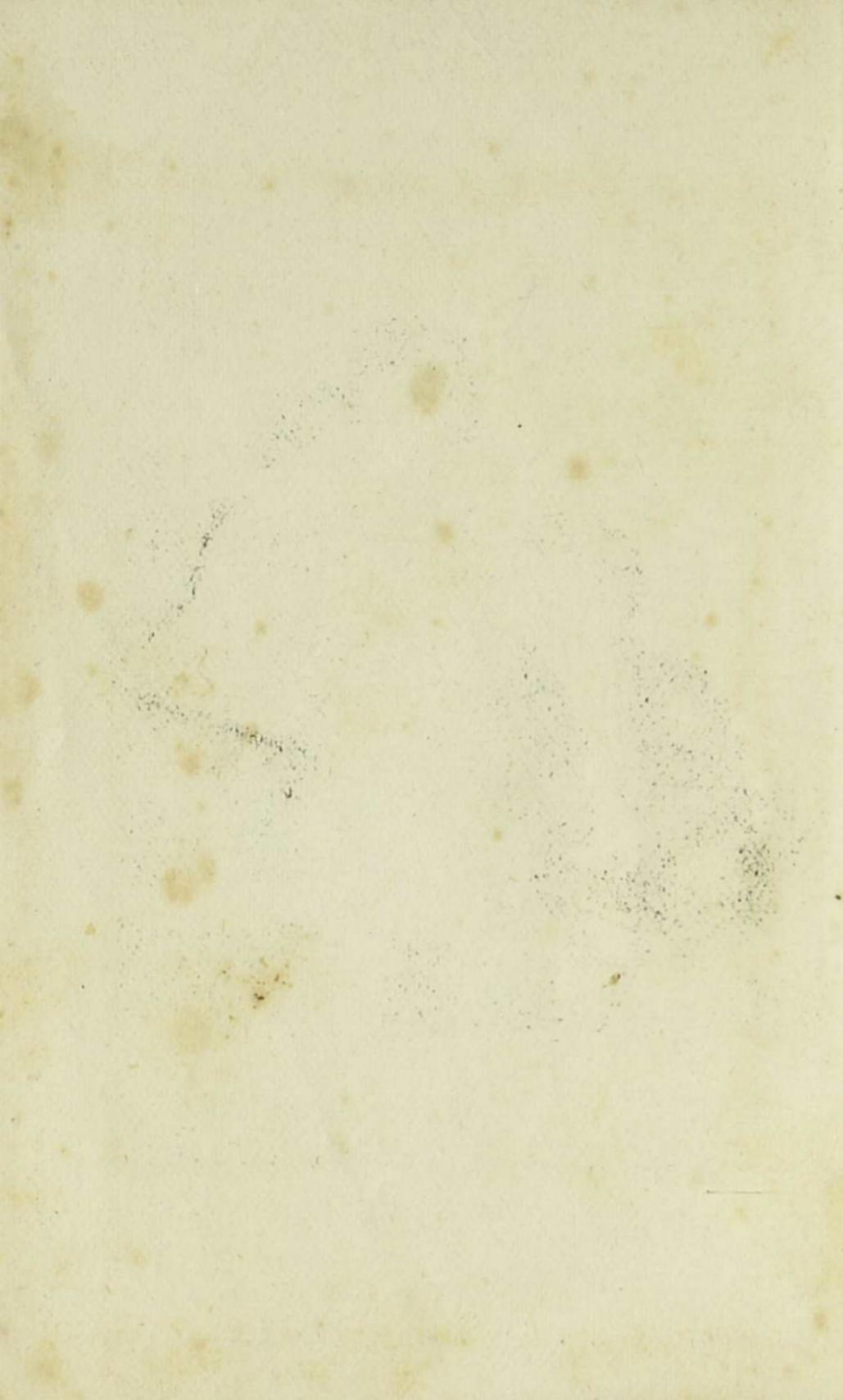


TOWN SPARROWS



STORIES OF THE
DUBLIN RAGGED SCHOOLS



Town Sparrows.

BY MISS DAVIES.

“Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?”

“Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”—ST. LUKE, xii. 6, 7.

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1880.

TOWN SPARROWS.

“ We know there are many sparrows,
All over the world they're found ;
But our Heavenly Father knoweth
When one of them falls to the ground.”

YES, plenty of them, everywhere and always. Little brown sparrows, dear to us, because Jesus spoke of them ; of so little worth in human eyes that in purchasing two farthings' worth one was given in.* Yet even *that* one, He said, was not forgotten by the greatest Being in the universe. Dearer still, because in speaking of the care of them, He says to His poor ones, “ Fear not ; ye are of more value than many sparrows.” Yes, there

* Compare Matt. x. 29 ; Luke xii. 6.

are plenty of sparrows always and everywhere, seeking their food here and there, and "God feedeth them." And plenty of poor children always and everywhere, needing the food, and clothing, and teaching, He tells His people to give. Poor little Town Sparrows! How often are they left hungry, because Christ's friends are forgetting His loving commands.

I often think how *few* could work for God if there were no poor to be ministered to. But He has given us the poor to be always with us, to furnish service for Him, even to the weak ones, and the little children; and, lest we should think it *mean* work, Jesus says, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the *least* of these ye did it unto me."

But how shall we find the Town Sparrows, and how shall we help them? Just as we find the real sparrows. When the snow is deep on the ground, and all the leaves gone

from the trees, we sweep a clean place on our door-step or window-sill, and there we spread nice soft crumbs, and first *one* sparrow finds it out, and he chirps the glad news to other sparrows, and very soon there is a flock enjoying the meal; and if food is prepared every day, the sparrows will be constant guests, and will reward the kind providers with happy songs.

In just this way we gather the poor little children. In each of the five Ragged Schools a room is prepared every morning; there is a good fire, and clean tables with rows of porringers ready for some good hot food. The news of this spreads into poor homes where there is no breakfast for hungry children, and to the Night Asylum, where mothers and children have got a shelter for the night, and have rested as they could on the hard floor. To the archways, where those who could not

get admission, have passed the night shivering; and there poor Town Sparrows gather in to find food and shelter for the day. For the children want food for the mind and heart, as well as for the body; and texts of Scripture, and hymns, and other lessons are eagerly learned when the hunger for food has been satisfied.

If any children or grown-up people *want* to find work for Jesus, we would advise them to visit any one of these Daily Ragged Schools. They are to be found—

In Grand Canal-street, corner of Grattan-street.

In Lurgan-street, close to the Linen-hall Barracks.

In 27, Townsend-street, not far from Brunswick-street.

In Luke-street, No. 18, off Townsend-street.

In the Coombe, corner of Skinners'-alley, not far from St. Luke's Church.

In any of these Schools will be found every day a number of poor children who are waiting to be ministered to.

As you look at them together you can hardly realize their need. I will tell something of individual children.

One day in the midst of the frost of last winter, the Missionary living in Lurgan-street opened the door early to go out for a paper. On the steps he found two little children sitting close together, their arms around each other, their bare feet purple with cold. "What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Waiting for school," said the elder.

"But," said he, "it is too early; run home and wait till it is time."

"We cannot," she replied, "mother is gone to work, and she had to lock the door, and we wanted to come to school, so we came here to wait."

“Do you know anything about Jesus?”

“Yes; He died for us, and He gives us food.”

“What do you do after school?”

“We *used* to be very hungry, and we prayed to Jesus, and now you know we get dinner after school.”

These little ones were soon placed at the school-room fire, and got a warm before breakfast. And I think if some little girls I know had seen them, it would not have been long before the purple feet were covered with some old boots and stockings, and a pair of warm cuffs would have been placed on the wrists; and I should not wonder if a petticoat and frock would have been added.

But shall I tell you about another family of children who found their way to this School, five of them, hungry, and ragged, and barefooted. One of them was more miserable than the others—he was pale and thin, and in need of many comforts

he did not get. After a while the four came without him. Willy was in the poor-house hospital. Twelve long months he lay there; and then, paler and thinner than ever, he came back to school. He learned his texts with eagerness; but he was a sad sufferer, and a lady visiting the School got him admitted into the Adelaide Hospital. Here he wanted for nothing. He might have been a prince, for the beauty of his countenance and the attention bestowed upon him.

I had never seen Willy before he came there; but visiting others of our poor children I saw him. After some little conversation, I asked him, "Would you be afraid to die?"

"Not if I was sure I'd be in heaven," he replied.

"But how are you to get there?"

"It's by believing in Jesus. I *do* believe in Him, but I am not RIGHTLY SURE."

“Can you say Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30?”

“Oh yes; ‘Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’”

“Who are the weary ones?”

“Them as feels their sins.”

“Do you feel yours?”

“Yes;” he said, “it’s a big burden.”

“Jesus says to you, *Come*, I’ll give you rest. What is rest.”

“It’s to have the burden lifted off.”

“Yes, Jesus took the burden to the cross, and He says, *Come*, Willy, I will give you rest.”

“Yes, that’s it; He *will* give it,” the child replied.

He was lying under one of the text-quilts, and the verse was just before him.

“I did not notice it before,” he said, but now it will remind me.”

When I visited him again he spoke of the rest as HIS.

A kind friend visited him often, and had many sweet conversations with him, of which she has kept no record. Willy lay many weeks in that comfortable bed, and then Jesus took him to the happy land.

Don't you wish, some of you, that you had been permitted to do *something* for Willy, when he needed so *much*—that you had made a pillow for his aching head, or a cushion for him to sit on at school when he was in such pain! It is too late now; but there are many more needing help just as much.

I think if any of you could go to the Schools in time to see our little Town Sparrows flocking in for breakfast, you would understand better than I can tell, what need there is for food; and if you had sent a collection to help to provide it, you would feel very thankful; and if you had not, you would determine as soon as pos-

sible to be a crumb-gatherer. One penny is the cost of breakfast for one little Town Sparrow. One pound ten shillings would be enough to give one a breakfast for a *whole year*. What a work for Jesus this would be! For a little child has a soul that must live for ever. The same Jesus who told us the value of a sparrow, also told us something of the value of a soul. He compared it with the "*whole world*," and said it was worth *more*—ay, so *much* more, that His life was the price he paid for it. And in the Ragged Schools we teach the little children about the price given. We tell them Jesus loves them, and wants to have them for His own, and longs to see them trust and follow Him. Ah, yes! of *much* more value than *many* sparrows are the little children in His sight. I could tell of many, *many* of these poor little ones who, in the Ragged Schools, learned about the Saviour Friend for

little children ; and then when He called them—

“ Flew up through the great golden archway
to God,
To nestle for aye at His feet.”

Dear friends and fellow-workers, when you get into that glorious presence, and see amongst “ the multitude that no man can number ” the little children you helped to gather into the Ragged Schools, you will praise and thank God that He gave you this work to do for Him.

There is one thing about this work of feeding Town Sparrows that does not apply to all works undertaken for God. It is a *constant* work. *Daily* bread is needed, and daily bread the Town Sparrows seek. There is none in their poor homes ; often no fire, and the beds they rise from in the morning are seldom more than a little straw on the floor, with their ragged clothes for covering.

One day three poor little girls

came hand-in-hand to the Coombe School. "Have you a mother?" asked the Teacher. "Yes." "And where is she?" "She's sitting at home doing nothing, and HAS nothing," was the dreary reply.

Another day a request came that the Teacher would visit a poor mother at home that was ill. Poor thing! she was very ill, and had been some time, and her bed was a few old corks in a sack. Yet she was happy, for the little ones had told her about the Saviour's love, and she was trusting in Him.

Such homes as these are miserable enough; but what about the poor little Town Sparrows who have *no home*—who wander about clinging to their poor mother, and sometimes find refuge in the Night Asylum.

A little boy who was taken into the Elliott Home a few months ago, and who died, told us that many a night of the last winter he and his

mother passed in the street. She would cover him with her thin shawl, and walk quickly up and down to try and keep warm. How they longed for a dry crust! but there was nothing, and they did not know about the Schools, until little Alfy was taken into the Home—too late to save his life.

A few weeks ago a respectable-looking widow came to the Home with three children. She said they were all starving together. How glad she was to hear of the breakfast provided in School! She could send them there, and go out to work, knowing they would not be hungry till she got back.

In order to try and help these poor little Town Sparrows in the best way, we put a little money into the hands of a wise and loving-hearted Town Missionary. He visits their homes, and those who sleep in the Night Asylum he gets to visit

him. He has a very long list of names in his book. Sometimes, when I have no money I go through them, to see if any names can be marked out; but when the sad cases are entered into, one by one, we feel we cannot put any out. And then we just ask the Father in heaven to send us gifts to fill the empty bag, and something is sure to come.

A shilling a week to some, and two shillings to others, will keep whole families out of the poor-house; and a bag of coals in frosty weather, given out of the Christmas penny-collection, gives a world of comfort, for the poor people are very kind to each other, and often two or three neighbour-families will spend the evening around one fire, so as to make each bag last as long as possible. And the fire-side gathering turns into a little meeting, the children singing hymns together, and teaching their parents

the texts they learn so perfectly at School.

One evening at a tea-party, to which we had invited the poorest people we could find, some children being present to sing, I noticed a poor woman joining heartily in the hymns. "How did you learn them?" I asked. "Ah sure, Miss, it's the children," she said; "a body can't help knowing them." Another poor woman sat listening, with tears rolling down her cheeks. "It's thinking of my Jemmy," she said; "he was always singing, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' and he's gone."

Oh, are they not of much more value than many sparrows! These children for whom Jesus died—these children that can be brought to Him, that He may lay His hands upon them and bless them—these children that can "shine as lights, holding forth the Word of Life."

Dear friends, old and young, who

may read this little book, I am sure you will help us to keep the tables spread for the dear little "Town Sparrows."

Contributions will be gratefully received for Townsend-street and Luke-street, by—

MRS. ROBINSON, 3, Wilton-place,
Dublin; or,

MRS. SMYLY, 35, Upper Fitzwilliam-
street, Dublin.

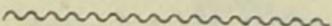
For Lurgan-street, by—

MISS ENGLISH, 27, Townsend-
street, Dublin.

For the Coombe and Grand Canal-street,
by—

MISS ELLEN SMYLY, 35, Upper
Fitzwilliam-street, Dublin.

Song of the Sparrow.



I'm only a little sparrow,
A bird of low degree ;
My life is of little value,
But the dear Lord cares for me.

He gives me a coat of feathers—
It is very plain, I know ;
Without a speck of crimson ;
For it was not made for show.

But it keeps me warm in winter,
And it shields me from the rain ;
Were it bordered with gold and purple,
Perhaps it would make me vain.

I have no barn nor storehouse,
I neither sow nor reap ;
God gives me a sparrow's portion,
And never a seed to keep.

If my meat is sometimes scanty,
Close pecking makes it sweet ;
I have always enough to feed me,
—and life is more than meat.

I know there are many sparrows ;—
All over the world they are found ;
But our Heavenly Father knoweth
When *one* of us falls to the ground.

Tho' small, we are never forgotten,
 Tho' weak, we are never afraid ;
 For we know that the dear Lord keepeth
 The life of the creatures He made.

I fly thro' the thickest forest,
 I alight on many a spray ;
 I have no chart nor compass,
 But I never lose my way.

I just fold my wings at nightfall,
 Wherever I happen to be ;
 For the Father is always watching,
 And no harm can happen to me.

I am only a little sparrow,
 A bird of low degree ;
 But I know that the Father loves me,
 DOST THOU KNOW HIS LOVE FOR THEE ?

(B) (1880) dr.
DAVIES, S,
TOWN...
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Not one
of them
is forgotten
before
God.

Luke XII. 6.