply. 'And what do you do when the rat gets into the hole?' was asked. 'Send the ferret in, sir,' was the answer. Yes, and even though now the wicked hide themselves in the dark dens of wickedness, God can and will ferret them out. On giving out the hymn, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds, &c.," the old man said, "That's true, I like that better than anything you have said to night. I've got him safe here," pointing his hand to his heart, "And I can't get him off now." Who have you got there? was asked. "Jesus," was the reply.

The above facts were taken down at the times of their occurrence. They show the power of the truth as it is in Jesus, to interest the attention and captivate the affections of these poor outcasts. They may also suggest to the pious reader, the best way of addressing these people, namely, making the commonest circumstances illustrate religious and saving truth.

#### A GIPSY TEA-PARTY AND LOVEFEAST.

I lately had the pleasure of being present at a tea-party given by some kind ladies and friends to a large number of Gipsies, gathered together by their much-loved City Missionary, Mr. Burns, from the distant outskirts of London. I know you are much interested in these ancient wanderers, still loving, like their forefathers, to dwell in tents, and would have thought it a gladdening sight, on entering that large schoolroom, to see a long and well-spread table surrounded by (I suppose) about sixty Gipsies, men and women, their black eyes sparkling with a brilliancy peculiarly their own.

Several of the women possessed no small share of beauty, and all had sought by their neat and respectful appearance to do honour to the kind entertainers, who were personally waiting upon them. Some *baby* Gipsies were present, and the roving mothers seemed as loving and as tender as their more settled sisters.

Men and lads, and wild, rough boys were there too, enjoying such a tea as some of them said they had never seen before, with their skins brown as the earth they wander over, and their wondrous thick, black, matted hair, which had never known brush or comb. We sang the grace, and all went on happily till a certain kind lady began to address them, drawing a contrast between the word of God, "the good news," and the certain happy good future it revealed to all who believed it, and the lies the Gipsies went

about telling concerning fortunes that they knew could never come true. She was right, and meant well, but spoke without tact; and a bright little Gipsy, in a scarlet cloak, fired up in a rage and said, "Many told lies, and fortunes also, besides Gipsies, and she was not coming there to be told she was a liar."

This brought the lady's address to a conclusion, and Mr. Burns soon, by a few kind words, put all right again. Soon after this, a young gentleman accused one of the matted-haired boys of stealing his pocket handkerchief, which caused a tremendous burst of indignation. One handsome old Gipsy, with her black bonnet and scarlet roses inside and feather, in a large cloak, scolded very much, and all desired the boy to give himself up to be stripped and searched immediately, and thus prove that they were an honest people, and the dear lad an honour to his parents. Well, this, too, proved an unhappy mistake, and Mr. Burns again poured oil upon the troubled waters, and the rest of the evening was peaceful and joyful.

The tea finished, we all rose and sang the hymn—

"O for a heart to praise my God."

and a gentleman read Luke xi., and Mr. Burns offered prayer. All behaved very reverently. He addressed them nicely on having no continuing city here, and drew a contrast between our city of London, with its sins and sorrows, and Jerusalem the golden, with its pearly gates, where no sin, no death, no sorrow shall ever enter. He called their attention to the words, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," and "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" and then, "What think ye of Christ?" Are any of you saying, I wish I knew him? Think of His words, "Lovest thou me?" Who here is able to give Peter's answer, "*Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee!*" He then

counselled them, in the words of the hymn, to seek each night to "pitch their tents a day's march nearer home."

Another lady friend then rose and made an address on the free salvation offered in Jesus without money and without price. She was very studied in her attitude and manner; and as she kept her eyes shut all the time she spoke—the "windows of the soul"—her words fell rather powerless. But now a fine old Gipsy woman, with a beaming, happy countenance, very clean and neat, having on a dark dress and a large shepherd's-plaid shawl, rose and asked to tell her dear friends what the Lord had done for her soul. "Since I have been a widow," she said, "I have brought up nine children; but oh, what mercy God has shown to me! In His infinite love He brought me into his fold. He has made me, as you see, friends, a happy woman. I cannot read the Bible, but I love to hear it, and follow what it tells me, and you know what a sinner I used to be. Ah! Selina (speaking to a woman across the table), you know how we used to go on sinning together, telling fortunes, and telling lies, as the lady said, but I would not do it now, Selina. Oh, give it up, and join me. Come to Jesus, just now, just as you are, every one of you. Have you looked to Him? Have you asked Him to forgive you? "Just as I am" I go to God on my knees night and morning, and I long to speak a word for Jesus. I know you have never heard a Gipsy woman speak like this before. O friends, seek Him! seek Him! there are but two paths, one leads to heaven, the other down to hell; for Christ's sake, turn to the Lord; oh, for Christ's sake, turn now."

This poor woman had such evident love in her heart for her people, such a touching manner, and *clear, fine voice*, that she riveted all ears and eyes *also*, and reminded one of the woman of Samaria.

"Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did is not this the Christ?"

I conversed with many of these interesting people. Several seemed seeking the Lord. One old man of seventy-four, already very happy in Jesus, said "he prayed constantly to Him; the name of Jesus was so sweet to him, that it seemed to make his heart jump, and he thought he could be cut in pieces for Jesus."

The editor of the *British Workman*, Mr. Smithies, now very humorously addressed them: told them the two Scriptural bears; viz., Bear and Forbear; how they had cured a man and his wife of quarrelling, etc. Then another on the power of silence, when two are disposed to quarrel, or if a bad-tempered neighbour comes into your house.

A gentlemen from Sheffield spoke to them on the blessing of temperance, and how a poor drunkard had been brought to God by the piety of his little daughter.

After one more hymn and prayer, this happy Gipsy tea-party was brought to a close, and I am sure all went home grateful for their kind friends and good missionary, and hoping it might not be their last gathering in the name of the Lord.

This party was far more interesting than I have had memory to portray, but you will get an idea of it.

Mr. Smithies gave each of the Gipsies a Workman's Almanac, and told them to fasten them to the walls with shoemaker's wax, and read and learn the text for every day. These almanacs are very attractive, having a large picture of the heads of animals in the centre.—*Missing Link*, May, 1865.

#### A SPECIMEN OF GIPSY LETTER-WRITING.

The following letter was addressed to Mr. Crabb

by a Gipsy woman when she was in great trouble of mind. It is presented to the reader just as it was received, and may be found interesting to the friends of their cause.

“ Sir,

“ I Hope you will Excuse Me for Ritin These few Lines too you, I did Not Now where to Cend to My Sister, I Have Been very Il and my Familee. My Children Ave Had The Measils, They are Got Well from That. I am Sorry to hinform you I Have Had A Shockin Accedent to my Little Girl, She was Burnd to Death. I Giv my Luv To My Son Job. Plesse to Give My Luv to My Sister Pashince, and Hur Children. Plesse to Give my Luv To My Ant Pheny, and Plesse to Lett Me Now How My Cuzin James doos Go on, Plesse to Lett Me Now How My Unkil Charls and His Family Is. Wm. Duff Gives His Best Rispects To All. Plesse To Tel My Sister too Anser This Letter by Returne of Post. I Am So unappy in My Mind Till I Do Hear From Er. Dear Sister, I Have Mett With So Much Trubel Sinc I Saw you Last, That I am Sorre To inform you. Plesse to Tel My Child from Me To Be A Good Boy, and Think Imself Wel of Wher He Is. My Distris and My Trubel Makes Me Think More of My Sister. Ples To Direct the Letter to Be Left At The Post Offis, for Haryett Duff, Till Caulld for, in Bristil. Plesse To Give My Luv To My Son Job. So No More At Prezint from your Umble Sarvint. Plesse God I Am Coming to See You Some time This Munth.

“ My Littel Girl Met The Accedent Wednesday, April 23, 1828.”



## CHAPTER XII.

## PERSONAL EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE GIPSIES, NECESSARY TO THEIR REFORMATION AND CONVERSION.

“ Like Priest and Levite, would'st thou shun  
The bleeding, loathsome, wretched one ?  
Though fallen he, he's still a man,  
Then be the good Samaritan.”

WE have seen that the ignorance, debasement, and wretchedness of the Gipsies, is very great, and that all that has been done by committees and individuals to alleviate their condition, is much too little. And when it is borne in mind that there are 12,000 of these wanderers at our very doors, it will be seen what a field there is for the beneficence, the charity, and the sympathy of the humane, the rich, and the benevolently disposed. What, then, can we, as individuals, do towards the salvation of the English Gipsies ?

These people have never been reclaimed by acts of parliament, nor made good citizens and useful members of society by sweeping legislative enactments. They may be compared to the Leviathan of the ocean, which is said to pursue its way quietly, while unhurt, but which, on being goaded and ensnared, instantly seeks to destroy all within its reach. Severity has often enraged, but never subdued a Gipsy.

The Gipsies have no chance of gaining “ a local habitation and a name ” in civil society, unless some one will take them by the hand and point out to them the successive steps by which they may rise. Many

of them cannot obtain work. A strange prejudice exists against them, and few will employ them, if others can be got to do their work. It has often happened at the hop-pickings in Kent, that Gipsies have not been allowed to pick hops, while common beggars and well-known thieves, have been engaged on purpose. Indeed, the great complaint among the Gipsies is that their earnings are inadequate to their physical support and the decent maintenance of their families. Many of them have not wherewith to provide food and raiment. But were people to take them by the hand and say, "We will give you work," many of them would gladly accept the offer. A benevolent gentleman, having employed fifteen of them, says:—"Their work is to clear a large piece of forest land: I have furnished them with pick-axes, spades, iron levers, and wedges; and to those who had no money, I advanced eighteen pence on condition that they returned fourpence per week. Their work is heavy, and no severe treatment would make them undertake it; but my people engage in it cheerfully, and I shall work with them, for what I do they do likewise. What will not love effect?"

Religiously, the Gipsies cannot be reached by the ordinary ministrations of the word. Their migratory character renders it very difficult to reach them. For not only are they found in small batches, but they are perpetually removing from place to place. "To supply them, therefore, with regular instruction, a preacher would be necessary to every family; who would conform to their mode of life, travel when they travelled, rest when they rested, and be content with the ground and straw for his bed, and a blanket tent for his covering. All this would subject them to great personal inconvenience, and at the same time be very expensive, and highly improper." This difficulty, however, is being gradually lessened from the fact that many of the Gipsies are leaving their tents

to find a home in the miserable garrets, damp cellars, dirty lanes, and wretched alleys of our villages, towns, and cities.

How, then, are they to be reached? Why, if they will not come to us we must go to them. The bread of life must be taken to them if they will not come to it. These "wandering sheep" must be sought out by the servants of the "Great Shepherd," for it is evident they will not return of themselves. And *who* are to do this? To suppose that these wanderers can be won back to God and virtue, by mere official or ministerial instrumentality is one of the wildest notions that can be entertained. No. We shall never accomplish the reformation and conversion of the Gipsies, unless we can induce private Christians to visit their camps and haunts, with a view to their instruction and salvation.

"What," exclaims the Christian reader, "must I\* visit the Gipsies and thus expose myself to the dirt, filth, rudeness, and vulgarity of their camps? Is it necessary that I should leave my comfortable sofa, before a bright fire, and go out into the 'highways and hedges' and invite the Gipsies to the Saviour? I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" And are you really so ethereally pure, and so unaccustomed to the slightest connection with ignorance, vulgarity and crime, that you *dare not* enter the precincts of a Gipsies tent? The fact is, at all hazards, *the thing must be done*, if these poor creatures, with souls as precious and immortal as our own, are to be saved.

In thus visiting them, however, great delicacy should be shown and great care taken, lest in endeavouring to do good, we should on the contrary, per-

\* What Sidney Smith said of benevolence is too true: "Benevolence is common to men: for example: A. never sees B. in distress, without wishing C. to relieve him."

petuate evil. Speaking from observation and experience we would say, (1.) Approach them gently ; enter not their tents rudely, but ask permission to enter, saying, with a pleasant smile, "May I come in?" (2.) When you have gained access, don't speak to them *dictatorially*, as though you were their masters ; or *patronizingly*, as though you were about to confer some enormous and unheard-of favour upon them,—but speak to them tenderly and lovingly, like a man, a brother, and a Christian. In the dark heart of the Gipsy there are cords that loving-kindness can reach and rouse to responsive tones. Even the most abandoned are not beyond the influence of what Dr. Chalmers calls, "the omnipotence of loving-kindness." Indeed, they are easily won by kindness, and if you would really benefit them, you must convince them that this is your object, by patiently bearing with their weaknessess ; by making every allowance for their ignorance, and by promptly lessening their distresses as far as you are able. (3.) Don't be afraid to speak to them about their best interests. Even among the Gipsies, as among heathen nations, there is an earnest desire to be instructed in the truths of Christianity ; and many a throbbing heart yearns for the gospel. Alas ! that there is scarcely a friendly hand outstretched to lead them to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus !

One correspondent writes : "A few Sabbaths ago, my attention was arrested by a camp of these wanderers. Having introduced myself by some common observations, I asked if ever they went to a place of worship? They replied, "Sometimes, sir." "O sir," continued a man, whose hoary locks proclaimed his lengthened years, "I wish some good gentleman would come and read the Bible to us ; we cannot read. The good people in Cornwall used to visit us often, but here no one careth for us." I said, "I will read to you," when rising from his seat and putting

his pipe by his side, he said, with transport glowing in his eyes, "Do, sir, come and read to my poor wife. there, sir, (pointing his finger to a tent), my wife is dying." I approached her, and the scene will not be easily erased from my memory ; she appeared on the confines of eternity. I endeavoured to administer to her that instruction which her situation required. Her husband then collected about thirty of his people to hear me read. I read and prayed with them. While thus engaged six or seven young men and women, who came from a neighbouring village to have their "fortunes told," gathered around me. I then preached to them "Jesus," and at the close they thanked me, and begged I would renew my visit. The kindness which they manifested was, indeed, highly gratifying." Another, a pious clergyman, who paid a religious visit to one of their tents, says : "Instantly, on entering, a female brought a small piece of carpet, and spread it before me on the grass, for me to kneel upon ; and then all kneeling down, I prayed that the minds of these miserable outcasts of society might be enlightened, to discover the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the blessedness and efficiency of the Saviour ; that the sacred book given them through the influence of the Holy Ghost, might lead them into the way of righteousness, and finally guide them to everlasting life. When we rose from our knees, gratitude was seen in every countenance, and expressed by every tongue. 'God bless you, sir ; thank you, sir ;' echoed throughout the camp."

The next evening this clergyman went again to the camp, when one of the Gipsies came to meet him, and informed him of the arrival of some of their relatives. "I shook hands with them," says he, "and asked of their welfare. Never was a king received with a more hearty welcome, or with greater attention and respect.

"As I was expected, the utmost order, cleanliness,

and quiet, prevailed throughout the camp ; and all were dressed in their best clothes to receive me. The arrangement of my congregation was much the same as the preceding evening. I spoke to them of the blessed Jesus ; his birth, his ministry, his death, passion, and grace ; and his glory at his second coming in the clouds of heaven, to judge the world in righteousness. I spoke also of death, and of the immortality of the soul.

“ I had not proceeded far in my lecture, before several farmers and passengers, some on horseback, and others on foot, came and joined my congregation.

“ Before concluding my address, I said, ‘ It may seem singular to some of you that a stranger should interest himself on your behalf in the way I have done ; and it might be expected that I should give some reasons for doing as I have. My chief reason is a sense of duty. Gipsies have long been neglected, and left to perish in their sins ; but Gipsies have souls equally precious as others, and of equal price in the sight of God. Who, I asked, cared for the souls of Gipsies ? who uses means for their instruction in righteousness ? Yet must it be equally our duty to care for them, and endeavour to secure their conversion and happiness, as to plan societies, obtain subscriptions, and send out missionaries to the heathen.’

“ I said, moreover, that, ‘ supposing, when I first saw your camp, I had rode by you on the other side, and taken no notice of you, nor felt an interest in your welfare ; and after that, had met you at the bar of judgment ; what would have been the language with which you might have addressed me at that awful period ? Might you not have charged the misery of your eternal condemnation upon me, and said, The curse we are doomed to bear, thoughtless man, might, perchance have been prevented by you ? You saw us *when riding* by our camp, lying in ignorance, and *unbelief* : you might have rode up to us, and imparted

instruction to our perishing souls; because to you were committed the oracles of God, and you knew the way to heaven. But, no, *cruel man*, our state excited in you no compassion, or desire for our salvation! In your conduct there was no imitation of your Lord and Master. Go, cruel man, and if heaven you enter, let your felicity be embittered by the recollection of neglect to the Gipsy wanderers, whom Providence had placed in your way, that you might direct them to God, but which you neglected! In conclusion, I again referred to the holy Bible, which I had given them; and again repeated the way to to use it. After which I said, 'Now we will conclude with prayer, as we did last evening.' Immediately the same female who before brought the carpet, again spread it, with great civility, for me to kneel upon; and again I offered up a solemn prayer for the salvation of these lost and perishing mortals. The greatest seriousness and awe rested upon the assembly. Surely the prayer was registered in heaven, and shall, in time not far distant, be answered. Come, and take these heathens for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. When I proposed to take leave of my swarthy flock, it was not without feelings of attachment on both sides. I had observed several of them much affected under my discourse, and now they manifested it more openly. As I shook hands with them, I said, 'You see, I did not come among you to give you money. I considered religious instruction of the most value; therefore I have endeavoured to impart it.' 'Sir,' replied several, 'we did not want your money; your instruction is better to us than money; and we thank you for coming.' The camp now resounded with voices, saying, 'Thank you, sir; God bless you, sir;' and every countenance seemed to glow with gratitude. The young branches of the family seemed to think a great honor and blessing had been conferred upon them.

"As I mounted my pony to come away, I observed

one of the females, a fine young woman about twenty-five years of age (the same that brought the carpet from the package, and spread it on the grass for me to kneel upon), retire from the rest. She walked slowly near to the hedge, and appeared evidently much distressed. Her expressive eyes were lifted up to heaven, while the big tears rolling down her cheeks were wiped away with her long black tresses. I thought, here, surely, are some of the first fruits! Thus did the woman who was a sinner weep, and with her hair wipe away the tears from the feet of her Saviour. May those tears be as acceptable to God: may the same Redeemer bid her go in peace! Her conduct attracted the notice of her family, and she was asked the reason of her sorrow. At first she could scarcely speak; but at length exclaimed, 'Oh! I am a sinner!' Then lifting up her eyes to heaven, she wept aloud, and again wiped away the falling tears with her hair. 'But did you not know that before? we are all sinners. What have you done to cause you so much distress?' "She made no reply, but shook her head and wept."

But though the Gipsies in the above narrative did not "*want* the clergyman's money, but his instructions," yet, it is well to bestow upon them, occasionally, some little presents. Pressed by bodily wants, and but imperfectly qualified to form a conception of the nature and value of religious instruction, they hail with feelings of sincere gratitude anything that ministers to their immediate necessities.\* A loaf of

\* "When the angel went to Elijah in the wilderness to help him, he did not take a company of celestial choristers to sing to the disconsolate man, nor a fiery chariot, hovering in mid air, ready to convey him any whither, but he took him food;—a cake baked on coals by an angel's hands, and a cruise of water, drawn from the spring, and then he slept, while the angel sat and watched him even as a mother a sick or sleeping child; and in awhile he awoke him and sent him on his way. Christ fed the hungry people on the hill sides of Galilee, and Paul prayed those on ship-board in distress and alarm to take some meat, for this was their health."—Rev. Alexander Raleigh.



bread, a cast off garment, or a few coppers, have often served as a key to unlock the Gipsy's heart. A Bible, a small book, a tract, and especially "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress," will be welcomed by them. Such gifts have been known to be the turning point in many a degraded Gipsy's history. "I hope you will not be offended with me, sir," said a Gipsy to one who visited their camp, "but I was going to ax you if you had a 'Pilgrim's Progress' you would give me? I want to get one very bad. Have you got a New Testament?" said the visitor. "No, sir," was the reply. "Would you not rather have a Testament?" was asked. "No, I'd rather have a Pilgrim's Progress, if yee could get me one." "But why would you rather have a Pilgrim's Progress than a Testament?" "Because, sir, the Pilgrim's Progress tells us what we's got to go through to get to heaven. We poor volks be no scholars, and we wants something straight for'ard, au 'tis all straight for'ard in the Pilgrim's Progress, but in the New Testament 'tisn't; 'tis a piece here and a piece there, and if you could get me one I should be much obliged to you." "Then you really want to get to heaven, do you?" "I do, sir, and that's why I want the Pilgrim's Progress, that I may get some body to read it for me, when I don't see you. 'Tis so nice where poor Pilgrim lost his burden." "Have you a burden?" asked the visitor. "Yes, sir, I have." "What is it?" "My sins, sir," was the reply. The Gipsies are a highly imaginative people, and this matchless allegory, with its "Wicket Gate," "The Interpreter's House," "The Lost Roll," "The Fight with Apollyon," "Vanity Fair," "Doubting Castle," "Delectable Mountains," "The Land of Beulah," and the "Celestial City," has often been found to arrest their attention and to hold them spell-bound for hours. And now that one hundred copies of this book can be had for four shillings and sixpence, would it not be a benevolent act if a few

persons, interested in the spiritual welfare of men, would circulate among the Gipsies a few thousand copies?

To those who shrink from visiting the Gipsies, lest they should be insulted and abused, we would say, there is not the least ground for such fears. A stranger may mingle with them with the greatest confidence, and in every tent he will meet with kindness and hospitality. Indeed, they welcome such a visitor, and if he manifests a friendly disposition, he at once wins their confidence, and they will provide him with food, and give him the best accommodation their tents afford. A minister who had taken a deep interest in their spiritual welfare, says:—"In speaking to them on the road side, and offering a tract, I have never but once met with impertinence. It is probable that that individual had been impertinently treated first, by people called Christians."

"It is the frank and earnest plan  
Of simple truth sincerely spoken,  
That breaks the spirit of a man,  
Or heals it up however broken."

Especially should attention be paid to the children of the Gipsies. There are said to be 8,000 of those children in England, two thirds of whom are under twelve years of age, and needing instruction. And yet, very few of them are receiving any education, and no sooner will they reach the period of youth, than they will discover that they belong to a degraded and outcast race, who are crushed, and despised, and held down in the social world. Now, could these children be taken by the hand of Christian charity, and be taught in our schools and instructed in our congregations, what blessed results might be expected to follow? Reckoning half of them to be girls, 4000 boys might be employed in agricultural labour or be *apprenticed* to some trade, on arriving at a proper *age*. And if these, on arriving at man's estate, mar-

ried Gipsy girls, who had been accustomed to domestic duties, some 8000 useful subjects might be calculated upon as gained to the state, during the first generation. And can any well disposed and patriotic person look unmoved at the bare probability of so many wanderers been made honest and useful members of society?

That, in seeking to benefit the Gipsies, you would meet with opposition and occasionally with insult, is highly probable. But be not discouraged. Mr. Baird says:—"There is nothing obviously in the native character, blood, or constitution of the Gipsy, to render him more desperate and vicious than others. They are neither better nor worse, I conceive, than other members of society would be were they placed in similar circumstances. Their wandering, for instance, exposes them to many peculiar temptations; idleness and rapine lead them frequently into scenes of mischief and wickedness, and necessarily leave them ignorant, uneducated, and uncivilized. Withdraw them therefore from this mode of life, and at as early an age as possible, before they have acquired the bad habits of the tribe, and you save them from innumerable evils, and probably render them valuable members of society; and several cases fortunately can be referred to of the Gipsies, who, owing to some peculiar circumstances, have been separated from their tribe, acquiring domestic habits, residing contentedly at home, and in no way to be distinguished from the rest of the community; and an equal or greater number of cases might be adduced of individuals in no way connected with the tribe, and who in early life had been trained to domestic habits, associating themselves with it, and acquiring all their disorderly and vicious habits. Let society, therefore, do their duty to these houseless wanderers, regard them not as an outcast and infamous race, but *stretching forth to them the hand of reconciliation, say by*

their altered conduct, let us be friends and brothers, and as to the poor, and ignorant, and immoral, let a civilized, a religious and a benevolent society grant to them the privileges of education, and the means of improvement. Until this be done, they must naturally expect to have their properties injured, and perhaps even their own persons insecure. And they have a fine class of subjects to work upon; a people who will be grateful for any attention that is shown them, and the more so as they have been little accustomed to kindness; and a people whose capabilities of improvement are very great."

The reports we have given in former chapters prove the truth of these remarks. During the few years that Mr. Crabb and his friends sought to save the Gipsies, forty of them deserted their migratory and vagrant life, and were put in a way of earning an honest living. At Yetholm, London, and in many of the villages in Kent and Surrey, great numbers have exchanged their pilfering tricks, for the labourers' plough and the scavengers' broom. Thus, proving, that when an avenue of escape is opened to them, and proper and kind means used to bring them from their predatory practices, the poor outcasts are willing to make good their exit.

"Do you still mean," said a gentleman to the late Mr. Baird, "to go on feeding and clothing these Gipsies?"

"Yes, why not?"

"They burn your stacks, pillage your garden, and allow their horses to feed on your fields; I wonder how you can feel any concern about them at all."

"True, such things are done, but I am not sure that *they* do them, or are the *only* persons who do them; but even if they are, would you have me give over the best means of getting them to do better?"

"I would expect gratitude at least."

"Oh! but we must not measure our efforts to do

good by the gratitude of the recipients. What is a duty ought to be done, whether we get gratitude or not."

"But are you sure it is a duty? May not the continuance of such benefits to persons unworthy of them only embolden them in their perversity, and thus the good intended be turned into a source of evil?"

"Oh, no! no! You judge harshly of these poor people. You forget the unfavourable circumstances in which they have long been left. We must continue our operations of instructing them, and leave the result with God."

And let us say, to the pious reader, in all your efforts to save the Gipsies look up to God for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. Here is an agency to which nothing is impossible. He can enlighten the darkest understanding; He can rend the hardest heart; He can control the fiercest passions, and rescue the spirit that is held captive by inveterate habits and prejudices. Instruments which would be powerless without the spirit of God, become powerful when that spirit breathes upon them, and works with them.

"The tiger is changed, and becomes like a child,  
The lion is meek as a lamb;  
The drunkard is sober, the savage is mild,  
And sing our Immanuel's name."

On the 23rd of June, 1858, a few pious individuals went from London to Epping Forest, and in the afternoon they held a religious service in the open air. A number of Gipsies with their donkeys drew near, and one of the men made a desperate effort to disturb the assembly. He hooted, cursed, swore, beat the poor animal in a most brutal manner, and, with contracted brow and set teeth, sought to drive it into the midst of the praying people. The whole company struck up singing;—

"Save the sinner, just now,  
Save the poor Gipsy, just now."

As they sang the power of God fell on the man, and he sat, speechless and motionless, on his ass. Tears of penitential sorrow gushed from his eyes and choked his voice. The company knelt down to pray for him, and whilst they were thus engaged, the poor Gipsy fell to the ground under deep concern for his soul. The ass ran away; and while the man was crying for mercy, his companions stood around, seemingly much affected. Many hearts surged with hallowed feeling, and many an eye filled with tears, on witnessing this display of God's grace. Before the Gipsy rose from his knees he professed to find salvation, and the company left him praying that heaven's blessing might rest upon him and his much-neglected companions.

Beside, it is our duty to instruct, warn, and admonish them, and if they refuse to hearken to us we shall at least have the satisfaction of feeling that it was not through any neglect of ours that they remain in ignorance, misery, and vice. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"—Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.

And what more shall I say to excite sympathy on behalf of the Gipsies? Hundreds of thousands of these people have been left without the message of salvation; and generation after generation has already gone down, neglected and unpitied, to the grave. It is estimated that from England alone not fewer than 160,000 of these outcasts have gone into eternity ignorant of God and salvation, since they first came to our shores. 12,000 still remain. Hundreds of these are rising to the age, the temptations, and the *vices* of manhood. Hundreds are far advanced in *life*, and their increasing infirmities and failing health

proclaim that the time of their departure is at hand. Scores from among them are yearly passing into eternity. Shall we try, in the spirit of meekness, pity, and love, to elevate and save them ere they are swept into perdition? They are immortal beings who like ourselves are undergoing their period of probation. They may rise to be actual partakers of the Divine nature, or by negligence they may sink down to hell. And are not many of them ready for the gospel? Are there not silent thoughts, pent up, untold, and unheard of, burning in the breast of many a Gipsy? Were Philip to come and ask again, "Understandest thou what thou readest? perhaps none would have more need than many a Gipsy to answer: "How can I except some man teach me?" And, charmed by the voice and allured by the example of Christ, ought we not to visit them in their tents and homes, and unfold to them more perfectly the way of salvation? Did not Christ himself go "through all the cities and villages," preaching? "The common people heard him gladly." He had compassion on the multitude. He wept over incorrigibly wicked sinners. He sent his disciples forth to preach the gospel to every creature, saying:—"Go into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." And are not these 12,000 Gipsies just as precious in the sight of God as 12,000 of any other people? If we can pray, and labour, and give for the diffusion of the Gospel in heathen lands and for the emancipation of the American slaves, ought not the Gipsies to share in our commiseration and help? What says the Bible? "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—Lev. xix. 18. "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of the gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut

thine hand from thy poor brother."—Deut. xv. 8. "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father who is in heaven is merciful."—Luke vi. 36. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."—Matt. vii. 12. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—Matt. xix. 19. And who is our neighbour? Why in the parable of the good Samaritan, our Saviour teaches us to recognize our neighbour in every child of Adam, and says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

King George the third, of blessed memory, was one day enjoying himself with the diversion of hunting, when, becoming separated from his companions in the chase, he turned down an avenue in the forest which led to the oaks. The king had not gone far before he fancied he heard the cry of human distress. He listened and heard a feeble voice cry, "Oh, my mother! my mother!" On arriving at the spot the king saw, under a branching oak, a tent spread out on the grass, where a little swarthy girl, about eight years of age, was on her knees, praying, while her little black eyes were brim full of tears. "What my child is the cause of your weeping, and for what do you pray?" asked the compassionate king. The little girl sprang from her knees, and pointing to the tent, said, "Oh! sir, my mother is dying." The king having dismounted, the little girl led him to the tent, where lay, partly covered, a middle aged female Gipsy, in the last stages of a decline, and in the last moments of life. She cast an expressive glance towards the royal visitor, and then looked up to heaven, but uttered not a word. The organs of speech had ceased their office. The little girl wept aloud, as she wiped the sweat from her dying mother's face, which greatly affected the king. Just at this moment, another Gipsy girl, an elder daughter, who had been *to fetch some medicine for her dying mother*, came



breathless to the spot. "What," said the weeping king, "can be done for your mother?" "Oh, sir," she replied, "my mother *wanted* a religious person to teach her, and pray with her before she died. I ran all the way before it was light this morning to the town, and asked a minister, but no one could I get to come with me to pray with my dear mother." "But," said the king, amid the sobs of the two daughters, "I am a minister, and God has sent me here to instruct and comfort your mother," and seating himself down on a pack, and taking the hand of the dying Gipsy, he discoursed about the demerit of sin, and the nature of redemption. He pointed her to Christ the all-sufficient Saviour. The poor creature seemed to gather consolation and hope, for her dim eyes sparkled with brightness, and her countenance became animated. But her struggling spirit soon quitted its tenement of clay. At this moment, some of his Majesty's attendants who had missed him at the chase, and who had been riding through the forest in search of him, came up to the spot and found him comforting the bereaved daughters. His majesty rose, put some gold into their hands, promised them protection, and bade them to look to God for succour and help. He wiped the tears from his eyes and mounted his horse. His attendants, greatly affected, stood in silent admiration. A nobleman present was about to speak, but his majesty turning to the Gipsies, and pointing to the breathless corpse and the weeping daughters, said, with strong emotion:—"Who, my Lord, who, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto these."

God Almighty, bless the gipsies!  
Bless them in their camps and woods;  
Bless them, Lord, with heavenly treasure,  
Though they have not earthly goods.  
God Almighty! God Almighty!  
Bless them in their camps and woods.

## THE GIPSIES.

God Almighty! on their children  
Look, O look in mercy down,  
Camping by the woods and hedges,  
Far from God—depraved, forlorn.  
God Almighty! on their children  
Look, O look in Mercy down!

God Almighty! we will bless thee;  
Some are gathered in thy name,  
From the highways and the hedges,  
At the Gospel's call they came.  
God Almighty! we will bless thee,  
Some are gathered in thy name.

God Almighty! send the Spirit  
Now, to bless the Gospel's sound;  
Let the Gipsies and their children  
Find in Christ true peace abound.  
God Almighty! send the Spirit  
Now to bless the Gospel's sound.

God Almighty! then in glory  
We will loud with Gipsies sing,  
Sing with angels the sweet story  
Of the love of Christ our King.  
"Sing with Gipsies and the angels,  
Of the love of Christ our King."

THE END.