"Do the duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty! Thy second duty will already have become clearer."

Carlyle's grand words might have been her motto throughout the seventy years of her manifold toil.

"The next thing" was with her always *the* thing to be done,—the rest could wait for His good pleasure.

Never forgetting it, never for one moment really setting it aside, she just *waited*—which is the hardest thing of all to do well—until the opportunity developed itself, and then, strengthened by years of patient preparation, she came forward as one of the world's champions against the powers of evil, with a ripened experience and a vigour tenfold intensified.

"First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

Between 1831 and 1840 there were times of "gloomy sorrow," of exceeding depression, of "fightings and fears without, within," of physical and mental weariness, of disappointment and personal self-depreciation such as nearly all noble souls have endured, culminating in the death of that revered father whom most she loved on earth.

On the first Sunday of the year 1840 she "formed a resolution to give up all desires and hopes to God." "I feel from experience," she wrote on April

3rd, "that the more I can do this, the more my mind will be at peace."

A few days later her faith was tested to its foundations, for just as the very shadow of the Cross was falling upon Christendom, the tidings came that Dr Carpenter had been drowned while on the way from Leghorn to Marseilles. In search of renewed health, he had gone abroad full of bright hopes of future usefulness, but "God took him," and henceforth only his memory remained as an incentive and a benediction. There were times when she sorrowed under the realisation that none of his best-beloved had been with him at the last, but gradually it grew to be a comforting thought that he had been spared the long physical pain of dying, and had just been taken up by God's own hand from this world into *that.*

Life was never quite the same to her again. Tenacity of purpose almost involves tenacity of memory and of affection, but as earthly ties loosened, her purposes strengthened, and at last, in August 1846, the first Ragged School was opened in Bristol, with an attendance of seven boys, who brought with them a dozen more in the afternoon.

The scene must have been a strange one—discouraging and unpromising in the extreme. No boy present had any shoes, stockings, or shirt, and, what was far worse, none of them had any home or the most elementary ideas of order or discipline.

Their novel surroundings held them in check for a few minutes, and then a voice was heard, friendly yet defiant, "Let's have a fight!"

The motion was carried unanimously, and in an instant a battle-royal was in full swing. One can imagine that on that sultry summer day those poor waifs found the confinement within four walls insupportably irksome, and longed for the freedom of the gutter.

All of them, however, in spite of their scanty clothing, seemed better fed than the children of the respectable poor, for the former had no misgivings as to the rights of property, and promptly annexed anything eatable that came in their way. To be hungry was natural, to satisfy hunger was equally so in their estimation, and they recognised no barriers save the law, which punished but did not prevent either the hunger or the theft. The animal instinct of self-preservation was their only guide, and to all intents and purposes they were as guiltless as any other animal that refuses to die when the means for living are within its grasp.

This, however, was only the beginning of things, and four months later the experiment had proved so successful that new premises were opened in St James's Back, where for twenty-five years this small but important work was steadily carried on.

The knowledge which she had gained of the art of teaching was now an incalculable benefit. She

was called to work upon the raw material, and all her tact and method were needed to keep order and educe intelligence. But her efforts were ultimately crowned with success, and not only were her scholars a credit to herself and to the schoolmaster, but the spirit of chivalry, which, paradoxical as it may appear, can and does exist even in the lowest stratum of society, prompted the worst denizens of Bristol slumland to receive her visits with friendly recognition, and enabled her to go alone, and at night, into courts and alleys which a policeman did not dare to enter save in the company of another. They appreciated her services loyally, and this brave woman was to many of them the only person whom they held sacred—the incarnation of all that they recognised as good and true.

The influence which she had over her scholars was a practical one, because she realised their temptations so fully. It was to her no surprise that they should sink—rather that they should possess any power of rising. Their failures in honesty, their frequent relapses into vice, only stirred her into more active sympathy and more urgent work. The life of Mary Carpenter was one incessant mission.

Trained as she had been, mentally and spiritually, every fibre of her being thrilled to the beauty of the Gospel story, and the children felt and acknowledged it also.

"This Jesus" of whom she spoke so lovingly was *worthy* of their service at any rate, and even in their short experience they had sifted the elements of life pretty thoroughly, and had early found that "the way of transgressors is hard."

"Within that rugged block is an angel!" said Michael Angelo the sculptor, and often must Mary Carpenter, and workers such as she, have thought of his words when from beneath some scarred surface gleamed out the face divine.

On one occasion she held a levee of ragged school children at Druid Stoke (then tenanted by Mr D. Sykes). They were all drawn up in the avenue leading to the house, and sang several of their favourite school-songs, finally, and at her special request, singing with touching fervour—

"Here we suffer grief and pain,
Here we meet to part again—
In Heaven we part no more!" &c.

The appearance of the children was most pathetic, many of them being almost indecently ragged. One tiny girl whose mother was evidently more at home in making bargains than in readapting them, was garbed in a long dress which trailed upon the ground with most ludicrous effect. But the entire absence of anything save pride and pleasure in her new frock sustained the poor mite even in these trying circumstances, and her enjoyment was complete.

A conference of workers, on her initiative, now appointed a committee to urge upon the Government, and the country generally, the desirability of establishing reformatory schools for convicted children, instead of sending them to prison; and in order to demonstrate that such a plan was practicable, she started one on her own account at Kingswood, four miles from Bristol, in premises most generously given by a Mr Scott.

Sufficient interest and sympathy having been excited throughout the country, she was relieved from any anxiety as to pecuniary matters, and on September 4, 1852, these premises were opened.

In 1852 there was no "Clifton Extension Railway"—electric tramways were all undreamed of—and the physical fatigue involved by such an undertaking is easy to be imagined. Her brother-in-law, Mr Herbert Thomas, travelled for his firm (Christopher Thomas Brothers, soap manufacturers) in those days, and, as his journeys had to be done regularly, he depended almost entirely upon the carriage which was placed at his service. He was sometimes, therefore, able to drive Mary Carpenter from Bristol to Kingswood, but the distance more frequently had to be done on foot, and often the indefatigable woman would return between nine and ten o'clock at night "ready to drop"—only able to fall asleep in the chair by the fireside. So great, however, were her recuperative powers,

that in the morning she would be quite ready to start off again on her self-imposed duty. No weather was allowed to interfere, no womanly weakness was taken into account, and work which would tax the strongest was undertaken, and performed, with cheerful willingness and unswerving purpose. The story of her struggles with these juvenile offenders is deeply interesting, and amid much discouragement she had frequent evidences as to the good resulting from her efforts, while letters from boys and girls in the after days testified to the permanence of the teaching received and the love which she inspired among these poor waifs.

Of one John Shawny (Shaughnessy?), an incorrigible young thief with whom she had much influence, we know that the last thing heard of him after his enlistment was that, during the Indian Mutiny of 1858, he was told off to take care of the English ladies.

He was never heard of again, and there is every likelihood that, in the horrors of that awful time, he lost his life for their sakes. During the night-watches, under those star-lit skies, he would often doubtless recall some seemingly chance word of counsel given in the Kingswood Reformatory School; and it may well be that he who had cost her so many hours of painful anxiety will have been among the first to welcome her on the other

side. Not in vain were kindness and sympathy lavished on that poor friendless Irish boy.

"He saw his dutv—a dead sure thing—
And *sent for it* there and then,
And God isn't going to be too hard
On a man who died for men."

But the time came at last when she was to be "set aside for stillness," and for many weeks Mary Carpenter lay upon a sick-bed; the vitality that was in her fighting fiercely against the torturing ravages of rheumatic fever. Through all that time the tender inquiries of her scholars and of a far-reaching circle of admiring friends were a touching evidence to the value of her life and work; and when again she was able to take an active share in the organisations which she had promoted, it was with a deepened sympathy in human suffering and a wider outlook upon heavenly things.

Not until she had personally tested the working of the Reformatory at Kingswood did she undertake the formation of another, for *girls only*, at the Red Lodge, and of this she took the entire management, Lady Noel Byron assisting in the purchase of the property and giving invaluable help both in money and encouragement.

The name of Lady Byron carries us back to the days when the passionate poetry of her husband was flooding the world. At this time, 1857, she

had been a legal widow for more than thirty years, but in reality she was widowed from the day of her marriage in 1815. No more disastrous union could have been made. "Fire is a good servant, but a bad master," and poor Byron was *all* fire, as the quiet and simple-minded Miss Milbanke very soon discovered. The reformation of a rake is an ungracious task at best, and no one less fitted for such an office could well be imagined. Whether this was her day-dream we know not, but the awakening came only too soon.

On the anniversary of their wedding-day in 1821 Lord Byron wrote :—

"This day of all our days has done
The worst for me and you;
'Tis just six years since we were *one,*
And five since we were *two.*"

But we know that there could never have been any true union between this most ill-assorted pair, though they did not separate until 1816.

Henceforward Lady Byron devoted herself to their child Ada, and to the furtherance of beneficent schemes among the poor. Because her own life had been spoiled she seemed to long all the more intensely for the happiness of others, and this Red Lodge Home was only one among many good agencies with which she was associated.

The "sanctified common-sense" and enthusiastic but practical Christianity of Mary Carpenter were

very attractive to one whose calm, quiet goodness was conspicuous. It bad never varied even in the subtle agony of an unrequited affection, the hysterical accusations of her husband's admirers and the unhomeliness of her own home; but the stronger individuality of the Bristol philanthropist gained her loving confidence, which was warmly reciprocated, and of her three literary executors Mary Carpenter was one.

Her death in 1860 was an unspeakable sorrow to the surviving friend, and a few verses composed by the latter at this time may not be out of place here.

"Long tried and faithful servant! thou didst run
A weary race.
The distant goal is readied! thy crown is won!
Thy resting-place.

'Midst blighted joys thou trod 'st thy path of youth—
'Midst griefs thy prime—
But thou didst glean from all, eternal truth,
Vanquishing time.

Thy Lord well knew in weakness thou wast strong,
And! on thee laid
A burden of rich gifts, to use them long,
E'en as He bade.

How thou didst strive to spend the treasures well
So largely given—
How constant toil—no mortal tongue can tell,—
'Tis known in heaven.

Yet, friend beloved, our tears most warmly flow
That thou art gone.
An awful void is nigh us here below;
We feel alone.