

The Gipsies' advocate; or, observations on the origin, character, manners, and habits of the English Gipsies: to which are added, many interesting anecdotes, on the success that has attended the plans of several benevolent individuals, who anxiously desire their conversion to God / [James Crabb].

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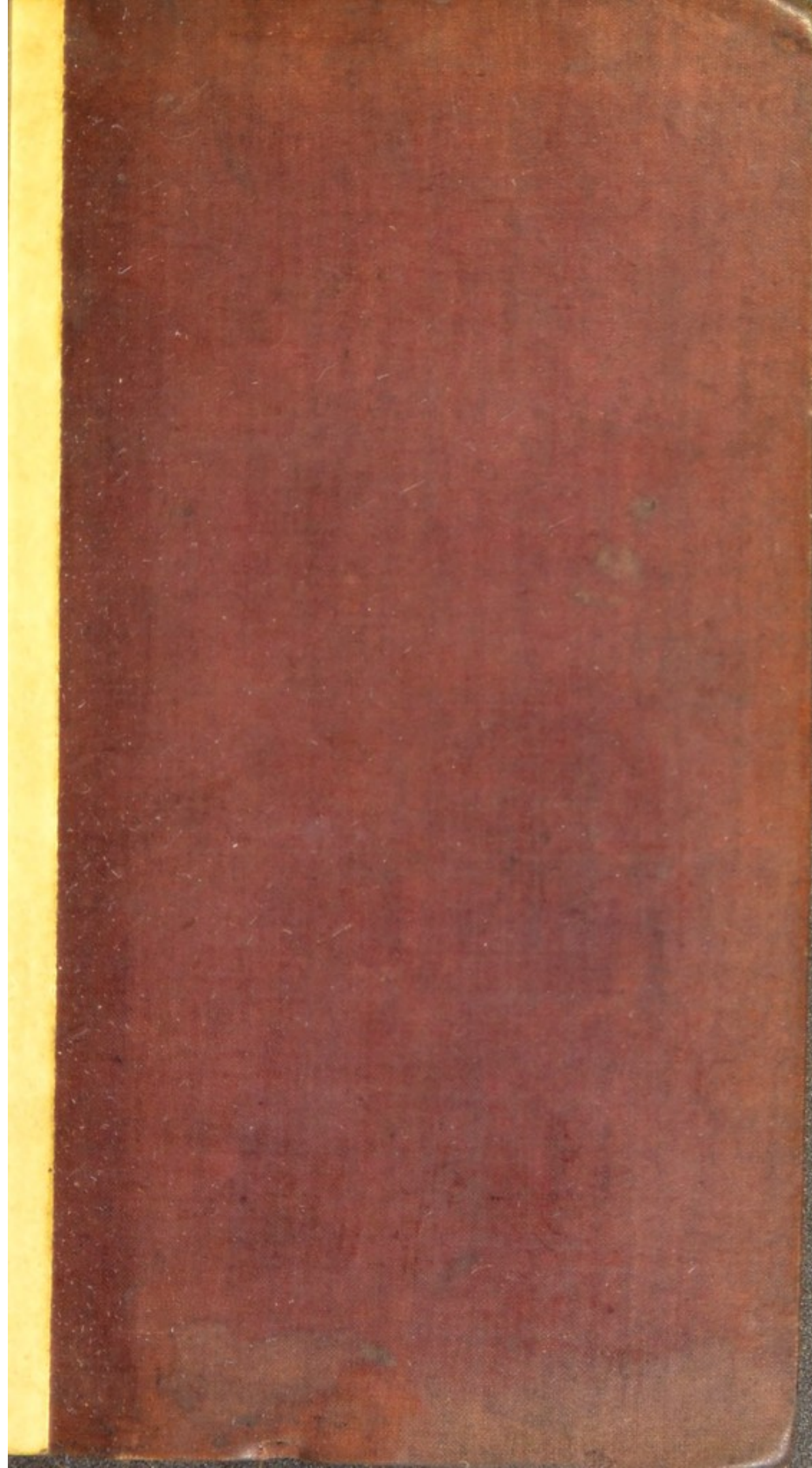
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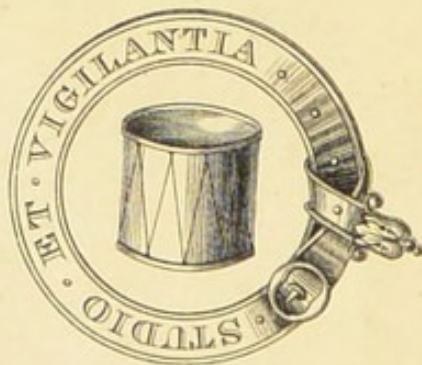
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Mrs Tact from
her affectionate son
William -
May 1st 1831.

The profits of THE GIPSIES' ADVOCATE will be appropriated to the funds of the 'Southampton Committee for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Gipsies,' and to aid in the support of the 'Lansdown and Kingland Infants' Schools' of Southampton.

The work may be had of MR HART, Music-seller, No. 2 Hatton Garden, London; and of LIEUT. KEMPELL, R.N. Marine School, Queen's Square, Bristol; who have kindly offered to promote its sale without any pecuniary advantage to themselves.

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THE
GIPSIES' ADVOCATE;

OR,

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

ORIGIN, CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND HABITS

OF

The English Gipsies:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

MANY INTERESTING ANECDOTES,

ON THE

SUCCESS THAT HAS ATTENDED THE PLANS OF SEVERAL
BENEVOLENT INDIVIDUALS, WHO ANXIOUSLY
DESIRE THEIR CONVERSION TO GOD.

BY JAMES CRABB,

AUTHOR OF "THE PENITENT MAGDALEN."

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."
"Let that mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus."

LONDON:

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1831.



TO
THE JUDGES, MAGISTRATES,
AND
Ministers of Christ,
AS THE
ORGANS OF PUBLIC JUSTICE, AND REVEALED
TRUTH,
THE GIPSIES' ADVOCATE
IS MOST
RESPECTFULLY AND SINCERELY DEDICATED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

PERPETUAL

THE JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE

The object of the following paper is to
show the importance of the judicial
magistrate in the administration of
the law of the State and to
show the manner in which the
magistrate should be selected and
the manner in which he should
be supported.

THE CIRCUIT JUDGE

The object of the following paper is to
show the importance of the circuit
judge in the administration of
the law of the State and to
show the manner in which the
circuit judge should be selected and
the manner in which he should
be supported.

THE ATTORNEY

The object of the following paper is to
show the importance of the attorney
in the administration of the law
of the State and to show the
manner in which the attorney
should be selected and the
manner in which he should be
supported.

PREFACE.

THE Author of the following pages has been urged by numerous friends, and more particularly by his own conscience, to present to the Christian Public a brief account of the people called Gipsies, now wandering in Britain. This, to many readers, may appear inexpedient; as Grellman and Hoyland have written largely on this neglected part of the human family. But it should be recollected, that there are thousands of respectable and intelligent christians, who never have read, and never may read either of the above authors. The writer of the present work is partly indebted for the sympathies he feels, and which he wishes to awaken in others toward these miserable wanderers, to various authors who have written on them, but more particularly to

Grellman and Hoyland, who, in addition to the facts which came under their own immediate notice, have published the observations of travellers and others interested in the history of this people. A list of these authors may be seen in the Appendix.

But his knowledge of this people does not entirely depend on the testimony of others, having had the opportunity of closely examining for himself their habits and character in familiar visits to their tents, and by allowing his door to be free of access to all those encamped near Southampton, when they have needed his help and advice. Thus has he gained a general knowledge of their vicious habits, their comparative virtues, and their unhappy modes of life, which he hopes the following pages will fully prove, and be the means of placing their character in the light of truth, and of correcting various mistakes respecting them, which have given rise to many unjust and injurious prejudices against them.

The Author could have enlarged the present work very considerably, had he detailed all the facts with which he is well acquainted.

His object, however, was to furnish a work which should be concise and cheap, that he might be the means of exciting among his countrymen an energetic benevolence toward this despised people; for it cannot be denied that many thousands of them have never given the condition of the Gipsies a single thought.

Such a work is now presented to the public. Whether the author has succeeded, will be best known to those persons who have the most correct and extensive information relative to the unhappy race in question. Should he be the honoured instrument of exciting in any breasts the same feelings of pity, mercy, love and zeal for these poor English heathens, as is felt and carried into useful plans for the heathens abroad, by christians of all denominations; he will then be certain that, by the

blessing of the Redeemer, the confidence of the Gipsies will be gained, and, that they will be led to that Saviour, who has said, *Who-soever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast him out.*

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CHAP. I.

On the Origin of the Gipsies.

OF the Origin of these wanderers of the human race, the learned are not agreed ; for we have no authentic records of their first emigrations. Some suppose them to be the descendants of Israel, and many others, that they are of Egyptian origin. But the evidence adduced in confirmation of these opinions appears very inconclusive. We cannot discover more than fifty Hebrew words in the language they speak, and they have not a ceremony peculiar to the Hebrew nation. They have not a word of Coptic, and but few of Persian derivation. And they are deemed as strangers in Egypt at the present time. They are now found in many countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa, in all of which they speak a language *peculiar to themselves*. On the continent of America alone are there none of them found. Grellman informs us that there were great numbers in Lorraine, and that they dwelt in its forests, before the French Revolution of 1790. He

supposes that there are no less than 700,000 in the world, and that the greatest numbers are found in Europe. Throughout the countries they inhabit, they have kept themselves a distinct race of people in every possible way.

They never visit the Norman Isles; and it is said by the natives of Ireland, that their numbers are small in that country. Hoyland informs us, that many counties in Scotland are free of them, while they wander about in other districts of that country, as in England. He has also informed us, sec. 6, of a colony which resides during the winter months at Kirk Yetholm in the county of Roxburgh.*

Sir Thomas Brown, in his work entitled "VULGAR ERRORS," says, that they were seen first in Germany, in the year 1409. In 1418, they were found in Switzerland; and in 1422, in Italy. They appeared in France, on the 17th August, 1427. It is remarkable that, when they first came into Europe, they were black, and that the women were still blacker than the men. From Grellman we learn, that "in Hungary, there are 50,000; in Spain, 60,000; and that they are innumerable in Constantinople."

It appears from the statute of the 22nd of Henry VIII, made against this people, that they must at that time have been in England some years, and must have increased much in number, and in crime. In the 27th of that reign, a law was made against the im-

* See a late account of this Colony in a subsequent page.

portation of such persons, subjecting the importer to 40*l* penalty. In that reign also they were considered so dangerous to the morals and comfort of the country, that many of them were sent back to Calais. Yet in the reign of Elizabeth, they were estimated at 10,000.*

Dr Walsh says, that the Gipsies in Turkey, like the Jews, are distinguishable by indelible personal marks, dark eyes, brown complexion, and black hair; and by unalterable moral qualities, an aversion to labour, and a propensity to petty thefts.†

The celebrated traveller, Dr Daniel Clarke, speaks of great numbers of Gipsies in Persia, who are much encouraged by the Tartars. Formerly, and particularly on the Continent, they had their counts, lords, and dukes; but these were titles without either power or riches.

The English Gipsies were formerly accustomed to denominate an aged man and woman among them, as their king and queen; but this is a political distinction which has not been recognized by them for many years.

If we suppose the Gipsies to have been heathens before they came into this country, their separation

* See Hoyland, pages 78, 79, and 80.

† We should not forget that the grace of God can change their hearts and morals. The facts contained in this book are very encouraging examples of the power of divine grace upon the heart and character of the Gipsy people. The reader would do well to turn to the following scriptures—Isaiah, xi. 6, 7, 8, 9. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

from pagan degradation and cruelty, has been attended with many advantages to themselves. They have seen neither the superstitions of idolatry, nor the unnatural cruelties of heathenism. They are not destitute of those sympathies and attachments which would adorn the most polished circles. In demonstration of this, we have only to make ourselves acquainted with the fervour and tenderness of their conjugal, parental, and filial sensibilities,—and the great care they take of all who are aged, infirm, and blind, among them. Were these highly interesting qualities sanctified by pure religion, they would exhibit much of the beauty and loveliness of the christian character. I am aware that an opinion is general, that they are cruel to their children; but it may be questioned if ebullitions of passion are more frequent among them, in reference to their children, than among other classes of society; and when these ebullitions, which are not lasting, are over—their conduct toward their children is most affectionate. The attachment of Gipsy children to their parents is equally vivid and admirable; it grows with their years, and strengthens even as their connections increase.* And indeed the affection that sisters and brothers have one for the other is very great. A short time since, the little sister of a

* Children, after grown up to men and women, have an affection for their parents somewhat childish. A young Gipsy man known to the author, when his mother stays longer from the camp than usual, expresses his anxiety for her return, by saying—*Where is my mum? I wish my mum would come home.*

Gipsy youth seventeen years of age, was taken ill with a fever, when his mind became exceedingly distressed, and he gave way to excessive grief and weeping.

Those who suppose these wanderers of mankind to be of Hindostanee or Suder origin, have much the best proof on their side. A real Gipsy has a countenance, eye, mouth, hands, ankle, and quickness of manners, strongly indicative of Hindoo origin. This is more particularly the case with the females. Nor is the above mere assertion. 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 natives of Hindostan, have been surprised at the similarity of manners and features existing between them and the Gipsies. The Author of this work once met with a Hindoo woman, and was astonished at the great resemblance she bore in countenance and manners to the female Gipsy of his own country.

The Hindoo Suder delights in horses, tinkering, music, and fortune telling; so does the Gipsy. The Suder tribes of the same part of the Asiatic Continent, are wanderers, dwelling chiefly in wretched mud-huts. When they remove from one place to another, they carry with them their scanty property. The English Gipsies imitate these erratic tribes in this particular. They wander from place to place, and carry their

small tents with them, which consist of a few bent sticks, and a blanket.* The Suders in the East 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 choice of food! They have been 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. It has been a common saying among them—*that which God kills, is better than that killed by man.* But of late years, with a few exceptions, they have much improved in this respect; for they now eat neither dogs nor cats, and but seldom seek after carrion. But in winter they will dress and eat snails, hedge-hogs, and other creatures not generally dressed for food.

But the strongest evidence of their Hindoo origin is the great resemblance their own language bears to the Hindostanee. The following Vocabulary is taken from Grellman, Hoyland, and Captain Richardson. The first of these respectable authors declares, that twelve out of thirty words of the Gipsies' language, are either purely Hindostanee, or nearly related to it.

The following list of words are among those which bear the greatest resemblance to that language.

* Some of those Gipsies who have families, and a little property, provide themselves with a cart, or waggon, as most convenient for a warehouse for their goods, and more comfortable than a tent to dwell in during winter.

<i>Gipsy.</i>	<i>Hindostanee.</i>	<i>English.</i>
Ick, Ek,	Ek,	One.
Duj, Doj,	Du,	Two.
Trin, Tri,	Tin,	Three.
Schtar, Star,	Tschar,	Four.
Pantsch, Pansch,	Pansch,	Five.
Tschowe, Sshow,	Tscho,	Six.
Efta,	Hefta, Sat,	Seven.
Ochto,	Aute,	Eight.
Desch, Des,	Des,	Ten.
Bisch, Bis,	Bjs	Twenty.
Diwes,	Diw,	Day.
Ratti,	Ratch,	Night.
Cham, Cam,	Tschanct	The sun.
Panj,	Panj,	Water.
Sonnikey,	Suna,	Gold.
Rup,	Ruppa,	Silver.
Bal,	Bal,	The hair.
Aok,	Awk,	The eye.
Kan,	Kawn,	The ear.
Mui,	Mu,	The mouth.
Dant,	Dant,	A tooth,
Sunjo,	Sunnj,	The hearing.
Sunj,	Sunkh,	The smell.
Sik,	Tschik,	The taste.
Tschater,	Tschater,	A tent.
Rajah,	Raja,	The prince.
Baro,	Bura,	Great.
Kalo,	Kala,	Black.
Grea,	Gorra,	Horse.
Ker,	Gurr,	House.
Pawnee,	Paniee,	Brook, drink, water.

<i>Gipsy.</i>	<i>Hindostanee.</i>	<i>English.</i>
Bebee,	Beebe,	Aunt.
Bouropanee,	Bura-panee,	Ocean, wave.
Rattie,	Rat,	Dark night.
Dad,	Dada,	Father.
Mutchee,	Muchee,	Fish.

This language, called by themselves Slang, or Gibberish, invented, as they think, by their forefathers for secret purposes, is not merely the language of *one*, or a *few* of these wandering tribes, which are found in the European Nations; but is adopted by the vast numbers who inhabit the earth.

One of our reformed Gipsies, while in the army, was with his regiment at Portsmouth, and being on garrison duty with an invalid soldier, he was surprised to hear some words of the Gipsy language unintentionally uttered by him, who was a German. On enquiring how he understood this language, the German replied, that he was of Gipsy origin, and that it was spoken by this race in every part of his native land, for purposes of secrecy.*

* "Should any be inclined to doubt, which I scarcely suppose possible, the identity of the Gipsy or Cingari, and Hindostanee languages, still it will be acknowledged as no uninteresting subject, that tribes wandering through the mountains of Nubia, or the plains of Romania, have conversed for centuries in a dialect precisely similar to that spoken at this day, by the obscure, despised, and wretched people in England, whose language has been considered as a fabricated gibberish, and confounded with a cant in use among thieves and beggars; and whose persons have been, till within the period of

A well known nobleman, who had resided many years in India, taking shelter under a tree during a storm in this country, near a camp of Gipsies, was astonished to hear them use several words he well knew were Hindostanee; and going up to them, he found them able to converse with him in that language.

Not long ago, a Missionary from India, who was well acquainted with the language of Hindostan, was at the Author's house when a Gipsy was present; and, after a conversation which he had with her, he declared, that, her people must once have known the Hindostanee language *well*. Indeed Gipsies have often expressed surprise when words have been read to them out of the Hindostanee vocabulary.

Lord Teignmouth once said to a young Gipsy woman in Hindostanee, *Tue burra tschur*, that is, *Thou a great thief*. She immediately replied; No—*I am not a thief—I live by fortune telling*.

It can be no matter of surprise that this language, as spoken among this people, is generally corrupted, when we consider, that, for many centuries, they have known nothing of elementary science, and have been strangers to books and letters. Perhaps the secrecy necessary to effect many of their designs, has been the greatest means of preserving its scanty remains among them. But an attempt to prove that they are *not* of

the last year, an object of the persecution, instead of the protection of our laws."—Extract from a letter of William Marsden, Esq. addressed to Sir Joseph Banks, F. R. S., and read to the Society of Antiquaries in London, 1785.

Hindoo origin, because they do not speak the Hindostanæ with perfect correctness, would be as absurd as to declare, that, our Gipsies are not natives of England, because they speak very incorrect English. The few words that follow, and which occurred in some conversations the Author had with the most intelligent of the Gipsies he has met, prove how incorrectly they speak *our* language ; and yet it would be worse than folly to attempt to prove that they are not natives of England.

Expencival	<i>for</i>	expensive.
Cide	<i>for</i>	decide.
Device	<i>for</i>	advice.
Dixen [*]	<i>for</i>	dictionary.*
Ealfully	<i>for</i>	equally.
Indistructed	<i>for</i>	instructed.
Gemmem	<i>for</i>	gentleman.
Dauntment	<i>for</i>	daunted.
Spiteliness	<i>for</i>	spitefulness.
Hawcus Paccus	<i>for</i>	Habeas Corpus.
Increach	<i>for</i>	increase.
Commist	<i>for</i>	submit.

Brand, in his observations on POPULAR ANTIQUITIES, is of opinion that the first Gipsies fled from Asia, when the cruel Timur Beg ravaged India, with a view to proselyte the heathen to the Mohammedan religion ; at which time about 500,000 human beings were butchered by him. Some suppose, that, soon

* "The gentleman spoke dixen to me," said a Gipsy to the Author ; that is, long hard words.

after this time, many who escaped the sword of this human fury, came into Europe through Egypt; and on this account were called, in English, GIPSIES.

Although there is not the least reason whatever to suppose the Gipsies to have had an Egyptian origin, and although, as we have asserted in a former page, they are strangers in that land of wonders to the present day; yet it appears possible to me, that Egypt may have had something to do with their present appellation. And allowing that the supposition is well founded, which ascribes to them a passage through Egypt into European nations, it is very likely they found their way to that place under the following circumstances.

In the years 1408 and 1409, Timur Beg ravaged India, to make, as has already been observed, proselytes to the Mohammedan delusion, when he put hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants to the sword. It is very rational to suppose, that numbers of those who had the happiness not to be overtaken by an army so dreadful, on account of the cruelties it perpetrated, should save their lives by flying from their native land, to become wandering strangers in another. Now if we assert that the Gipsies were of the Suder cast of Asiatic Indians, and that they found their way from Hindostan into other and remote countries when Timur Beg spread around him terrors so dreadful, it is natural to ask, why did not some of the other casts of India accompany them? 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, Tschecheries, 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.

It cannot be determined by what track the forefathers of the Gipsies found their way from Hindostan to the countries of Europe. But it may be presumed that they passed over the southern Persian deserts of Sigiston, Makran and Kirman, along the Persian Gulph to the mouth of the Euphrates, thence to Bassora into the deserts of Arabia, and thence into Egypt by the Isthmus of Suez.

It is a fact not unworthy a place in these remarks on the origin of this people, that they do not like to be called Gipsies, unless by those persons whom they have reason to consider their real friends. This probably arises from two causes of great distress to them—*Gipsies are suspected and hated as the perpetrators of all crime—and they are almost universally prosecuted as vagrants.* Is it to be wondered at, that to stran-

gers, they do not like to acknowledge themselves as Gipsies? I think not.

We will conclude our remarks on the origin of these erratic sons of Adam, by adding the testimony of Col. Herriot, read before the Royal Asiatic Society, Sir George Staunton in the chair. That gentleman, giving an account of the Zingaree of India, says, that this class of people are frequently met with in that part of Hindostan which is watered by the Ganges, as well as the Malwa, Guzerat, and the Decan : they are called Nath, or Benia ; the first term signifying a *rogue*—and the second a *dancer*, or *tumbler*. And the same gentleman cites various authorities in demonstration of the resemblance between these Gipsies and their neglected brethren in Europe. Nor does he think that the English Gipsies are so degraded as is generally supposed ; in support of which he mentions some instances of good feeling displayed by them under his own observation, while in Hampshire.

CHAP. II.

Observations on the Character, Manners, and Habits of the English Gipsies.

THE origin of this people is by no means of so much importance as the knowledge of their present character, manners and habits, with the view to the devising of proper plans for the improvement of their condition, and their conversion to christianity: for to any one who desires to love his neighbour as himself, their origin will be but a secondary consideration.

Fifty years ago the Gipsies had their regular journeys, 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. And it is proper to suppose,

that, at such a time, their outrages and depredations were very few.

It has already been stated that the Gipsies are very numerous, amounting to about 700,000. It is supposed that there are about 18,000 in this kingdom. But be they less or more, we ought never to forget—that they are branches of the same family with ourselves—that they are capable of being fitted for all the duties and enjoyments of life—and, what is better than all, that they are redeemed by the same Saviour, may partake of the same salvation, and be prepared for the same state of immortal bliss, whence flows to the universal church of Christ, that peace which the world cannot take from her. Their condition, therefore, at once commands our sympathies, energies, prayers, and benevolence.

Gipsies in general are of a tawny or brown colour; but this is not wholly hereditary. The chief cause is probably the lowness of their habits; for they very seldom wash their persons, or the clothes they wear, their linen excepted. Their alternate exposures to cold and heat, and the smoke surrounding their small camps, perpetually tend to increase those characteristics of complexion and feature by which they are at present distinguishable.

It is not often that a Gipsy is seen well-dressed, even when they possess costly apparel; but their women are fond of finery. They are much delighted with broad lace, large ear-drops, a variety of rings, and glaring colours; and, when they possess the

means, shew how great a share they have of that foolish vanity, which is said to be inherent in females, and which leads many, destitute of the faith, and hope, and love, and humility of the gospel, into utter ruin.

A remarkable instance of the love of costly attire in a female Gipsy, is well known to the writer. The woman alluded to, obtained *a very large sum of money* from three maiden ladies, pledging that it should be doubled by her art in conjuration. She then decamped to another district, where she bought a blood-horse, a black beaver hat, a new side-saddle and bridle, a silver-mounted whip, and figured away in her ill-obtained finery at the fairs. It is not easy to imagine the disappointment and resentment of the covetous and credulous ladies, whom she had so easily duped.

Nor indeed are the males of this people less addicted to the love of gay clothing, if it suited their interests to exhibit it. An orphan, only ten years of age, taken from actual starvation last winter, and who was fed and clothed, and had every care taken of him, would not remain with those who wished him well, and who had been his friends; but returned to the camp from which he had been taken, saying, that he *would be a Gipsy, and would wear silver buttons on his coat, and have topped boots*; and when asked how he would get them, he replied—*by catching rats*.

Some Gipsies try to excel others in the possession of silver buttons. They will sometimes give as much as fifteen pounds for a set. The females too spend many

pounds on weighty gold rings for their fingers. The Author has by him, belonging to a Gipsy, three massy rings soldered together, and with a half sovereign on the top, which serves instead of a brilliant stone. We pity a vain Gipsy whose eyes are taken, and whose heart delights in such vulgar pomp. Are not those equally pitiable, who estimate themselves only by the gaiety, singularity, or costliness of their apparel? The Saviour has given us a rule by which we may judge persons in reference to their dress, as well as in other ostensibilities of character—*by their fruits ye shall know them.*

The Gipsies are not strangers to pawn-brokers shops; but they do not visit these places for the same purposes as the vitiated poor of our trading towns. A pawnshop is their bank. When they acquire property illegally, as by stealing, swindling, or fortune-telling, they 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 dishonest habits, often overtake them. Should one of their families stand before a Judge of his country, charged with a crime which is likely to cost him his life, or to transport him, every article of value is sacrificed to save him from death, or apprehended banishment. In such cases they generally retain a Counsellor to plead for the brother in adversity.

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.

The Gipsies of this country are very punctual in paying their debts. All the Shop-keepers, with whom they deal in these parts, have declared, that they are some of their best and most honest customers. 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, if he cannot with money, if he wish to be considered by his friends honest and respectable. They call this law *pizharris*.

There are few of these unhappy people that can either read or write. Yet a regular and frequent correspondence is kept up between the members of families who have had the least advantage of the sort ; and those who have had no advantages whatever, correspond through the kindness of friends who write for them. Numerous are the letters which they receive from their relatives in New South Wales, to which Colony so many hundreds of this unsettled race have been transported. Their letters are usually left at one particular post-office, in the districts where they travel ; and should such letters not be called for during a long period, they are usually kept by the post-master, who is sure they will be claimed, sooner or later. A long journey will be no impediment, when a letter is ex-

pected ; for a Gipsy will travel any distance to obtain an expected favour of the kind. They are never heard to complain of the heavy expense of postage.

We have already observed that there are many genuine features of humanity in the character of this degraded and despised people. Their constantly retaining an affectionate remembrance of their deceased relatives, affords a striking proof of this statement. And their attachment to the horse, donkey, rings, snuff-box, silver-spoons, and all things, except the clothes, of the deceased relatives, is very strong. With such articles they will never part, except in the greatest distress ; and then they only pledge some of them, which are redeemed as soon as they possess the means.

Most families visit the graves of their near relatives, once in the year ; generally about the time of Christmas. Then the depository of the dead becomes a rallying spot for the living ; for there they renew their attachments and sympathies, and give and receive assurances of continued good will. At such periods however they are too often addicted to feasting and intemperance.

The graves of the deceased of this people, are usually kept in very good order in the various Church yards where they lie interred. This is done by the Sextons, for which they are annually remunerated. Sometimes large sums of money are expended on the erection of head-stones ; and in one instance a monument was erected in the County of Wilts at considerable cost. It is not very long since, that the parents of a deceased

Gipsy child, whom they loved very much, paid a great sum to have it buried in the Church.

The Gipsies have a singular custom of burning all the clothes belonging to any one among them deceased, with the straw, litter, &c, of his tent. Whether this be from fear of infection, or from superstition, the Author has not been able to learn. Perhaps both unite in the continuation of a custom which must be attended with some loss to them.*

Seldom do these mysterious sons and daughters of Adam unite themselves in the holy obligations of marriage, after the form of the Established Church of our land. Nor, indeed, for so sacred a union, have they *any ceremony at all*. The parents on each side are consulted on such occasions, and if their consent be obtained, the parties become, after their custom, *husband and wife*. Should the parents object, like the thoughtless and imprudent persons in higher life, who flee to Gretna Green, the Gipsy lovers also escape from their parents to another district. When the couple are again met by the friends of the female, they take her from her protector; but if it appear that he has treated her kindly, and is likely to continue to do so, they restore her to him, and all objections and animosities are forgotten.

As it seldom happens that they now stay more than a few days in one place, the Gipsy, his wife, and each

* May not this be a proof of their Hindostanee origin? There is this difference, however—the clothes, &c. of the deceased Gipsy, are burnt instead of his body!

of their children, may severally belong to different parishes. This is an objection to their ultimate settlement in any one place. It will be some time before this objection can be removed: not till the present generation of Gipsies has passed away, and their posterity cease to make the wilderness their homes, choosing a parish for a permanent place of settlement.

It may naturally be expected that these inhabitants of the field and forest, the lane and the moor, are not without a knowledge of the medicinal qualities of certain herbs. In all slight disorders they have recourse to these remedies, and frequently use the inner bark of the elm, star-in-the-earth, parsley, pellitory-in-the-wall, and wormwood. They are not subject to the numerous disorders and fevers common in large towns; but in some instances they are visited with that dreadful scourge of the British nation, the Typhus fever, which spreads through their little camp, and becomes fatal to some of its families. 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. It is a fact, however, that ought not to be passed over here, that when they leave their tents to settle in towns, they are generally ill for a time. The children of one family that wintered with us in 1831, were nearly all attacked with fever that threatened their lives. This may be occasioned by their taking all at once to regular habits, and the renunciation of that exercise to which they have been so long ac-

customed, with some disposing qualities in their change of diet and the atmosphere of a thickly populated town.

This people often live to a considerable age, many instances of which are well known. In his tent at Launton, Oxfordshire, died in the year 1830, more than a hundred years of age, James Smith, called by some, the King of the Gipsies. By his tribe he was looked up to with the greatest respect and veneration. His remains were followed to the grave by his widow, who is herself more than a hundred years old, and by many of his children, grand-children, great grand-children, and other relatives; and by several individuals of other tribes. At the funeral his widow tore her hair, uttered the most frantic exclamations, and begged to be allowed to throw herself on the coffin, that she might be buried with her husband. The religion of the Redeemer would have taught her to say, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

A woman of the name of B—— lived to the reputed age of a hundred and twenty years, and up to that age was accustomed to sing her song very gaily. Many events in the life of this woman were very remarkable. In her youth she was a noted swindler. At one time she got a large sum of money, and other valuable effects, from a lady; for which and other offences, she was condemned to die. A petition was presented to George the Third, to use the Gipsy's own expression, who told the author, *just after he had set*

up business, that is, begun to reign, and he attended to its prayer. The sentence was reversed, and her life was consequently spared. But, poor woman, she repented not of her sins ; for she taught her daughter to commit the same crimes for which she had been condemned ; so that her delivery from condemnation led to no salutary reformation.

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. They are known strictly to avoid all conversation of an unchaste kind in their camps, except among the most degraded of them ; and instances of young females having children, before they pledge themselves to those they love, are rare. This purity of morals, among a people living as they do, speaks much in their favour.

The anxiety of a Gipsy parent to preserve the purity of the morals of a daughter, is strongly portrayed in the following fact. The author wished to engage as a servant the daughter of a Gipsy who was desirous of quitting her vagrant life ; but her mother strongly objected for some time ; and when pressed for the reason of such objection, she named the danger she would be in a town, far from a mother's eye. It would be well if all others felt for their children as did this unlettered Gipsy. After having promised that the morals of the child should be watched over, she was confided to his care. And the author has known a Gipsy parent correct with stripes a grown daughter,

for mentioning what a profligate person had talked about.

The following is an instance of conjugal attachment. A poor woman, whose eldest child is now under the care of the Society for the improvement of the Gipsies, being near her confinement, came into the neighbourhood of Southampton, to be with her friends, who are reformed, during the time. This not taking place so soon as she expected, and having promised to meet her husband at a distance on a certain day, he not daring to shew himself in Hampshire, she determined on going to him; and having mounted her donkey, set off with her little family. She had a distance of nearly fifty miles to travel, and happily reached the desired spot, where she met her husband before her confinement took place. The good people at Warminster, near which place she was, afforded her kind and needful assistance; and one well-disposed lady became God-mother to the babe, who was a fine little girl; the grateful mother pledging that, at a proper age, she should be given up to Christians to be educated.

Before this woman left Southampton, referring to many kind attentions shewn her by the charitable of that place, she was heard to say, *Well—I did not think any one would take such trouble for me!*

Professing to be church people whenever they speak of religion, the Gipsies generally have their children baptized at the church near which they are born,

partly because they think it right, and partly, perhaps chiefly, to secure the knowledge of the parish to which the child belongs; for every illegitimate child is parishioner in the parish in which it happens to be born. They will sometimes apply to the parish officers for something toward the support of a child, which they call *settling the baby*.

The sponsors at baptism are generally branches of the same family, and they speak of their God-children with pleasure, who in return manifest a high feeling of respect for them, and superstitiously ask their blessing on old Christmas-days, when in company with them. It is worthy of remark that all the better sort of Gipsies teach their children the LORD'S PRAYER.

The anxiety evidenced by some parish officers to prevent these families from settling in their districts, has occasionally led the Gipsies to act unjustifiably by menacing them with the settlement of a number of their families; but this, from their perpetual wandering, need never be feared. Happy would it be for the Gipsies as a people, if these civil officers did encourage them to stay longer in their neighbourhood; for they then might be induced to commence and persevere in honest, industrious and regular habits. Not long ago thirty-five Gipsies came to a parish in Hampshire, to which they belonged, and demanded of the overseers ten pounds, declaring that, if that sum were not given them, they would remain there. Seven pounds were advanced, and they soon left the place.

CHAP. III.

The Character, Manners and Habits of the English Gipsies, continued.

FROM the mode of living among the Gipsies, the parents are often necessitated to leave their tents in the morning, and seldom return to them before night. Their children are then left in or about their solitary camps, having many times no adult with them; the elder children then have the care of the younger. Those who are old enough gather wood for fuel; nor is stealing it thought a crime. By the culpable neglect of the parents in this respect, the children are often exposed to accidents by fire; and melancholy instances of children being burnt and scalded to death, are not unfrequent. The author knows one poor woman, two of whose children have thus lost their lives, during her absence from her tent, at different periods: and very lately a child was scalded to death in the parish where the author writes.

The Gipsies are not very regular in attending to the calls of appetite and hunger. Their principal meal is supper, and their food is supplied in proportion to the success they have had through the day; or, to use their own words, *the luck they have met with.*

Like the poor of the land through which they wander, they are fond of tea, drinking it at every meal.

When times are hard with them, they use English herbs, of which they generally carry a stock, such as agrimony, ground-ivy, wild mint, and the root of a herb called spice-herb.

The trades they follow are generally chair-mending, knife-grinding, tinkering, and basket-making, the wood for which they mostly steal. Some of them sell hardware, brushes, corks, &c.; but in general, neither old nor young among them, do much that can be called labour. And it is lamentable that the greatest part of the little they do earn, is laid by to spend at their festivals; for like many tribes of uncivilized Indians, they mostly make their women support their families, who generally do it by swindling and fortune-telling. Their baskets introduce them to the servants of families, of whom they beg victuals, to whom they sell trifling wares, and tell their fortunes, which indeed is their principal aim, as it is their greatest source of gain. They have been awkwardly fixed, both servants and the Gipsy fortune-teller, when the lady of the house has unexpectedly gone into the kitchen and surprised them while thus employed; and sometimes, to avoid detection, the obnoxious party has been hurried into a closet, or butler's pantry, where there has been much plate. Few are aware of the losses that have attended the conduct of unprincipled servants in this, as in other respects. It may be hoped that few families would knowingly look over conduct so improper, so dangerous.

Many of these idle soothsayers endeavour to per-

suade the people whom they delude, that the power to foretell future events, is granted to them from heaven, to enable them to get bread for their families. It would be well were the prognostications of these women encouraged only among servants ; but this is not the case. They are often invited into gay and fashionable circles, whom they amuse, if, by the information possessed by the parties, they are not cunning enough to deceive. They are well paid, and are thus encouraged in their iniquity by those who ought to know, and *teach them* better. But it is astonishing how many *respectable* people are led away with the artful flattery of such visitors. They forget that the Gipsy fortune-teller has often made herself acquainted with their connexions, business, and future prospects, and consider not that God commits not his secrets to the wicked and profane. They use not the reason heaven has given them, and are therefore more easily led astray by these crafty deceivers.

They generally prophesy good. Knowing the readiest way to deceive, to a young lady they describe a handsome gentleman, as one she may be assured will be her "husband." To a youth they promise a pretty lady, with a large fortune. And thus suiting their deluding speeches to the age, circumstances, anticipations and prospects of those who employ them, they seldom fail to please their vanity, and often gain a rich reward for their fraud.

They suit their incantations, or their pretended means of gaining knowledge, to their employers. Two

female servants went into the camp of some Gipsies near Southampton, to have their fortunes told by one well known to the author, and a great professor of the art. On observing them to appear like persons in service, she said to a companion, *I shall not get my books or cards for them; they are but servants.* And calling for a frying-pan, she ordered them to fill it with water, and hold their faces over it. This being done, she proceeded to flatter and to promise them great things, for which she was paid 1s 6d each. This is called the frying-pan fortune. But it ought to be remembered that all fortune-telling is quite as contemptible.

These artful pretenders to a knowledge of future events, generally discover who are in possession of property; and if they be superstitious and covetous, they contrive to persuade them there is a lucky stone in their house, and that, if they will entrust to them, *all*, or a *part of their money*, they will double and treble it. Sorry is the author to say that they often gain their point. Tradesmen have been known to sell their goods at a considerable loss, hoping to have the money doubled to them by the supposed power of these wicked females, who daringly promise to multiply the blessings of Providence.

If the fortune-teller cannot succeed in obtaining a large sum at first, from such credulous dupes, she commences with a small one; and then pretending it to be too insignificant for the planets to work upon, she soon gets it doubled, and when she has suc-

ceeded in getting all she can, she decamps with her booty, leaving her mortified victims to the just punishment of disappointment and shame, who are afraid of making their losses known, lest they should be exposed to the ridicule they deserve. Parties in Gloucestershire, Dorsetshire, and Hampshire, have been robbed in this manner of considerable sums, even as much as three and four hundred pounds, the greatest part of which has been spent in Hampshire.

A young lady in Gloucestershire allowed herself to be deluded by a Gipsy woman of artful and insinuating address, to a very great extent. This lady admired a young gentleman, and the Gipsy promised that he would return her love. The lady gave her all the plate in the house, and a gold chain and locket, with no other security than a vain promise that they should be restored at a given period. As might be expected, the wicked woman was soon off with her booty, and the lady was obliged to expose her folly. The property being too much to lose, the woman was pursued, and overtaken. She was found washing her clothes in a Gipsy camp, with the gold chain about her neck. She was taken up; but on restoring the articles, was allowed to escape.

The same woman afterwards persuaded a gentleman's groom, that she could put him in possession of a great sum of money, if he would first deposit with her, all he then had. He gave her five pounds and his watch, and borrowed for her ten more of two of his friends. She engaged to meet him at midnight in a

certain place a mile from the town where he lived, and that he there should dig up out of the ground a silver pot full of gold, covered with a clean napkin. He went with his pick-axe and shovel at the appointed time to the supposed lucky spot, having his confidence strengthened by a dream he happened to have about money, which he considered a favourable omen of the wealth he was soon 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 took to his heels and made no stop till he reached his master's house, where he awoke his fellow servants and told to them his disaster.

This woman, who made so many dupes, rode a good horse, and dressed both gaily and expensively. One of her saddles cost £30. It was literally studded with silver; for she carried on it the emblems of her profession wrought in that metal; namely, a half-moon, seven stars, and the rising sun. Poor woman! *her sun is now nearly set.* Her sins have found her out. She has been in great distress on account of a son, who was transported for robbery; but has never thought of seeking, as a penitent, refuge in the God of mercy; for seeing one of her reformed companions reading the New Testament, she exclaimed, *That book will make you crazy,* at the same time calling her a fool for burning her fortune-telling book. Her condition is now truly wretched; for her ill-gotten gains are all fled, and she is dragging out a miserable existence, refusing

still to seek the mercy of God, and despising those who have made him their refuge.

Another woman, whom the author would also call a *bad* Gipsy, who likewise practised similar deceptions, having persuaded a person to put his notes and money in a wrapper and lock it up in a box, she obtained the liberty of seeing it in his presence, that she might pronounce certain words over it; and although narrowly watched, she contrived to steal it, and to convey into the box a parcel similar in appearance, but which on examination, contained only a bundle of rubbish. This money amounted to several hundred pounds. She was immediately pursued and taken with the whole amount about her person. She was also allowed to escape justice, because the covetous old man neither wished to expose himself, nor waste his money in a prosecution.

The daughter of this woman has followed the same evil and infamous practices; and the crime has descended to her through several generations. Many circumstances like the above are hid to prevent the shame that would assuredly follow their exposure. But the day of Christ will exhibit both these deceivers and their dupes, who are equally heinous in the sight of God. It were well if such characters had paid more attention to the words of the apostle Paul—*And having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction. The love of money is the root of all*

evil; which, while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Not to mention many other facts with which the author is acquainted, and which he would relate, were he not likely thereby too much to enlarge his work, he will conclude this chapter with observing, that, thankfulness to Almighty God, for the blessings we enjoy, less anxiety about future events, and more confidence in what God has revealed in his word and providence, would leave no room for the encouragement of Gipsy fortune-tellers, and their craft would soon be discontinued.

CHAP. IV.

The Character, Manners, and Habits of the English Gipsies, continued.

AMONG this poor and destitute people, instances of great guilt, depravity and misery are too common; nor can it be otherwise expected, while they are destitute of the knowledge of salvation in a crucified and ascended Saviour. One poor Gipsy, who had wandered in a state of wretchedness, bordering on despair, for nearly forty years, had not in all that time, *heard of the Name which is above every name; for there is salvation in no other*; till in his last days some Christian directed him to the Bible, as a book that tells poor sinners the way to God. He gave a woman a guinea to read its pages to him; and he remunerated another woman, who read to him the book of Common Prayer. The last few years of his life were marked by strong conviction of sin. His children thought he must have been a murderer. They often saw him under the hedges at prayer. In his last moments he received comfort through a pious minister, who visited him in his tent, and made him acquainted with the promises of the gospel.

A similar instance has been related by a clergyman known to the author; nor should the interview of

GEORGE THE THIRD with a poor Gipsy woman, be forgotten; for a brighter example of condescending kindness is not furnished in the history of kings. This gracious monarch became the minister of instruction and comfort to a dying Gipsy, to whom he was drawn by the cries of her children, and saw her expire cheered by the view of that redemption he had set before her.

But how few are there of the tens of thousands of Gipsies, who have died in Britain, that, whether living or dying, have been visited by the minister or his people! The father of three orphan children lately taken under the care of the Southampton Committee for the improvement of the Gipsies, had lived an atheist, but such he could not die. He had often declared there was no God; but before his death, he called one of his sons to him and said—*I have always said there was no God, but now I know there is; I see him now.* He attempted to pray, but knew not how! And many other Gipsies have been so afraid of God, that they dreaded to be alone.

It is a fact not generally known, that the Gipsies of this country have not much knowledge of one another's tribes, or clans, and are very particular to keep to their own. Nor will those who style themselves respectable, allow their children to marry into the more depraved clans.

The following are a few of the family names of the Gipsies of this country:—Williams, Jones, Plunkett,

Cooper, Glover, Carew (descendants of the famous Bamfield Moore Carew), Loversedge, Mansfield, Martin, Light, Lee, Barnett, Boswell, Carter, Buckland, Lovell, Corrie, Bosvill, Eyres, Smalls, Draper, Fletcher, Taylor, Broadway, Baker, Smith, Buckley, Blewett, Scamp, and Stanley. Of the last-named family there are more than two hundred, most of whom are known to the author, and are the most ancient clans in this part of England.

It is a well-authenticated fact, that many persons pass for Gipsies who are not. Such persons having done something to exclude them from society, join themselves to this people, and marrying into their clans, become the means of leading them to crimes they would not have thought of, but for their connection with such wicked people. Coining money and forging notes are, however, crimes which cannot be justly attributed to them. Indeed it has been too much the custom to impute to them a great number of crimes of which they either never were guilty, or which could only be committed by an inconsiderable portion of their race ; and they have often suffered the penalty of the law, when they have not in the least deserved it. They have been talked of by the public, and prosecuted by the authorities, as the perpetrators of every vice and wickedness alike shocking to civil and savage life. Nor is this to be wondered at, living as they do, so remote from observation and the walks of common life.

Whoever has read Grellman's Dissertation on the Continental Gipsies, and supposes that those of England are equally immoral and vicious, will be found greatly mistaken. The former are a banditti of robbers, without natural affection, living with each other almost like brutes, and scarcely knowing, and assuredly never caring about the existence of God; some of them are even counted cannibals. The Gipsies of this country are altogether different; for monstrous crimes are seldom heard of among them.

The author is not aware of any of them being convicted of house-breaking, or high-way robbery. Seldom are they guilty of sheep-stealing, or robbing hen-roosts.* Nor can they be justly charged with stealing children; this is the work of worthless beggars who often commit far greater crimes than the Gipsies.

They avoid poaching, knowing that the sporting gentlemen would be severe against them, and that they would not be permitted to remain in the lanes and commons near villages. They sometimes take osiers from the banks and coppices of the farmer, of which they make their baskets; and occasionally have been known to steal a sheep, but never when they have had any thing to eat, or money to buy it with; for according to a proverb they have among themselves, *they despise those who risk their necks for their bellies.*

The author however recollects a transgression of the

* One Gipsy, I believe, has been convicted of having some stolen poultry in his tent; but he had received it from the thief. No other fact of the sort has come to my knowledge.

sort in the county of Hants. Eight Gipsy men united in stealing four sheep: four were chosen by lot for the purpose. They sharpened their knives, rode to the field, perpetrated the act, and before day-break brought to their camp the sheep they had engaged to steal; and, before the evening of the same day, they were thirty miles distant. But when pressed by hunger, they have been known to take a worse method than this. For as the farmers seldom deny them a sheep that has died in the field, if they apply for it, *so many* were found dead in this way, that a certain farmer suspected the Gipsies of occasioning their deaths. He therefore caused one of these animals to be opened, and discovered a piece of wool in its throat, with which it had been suffocated. The Gipsies, who had no objection to creatures that die in their blood, had killed all these sheep in the above manner.

Horse-stealing is one of their principal crimes, and at this they are very dextrous. When disposed to steal a horse, they select one a few miles from their tent, and make arrangements for disposing of it at a considerable distance, to which place they will convey it in a night. An old and infirm man has been known to ride a stolen horse nearly fifty miles in that time. They pass through bye-lanes, well known to them, and thus avoid turnpikes and escape detection.

Unless they are taught better principles than at present they possess, and unless those on whom they impose, use their understandings, it is to be feared that swindling also will long continue among them; for

they are so ingenious in avoiding detection. When likely to be discovered, a change of dress enables them to remove with safety to any distance. Instances of this kind have been innumerable. But as it is the aim of this book to solicit a better feeling towards them, rather than expose them to the continuation of censure, the writer will not enter into further detail in reference to their crimes, than barely to shew the great evils into which they have been led by many of those in high life, who have long encouraged them in the savage practice of prize-fighting. Pugilism has been the disgrace of our land, and our nobility and gentry have not been ashamed to patronize it.

Not long ago a fight took place in this county which will be a lasting disgrace to the neighbourhood. One of the pugilists, a Gipsy, in the pride of his heart, said during the fight, that he *never would be beaten so long as he had life*. The poor wretch fought till not a feature of his countenance could be seen, his head and face being swollen to a frightful size, and his eyes quite closed. He attempted to tear them open that he might see his antagonist; and was at last taken off the stage. Not satisfied with this brutal scene, the spectators offered a purse of ten guineas for another battle. This golden bait caught the eye of another Gipsy, who, but a few months before, had ruptured a blood-vessel in fighting. Throwing up his hat on the stage, the sign of challenge, he was soon met with a fellow as degraded as himself, but with much more strength and activity. He was three times laid pros-

trate at the feet of his antagonist, and was taken away almost lifeless. His conqueror put a half-crown into his hand as he was carried off, saying, it was a little something for him to drink. About three months after this, the author saw this poor Gipsy in his tent, in the last stage of a consumption; but he was without any marks of true penitence. Surely the way of wickedness is full of misery!

What a disgrace is this demoralizing mode of amusement to our country! Degrading to the greatest degree, it is nevertheless pursued with avidity by all classes of people; and large bets are often depending on these brutal exercises. Gentlemen, noblemen, and even ladies, are, on such occasions, mixed with the most degraded part of the community. In the instance referred to it is said, that fifty pounds were taken by admitting carriages into the field in which the fight took place. Where were the peace-officers at this time? Perhaps some of them spectators of the horrid scene!

Verily our men of rank and fortune are guilty in encouraging these shocking practices; and they are little better than murderers, who goad their fellow-men on to fight by the offer of money. Such persons are frequently instruments of sending sinners, the most unprepared, into the presence of a righteous God. What an account will they have to give when they meet the victims of their amusement at the bar of Christ!

The Gipsies often fight with each other at fairs, and

other places where they meet in great numbers. This is their way of settling old grudges; but so soon as one yields, the quarrel is made up, and they repair to a public house to renew their friendship. This forgiving spirit is a pleasing trait in their character.

CHAP. V.

Further Account of the English Gipsies.

IT has been the lot of Gipsies in all countries to be despised, persecuted, hated, and have the vilest things said about 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. The dislike they have to rule and order has led many of them to maim themselves by cutting off a finger, that they might not serve in either the army or the navy: and I believe there is one instance known, of some Gipsies murdering a witness who was to appear against some of their people for horse-stealing: the persons who were guilty of the deed have been summoned to the bar of Christ, and in their last moments exclaimed with horror and despair, "Murder, murder." But these circumstances do not stamp their race without exception as infamous monsters in wickedness. Not many years since several of their men were hung in different places for stealing fourteen horses near Bristol, who experienced the truth of that scripture, *be sure your sins will find you out*. Indeed there is not a family among them that has not to mourn over the loss of some relative for

the commission of this crime. But even in this respect their guilt has been much over-rated; for in many cases it is to be feared they have suffered innocently. There was formerly a reward of 40*l* to those who gave information of offenders, on their being capitally convicted. Those of the lower orders, therefore, who were destitute of principle, had a great temptation before them to swear falsely in reference to Gipsies; and of which it is known they sometimes availed themselves, knowing that few would befriend them. For the sake of the above sum, vulgarly, but too justly called *blood-money*, they perjured themselves, and were much more wicked than the people they accused. But the Gipsies were thought to be universally depraved, and no one thought it worth his while to investigate their innocence. Let us be thankful that many at the present day look upon them with better feelings.

Very lately one of these vile informers swore to having seen a Gipsy man on a horse that had been stolen; and although it came out on the trial, that it was night when he observed him, and that he had never seen him before, which ought to have rendered his evidence invalid, the prisoner was convicted and condemned to die. His life was afterwards spared by other facts having been discovered and made known to the judge, after he had left the city.

The Gipsies in this country have for centuries been accused of child-stealing; and therefore it is not to be wondered at, that, when children have been missing, the Gipsies should be taxed with having stolen them.

About thirty years since, some parents who had lost a child, applied to a man at Portsmouth, well known in those days, by the name of Payne, or Pine, as an astrologer, wishing to know from him what was become of it. He told them *to search the Gipsy tents for twenty miles round*. The distressed parents employed constables, who made diligent search in every direction to that distance, but to no purpose; the child was not to be found in their camps. It was however soon afterwards discovered, drowned in one of its father's pits, who was a tanner. Thus was this pretended astrologer exposed to the ridicule of those who but a short time before foolishly looked on him as an oracle.

On another occasion the same accusation was brought against the Gipsies, and proved to be false. The child of a widow at Portsmouth was lost, and after every search was made on board the ships in the harbour, and at Spithead, and the ponds dragged in the neighbourhood, to no effect, it was concluded that the Gipsies had stolen him. The boy was found a few years afterwards, at Kingston-upon-Thames, apprenticed to a chimney sweeper. He had been enticed away by a person who had given him sweet-meats; but not by a Gipsy.

I may be allowed here to say a word about this boy's mother. She was a good and pious woman, and had known great trials. Her husband was drowned in her presence but a short time before she lost her son in the mysterious way mentioned; and before he was heard of, she was removed to the enjoyment of a better

world. Her death was a very happy one, for it took place while she was engaged in public worship. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all.*

Instances have been known of house-breakers leaving some of their stolen goods near the tents of the Gipsies; and these being picked up by the children, and found upon them, have been the cause of much unjust suffering among them. The grandfather of three little orphans now under the care of the Southampton Committee, was charged with stealing a horse, and was condemned and executed; although the farmer of whom he bought it, came forward and swore to the horse being the same which 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 frantic Gipsy exclaimed—*Oh God, if thou dost not deliver me, I will not believe there is a God!*

The following anecdote will prove the frequent oppression of this people. Not many years since, a collector of taxes in a country town, said he had been robbed of fifty pounds by a Gipsy; and being soon after at Blandford in Dorsetshire, he fixed on a female Gipsy, as the person who robbed him in company with two others, and said she was in man's clothes at the time. They were taken up and kept in custody for some days; and had not a farmer voluntarily come forward, and proved that they were many miles distant when the robbery was said to be perpetrated, they would have been tried for their lives, and probably

hanged. The woman was the wife of Wm. Stanley, (who was in custody with her,) who now reads the Scriptures in the Gipsy tents near Southampton. Their wicked accuser was afterwards convicted of a crime for which he was condemned to die, when he confessed that he had not been robbed at the time referred to, but had himself spent the whole of the sum in question.

Another Gipsy of the name of Stanley was lately indicted at Winchester, for house-breaking, and had not his friends at great expense proved an *alibi*, it is likely he might have been executed. And in this way have they been suspected and persecuted ever since the days of Henry the Eighth. They have been hunted like wild beasts; their property has been taken from them; themselves have been frequently imprisoned; and in many cases their lives taken, or what to many of them would be much worse, they have been transported to another part of the world, for ever divided from their families and friends.

In the days of Judge Hale, thirteen of these unhappy beings were hanged at Bury St Edmonds, for no other cause than that they were Gipsies; and at that time it was death without benefit of clergy, for any one to live among them for a month. Even in later days two of the most industrious of this people have had a small pony and two donkeys taken away merely on suspicion that they were stolen. They were apprehended and carried before a magistrate, to whom they proved that the animals were their own,

and that they had legally obtained them. The cattle were then pounded for trespassing on the common, and if their oppressed owners had not had money to defray the expenses, one of the animals must have been sold for that purpose.

Not long ago, one of the Gipsies was suspected of having stolen lead from a gentleman's house. His cart was searched, but no lead being found in his possession, he was imprisoned for three months, for living under the hedges as a vagrant; and his horse, which was worth thirteen pounds, was sold to meet the demands of the constables. And another Gipsy, who had two horses in his possession, was suspected of having stolen them, but he proved that they were legally his property. He was committed for three months as a vagrant, and one of his horses was sold to defray the expenses of his apprehension, examination, &c.

While writing this part of the GIPSIERS' ADVOCATE, the author knows that a poor, aged, industrious woman, with whom he has been long acquainted, had her donkey taken from her, and that a man with four witnesses swore that it was his property. The poor woman told a simple, artless tale to the magistrates, and was not fully committed. She was allowed two days to bring forward the person of whom she bought it. Conscious of her innocence, she was willing to risk a prison if she could recover her donkey, and establish her character. After a great deal of trouble and expense in dispatching messengers to bring for-

ward her witnesses, she succeeded in obtaining them. They had no sooner made their appearance than the accuser and his witnesses fled, and left the donkey to the right owner, the poor, accused and injured woman.

It cannot be expected that oppression will ever reform this people, or cure them of their wandering habits. Far more likely is it to confirm them in their vagrant propensities. And as their numbers do not decrease, oppression will only render them the dread of one part of their fellow-creatures, while it will make them the objects of scorn and obloquy to others.

It is the earnest wish of the author that milder measures may be pursued in reference to the Gipsies. To endeavour to improve their morals, and instruct them in the principles of religion, will, under the divine blessing, turn to better account than the hateful and oppressive policy so long adopted.

CHAP. VI.

Further Account of the English Gipsies.

MANY persons are of opinion in reference to the Gipsies, that, if all the parishes were alike severe in forcing them from their retreats, they would soon find their way into towns. But if this were the case, what advantage would they derive from it? In large towns, in their present ignorant and depraved state, would they not be still more wicked? They would change their condition only from bad to worse, unless they were treated better than they now are, and could be properly employed; but from the prejudice that exists among all classes of men against them, this is not likely to be the case: they would not be employed by any, while other persons could be got. At a hop plantation, so lately as 1830, Gipsies were not allowed to pick hops in some grounds, while persons as unsettled and undeserving, were engaged for that purpose. Had this been a parochial arrangement to benefit the poor of their own neighbourhood, who were out of employ, it were not blameable.

If they were driven to settle in towns, and could not, generally speaking, obtain employment, it might soon become necessary to remove all their children to their own parishes; a measure not only very unhappy

in itself, but one to which the Gipsies would never submit. Sooner would they die than suffer their children to go to the parish workhouses.

The severe and unchristian-like treatment they meet with from many, only obliges them to travel further, and often drives them to commit greater depredations. When driven by the constables from their station, they retire to a more solitary place in another parish, and there remain till they are again detected, and again mercilessly driven away. But this severity does not accomplish the end it has in view; their numbers remain the same, and they retain the same dislike to the crowded haunts of man. For they only visit towns in small parties, offering trifling wares for sale, or telling fortunes; and this is done to gain a present support.

In this neighbourhood there was lately a sweeping of the commons and lanes of the Gipsy families. Their horses and donkeys were driven off, and the sum of £3 5s levied on them as a fine to pay the constables for thus afflicting them. In one tent during this distressing affair, there was found an unburied child, that had been scalded to death, its parents not having money to defray the expenses of its interment. The constables declared that it would make any heart ache to see the anguish the poor people were in, when thus inhumanly driven from their resting places; but, said they, *We were obliged to do our duty.* To the credit of these men, thirteen in number, it should be mentioned, that, with only one exception, they returned the

fines to the people; and one of them, who is a carpenter, offered a coffin for the unburied child, should the parish be unwilling to bury it.

In this instance of their affliction and grief, the propensity to accuse these poor creatures was strongly marked by a report charging them with having dug a grave on the common in which to bury it; a circumstance very far from their feelings and general habits. The fact was, some person had been digging holes in search of gravel, and these poor creatures pitched their tent just by one of them.

It was supposed by many in this neighbourhood, that the poor wretches thus driven away, were gone out of the country; but this was not the case. They had only retired to more lonely places in smaller parties, and were all seen again a few days after at a neighbouring fair. This circumstance is sufficient to prove that they are not to be reclaimed by prosecutions and fines. It is therefore high time the people of England should adopt more merciful measures towards them in endeavouring to bring them into a more civilized state. The money spent in sustaining prosecutions against them, if properly applied, would accomplish this great and benevolent work. And without flattering any of its members, the author thinks the Committee at Southampton have discovered plans, wholly different to those usually adopted, which may prove much more effectual in accomplishing their reformation; for by these plans being put in prudent

operation, many have already ceased to make the lanes and commons their home; and their minds are becoming enlightened and their characters religious.

In concluding this chapter it may not be improper to remark, that, bad as may be the character of any of our fellow-creatures, it is very lamentable that they should suffer for crimes of which individually they are not guilty. Let us hope that, in reference to this people, unjust executions have ceased; that people will be careful in giving evidence which involves the rights, liberties, and lives of their fellow-creatures, though belonging to the unhappy tribes of Gipsies; and above all, let us hope, that such measures will be pursued by the good and benevolent of this highly favoured land, as will place them in situations where they will learn to fear God, and support themselves honestly in the sight of all men.

CHAP VII.

Of the formation of the Southampton Committee, and the success that has attended its endeavours.

ALTHOUGH the Gipsies, on account of their unsettled habits, their disposition to evil practices, and that ignorance of true religion, which is inseparably connected with a life remote from all the forms of external worship, and from the influence of religious society, may be said to be in a most lamentably wretched state; yet is their condition not desperate. They are rational beings, and have many feelings honourable to human nature. They are not as the heathens of other countries, addicted to any system of idolatry; and what is of infinite encouragement, they inhabit a land of Bibles and of Christian ministers; and, although at present, they derive so little benefit from these advantages, there are many of them willing to receive instruction. The following details, to which I gladly turn, will shew that, when *patient* and *persevering* means are used, Gipsies may be brought to know God; and no body of people were ever yet converted to Christianity without means. The following circumstances gave rise to the idea of forming a society for the improvement of this people.

In March, 1827, during the Lent Assizes, the author

was in Winchester, and wishing to speak with the sheriff's chaplain, he went to the court for that purpose. He happened to enter just as the judge was passing sentence of death on two unhappy men. To one he held out the hope of mercy ; but to the other, *a poor Gipsy*, who was convicted of horse-stealing, he said, *no hope could be given*. The young man, for he was but a youth, immediately fell on his knees, and with uplifted hands and eyes, apparently unconscious of any persons being present but the judge and himself, addressed him as follows: "*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, entreated—" *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 judge, "*I cannot : you should have thought of your wife and children before.*" He then ordered him to be taken away, and the poor fellow was *rudely dragged* from his earthly judge. It is hoped, as a penitent sinner, he obtained the more needful mercy of God, through the abounding grace of Christ. After this scene, the author could not remain in court. As he returned, he found the mournful intelligence had been communicated to some Gipsies who had been waiting without, anxious to learn the fate of their companion. They seemed distracted.

On the outside of the court, seated on the ground,

appeared an old woman, and a very young one, and with them two children, the eldest three years, and the other an infant but fourteen days old. The former sat by its mother's side, alike unconscious of her bitter agonies, and of her father's despair. The old woman held the infant tenderly in her arms, and endeavoured to comfort its weeping mother, soon to be a widow under circumstances the most melancholy. *My dear, don't cry,* said she, *remember you have this dear little baby.* Impelled by the sympathies of pity and a sense of duty, the author spoke to them on the evil of sin, and expressed his hope that the melancholy event would prove a warning to them, and to all their people. The poor man was executed about a fortnight after his condemnation.

This sad scene, together with Hoyland's Survey of the Gipsies, which the author read about this time, combined to make a deep impression on his mind, and awaken an earnest desire which has never since decreased, to assist and improve this greatly neglected people. The more he contemplated their condition and necessities, the difficulties in the way of their reformation continued to lessen, and his hope of success, in case any thing could be done for them, became more and more confirmed. He could not forget the poor young widow whom he had seen in such deep distress at Winchester, and was led to resolve, if he should meet her again, to offer to provide for her children.

Some weeks elapsed before he could hear any thing of her, till one day he saw the old woman sitting on

the ground at the entrance of Southampton, with the widow's infant on her knee. "Where is your daughter?" he inquired. "Sir," she replied, "She is my niece; she is gone into the town." "Will you desire her to call at my house?" "I will, sir," said the poor old woman, to whom the author gave his address.

In about an hour after this conversation, the widow and her aunt appeared. After inviting them to sit down, he addressed the young woman thus:—"My good woman, you are now a poor widow, and I wished to see you, to tell you that I would be your friend. I will take your children, if you will let me have them, and be a father to them, and educate them; and, when old enough to work, will have them taught some honest trade." "Thank you, sir," said she; "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 be taken care of; but I could not often see her there." I 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. The old aunt also added, "Our people set great store by their children." "Well," I replied, "I do not wish you to determine on this business hastily; it is a weighty one. You had better take a fortnight for consideration, and then give me a second call."

How improbable did it then appear that this interview would ultimately lead to so much good to many of her people! When the fortnight expired, the widow

and her aunt again appeared, when the following conversation took place. "I am glad you are come again," said their friend. "Yes," replied the widow, "and I will now let you have my Betsy;" and the aunt immediately added, pointing to one of her grand-children, "I will let you have my little *deary*, if you will take care of her. Her father," continued she, "was condemned to die, but is transported for life, and her mother now lives with another man." The proposal was readily accepted; and three days after, these two children were brought washed very clean, and dressed in their best clothes. It was promised the women, that they should see their children whenever they chose, and all parties were pleased. The eldest of these children was six years of age; the widow's little daughter, only three. The first day they amused themselves with running up and down stairs, and through the rooms of the house. But when put to bed at night, they cried for two hours, saying that the house would fall upon them. 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. A few kisses and some promises at length quieted them, and they went to sleep.

After remaining with the author three days, they were removed to one of the Infants' Schools, where they were often visited by the widow and her aunt. Soon after this the eldest girl was taken ill. A medical gentleman attended her at the tent, a little way from the town, whither her grandmother had begged

to remove her for change of air. But the sickness of this child *was unto death*. She was a lovely and affectionate girl, notwithstanding the disadvantages under which she had necessarily laboured. When on her bed, in the tent, suffering much pain, she was asked by a gentleman, "Although you love Mr Crabb so much, would you rather live with him, or die, and go to Jesus?" She answered, "I would rather die and go to Jesus." Her death very much affected her grandmother. She would not leave the corpse, which she often affectionately embraced, till persuaded she would endanger her own life. This appeared a melancholy event to all who wished well to the Gipsies in the neighbourhood of Southampton. For the widow, fearing her child would become ill and die too, immediately removed her from the school. And many of the Gipsy people treated the women with great contempt, for giving up their children; and the prospects of doing them lasting good, became very much beclouded. It was however represented to them, that God was doing all things for the best, and their spirits were soothed; and in consequence, the little fatherless girl was again brought to the school.

After this event, the women remained a considerable time in the neighbourhood, waiting to see if the little one, again given up to the author, would be kindly treated. By this detention they were often brought into the company of good people, whose kindness gained their confidence. They began to listen to invitations to settle in the town, and finally determined

on doing so. Even the *old* woman, who had lived under hedges for fifty years, and who had declared but a short time before, that she would not leave her tent for a palace, now gladly occupied a house; this greatly encouraged their friends, who well knew that it was not a small sacrifice, for a Gipsy to give up what is thought by them to be their liberty.

A short time before these women removed from under the hedges, the sister of the unhappy man who had been executed, came out of Dorsetshire with her three children, on her way to Surry, where she had been accustomed to go to hop-picking. Encamping under the same hedge with the widow and her aunt, she was seen by the author in one of his visits to them. He found them one evening about six o'clock at dinner, and took his seat near them; and while they were regaling themselves with broiled meat, potatoes, and tea, the following interesting conversation took place.

"Sir," said the widow, "this is my sister and her children." No one could have introduced this woman and her little ones with more easy simplicity than she did, while, by the smile on her swarthy countenance, she exhibited real heartfelt pleasure. "I am glad to see you, my good woman;" said the author, "are these your children?" "Yes, sir," replied she, very cheerfully. "And where are you going?" "I am going into Surry, sir." "Have you not many difficulties to trouble you in your way of life?" "Yes, sir," answered she. The author continued, "I wish you would let me have your children to provide for and

educate." "Not I, indeed," she replied sharply; "others may part with their children, if they like, but I will never part with mine." "Well, my good woman, the offer to educate them has done no harm: let me hope it will do good. I would have you recollect that you have now a proposal made you of bettering their present and future condition. You and I must soon meet at the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account of this meeting; and you know that I can do better for your little ones than you can." She was silent. The author then addressed these people and left the tents.

The next day he visited the camp again, when the widow woman said, "Sir, my sister was so *cut up* (putting her hand to her heart), with what you said last night, that she could not eat any more, and declared she felt as she never had done before; and she has determined to come and live with us at Michaelmas." What was still better, in consequence of what was said to this poor stranger, she did not go to the races, although she had stopped near Southampton for that purpose.

From this time endeavours were made to confirm the woman's intentions to stay at Southampton, and to place her children with the other. She was asked, why she would not stay at Southampton then? "Why, to tell you the truth," said she, "for it's no use to tell a lie about that, I don't want to bring my children to you, like vagabonds; and as we shall earn a good *bit* of money at hopping, I shall buy them some clothes;

and then, if you will take me a room at Michaelmas, I will surely return and live in Southampton, and my children shall go to school; but I will never give them up entirely." She continued with her sister till the house which had been taken for the latter was ready; during which time a gentleman from Ireland, then living near the encampment, had her children every day to his house, and taught them to read. The remembrance of him will be precious to them for ever. She came on the day appointed, and her children were put to the Infants' School, where they have continued ever since, clean and respectable, and very diligent in their learning. They often explain the Scriptures to their mother. One of them has long been a monitor in the school. May she continue a credit to the institution in which she has been so far educated.

Although the mother of these children is not yet decidedly pious, she is very much improved. She is now able to read her Testament with tolerable ease, takes great pleasure in receiving instruction, and we hope is deeply impressed with the importance of personal religion. She attends public worship diligently, and loves Christians, whom she once hated. She weeps with abhorrence over past crimes, and says she would rather have her hands cut off, than do as she has done. For more than twelve months after living at Southampton, she continued occasionally to tell fortunes for the gain it brought her. But a remarkable dream led her to see the wickedness of this practice; for it so ter-

rified her that she rose from her bed, lighted a fire, and burnt the book in which she had pretended to see the fortune of others. Large sums of money had been offered her for this volume; but, though in extreme poverty, she determined to make any sacrifice, rather than enrich herself by its sale. She dreamed that she was at the adult school, where she regularly attended, and, that while she was reading her Testament, it changed into a book of divination, and she began to tell the fortune of the lady who was teaching her; and while thus employed, she thought she heard awful thunderings, and the sound of trumpets; after which a tremendous tempest ensued, during which she fancied herself in an extensive plain, exposed to all the fury of the storm. She then thought the day of judgment was come, and that she was summoned to render up her account. She awoke in great terror, and as soon as she had a little recovered herself, arose and followed the example of those we read of in the Acts of the Apostles:—*And many of them which also used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.* Acts xix. 19.

When relating this dream to a lady, she was asked whether she had formerly been in the habit of seeking by any means, the aid of the devil, in order to know future events; it having been asserted that many of the Gipsies had done so. She informed the lady that she never had done so, and that she thought none of

her people had any thing to do with him, otherwise than by giving themselves up to do wickedly. The devil tempted them to do still worse; as those who neglect to seek to God for help, must of course be under the power of the wicked one.

CHAP. VIII

Of the plans pursued by the Southampton Committee, and the success which has attended them, continued.

SIXTEEN reformed Gipsies are now living at Southampton, one of whom is the aged Gipsy whose history has been published by a lady.* There are also her brother and four of his children, her sister, who has been a wanderer for more than fifty years, and her daughter, three orphans, and a boy who has been given up to the Committee by his mother, a woman and her three children, and the young woman before mentioned, who has, since her reformation, lost her two children by the measles.

In addition to those who have retired from a wandering life, and are pursuing habits of honest industry, three other families, whose united number is sixteen, begged the privilege of wintering with us in the beginning of 1831. These Gipsies regularly attended divine service twice on a Sunday, and on the work-day evenings the adults went to school to learn to read. The children were placed at one of the Infants' Schools. The prospects of doing one of the families lasting good,

* Sold by Seeley, and by Westley and Co, London; Clark, Bristol; Binns, Bath; and Lindsay and Co, Edinburgh.

are rather dark, as they are grown old and hardened in crime; but the condition of the others is more encouraging. The children, who would gladly have stayed longer with us, were sickly; and it is apprehended, had not this been the case, the parents would have continued longer, that they might have gone to school. Two women, mother and daughter, in one family, are much interested in the worship of God, and already begin to feel the value of their souls; and both regret that they are under the necessity of submitting to the arbitrary will of the father. One of them declared that she could never more act as a Gipsy, and with weeping eyes she said, that, she feared she never should be pardoned, or saved. When directed to go to Jesus, she replied, she knew not how to go to him. In three days they will leave us, and it will be a painful separation. It was very gratifying to the author to see so many Gipsies attend the house of God, and he frequently recollected with pleasure, that promise of holy Scripture, *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the*

fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Six of the children are at an Infants' School at Southampton, and three others attend a charity school; and another is learning to be a coach wheelwright. This youth has behaved so well in his situation, that he has been advanced by his master to a higher branch in the business. His fellow-workmen, who at first disliked him for being a Gipsy, have subscribed money to assist him in the purchase of additional tools, to which the foreman added five shillings, and the master *one pound*. This is a most encouraging circumstance.

The aged man who has been so many years reformed, is a basket maker. He often visits his brethren in their tents, under the direction of the Committee, to give advice and instruction. His sister, lately reclaimed, takes care of the six Gipsy children, and is become very serious and industrious; and though in the decline of life, she receives but one shilling per week from the Committee. Two instances of the gratitude of this woman ought not to be omitted.

The author's horse having strayed from the field, a sovereign was offered to any one who would bring it back to him. Several persons sought for it in vain. This old Gipsy woman was sent in quest of it, and in two days returned with the horse. Of course she was offered the sovereign that had been named as a reward; but she refused to take it, saying, she owed the author more than that; yea, all that she had, for the comfort

she was then enjoying. This was the language of an honest and grateful heart. On being compelled to take it, she bought herself some garments for the winter.

On another occasion, when she was coming from some place which she had visited, and was detained on the road longer than she had expected, she became penniless; yet would she not beg, lest it might be looked on as one step towards turning back to habits she had entirely abandoned. She assured the author that she would rather have starved than return to her old trade of begging; and besides, added she, "the people know that I am one of your reformed Gipsies, and I will never bring a reproach upon my best friends."

The young widow was taught to make shoes; but becoming depressed in spirits after the death of her children, she has been placed in service. And another young Gipsy woman has also obtained a situation as a servant.

But while the Committee has had to rejoice over the success that has attended its efforts, it has also experienced great and manifold disappointments. But its members are not discouraged, and it is hoped they never will be.

One young woman stayed with the Committee a month, and then ran away. She was lamentably ignorant, and could never be brought to work.* Another

* I ought to say perhaps, that though this young and ignorant woman ran away, she did not go with any thing that was not her

very promising in temper and habits, stayed in a family three months, and then left them to live again with her parents, who encouraged her to believe that she would be married to one of her clan. It may be hoped the knowledge she gained while in service may be useful to her at some future time. She is not, cannot be happy, and is sorry that she left her service and her friends. The father and mother have promised to stay in Southampton through the next winter, which they will be encouraged to do, with the hope of gaining instruction in the truths of religion.

A woman, her four sons, and their grandmother,* joined the family of reformed Gipsies for a short time, and we had considerable hopes of them all, the two eldest boys excepted, who refused to work, and who grew much more vicious than when under the hedges. Their father had formerly been sentenced to death, but by the interest of a friend, the sentence was changed to fourteen years' hard labour on board the hulks at Portsmouth, nearly nine of which had expired at the time his family came under the direction of the Committee. His wife intimating that if they were to apply for his release, it might be granted, and that then he might govern the boys, and make them work, his liberty was obtained. But within three days after-

own; for she left behind her a bonnet that had been lent her, while she had nothing more on her head than a piece of cloth.

* The latter was the daughter of the dying Gipsy, an account of whom may be seen in the tract numbered 803, and published by the Tract Society

wards, he declared he would not constrain any of his children to labour; they might do it or not, as they pleased. And, in the course of the week, he took them all away and went to Brighton.

A lady then staying at that place, and who had known this family at Southampton, sent to the place where the Gipsies usually encamp, hoping to recall some of them to a sense of their duty, but was informed that the whole of the party had set off a few days before. Early on the following morning, a Gipsy called at the house of this lady, and offered to tell the fortunes of the servants. She was asked if she knew the woman who was enquired for the preceding day? She replied, that *she was the very person*. On hearing by whose servant she was addressed, she became almost speechless with shame, and said, *I would rather have met the king*. On recovering, she expressed great delight and gratitude that she was not forgotten by the lady, and declared she had been very unhappy since she had left Southampton, and that the sin of fortune-telling greatly distressed her mind; but that she knew not how to support her family without it. They had undergone many hardships. The little boys, she said, had frequently amused themselves with trying to spell the different things about their tent, and were often wishing for their Southampton fire. The next morning she brought them to see their kind benefactress. The youngest of them, a fine promising boy, both as to talent and disposition, was overjoyed at the meeting; his little eyes were filled with tears, and he could

scarcely speak. He and his brother were immediately provided with clothing, and sent to the School of Industry; where, in addition to the religious instruction given them, they were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, digging, &c. Their master has been much pleased with their progress. The mother was afterwards induced to stay at Brighton, being allowed a small sum weekly. She has been taught to read by some kind friends, and many hopes are entertained of her conversion to God. A letter has lately been received, which gives a very interesting account of her increase in knowledge and improvement in morals.

A very promising Gipsy youth, who was placed with a coach-maker in Southampton, after working some time, cut his hand, and then relinquished his employment, to wander with his father, who is a rat-catcher. But it is hoped that he, as well as others of his brethren who have returned to their former courses, will be brought back, or find some other desirable and permanent abode; that what has been done by this society may not ultimately be lost. Indeed, while writing this, I am happy to be able to state, that the morals of this young man appear very correct, and that he has, by constant application, learned to read tolerably well since he left Southampton. He supports himself by selling brushes, lines, and corks, but talks very seriously of giving up his wandering habits to return to us again.

Among the reclaimed Gipsies are three women who were notorious fortune-tellers, and who doubtless have

done much injury to the morals of society. They are now very promising; and there is a fair prospect of their children being saved from much sin and misery, as they are placed at Infants' Schools, where they are gradually acquiring useful scriptural knowledge, and correctness of habits; in which, if they persevere, by the grace of the Redeemer, their present and everlasting welfare will be secured. Such examples of success amply repay the Committee for the trouble and expense already bestowed on the Gipsies; and it is hoped its members will be stimulated to every exertion in their power by the good done to those in a state of reformation and improvement, that the whole wandering race may be led into the right way.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Plans pursued by the Southampton Committee, and the success which has attended them, continued.

A GIPSY woman, of whose reformation we have already taken some notice, having gone to solicit the assistance of the parish to which one of her children belonged, met with many difficulties and troubles. She was not at this time destitute of the knowledge of religion. She had learned to read, and had become acquainted with the Scriptures, at an adult school, and by attending at a place of worship ; and these instructions were not thrown away on her ; for although she was frequently invited to eat and drink in the tents of the Gipsies on her journey, she conscientiously refused, fearing that what they were partaking of might not be honestly obtained. She informed them that her Testament had taught her better habits than those she had formerly known. Her children helped to keep alive her religious impressions. They often talked to her about the school from which she had taken them, of their lessons, and the observations of the master and mistress, on different parts of the Scriptures, and at other times they catechised each other on the objects that presented themselves on the road, in the same way they had been used to in the Infants' Schools ; to

which they often begged their mother to let them return. These circumstances, she has since said, made her so miserable that she felt she *could not live as she had done.*

Some time after this, she made a visit to a parish in which another of her children was born, near Basingstoke. She entered the cottage of an old couple who sold fruit, &c. Tea being proposed, the old woman expressed her surprise that she had not seen her visitor for so long a time, saying she was glad she was come, as she wanted her to tell her many things, meaning future events. She mentioned a great deal that another Gipsy woman had told her, on which the reformed one exclaimed—*Don't believe her, dame. 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 woman was still more surprised, and asked *how she*, who had so often told their fortunes, and had promised them such good luck, could be so much altered? The woman taking her 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 opened her book and began reading a chapter, endeavouring to explain as she read, at which her host and hostess began to weep. She told them that though she knew she had been a great sinner, and was one still, yet she never had felt so happy as then. The old woman observed, that *she* could not

say *she was happy*, and wished to know what she 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 to pray, and *then* you will become happy.

This poor Gipsy woman, who was so anxious to instruct those she had many times deceived, was soon after taken sick, at which time her distress of soul was very great; and she then said, were she to die, her *soul could not go to heaven*.

Many were her temptations, while in great poverty, to renew the practice of fortune-telling. Several genteel parties have visited her, and sometimes offered her gold, tempting her to begin again the sins she had for ever given up; but, much to her credit, she at all times resolutely refused all such unholy gain.

At one time some very gay young women called on her, desiring to have their fortunes told. Her Testament lay on the table, which she had but a short time before been reading, and pointing to it, 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 had told her, *all unrighteousness is sin*. They then requested she would not tell any one that they had called upon her. She replied — *Oh! you fear man more than God!*

A few days since, this reformed woman was sweeping the pavement in front of her house, when two female servants came up, enquiring for the house of the fortune-teller; mourning over them for their folly,

she said—*My dears, she cannot tell your fortunes. I have been a professed fortune-teller, and have deceived hundreds.* She succeeded in persuading them to go home.

At a meeting of Gipsies held at a gentleman's house, Jan. 1830, the youngest child of this woman said to her mother, *Mammy, who be all these folks?* The mother replied, *They are Gipsies. Was I ever like 'em?* asked the child. *Yes,* said the mother, *you was once a poor little Gipsy without stockings and shoes, and glad to beg a halfpenny of any body.* It is a circumstance not to be lamented, that the condition even of a little child, has been so much bettered by the exertions of the Committee.

In addition to the encouragement afforded us by this woman, giving up with so much decision the practice of fortune-telling, the author must not forget to mention an instance of her forbearance of temper under provocation and outrage. She had, when a vagrant, a quarrel with some of her ignorant people of another tribe. Meeting with them after her reformation, she was severely beaten by them, and had her ear-drops torn from her ears, while they contemptuously called her *Methodist*. When asked, why she did not bring her persecutors to justice, she replied, *How can I be forgiven, if I do not forgive? That is what my Testament tells me.*

The young widow we have before mentioned, continued to tell fortunes for some time after we had taken her children; but it pleased the Holy Spirit to awaken

her conscience, and to shew her the wickedness of such crimes, by which she was led to true repentance and reformation of character.

After the death of both the children of this interesting individual, she went into the service of a kind and pious lady in London. For this situation she was prepared by one of equal benevolence in Southampton, who had her for some time in her own house for that purpose. She continued in this situation till the lady's death, and has since been in other service, where she has conducted herself so well as to prove she is become a sincere servant of Christ.

CHAP. X.

Some Remarks on the Sin of Fortune-telling.

THE author will be pardoned, he is willing to hope, by the kind reader, if he digress in one or two paragraphs in this part of his work, purposely to expose the great wickedness of prognostication and fortune-telling; as the whole is not only unsound, foolish, absurd and false, but is most peremptorily forbidden in the Scriptures.

In the law of Moses it is commanded, that there should not be found among the people, any that used divination, or that was an observer of the times, or that was an enchanter: Deut. xiii. 10. In the prophecies of Malachi, the Lord has declared—*Thou shalt have no more soothsayers*: Mal. v. 12. 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. *Woe to them that devise iniquity*: Micah, ii. 1. Those who employ unhappy Gipsy women, should think on the portion of the liar; Rev. xxi. 8: for the person who tempts another to utter falsehood by offering rewards, is equally guilty before God. *A companion of fools shall be destroyed*: Prov.

xiii. 20. *Though hand join in hand, in sin, the wicked shall not go unpunished: Prov. xvi. 5. The destruction of the transgressors and the sinners shall be together: Isai. i. 28.* It may be safely affirmed that the sin of those persons, who trifle with Gipsy women in having their fortunes told by them, nearly resembles that of the first king of Israel; who, by consulting, in his trouble, a wicked woman, who pretended to supernatural power, filled up the measure of those sins, by which he lost the protection of heaven, his crown, and his life, and by which he involved his family in the most ruinous calamity.

Reader, have you encouraged any of these people in such crimes? If you have so far forgotten yourselves, the commands of God, and the curse that awaits you and those who deceive themselves the same way; reflect, before it be too late, on the evil into which you have willingly, wilfully, and without the least reasonable excuse, fallen, and on the guilt that must of necessity attach to your consciences thereby. Should you never meet those you encouraged to sin in this world, and therefore never have an opportunity of warning them of their danger, yet must you meet at the bar of Christ; and if then loaded with the weight of the sin in question, how awful will be your condition! Yourself and a fellow creature turned out for ever from God, and heaven, and hope! You may find mercy *now*, if you, by faith in the Redeemer, *seek for it*; and who can tell but if you sincerely pray for those

you led into sin, but that the mercy of which you partake, may find out them! May it even be so, to your everlasting comfort!

Some have supposed that this contemptible practice was first introduced into Europe by the Gipsies: but such persons are greatly mistaken. In the dark ages of superstition, in which this wandering people came to our part of the world, prognostication and fortune-telling were carried on to an infinite extent; and so enraged were the deceivers of those days against the Gipsies, that they proclaimed they knew nothing of the *art*; that they were deceivers and impostors.

It were well, if the Gipsies were *now* the only persons addicted to such wickedness; but this is not the case; for it is well known that almost every town is cursed with an astrological, magical, or slight-of-hand fortune-teller. There are two now in Southampton; and their wretched abodes are visited not only by vain and ignorant servants, but often by those who belong to the higher circles, and not unfrequently by those who drive their carriages.

To conclude this chapter, it may be safely said, that the sort of wickedness in question, is not only forbidden in the Scriptures, and will add much to the guilt of an impenitent death; but that it is calculated to give us the most airy anticipations, or oppress us with the most unreasonable despair. *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*; why should we then afflict ourselves about ill-fortune in future years? If we *seek*, as the

first great object of life, *the kingdom of heaven*, all [necessary] *things shall be added*. And why should we deceive ourselves with gay and splendid expectations? *Riches make themselves wings and soon fly away.*

CHAP XI.

Plans suggested to the pious and benevolent for promoting a Reformation among the Gipsies.

As no event happens without a cause, so no good is accomplished without means. It is in the power of man as an instrument, frequently to make his fellow-creatures either happy or miserable. And it may safely be asserted, that much of the ignorance, depravity, and consequent misery found in the world, are occasioned by the want of a united and persevering application of the energies of Christians, to the reformation of the most debased classes of Society. This backwardness to perform that which is good, with respect to our fellow men, must be accounted for, by the want of faith in God's word, and the little influence we allow the religion of the Saviour to have on our own hearts. It may also be occasioned by the strong evidences we have of the corruption of human nature, and the little good we see attend the labours of others: and we are often likewise discouraged because our own efforts fail. On these accounts, how often do we sigh for opportunities of doing good, whilst we neglect the openings of Providence in little things, which would frequently lead to the accomplishment of most important usefulness. Dr Johnson used to say;

“He who waits to do a great deal of good at once, will never do any.” Good is done by degrees. However small in proportion the benefit which follows *individual attempts* to do good, a great deal may thus be accomplished by perseverance, even in the midst of discouragements and disappointments. The first missionaries who visited England, had to contend with all the frightful cruelties of savage life, and the more horrid rites of Druidical worship. But now, though much wickedness abounds in England, it is, in a religious point of view, the paradise of the earth. May all those who wish to diffuse the genuine influences of Christianity among the poor Gipsies, imitate the example of the adorable Saviour, who *made himself of no reputation*, that he might enlighten the most ignorant, and impart happiness to the most miserable.

It will not be denied that the Gipsies are capable of feeling the influence, and appreciating the worth of the Gospel: and no one will doubt that the earlier the plans are adopted for their improvement, the sooner will this desirable work be accomplished.

The reader is requested to pay particular attention to the following suggestions.

The establishment of an Institution to supply instruction to the Gipsies by regular Ministers, or Missionaries, would be of but little use. Indeed such a measure could scarcely be carried into effect. For the Gipsies, beside associating in very small companies, are perpetually driven from place to place. To supply them, therefore, with regular instruction, a preacher

would be necessary to every family; who would condescend 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. Neither would it be possible for ministers to be appointed occasionally and alternately to visit the Gipsies in different counties. For it might often happen that, before intelligence could be forwarded to those appointed to give them instruction, they might be removed by a peace officer, or have set out on a journey of several miles distance. Benevolent, zealous, and prudent persons may do much by visiting the camps near towns; and the most suitable parts of the day for promoting this object, are morning and evening. But the most simple and easy plans of instruction should invariably be adopted.

To those persons who are afraid of visiting the Gipsies, lest they should be insulted, abused, and robbed, the author may be allowed to say that they have not the least grounds for such fears. In Scotland this fear is quite as general among the religious people as it is in England; and in that country the inhabitants are even afraid to prosecute them for their depredations and crimes. In England ladies are frequently known to visit their camps singly, when more than a mile from towns, and to sit and read and converse with them for a considerable time, with the greatest confidence and safety.

There is not the least prospect of doing them good, by forcing instruction upon them. About the year 1748, the Empress Theresa attempted the improvement of the Gipsies in Germany, by taking away, by force, all their children of a certain age, in order to educate and protect them; but such an unnatural and arbitrary mode of benevolence, defeated its own object; and this is not to be wondered at: the souls of the free resist every effort of compulsion, whether the object be good or bad. Compulsatory instruction, therefore, would do no good among the Gipsies. But they are easily won by kindness, and whoever wishes really to benefit them, must convince them that this is his intention, by patiently bearing with the displeasing parts of their characters, and by a willingness to lessen their distresses so far as it is in his power. Such kindness will never be lost upon them. Nor would the author recommend their being encouraged to live in Towns, except they are truly desirous of leading a new life, as it is almost certain that their morals would be greatly corrupted thereby: and they would be capable of more extensive injury to society, should they take to their wandering habits again.

A correspondent of a friend of the author, has just communicated the following particulars, which prove the truth of the above remarks.

There is in the neighbourhood of Harz, at Nordausen, a colony of Gipsies, to whom a Missionary has been sent from Berlin. His last letter speaks very favourably of their disposition to receive the word of

life. The manner of his introduction to them was by no means likely to ensure him a favourable reception. "Here," said the person who brought him among them, "you have a Missionary, who is come to convert you; now mind and be converted, or you shall go to prison." The effect this foolish speech produced on the Gipsies may be easily imagined, and likewise how useless it rendered the situation of the Missionary who desired to labour among them. They took to flight whenever they saw him approach, and thus, humanly speaking, there appeared not the least prospect of success, as the seed of the word could not so much as be sown. But HE, who alone is able to turn the heart, mercifully looked upon the work, and directed him to the right means effectually to bring it about.

The Gipsies were obliged to cultivate the land on which they were permitted to reside; but being quite ignorant of agriculture, they were at a loss how to proceed. The missionary undertook himself to give them advice and assistance in the work. Seeing the success that attended his labours, they began to be much more diligent in the cultivation of their grounds, while their confidence daily increased in their missionary, and they became more accessible and willing to be taught. At last they asked him for what reason the people at Berlin had sent him among them? and when he told them, they were overpowered with gratitude, and melted into tears. Their attachment to him and the friends who had sent him, became stronger and stronger. In some cases, it may be true, the conquest of their

prejudices against the missionary, might proceed from the advantages they reaped by attending to his advice; and this is much to their credit, and is a most desirable improvement. It is hoped they will soon be led to attend sincerely to his religious instructions.

A gentleman resident in one of the towns of Hampshire, was agreeably surprised one sabbath morning, by seeing a number of Gipsies at public worship; and on being induced to converse with them, was pleased to find that they regularly attended divine service at Southampton, and other places. He directed them to move their tents into a more commodious situation in one of his own fields. This unusual act of kindness, which however required no great sacrifice on his part, made so deep an impression on the hearts of this people, as is not likely to be forgotten: they will speak of his kindness as long as they live. This, as well as the instances we have mentioned already in this work, and many more which we may not notice, shew that we are not without opportunities of observing their gratitude for those favours that have been bestowed upon them.

They receive with willingness one of their own people, who is now a reformed and pious character, living at Southampton, and whom we have named in a former page. They now rejoice, too, in the assurance that a great number of good Christians pity and love them, and are seeking to promote their present and everlasting happiness.

It is therefore much to be wished, that committees of

ladies or gentlemen were formed in every town in the kingdom, and their attention directed to this neglected class of British subjects. An active person might be found in every place, to act under the sanction of such committees, who should visit their tents, instruct them in the Scriptures, and pray with and for them (the latter he should never neglect) by which means he would gain their confidence, and would always be looked on as a friend. Such a person should not be ashamed to speak kindly to them when he meets them in the street, or on the road. Indeed at all times he should converse with them plainly and affectionately about the great love of the Redeemer, in coming into this our world, to suffer and die for guilty sinners, of whom they make a number. But all the labour should not be confined to one person. Every member of these committees should be alive to this good work; as also all Christians, and especially ministers.

But should there not be sufficient energy and benevolence in all towns to form a committee, two or three who are well disposed to the object, may unite together and accomplish a great deal. And should there not be found more than one person thus benevolently disposed, let not that one be discouraged. The single talent must not be neglected, should it be only the power to give a cup of cold water, or to speak one word about the water of life to a necessitous and perishing Gipsy; for it may not, cannot be in vain. Reader, are you doing what you can in this humble way? It may be, you would rather ascend the pulpit and preach

to well-informed Christians, or visit the ignorant in your own town! This is well; but the other should not be left undone. The wanderers in the wilderness are not to be forgotten; the outcasts of society are to be sought after. Let us imitate our adorable Redeemer, *who went about doing good*, and who sought those who were not the least desirous of finding him. As an encouragement to British Christians, who are alive to the happiness of the Gipsies, they should know that there are many among them desirous of a new mode of life, as will appear by an application lately made to the author.

“ *Bristol, Oct. 11th, 1830.*

“ My dear Sir,

“ I am unwilling to let a parcel go to Southampton, without sending you a line to give you a little information respecting H——, of whom I made enquiry if she had called on the friends to whom I directed her? This was done by her; but she could obtain no employment. Both H—— and her husband conduct themselves in a very satisfactory manner. A young lady, I hope, will employ her soon; and, perhaps, in time she may get into regular work; but at present, she gets very little, and it is very necessary that the man should have employment. The cork trade is now over; (he used to sell corks.) They can have the loan of a donkey for two months for nothing, and that being the case, I told H—— to look out for a small cart, which I desired her to hire for a week, and sell coals

and potatoes in small quantities.* I have felt fearful lest you should think me too busy; but necessity has compelled me to do something, or they must have almost *starved*; and I cannot bear the thought of their wanting bread; knowing it must be a great temptation for them to return to their old habits. The man appears much altered for the better. He said one day, when they wanted food, that he would rather beg than oblige his wife to return to fortune-telling. H—— tells me that her husband and she live happily, and that they have had words but once since they left their vagrant life. I am also happy to discover in her pleasing evidences of honesty, as she pays her weekly rent often before it is due, when she has money, fearing that she may spend it in food. Job, their son, has no work, but I hope that he will be able to help his father. Do, my dear Mr Crabb, pray for this little branch of your family. I have received two pounds for your Infants' Schools, from Mr ——, and would send it now, but I have been obliged to expend a considerable part of it on these poor Gipsies. Do write to me when you can, and give me advice respecting this poor family.”

The author must remark that, since the above letter was received, others also have been sent from two

* The friends of this good cause at Bristol, now think that manual labour is far more conducive to their conversion than hawking any article whatever: the above plan is therefore totally abandoned for labour.

ladies in that neighbourhood, which give the Southampton committee great pleasure. The following are extracts.

“ I have seen Mr——, and have had a pleasing interview with Miss——, relating to the poor wanderers you wrote to me about. I have had the man and woman at my house. After having heard H—— read, I told her ‘ that the leprosy she had been reading of, represented the evil of our sinful heart; that we were born with it; that it prevailed in every part of the soul; and that we had lived always under its influence.’ She exclaimed, *dear me ! I never heard the like of that before ! now it seems good for me to know this.* She wept much. When I told her of the love of Christ, she appeared struck with her own extreme ingratitude. Her expressions were so simple and full of pathos, that my heart was quite overcome. She ran out of the room for her husband, and on her return, said, “*ah ! do talk to my poor husband, just what you said to me.*” I found him not so interesting, but desirous of leaving his wandering life for ever, and get employment if possible. They have made some flower baskets for me; and hoping they may obtain orders for more, I have recommended them to my friends. I have heard of another family, consisting of fourteen souls, who encamp on Bedminster Down, and there by God’s help, I intend to send a minister of Jesus, to try what can be done for them. There is also another family expected, who have a house of *their own* at

Bedminster, and who winter there. Should the Lord bless our humble endeavours, we must have a regular Committee, and set about our work in a workman-like manner; nothing short of a Colony will satisfy me. I intend to introduce this interesting subject at a party this evening, and hope the Lord will open the hearts of his people, to do good to those poor benighted wanderers."

The author has also just received from a clergyman in Scotland, a most interesting account of a colony of Gipsies in that country, where, I am happy to observe, they do not seem so much hunted as in England. And as the severity of their winters drive them into houses for three months, during that season, there is offered a fair opportunity to both ministers and kindly disposed Christians to do them good. The letter alluded to is most gladly inserted with the view to encourage the Christian denominations of England to imitate the benevolence, zeal, and industry of their much respected brethren the Scotch.

" Yetholm Hall, Dec. 11th, 1830.

" My dear Sir,

" Through the report of the Society for ameliorating the condition of that unfortunate race, the Gipsies, I am acquainted with your name, and with your benevolent exertions in their behalf. As the minister of a parish in which perhaps the largest colony of this people in Scotland reside, and naturally, therefore, very

much interested in any plan that promises to improve their condition, I take the liberty of writing you ; not so much for the purpose of answering the numerous queries subjoined to the report, as of requesting your advice and opinion, with regard to what plan might be adopted for the improvement of the colony, placed, in some degree, under my care and superintendence. I have but lately been called to the ministerial office, and appointed to the pastoral care of this parish ; and previous to the period of my appointment, I had no opportunity of being acquainted with the character and habits of the Gipsies. Your longer acquaintance with this people, and experience, may suggest to me some useful hints on the subject, should you take the trouble to notice this letter. The number of Gipsies in the parish of Yetholm is about 100. You are no doubt already in some degree acquainted with the Gipsies of Kirk Yetholm, from the interesting notices furnished by Mr Smith, of Kelso, and published in HOYLAND'S SURVEY, and in one of the earliest numbers of Blackwood's Magazine. And his account of them is substantially correct to this day. It would appear that the Gipsy population of this place is fluctuating. In 1798, there were only 59. In 1818, when Mr Smith wrote, there were 109. In 1830, there are 100. And in a few years more, this number may be considerably diminished or increased. The greater part of them are "muggers," or "potters," who carry earthen-ware about the country for sale. There are two horn spoon makers ; all the others are abroad from their head

quarters, of Kirk Yetholm, from eight to nine months in the year. The history of some of the individuals and families of the clan, would furnish something very interesting. One of the family of the Taa's is still denominated the "King." The number of children belonging to each family is generally large. There may be thirty children under twelve years of age. The parents express themselves very anxious that their children should be educated, and are willing, for this purpose, to leave them at home all the summer; and farther, that they should be trained to some occupation different from their own. Many of the parents declare, that they would willingly remain at home, could they be supplied with constant employment. Of late, the greater number of them have occasionally attended church, and some of them continue to attend most regularly when at home. A considerable number of the younger children also, when at home, attend our Sabbath School. I have likewise assisted the parents to send most of their children to the Day School: still, however, these children are at home scarcely three months in the depth of winter. Several families have not returned yet. Their education, therefore, even were they sent regularly to school, during this time, would be very limited. And besides, by attending the parents to the country, they contract an attachment to their loose, wandering life, which must tend to perpetuate the peculiarities of the tribe. A few weeks ago I was requested by Dr Baird, the Principal of the University, and one of the ministers of Edinburgh, to write

out a pretty full account of these my parishioners. This I have done. The account, however, was written so hastily, that I had not time even to correspond with you on the subject, before doing so, as my object in writing to you was chiefly to propose some plan which might be adopted for their improvement, on which you might give me some useful information. In this account, I have proposed that a fund or subscription should be raised for the purpose of keeping the children at home during those months their parents are traversing the country, for paying their school wages, and, if possible, for giving a salary to a teacher to superintend their education, and that a small additional sum be occasionally in readiness for paying an apprentice-fee with the boys. This account may probably be published. I am in hopes, also, that the Principal will interest himself in the cause. Should the account be published, the proof-sheet may be sent down to me, ere long, in which case I should wish to hear from you before that time, as I may have then an opportunity of supplying any hint, or otherwise altering the plan proposed, from your kind communication. The sum which I conceived would be required for the purpose was about a hundred pounds per annum. Mr B——, of Killau, with whom, I believe, we both have the pleasure of being acquainted, has more than once wished me to open a correspondence with you on this subject. He also is interested in the cause, and promises to use his influence with others. I think he told me that some more detailed account of your plan was

published, or preparing for the press, in which various alterations and improvements had been made. This was an additional reason for my wishing to hear from you, before submitting to the people of Scotland any plan on the subject. I should wish to know how the cause prospers with you, and what number you have at present under your care. I am extremely interested for this unfortunate people, and any information therefore with regard to what is doing elsewhere, would be acceptable. May He prosper the cause, whose blessing alone can render our labours effectual !

I remain, my dear Sir,

With much respect and esteem,

Yours truly,

JOHN BAIRD.

“ P. S.—I have just received a letter from Principal Baird, informing me that my account of the Gipsies of Kirk Yetholm, will be published, and a proof for correction be sent to me shortly. It will be published in a new statistical account of Scotland, which will ensure for it a very extensive circulation, especially among the ministers of the established church of Scotland.”

Another letter relating to the Gipsies of Yetholm, has been received from the same clergyman, extracts of which may be seen in the Appendix.

CHAP. XII.

Plans suggested to the pious and benevolent, for promoting a Reformation among the Gipsies, continued.

IT is usual, in Southampton, for a few pence to be given to a child who informs any of the members of the Committee when a family of Gipsies begin to erect their tents on the common, that they may immediately be visited by our Reader. This may be done elsewhere. It may be well, too, to buy a basket, or any other article they may honestly have to dispose of, when opportunity offers; but it is not well to bestow money on them, unless in sickness or want. When their wives are confined, a favourable opportunity offers to bring into action the sympathies of compassion in other females; and what gratitude would such an instance of tenderness beget! These poor women have frequently been heard to exclaim, while tears filled their eyes, *How kind, how good to us!* for favours very much less!

The author has seldom met with instances of ingratitude, though he is obliged to record one. He was interested in the reformation of a Gipsy family that encamped, a short time since, about five miles from Southampton, whom he visited early on a Monday morning. Reaching the camp, accompanied by the

old Gipsy he has often mentioned in the course of this work, he said to them, "Since you would not come to see me, I am come to see you." The camp, consisting of eight persons, gave him a cordial reception, the husband excepted, who said, he did not want his company. "You certainly do not mean what you say," said his friend; to which he ungratefully replied, "I never speak words without meaning." In a good-natured way he was questioned as to the truth of his being a Gipsy, accompanied with the remark, that Gipsies were seldom ungrateful for the favours which were shown them. In half an hour after, he left the camp very angrily. This man had been released from many years' imprisonment, through the author's intercession; but having associated with thieves so long, the worst principles of his heart were drawn forth. Before he left the camp, he said he had no care about his children, but to feed and clothe them. "Then you only treat your children as a man does his dogs and pigs." He replied, that "such treatment was good enough." This is a common sentiment; for the generality of parents have no further care about their children than to feed and clothe them. Such persons are not perhaps aware how nearly they come to that dreadful state of mind and heart, of which this ungrateful Gipsy so wickedly boasted.

After he had left the party, those who remained attended to conversation and prayer, when one of the women wept bitterly on account of her sin of fortune-telling. The author has since been informed that this

poor man expresses his sorrow for his uncalled-for behaviour.

The plans adopted in Southampton, for the conversion of the Gipsies in Hampshire, are now generally known among their people. Not long ago, an old woman brought four orphans of a deceased relative from a great distance, in order to place them under the care of the Committee. On this occasion the old woman thus addressed the author. "Are you Mr Crabb?" Being told, yes, she continued—"Mr Chas. Stanley, a Gipsy, desired me to bring you these poor orphans." The author being assured that they were orphans, promised, after some conversation, to visit their tent the following day. He did so, and never can he forget the distressing scene he then witnessed. It was winter, and the weather was unusually cold, there being much snow on the ground. The tent, which was only covered with a *ragged* blanket, was pitched on the lee side of a *small* hawthorn bush. The children had stolen a few *green* sticks from the hedges, but they would not burn. *There was no straw* in the tent, and only one blanket to lay betwixt six children and the frozen ground, with nothing to cover them. The youngest of these children was three, and the eldest, seventeen years old. In addition to this wretchedness, the smaller children were nearly naked. The youngest was squatted on the ground, her little feet and legs bare, and gnawing a frozen turnip, which had been stolen from an adjoining field. None of them had tasted bread for more than a day. The moment they

saw their visitor, the little ones repeatedly shouted, "Here is the *gemman come for us!*" Some money was given to the oldest sister to buy bread with, at which their joy was greatly increased. Straw was also provided for them to sleep on, four were measured for clothes, and, after a few days, they were placed under the care of one of our reformed Gipsies. The youngest child died, however, a short time after, in consequence of having been so neglected in infancy.

The children were cleanly washed and newly clothed, before they were removed from the common. Perhaps they had never been thoroughly washed before. The oldest sister would not give up her wandering habits; and the oldest boy chose to go back to the camp again; so that the Committee had soon only three of them in charge. And these were so filthy in their habits for a long time, that it was very disagreeable to be near them. It is hoped that, though they have lost their earthly parents, they may be led, through this event, to God their heavenly Father. These children were soon baptized, and two of them are improving at one of the Infants' Schools.

A short account of their parents may not be out of place here. The mother was a great fortune-teller and swindler. She once robbed a poor shepherd in Dorsetshire of twenty pounds, by promising to fill his box with money. Their father was a most depraved character. Their life and practices are well described in the language of the Apostle, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.* 1 Cor. xv. 32. The man was the

buffoon of their company, and became more depraved every year. They often had a great deal of money, which was, no doubt, obtained through dishonest means. On one occasion, he and many other Gipsies, entered the parlour of a small public house on the borders of Hants, when emptying the contents of a dirty purse into an half-pint cup, he nearly filled it with sovereigns; and declared, they would not leave the house, till they had spent it all. His wife, at this time, who was intoxicated, was robbed of all the money she had got from the poor credulous shepherd, excepting one pound.

The same man once put 150 sovereigns into his kettle, to treat himself with what he called, *gold water*, for his tea; a piece of folly and wickedness only equalled by a fact with which the author is well acquainted, when an old man had his gold put under his pillow, and often shown to him, when he was dying. We need not wonder, therefore, that the children of this Gipsy couple should be so ignorant, depraved, and destitute. For money that is ill-gotten, and squandered in extravagance, entails a double curse on the parties concerned. But to return to the subject of this chapter.

To visit the Gipsies in their tents is of great importance. Clergymen of the Establishment, dissenting ministers, and home missionaries, have at various times done this, and conversed freely with them on the Christian religion; and it has *not been in vain*. Indeed, nothing that is done, through Jesus Christ, pur-

posely to please God, and benefit the wretched, can fail to produce a good effect. The Rev. Messrs Hyatt and Cobbin, who were deputed by the Home Missionary Society, to visit many parts of England, to enquire into the condition of this people, had no doubt, but that much good may be done among them, if proper means are pursued. It has many times been proved, that to attempt to raise them in society, without the influence of religious instruction, would be improper. They have not sufficient principles of honesty, nor purity of conduct, till they are taught those principles, and changed, by religion. One, among several instances, may be named.

A young female Gipsy, remarkable for the beauty of her person, was much noticed by a lady of rank. She was made to sit many times for her portrait, was introduced into the drawing-room, and became of consequence as one of the family. She might have done well, had she not given up all her prospects by running away with a Gipsy youth, for whom she had an attachment, and with whom she has ever since lived in great misery. If less attention had been paid to her beauty, and more to the cultivation of right principles, she might now have been reformed, religious, and happy.

To those who wish to forward the instruction of the children of these wanderers, which is of vast importance, the use of tins with letters and monosyllables stamped upon them, is recommended. A little ink or paint will be necessary to make the letters visible.

This plan would save much expense, and render elementary books unnecessary. They could not be torn, as books generally are. The pieces thrown away by the tinman, if the corners were taken off, would answer every purpose. To induce those children, who cannot be got from the tent, to learn from these tins, the visitor might promise them an old garment, or some other trifle. Should the Gipsies conduct themselves properly, when thus visited, a little willow-wood may be given them to encourage them in industry, and forward the manufactory of baskets. And it might be well were a small piece of ground devoted to the growth of willows, in neighbourhoods frequented by them, on purpose to encourage them thereby. It might be advisable, too, to give them testimonials on a card, of good conduct, when about to remove to another district, which might serve as an introduction to benevolent persons, and those interested in their welfare in other places; and this means would effectually prevent all imposition, keep up the attention of the good among them, and would constantly bring them before the notice of christian society. Such kindness would be felt by the Gipsies, and, in time, might produce a good effect. This method has been attended to by the Southampton Committee.

The great object that Christians should have in view, should be to instruct them in the blessed truths of the Christian religion, imbue them with a happy sense of honesty and morality, and then reclaim them wholly from their unsettled and wandering habits; for

until they have some knowledge of religion, and some anxiety to reform, they would only be worse by being brought constantly before the bad examples that would be set them in towns. Of course, such a change *cannot be fully accomplished in the present generation*; it cannot be expected. But their conversion to God will wholly be accomplished in time, if all Christians do their duty, depending on the influence of the Holy Spirit.

From what has been said in this chapter, it will appear, that, visiting their tents to pray for, and instruct them, teaching such children to read as cannot get to public schools, and prevailing on all who are able to do so, to attend public worship; are the principal things to be attempted, in this great and good undertaking. Those Christians who wish for opportunities of doing good to the Gipsies in and about London, will find many of them in the suburbs in the months of April, May, and June, when they generally find work in the market gardens. In the months of July and August they move into Sussex and Kent, and are engaged in the harvest. And in the month of September, *great numbers* of them are to be found in the hop-districts of Kent, Sussex and Surry, where they find employment. During the winter, many of them settle in London, Westminster, Bristol, and other large towns, when a good opportunity is presented for teaching, both to the children and adults of this class, the elements of reading, and the principles of true religion. For the information of those who may wish to visit the Gipsies

in London and Bristol, during the winter, the author thinks it his duty to name the streets where they generally reside.

Tottenham-court Road; Battle Bridge; Paddington; Bolton Street; Church Lane; Church Street; Kent Street, Borough; New Street; White Street; Banbridge Street; Shore-ditch; Totbill-fields; and Tunbridge Street. In Bristol they are principally found in Saint Phillip's, Newfoundland Street, Bedminster, and at the March and September fairs.

At the Ascot and Epsom races, they may be met in large numbers; and if a benevolent, kind, and zealous minister of Christ were to visit them at their encampments at these seasons, and explain to them the facts, doctrines, and blessings of the Gospel, much good might be done. The morning would be the happiest time to visit these Gipsies, as they are too often at races, inebriated before night. It is presumed little could be said to profit them in a state of intoxication, and many of the women are then employed either in swindling or fortune-telling.

Should the sympathies of the British public be efficiently directed to the Gipsies of this country, it may call forth the zeal of other nations to improve their still more degraded condition on the Continent, where more than half a million of them wander, ignorant as the heathens of all that is necessary to salvation. Those of this country loudly call upon us for instruction, which may easily be given them. Let all who have either time, money, or ability, give a helping hand;

and, above all, assist by their unfeigned and earnest prayers. It may be very advisable to pray publicly for them in places of worship, and at the family altar, after visiting them in the highways and hedges. It might impress those of them who attend, with a grateful sense of the gracious care of God, and lead Christian congregations to think more of them, and to do more for them. May the merciful God of heaven and of earth, hasten the happy period, when the Gipsies of this, and of all other countries, shall embrace, and love, and be obedient to the Gospel of the gracious Redeemer!

CHAP. XIII.

Further Account of encouraging interviews with Gipsies, and interesting Correspondence.

THE author laments that he has passed so many years of his life wholly careless of the Gipsies of this country. Having travelled many times through England, he has had frequent opportunities of seeing them. But, till now, he looked on their conversion as a hopeless case, and nearly wholly neglected them. He has already stated the manner his attention was first roused to consider their condition and necessities more particularly, and he reflects with pleasure on the kindness of Providence in leading him to witness those events which called for sympathy towards them; and on the mercy of God so apparent in blessing the labours of himself and others in their behalf.

The late Rev. Legh Richmond felt a deep interest in the conversion of this people. To awaken the sympathies and energies of his countrymen to that subject, he composed the following hymn on their behalf.

THE GIPSIES' PETITION.

Oh! ye who have tasted of mercy and love,
And shared in the blessings of pardoning grace;
Let us the kind fruits of your tenderness prove,
And pity, oh! pity the poor Gipsy race.

For long have we wandered, neglected and wild,
 Esteemed by all people as wretched and base;
 Nor once on our darkness has light ever smiled;
 Then pity, oh! pity the poor Gipsy race.

Like you, we have lost that pure gem, which, when lost,
 Not the mines of Golconda * can ever replace;
 To redeem it the blood of a Saviour it cost:
 Then pity, oh! pity the poor Gipsy race.

Like us, you were wild in the sight of your God;
 But he looked, and he loved, and he pitied your case;
 The Redeemer has cleansed you in streams of his blood;
 Then pity, oh! pity the poor Gipsy race.

Ye, who have found mercy, that mercy display;
 Ye sons of adoption, your origin trace;
 And then sure you cannot your face turn away,
 But will pity and pray for the poor Gipsy race;

That we may form part of that numerous throng,
 Redeemed from destruction by infinite grace;
 And mingle with you in the heavenly song;
 Then pity, oh! pity the poor Gipsy race.

It has been the custom of the author to have a yearly meeting of the Gipsies at his own house, which is then open to all their families. Here, early in the year 1830, those who were in the lanes and on the common near Southampton, met many of their kind and religious friends, who are interested in their happiness. The morning was agreeably spent in a religious service, conducted for their spiritual benefit; after which some attention was paid to their temporal wants. Forty-

* A district in East India celebrated for diamonds.

eight of them, all nearly related to each other, who were at that time assembled in the neighbourhood to renew their family friendships, attended on this occasion, and were much pleased with the services in which they engaged. Different portions of the Scriptures were read and expounded to them, after which they had a plain and familiar address. It was a pleasure to meet these people at a throne of grace. After partaking of bread and cheese and ale, during which they conducted themselves very properly, a blanket was presented to the proprietor of each tent, a pair of stockings to every individual, and a quantity of calico for changes for the children. There were thirteen reformed Gipsies among them, who spent the rest of the day in reading the Scriptures to their brethren at their own houses.

These people expressed themselves very gratefully. One of the families, of whom the mother could read, begged a bible. Some weeks after this bible had been given, the family was visited in its tent, when this copy of the Holy Scriptures was shewn to him, who observed many of the pages doubled down to mark the passages with which the reader had been impressed. The father of the family said—"I will never rest till I can read that book through." This poor man now attends divine service whenever he has an opportunity, although he strongly opposed, at one time, the reading of the Scriptures in his tent.

A lady, who was present at this meeting, asked one of the reformed Gipsies, how she had felt herself

on that morning? She replied—"I never was so happy;" and, after a short silence, continued—"The dinner we had last year, was much better than that we had to-day, as it was roast beef and plum-pudding; but what I heard then, of the minister's address, was only the word of man to me; but to-day, it has been the word of God; I am sure it has."

Although it may be feared, that to many Gipsies then present, the reading of the Scriptures, and the familiar address, were only as *the words of man*, yet is there reason to hope they understood it, and that they will benefit thereby.

This woman had an only surviving brother who was killed in fighting, and whose death was instantaneous. She was exceedingly distressed, and observed, in reference to this awful circumstance, "I should not have thought of his soul after death, at one time; but now I can read my Testament, I am sure that none can go to heaven but those who are born again." And she made an observation, too, of the utmost importance, shewing the great necessity there is for the Gipsies to be taught to read. *My being able to read myself*, said she, *has a great deal more effect upon me, than it would if another read it to me, and I could not read; for now* I AM SURE IT IS IN THE BOOK." She carries her Testament in her pocket when she goes a journey, and reads it to her former companions, when she meets them on the road; and if they express any wonder at the change that has taken place, she refers them to the

Scriptures as the cause, and her kind friends at Southampton, as the instruments.

The following circumstance lately occurred, and will shew the improvement that has taken place in her daughters. One of them had been sent by her mother to receive the weekly sum allowed her. On receiving the money, she said, "This is twopence too much, sir." Being accustomed now and then to give her a few pence towards buying a Testament, she was told to keep it for that purpose. "I thank you," said she, "I have got a Testament, now, and mother has given her's to my next sister, since she has had a bible; and my youngest sister had a Testament given her at the Sunday School: but one of us is saving money to buy a hymn-book with; I will give *her* the twopence."

This incident, trifling as it may seem to some, will not fail to gratify others, whose hearts are anxiously desirous of improving the Gipsies.

In the autumn of 1830, the author felt a strong desire to visit Farnham, where were, at that time, thousands of poor people assembled to pick hops, among whom were many Gipsies. Stanley was sent a few days before to make known his intentions of preaching to them on the evening of a fixed day. While at Farnham, Stanley ate, drank, and slept in some of their camps, by which he gained their confidence and affection.

During the author's stay he accompanied Stanley to various hop-plantations, where great numbers of the

most wretched part of the community are employed in the hopping season. Great numbers of tracts were distributed among them, while the author entered into many free and familiar conversations with them. Many were found very much depraved ; but none were more depraved among the Gipsies, than many of the other class ; for they were blasphemers of God and his religion. One man, like many of old, stirred up the people to reject and despise the truth. He said, “ No one would get any thing by praying to God ;” and, “ if people wanted bread on a Sunday, it would be better for them to steal a mess of potatoes, and wood to cook them with, than go to church.” Some of the poor shuddered at his boldness, and contempt of God’s law. With much impudence he declared, “ that he knew a man who put his dough into the oven on a Sunday without heating it, and then went to church to pray that God would bake it for him ; but that the fool was disappointed.” The minister said to him—“ You know that you have told a wilful lie. You never knew such a man. There is not one of these little children will believe you.” He appeared confounded at this unexpected rebuke. May this sinner repent and be saved!

Among the hop-pickers of Farnham were many Gipsies the visitors had long known ; and their smiling faces spoke the gladness of their hearts and the warmth of their gratitude, when they were noticed by their friends affectionately and kindly ; nor had they for-

gotten the favours that had been shewn them at Southampton.

Those of the Gipsies who were not acquainted with the object the author had in view, in paying them a visit, were much alarmed when enquiries were made for the Gipsies in the hop-grounds; supposing they were pursued by the magistrates. One youth told Stanley, that he knew not whether to run, or stay where he was; but recollecting to have been *in no spray lately*, he resolved on staying. When Stanley spoke to him in his own language, and introduced the minister, all his fears vanished. The Gipsies were astonished that any one should travel forty miles to see them.

Their public meeting was after the labours of the day, near one of the hop-grounds, about half an hour after sun-set. A few small candles gave light to a small tenement, used as a lodging place for the hop-gatherers, where the congregation was accommodated. A few of the inhabitants of Farnham, and some of the female Gipsies, who were much delighted to mingle with them in the worship of God, were put inside, and the men, with such women and children as could not get in, stood outside, the place being very much too small for so great a number of people. The preacher stood on the threshold of the door and addressed the people, of whom those without could only be seen now and then, as an adjacent wood fire cast at intervals upon them an intermitting light. The Rev. Mr John-

son kindly attended, and assisted in the devotional part of the service; and some of his congregation obligingly assisted in the singing.

On this occasion the Gospel of Christ was addressed to many who had never before heard an exposition of the blessed word of God. The sermon was from Psalm lxxxvi. 5. After service the Gipsies were exhorted to seek for opportunities of attending the house of God; to beg of some minister a bible for every tent; and to ask every one who may come near them to read certain of its pages to them.

During the address, many of *their crimes* were enlarged upon, and their dread of, and liability to punishment for them in this world; and they were urged to call on the God of all compassion and mercy, for help and for forgiveness, by that all-powerful motive, that he will never be inattentive to the prayers of the most helpless, wretched, and guilty sinner, when presented to God by faith in our only mediator, Jesus Christ.

Stanley, who, after the service, accompanied the Gipsies to their tents, found that the sermon afforded conversation for the whole evening. One of them said, "The minister has told us every thing, as though he had lived with us." Another observed, "If it be all true what the gentleman has said, not a Gipsy can be saved." A third exhorted his children "never to say bad words again." The little creature replied—"Then I hope my *grandfer* (grandfather) will never swear any more." Many of them talked of the evils

of fortune-telling, and some resolved on going to Southampton, to see the reformed Gipsies.

During the stay of the minister in that neighbourhood, eighty of them were visited, among whom was a dying woman, who very gladly received instruction, and heard prayer. A minister, in the neighbourhood, had been asked to visit her, but had neglected to do so.

The author must not forget to acknowledge the kindness of the farmers who assisted him in the distribution of tracts, &c. &c., and who solicited that some might be left them for that purpose.

This visit afforded an opportunity to contradict many false reports of the treatment with which the Gipsy children had met in the Infants' Schools at Southampton. It was said that they were all confined, and would at a future period be transported. This shews how easily people who deceive others, are imposed on themselves.

The following letter was addressed to the author 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 Give My Luv To My Son Job. Plese to Give My Luv to My Sister Paishince, and Hur Childern. Plese to Give My Luv To My Ant Pheny, and Plese to Lett Me Now How My Cuzin James doos Go on, Plese to Lett Me Now How My Unkil Charls and His Famly Is. Wm Duff Gives His Best Rispecs To All. Plese 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. Plese to Tel my Child from Me To Bee A Good Boy, and Think Imself Wel off 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 Cauuld for, in Bristil. Plese To Give My Luv To My Son Job. So No More At Prezint from your Umble Sarvint. Plese God I Am Coming To See You Some time This Munth.

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

The following letter, too, refers to the writer of the above.

Bristol, August, 1830.

“ My dear Sir,

“ As I know that you are deeply interested in every circumstance relating to the Gipsies, I trouble you

with the following anecdote. In the month of January last, when walking in the city of Bristol, I met a Gipsy woman, who accosted me with the usual salutation of her race, "Shall I tell you your fortune?" I enquired her name, and then said, "You well know that you are not able to tell me my fortune; and I am sorry to see you carrying on such deception." I then endeavoured to speak to her about the importance of considering her eternal welfare, and of seeking the salvation which is in Christ Jesus; at the same time pointing out the certain condemnation she was bringing upon herself, by willingly following the *multitude to do evil*, even carrying a *lie in her right hand*. She urged that her trade (which she acknowledged to be built on deceit and falsehood) was her only support; and that she must starve if she followed my advice. I reminded her that she would be like Dives, if she gained the whole world and lost her own soul; but that were she indeed to honour God, by giving up her wicked trade, because she knew that it was displeasing to him, he would never suffer her to want any good thing. After much more conversation, she assured me that she would never tell fortunes again, and would discontinue her evil habits of life. I told her that I could not allow her to make to me any promise of the kind; for she did not know her wickedness, nor the power which could alone prevent her from committing sin. I again besought her to avail herself of the means of instruction within her power.

Before leaving the city, I commended her to the

care of some pious friends, who were interested in my account of her, and who kindly promised not to lose sight of her. Since that time I have received very pleasing accounts from them respecting her. They have purchased materials in order that she may be able to support herself by basket-making, which she has begun ; and I trust she has relinquished her former trade. She is making progress in reading, and constantly attends the preaching of the Gospel. I hope also that she is really in earnest for the welfare of her soul. I earnestly wish that every one would take an interest in the same ; and I should be much rejoiced if the circumstance which I have just mentioned, should be the means of encouraging any one to notice those Gipsies with whom they may occasionally meet, and to exert themselves in saving them from their present degraded condition.

“ I am, my dear Sir,

“ Yours respectfully,

*****”

Wm. Stanley's Letter to the Author.

“ Hon. 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 be pity the sad state of the people whereof I made a part.* I have given them the best instruction that lay in my power, and by reading 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 would 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 expressions, which *was* so common amongst them—*Artmee Devillesty*, 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 a thought that he was every where 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 great 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 their 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, hon. Sir,

Your most obliged and humble Servant,

WILLIAM STANLEY.”

“ P. S.—On examining the different *branches of my family*, I find upwards of 200 of us in different parts of England.”

This poor man, when a soldier, and in the habit of attending divine service, as a part of his duty, often heard his comrades speak of the text, on their return to the barracks. He one day made up his mind to bring home the text also, the next time he went to church. He heard with attention, and when he returned to the barracks, he said, “ I’ve got the text now.” “ What is it, Stanley?” he was asked by a comrade, when he answered, “ The 19th day of the month, and the 95th Psalm.” When relating this to the author, he added, “ I had the mortification to be laughed at by all my comrades who witnessed my ignorance.” Do not many professing Christians come away from the house of God as ignorant as this poor Gipsy? Or if they have been taught to know and remember the text, it is all they attend to. This man’s mind did not long remain in this dark state. After the above event he learned to read, and one day, taking up a Testament from the barracks’ table, he read a portion of it, (for so he expressed himself.) *The sublimity of the language struck his mind with astonishment*, and he said, *I will buy that book if I can*. His comrade asked him three halfpence for it; and he was glad of his purchase; although the Testament was very much torn. The Holy Scriptures were scarce in those days, a copy of which could seldom be bought by the poor;

nor, indeed, would the word of life have been useful to them, as not one in a hundred could read.

Soon after this, he was invited to attend a Wesleyan chapel in Exeter, where a funeral sermon was to be preached by the Rev. Wm. Aver. The text was, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.* While the minister was describing the happiness of the righteous, divine light shone upon his soul, he felt that *he* was not that character, and that there was no prospect of his dying happily, unless he possessed it. This sermon was the means of his conversion.

CHAP. XIV.

Interesting particulars of the Gipsies, related by a Clergyman.

THE following account is selected from a tract published in York, in 1822, detailing several interesting visits that a Yorkshire clergyman made to some of the camps of that wandering and neglected people. Were the author of the little book known, application would have been made to him, for permission to reprint these extracts. But it is hoped he will excuse the liberty taken, as the design is to *induce other clergymen and ministers to go and do likewise*. This clergyman, having fallen in with a gang of Gipsies on the road, who were travelling to their place of encampment, addressed a young female among them, and found her not ignorant of religion. "How," said the clergyman, "did you obtain the knowledge of religion?" "Sir," answered she, "in the depth of winter, the men folks only travel; the women and children belonging to my family and party, always live in the town. In those seasons I have gone with some of our relatives, who live there, and are religious people, to the worship of God: in that way I have learned these things.'

"This was a practical comment on the text which says, *The entrance of the word giveth light; it giveth*

understanding to the simple. After giving her some suitable advice, and with it his benediction, he left her; but not without hopeful expectations that the seeds of grace were sown in her heart.

“ He next overtook the grandmother and several of her grandchildren. She was pleased at his noticing her, and answered his enquiries with modesty and propriety. She corroborated what her daughter had said, and in her answers discovered not only an acquaintance with the general truths of the Gospel, but a feeling sense of their importance. She said, ‘ I love to go to church, and do go *now*, sir, when I can; but do not always meet with the right doctrines: my prayers I offer up night and morning, under the hedge. I hope God Almighty hears my prayers.’ The clergyman observed, that sincere prayer was acceptable to God any where, equally under the hedge, as in the parlour, or in the church. When arrived at their camp, he promised them a Bible, as they had none, and directed some of the party to call at the friend’s house in the neighbourhood where he was staying. Soon after his return thither, a knock was heard at the door, when it was announced, ‘ Two Gipsies, sir, are come for a Bible.’ On going out, he found in the hall the young man who could read, and a younger brother, a fine boy of about fourteen years of age.” The gentleman who wrote the account, adds as follows:—

“ Their countenances were very animated and expressive; there seemed to be a ray of heavenly brightness resting upon them; and while I gave them a

charge how to read the sacred gift, they were much affected: the boy, in particular, listened with eager attention, fixing his eyes first on me, then on the Bible. After I had inscribed their names in the title-page, they departed with my blessing; and what is better—with the blessing of God.”

At another part of the year, this clergyman returned to the same spot where he had before been so delightfully engaged in attempting to benefit the poor Gipsies. He found out another camp, and thus writes of them.

“ On my approach to the camp (where was a group of nearly naked children,) the Gipsy girls rose up, and, in a modest and respectful manner, answered my questions; while the little swarthy group of children gathered around me. To one of these girls I said, ‘How is it that you bear such a wandering and exposed life?’ In reply, she said, ‘Sir, it is *use*; *use* is second nature.’ ‘But have you any religion? Do you think about God, about judgment, and eternity? Do you know how to pray?’ She answered, ‘I say my prayers, sir, night and morning.’ I then said, ‘can any of your people read?’ ‘Yes, sir,’ she replied, ‘one of our men that is not here, can read very well.’ ‘Have you a Bible among you?’ ‘No, sir; we should be thankful for one, sir.’”

On leaving the camp, the clergyman promised to call on them again, when the other part of the family should be returned from the town, where they were gone to vend their wares.

“ On my return to the encampment,” says he, “ I

was met by two men who came out to greet me. I asked them kindly of their names. They informed me it was Bosvill. The women and children were now collected around me. I inquired who among them could read. Captain Bosvill, for so I called him, answered me, 'My wife, sir, can read any thing in English.' I was glad to hear this, and asked them if they had any books. Bosvill went to a package and brought forth his stock, fragments of an old Testament, and an old spelling-book. 'And what use do you make of your spelling book?' asked I. 'My wife,' replied Bosvill, 'when she has time, teaches the children their letters.' I now shewed them the Bible I had in my pocket, saying, that as it was so holy and blessed a book, it ought not to be given in an indifferent and common manner; and asked, if I were to ride over in the evening to give it them, and to explain to them its use, whether they would be all together to hear me. 'Yes, yes;' was the reply, from many voices. I appointed seven o'clock for the purpose. I then distributed amongst them some tracts, containing passages for every day in the week, and also the tract of Short Sermons; for which they were very thankful. I told them that I intended to give them a Bible in the evening, a book which few of them had ever seen, and which fewer understood. I was pleased with the modesty of their deportment, and with their eagerness for instruction. Surely they are a people whose hearts the Lord has prepared for the reception of his word.

"At the hour appointed, I put the Bible in my

pocket, and rode again to the camp. The evening was particularly fine: the sun, hidden behind some thick fleecy clouds, had thrown around a mild and pleasing tint; the birds were every where singing their evening song; the ploughman was 'whistling o'er the lea;' and nature, after the labours of the day, was preparing for her wonted rest. It was a fit time for meditation, prayer, and praise. Such an evening, perhaps, as that which led the patriarch of old to meditation, when he lifted up his eyes and saw the returning servants of his father bringing home his future wife. As I drew near to the camp, I began to revolve in my mind the best way of making them acquainted with the importance of the most essential doctrines contained in the holy book I was about to give them. On my arrival, I found that I had been long expected. The men, however, were not there; they were gone to water a horse, which they had lent all the day to a farmer; but a tawny girl ran with great speed, barefooted, and brought them to the camp. I now dismounted, and gave my horse, with my stick, to the care of one of the men. The family circle was formed into an irregular circle round some pale embers, some of them sitting cross-legged on the grass, and others standing. I placed myself so as to have the women and children chiefly before me. The woman who could read, was seated opposite me: the men, the tents, and the package to the right; while the horses and asses belonging to the tribe, were quietly grazing at a short distance in the lane. All was solemn stillness; all was attentive ex-

pectation. As I took from my pocket the Bible, the eyes of the whole company were instantly fixed upon it. This book, said I, which I bring you, is the book of God; it is sent from heaven to make poor miserable and dying man happy. I then spoke a short time on God; on creation; how God created man upright; how he was once happy in paradise; the way in which he sinned, and broke the law of his Maker, and became guilty, polluted, and exposed to death and hell; that to save men from this dreadful state, God devised a plan of mercy; that he sent his Son, and the Scriptures of truth, which shew unto us the way of salvation. This was something of the outline of my lecture; but I added the responsibility of men to read the book, and to seek to understand it. I solemnly charged them, by the sacred book itself, and by the account which they, at the day of judgment, must give to God for it, to make the most sacred and constant use of it, by reading it together daily in their camp. In the course of my discourse, I stopped, and said,—‘Now do you understand what I say?’ Captain Bosvill’s wife replied, ‘We understand you, sir; but we have not the same words which you have.’ In conclusion, I spoke of the coming judgment, when they and all men must stand and be judged at the righteous bar of God. The Bible was then delivered to the care of the captain of the gang, and of his wife, the woman who could read.

“Now, I said, let us all kneel down on the grass, and pray for God’s blessing with this holy book. Instantly a female brought from her tent 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 the clergyman, "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 horse-back, and others on foot, 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, cares 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 to endeavour 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 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 honour 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 on the grass for me to kneel upon, to 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."

The author of the *GIPSIES' ADVOCATE*, who, for the encouragement of his readers, has embodied the

above interesting paragraphs in his work, sincerely hopes and prays that all ministers of Christ will, ere long, be led to imitate this clergyman in his benevolent and Christian attempts to benefit by the influence of religion and the word of God, the lost, and ignorant, and miserable, and perishing among mankind.

CHAP. XV.

Interesting visits to Gipsy camps, including an Anecdote of his late beloved MAJESTY, GEORGE THE THIRD.

THE following account is extracted from the Home Missionary Magazine for June, 1823.

March, 1823.

“ Sir,

“ If the following facts should afford any encouragement to the benevolent intentions of the Home Missionary Society, which has, for one of its objects, the improvement of the state of the *poor Gipsies*, my end in relating them will be amply answered.

“ On Saturday evening, in the month of October, the narrator followed several Gipsy families. Being arrived at the place of their encampment, his first object was to gain their confidence. This was accomplished; after which, to amuse their unexpected visitant, they shewed forth their night diversions in music and dancing; likewise the means by which they obtained their livelihood, such as tinkering, fortune-telling, and conjuring. That the narrator might be satisfied whether he had obtained their confidence or not, he represented his dangerous situation, in the midst of which, they all with one voice cried, ‘ Sir,

we would kiss your feet, rather than hurt you!’ After manifesting a confidence in return, the master of this formidable gang, about forty in number, was challenged by the narrator for a conjuring match. The challenge was instantly accepted. The Gipsies placed themselves in the circular form, and both being in the middle, commenced with their conjuring powers to the best advantage. At last the narrator proposed the making of something out of nothing. This proposal was accepted. A stone which never existed, was to be created, and appear in a certain form in the middle of a circle made on the turf. The master of the gang commenced, and after much stamping with his foot, and the narrator warmly exhorting him to cry aloud; like the roaring of a lion, he endeavoured to call forth non-entity into existence. Asking him if he could do it? he answered, ‘I am not strong enough.’ They were all asked the same question, which received the same answer. The narrator commenced. Every eye was fixed upon him, eager to behold this unheard-of exploit; but (and not to be wondered at,) he failed!—telling them, he possessed no more power to *create* than themselves. Perceiving the thought of insufficiency pervading their minds, he thus spoke:—“Now, if you have not power to create a poor little stone, and if I have not power either; what must that power be, which made the whole world out of nothing?—men, women, and children! that power I call God Almighty.

The night’s diversion having received a change,

the golden moment was eagerly seized to impress on their minds the infinite power, holiness, and justice of their Creator. This being done, the origin of sin, and the immortality of the soul, were, in the second place, impressed on their minds. Then followed the awful effects of sin, and the soul's eternal punishment in hell, because of offending this great God, whose holiness could not look on sin, and whose justice would punish it. Representing the soul's eternal punishment by the wrath of an incensed God, never did the preacher before witness such an effect; the poor Gipsies, with tremulous voice, crying, '*Did you ever hear the like! What ever shall we do?*' These expressions gave new energies to the preacher, and still brighter hopes of a good effect. Going on with the awful representation, and in the act of turning, as if to leave them, he bade them the long farewell. 'Never, never more to meet till we meet in hell! Oh! what a dreadful thing it is, my fellow-sinners, that we have to part in this world with the thought of meeting in an eternal world of pains, never to see God! never to see heaven! never to see any thing to comfort our poor souls! Oh! we are lost, lost, poor souls, we are lost for ever!—farewell!' In the act of leaving them, these poor creatures cried, 'Not yet, Sir, not yet.' Now was the glorious moment come, which the preacher eagerly anticipated of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Saviour. Asking how long they would stand to hear the way of escape from the wrath to come, they instantly lifted up their voices, an-

swering, 'All night, Sir, all night.' Then the preacher, without much persuasion, exhibited a Saviour, in all his sufferings, merits, death, and glory. They were sorry that such a good being should suffer so much; but the preacher took care to show the absolute necessity of his sufferings. Their manner bespoke an imperfect idea of a substitute. This was soon made clear to their understandings by comparisons, when the master of the gang cried, 'I see it, I see it!' He was asked what he saw? 'I see Jesus Christ getting between us and God, and satisfying our great God's justice by dying instead of us.' This truly made the preacher's heart glad, seeing the great plan of salvation was so clearly understood by those who declared (although in a land of light,) they never heard of Jesus Christ before.

"The preacher sang the hymn:—

"How condescending, and how kind
"Was God's eternal Son, &c,"

and then ended with prayer. They solicited him to return on the sabbath morning; he did so, and, as he hopes, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The master gratefully accepted of a bible; for though the Gipsies could not read, a little boy was among them, who was not a Gipsy, that could read remarkably well, having been taught at a Sunday school at Hastings, in Sussex. They all joyfully anticipated the pleasure of going to the Rev. J. Carter's Chapel, of Braintree, in the afternoon, but met with a disappointment, arising

from an unexpected decampment. About one month after, in the latter end of November, two Gipsy women called on the narrator, earnestly entreating him to go and preach to them, which they called conversation. Asking the reason, why they entreated this favour? their answer was, 'We have heard much about your conversation, sir, and we should like to hear it. Come, do come, and we will be all ready to receive you.' Asking who they were that told them of the conversation just mentioned, they said, 'some of our people, Sir, that you were with about a month since. They told us a great deal about your conversation, and we should so much like to hear it. Oh! sir, do come to us poor creatures, for we have an invitation for you, if you would condescend to take it, to meet with the Gipsies on Christmas day.' That night, the narrator walked a few miles to their camp, and in their smoky tent preached Jesus Christ the only way of salvation, to these poor, despised, neglected creatures. After being with them two hours and a half, he bade them farewell, and going behind a hedge, anxious to know what effect the new unheard of doctrines would produce on their minds, he listened for a short time. In the midst of conversation with each other, one of them said, 'Well, I know this, if I could get a house near where that gentleman lives, and could live by my business, I would send all my children to that school there, and hear him as long as ever I could live.' While they were conversing about Adam and Eve, and the evil effects of sinning against God; one of the women said, 'How-

ever, you see, all the punishment that us women get, is sorrow and pains in child-bearing.' 'Stop, stop,' says one of the men, 'that won't do, Ann, that won't do. If sorrow and pains in child-bearing be all the punishment that women are to have, what punishment must those women have that do not bear children? You are quite wrong, Ann; you women are as bad as *us*.' This led on to a further discovery, and the conversation among themselves was truly interesting.

"One of the children telling a lie, the mother touched it on the head, saying, 'What are you telling lies about? Have you forgotten what the gentleman said to night? You will go to hell, if you tell any more lies. Let me never hear you tell another, you bad lad, for God will not take you to heaven.'

"These, and several remarks about Jesus Christ, afforded no small pleasure to the preacher, and he hopes that these facts will afford no small encouragement to the Home Missionary Society.

"Your very humble Servant,

"J. H. C."

Before the author relates one of the most extraordinary anecdotes with which he is acquainted, one, of which a King and a dying Gipsy are the characters, he will relate another interesting account of a visit to a Gipsy camp, which will, it is hoped, prove that such visits are not in vain, when made in dependence on the Divine blessing. A Gipsy, in great distress of mind, and with weeping eyes, came to inform him of one of

their people, who was in great anguish of mind, and entreated him to visit them at the camp, which was several miles distant. The request was gladly complied with. On arriving at the tent, he found a woman sitting in a melancholy attitude on the ground; and distress and anguish were strongly marked in her countenance. She appeared quite indifferent to any thing that was said; and kept herself apparently engaged with the sticks and brands around the fire near the mouth of the tent. The man also appeared very melancholy. We learned that the cause of their distress was jealousy on the part of the man, who was called her husband. The circumstance which gave rise to those unhappy feelings had taken place several years before; yet the poor man has been so unhappy, that he has often intended to destroy both himself and his wife; and not many days before this visit to the camp, he had threatened to execute his purpose. The author talked and prayed with him, and exhorted him to look to God for strength and grace. Their repeated conversations were made useful to him, and those miserable feelings were subdued, and he now lives happily with the woman he had before hated, even to an intention of murder. This is another evidence, although a distressing one, that a want of chastity is evil in their sight.

“A king of England, of happy memory, who loved his people and his God, better than kings in general are wont to do, occasionally took the exercise of hunting. Being out one day for this purpose,

the chase lay through the shrubs of the forest. The stag had been hard run; and, to escape the dogs, had crossed the river in a deep part. As the dogs could not be brought to follow, it became necessary, in order to come up with it, to make a circuitous route along the banks of the river, through some thick and troublesome underwood. The roughness of the ground, the long grass and frequent thickets, gave opportunity for the sportsmen to separate from each other; each one endeavouring to make the best and speediest route he could. Before they had reached the end of the forest, the king's horse manifested signs of fatigue and uneasiness; so much so, that his Majesty resolved upon yielding the pleasures of the chase to those of compassion for his horse. With this view, he turned down the first avenue in the forest, and determined on riding gently to the oaks, there to wait for some of his attendants. His Majesty had only proceeded a few yards, when, instead of the cry of the hounds, he fancied he heard the cry of human distress. As he rode forward, he heard it more distinctly. 'Oh, my mother! my mother! God pity and bless my poor mother!' The curiosity and kindness of the king led him instantly to the spot. It was a little green plot on one side of the forest, where was spread on the grass, under a branching oak, a little pallet, half covered with a kind of tent; and a basket or two, with some packs, lay on the ground at a few paces distant from the tent. Near to the root of the tree he observed a little swarthy girl, about eight years of age, on her knees, praying,

while her little black eyes ran down with tears. Distress of any kind was always relieved by his Majesty, for he had a heart which melted at 'human woe;' nor was it unaffected on this occasion. And now he inquired, 'What, my child, is the cause of your weeping? For what do you pray?' The little creature at first started, then rose from her knees, and pointing to the tent, said, 'Oh, sir! my dying mother!' 'What?' said his Majesty, dismounting, and fastening his horse up to the branches of the oak, 'what, my child? tell me all about it.' The little creature now led the King to the tent:—there lay, partly covered, a middle-aged female Gipsy, in the last stages of a decline, and in the last moments of life. She turned her dying eyes expressively to the royal visitor, then looked up to heaven; but not a word did she utter; the organs of speech had ceased their office; *the silver cord was loosed, and the wheel broken at the cistern.* The little girl then wept aloud, and, stooping down, wiped the dying sweat from her mother's face. The King, much affected, asked the child her name, and of her family; and how long her mother had been ill. Just at that moment another Gipsy girl, much older, came, out of breath, to the spot. She had been at the town of W——, and had brought some medicine for her dying mother. Observing a stranger, she modestly courtesied, and, hastening to her mother, knelt down by her side, kissed her pallid lips, and burst into tears. 'What, my dear child,' said his Majesty, 'can be done for you?' 'Oh, sir!' she replied, 'my dying mother

wanted a religious person to teach her, and to pray with her, before she died. I ran all the way before it was light this morning to W——, and asked for a minister, *but no one could I get to come with me to pray with my dear mother!* The dying woman seemed sensible of what her daughter was saying, and her countenance was much agitated. The air was again rent with the cries of the distressed daughters. The King, full of kindness, instantly endeavoured to comfort them: he said, ‘I am a minister, and God has sent me to instruct and comfort your mother.’ He then sat down on a pack, by the side of the pallet, and taking the hand of the dying Gipsy, discoursed on the demerit of sin, and the nature of redemption. He then pointed her to Christ, the all-sufficient Saviour. While the King was doing this, the poor creature seemed to gather consolation and hope: her eyes sparkled with brightness, and her countenance became animated. She looked up; she smiled; but it was the last smile; it was the glimmering of expiring nature. As the expression of peace, however, remained strong in her countenance, it was not till some little time had elapsed, that they perceived the struggling spirit had left mortality.

“It was at this moment that 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, rode up, and found the King comforting the afflicted Gipsies. It was an affecting sight, and worthy of everlasting record in the annals of kings.

“ His Majesty now rose up, put some gold into the hands of the afflicted girls, promised them his protection, and bade them look to heaven. He then wiped the tears from his eyes, and mounted his horse. His attendants, greatly affected, stood in silent admiration. Lord L—— was now going to speak, when his Majesty, turning to the Gipsies, and pointing to the breathless corpse, and to the weeping girls, said, with strong emotion, ‘ Who, my lord, who, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto these?’ ”

CHAP. XVI.

Further interesting Correspondence.

“ Dear Sir,

“ In answer to your inquiries, I have to say, that within my knowledge, little or nothing has as yet been accomplished for the Gipsies. The Home Missionaries have frequently paid flying visits to their camps, and prayed, read, preached and distributed tracts. In all cases they have been treated with much respect, and their labour has been repaid with the most sincere marks of gratitude. But I never met with very warm support in carrying on this object, but was often exposed to some sarcastical insinuations or sardonic smiles from those who thought the attempt to ameliorate the condition of the Gipsies, only Quixotic.

“ I think their wandering life is one very great impediment in the way of improving the Gipsy tribes, and yet they are so attached to it, that, when taken into families, as servants, they will not stay. Nor can any good be done to their children; for, like all wild people, the parents are attached to them to a fault; so that they cannot allow them to be absent from them even to enjoy the instruction of a school, suspecting that such a separation might end in their final disunion.

“ Were a distinct society formed to effect a reforma-

tion among the Gipsies, many of the nobility, and other classes of the higher orders, would no doubt subscribe. There is a feeling among them on the subject, and many times the formation of a society has been on the tapis. The Gipsies are singularly attached to the Establishment, and many of them are married at the parish churches; and it is a pity the episcopalian body have not taken them up. There is a prejudice against them which I think is unfounded; but I cannot enter into details in a mere letter. People look on them as vagabonds, and *they* seem shy in return; and hence they continue a kind of outcast body in a civilized country.

“ If any further steps are taken, and if I can in any way assist in promoting your good object, you may command my services.

“ I am, dear sir, respectfully yours,

“ I. COBBIN.”

Extracts from the Letter of a Clergyman's Lady.

“ Sir,

“ My best thanks are due to you for your compliance with my request; and, in return, I beg to assure you, that I consider your answer to my friend's objection, as quite satisfactory and efficient. I rejoice to hear that God has been pleased to bless the endeavours and earnest exertion of the Scripture-readers (to the Gipsies) with success. To behold sixteen, and afterwards twenty-one Gipsies voluntarily attending Divine

worship, must have conveyed feelings of heartfelt gratitude to the heart of every Christian, and at the same time encourage him to persevere in earnest prayer to the Father of mercies, to pour his holy Spirit into their souls, that they might become the true and faithful followers of the Redeemer. You say you would be glad to receive any intelligence respecting this interesting people; by which I am led to suppose that an account of an interview which I had with some of them, may not be unacceptable; an interview that was highly pleasing and satisfactory, as I found them less ignorant of spiritual concerns, and to possess better qualities, than I had imagined.

“ Having sent for two women, (the heads of the camps) I received them in a cottage in the town of _____, and after allowing them some refreshment, proceeded to put the different questions to them that are inserted in the Observer. They told me that their family, altogether, consisted of eighteen persons, who travelled about the country in three camps; that the men found it difficult to obtain regular employment; that sometimes, during the winter, they made cabbage-nets, and mended culinary utensils; that in the summer, men and women were occasionally employed in making hay, &c. These women appeared very destitute of necessary clothing, which they said they found great difficulty in obtaining. They appeared careful to speak the truth, alleging that it hurt their consciences to speak otherwise. On the question being put to them, whether they appropriated to themselves the property

of those near whom they encamped? they candidly confessed that they sometimes took a little straw, hay, and sticks; but no fowls or any other live-stock. They shewed a very affectionate disposition and warm feelings towards their children. The eldest of them assured me, that if any in their camp became orphans, she considered herself more bound to provide for them than her own, as the former needed it the more, being destitute. She did not object to their gaining instruction, if it came in the way, and she wished to be read to herself, and appeared to take much pleasure in listening to my explanations of the important doctrines of religion. They said that none of their party could read, but that they were sometimes visited by a relative who was a good scholar. She said, too, that she always kept in her possession a *godly book*, for the purpose of asking, as opportunity offered, a traveller to read to them. She assured me, too, (which I rather doubted,) that they constantly attended Divine worship, when encamped near enough to churches; that they send for the nearest clergyman *to preach* to the dying, and that they never omit having their babes *full christened*, excepting in cases of sickness, when the child is only baptized: and should such child die, they obtain the services of a parochial clergyman to inter it. They said, thinking, no doubt, to please me, that they did not like the Ranters, but that they thought well of the *church folks*. I fear that, though they had a general knowledge of the Supreme Being, they were sadly ignorant of the most important point of Christianity,

namely, the all-sufficient sacrifice that was made for the whole world. While I expatiated to them on the day of judgment and the final doom of man, displaying the extreme and exquisite happiness of the righteous part of the human family, and the dreadful misery of the wicked, the younger of them, who appeared indisposed, was considerably agitated. They then said, that they were not in the habit of swearing, but occasionally did so, though they were aware it was very wicked. When travelling, they told me that they avoid breaking the sabbath; and that they visit all places included in the district through which they wander, three times per year, from which plan they seldom deviate. I inquired if they would like to settle in cottages, and gain their livelihood by industry. They replied, that *if house-rent, clothes, food, and all other necessaries were found them*, they would; but that they would not settle on any other condition.

“ I am desirous of obtaining your opinion respecting the plan I have lately formed to benefit this people; for, should you approve of it, it will be carried into immediate execution. I thought it would be very advantageous to offer an adequate remuneration to a pious person who would devote every half-day to reading and explaining the Scriptures to the old, and teaching the young to read. I was aware that it would be difficult to obtain one, who, while he would teach the young to read, and explain the Scriptures to the aged, would be wise enough to give wholesome advice to every case of mental distress, and be gifted to guide the first steps of

those who are disposed to be good, in the way of Christian godliness. After much anxiety and many attempts, I at length succeeded in meeting with a person most disinterestedly pious ; one who was willing to accede to any proposal to benefit his fellow-creatures. He appears to attach little importance to himself, but to have much confidence in God, in reference to his exertions. He is really desirous to promote the immortal interests of the poor people to whom his attention has been directed, and is pious, zealous and intelligent. He, however, cannot devote himself to this work more than three days per week. He will visit all Gipsy camps for seven or eight miles round.

“ Some clear, forcible, simple, religious tracts, such as are likely to instruct and awaken, with the Scriptures, would, perhaps, be of service. I shall hold out rewards of clothes and books to those of whom I hear the best accounts, and shall endeavour to meet them, a few at a time, in a cottage, at least once per year. Will you let me know whether you think I am doing right ?”

Extracts of a Letter from a man of plain, but pious character, addressed to the Southampton Committee.

“ Gentlemen,

“ It is natural for me to suppose that you expect, by this period, to hear something of the success that has attended my labours on the common among the people called Gipsies. I visit them three or four times

a-week, besides going among them on sabbath days. I go from tent to tent, and talk to them on religious subjects, read and explain the word of God to them, so far as I am able, and pray with them. At such times they thankfully receive what I humbly communicate to them, and often, with tears and gratitude, wonder that I should think of them in their poor degraded state. I hope some of them may be brought to the knowledge of God."

After some other pleasing details, this humble person concludes his letter thus :

" With regard to the children, I meet with here and there *one* among them that can read, but it is very little. These children, however, are desirous, I may say very desirous to have some little books. To such I have given books, till I have none left. I could have given away, where desired, and with the prospect of knowing they might be useful, many more, had I possessed them. Upon the whole I think there is cause for much encouragement.

" I am, gentlemen, your humble servant,

" * * * * * "

A clergyman, a most valuable correspondent, observes, while addressing the Committee, through the author :

" In speaking to the Gipsies on the road side, and offering a tract, I have never but once met with im-

pertinence. It is probable that the individual had been impertinently treated, first, by people called Christians.

“ Dr More has well said, with respect to the Jews, ‘ If Christians had believed and acted like Christians, it would have been a miracle if the Jews had not been converted.’

“ This observation is equally applicable to the Gipsies of England; for, if Christian denominations did their duty, they would cease to be Gipsies.”

CHAP. XVII.

Concluding Remarks.

HAD the author availed himself of all the facts relating to the addresses which have been given in different places by clergymen, home missionaries, and other ministers, and published all the letters of an interesting nature addressed to himself and the Southampton Committee, in reference to the Gipsies, together with the gratitude they have shown for such Christian attentions, it might have gratified many readers; but these pages would thereby have been increased to too great a number.

But, before concluding this little work, he desires to impress upon the reader, the necessity there is of engaging in the great work of the conversion of the poor Gipsies.

Why do not all ministers, and all good people unite in it? May we not conclude that they do not feel the value of their souls as they ought, if they do not perform all that is in their power for this end? Both ministers and their congregations are too lukewarm. We are discouraged by difficulties under the influence of unbelief, and we often say, How can these things be accomplished? Every Christian is called by his Saviour to attempt the instruction of his fellow-creatures;

and no common excuse, such as business, poverty, a want of time, acknowledged ignorance, and a want of talent, can justify us in neglecting the attempt to speak a word of advice, or reproof, or promise, to our fellow-creatures. This is the duty of every Christian, and if done in faith, Almighty God will bless the effort.

To the magistrates the author would make a most ardent appeal on behalf of the despised members of the Gipsy family. Most respectfully and most earnestly does he entreat them to pity their destitute condition, when brought before them as vagrants, and from which they have been so often made to suffer; for, sooner would the wild creatures of the forest be tamed, than those branches of the human family be brought, through coercion, to dwell in houses and follow trades, who were born under the hedges, and have, through life, made unfrequented solitudes their homes. Much better would it be for the magistrates to encourage the education of their children, with the view to improve and reform the rising generation. The author hopes and prays that they may. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

If we all felt the importance and necessity of discharging our Christian duties as the sailor and the soldier do in their different stations, no difficulties would deter us; but God expects every *Christian* to do his duty. A celebrated commander once called his officers together, and said, "We must carry such a garrison." The officers said, "It is impossible; the attempt would be vain." The general replied, "It can, and must be

done, for I have the order in my pocket." Oh! ye ministers of Christ! you have the order lying on your table, and in your desks, at this moment; read it in the Bible:—*Go ye into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.* Luke xiv. 23. The duty is ours: have we done it? Have we done it as opportunities have presented themselves? Have we done it as we ought? Yea, more; have we sought for opportunities to instruct souls? Our adorable Master did so. He came from heaven to earth, to seek and to save them who were lost. Private Christians! you also have your order from the high throne of heaven, in your houses, perhaps unnoticed; or, it may be, you have not rightly interpreted these orders to their full extent. Others may have acted the coward's part, and thrown these orders aside. Would a soldier or a sailor thus serve his king and country? If you saw your countrymen perishing on your shores by shipwreck, or likely to be destroyed by fire, would you not be anxious to assist both the virtuous and the wicked? Gipsies are perishing around you; hear their cries, ere they are plunged into eternity; and attend to these orders from the King of Kings:—

Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Leviticus, xix. 18. *The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be as one born amongst you, and thou shalt love him as thyself;* xxxiv. 5. *Beware of hardness of heart toward thy poor brother.* Deut. x. 15, 9. *Be ye therefore*

merciful, as your Father who is in heaven is merciful.
 Luke vi. 36. *For he raiseth up the poor out of the
 dust and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill.* Psalm
 cxiii. 7. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would
 that men should do to you, do ye 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 thy neighbour? Read the parable of the
 Good Samaritan, and *Go and do likewise.* Luke x. 15.

The author will finally conclude by observing, that
 England will have a great deal to answer for in refer-
 ence to the Gipsies of past generations. For, from a
 very moderate calculation that he has made, 150,000
 of these outcasts have passed into the eternal world,
 uninformed, unacquainted with God, since they came
 to this country. May the present, and succeeding
 generations, be wiser than the past!

APPENDIX.

SINCE the GIPSIERS' ADVOCATE was put to press, the author, as might naturally be expected on a subject so interesting as the conversion of the Gipsies, has had many other pleasing communications. From his Bristol correspondents he has been favoured with several of delightful interest, in reference to a small colony in that neighbourhood; and these state that several of the Gipsies not only begin to evidence an aversion to their former life, but increase in seriousness, and in habits of industry. And happy is he to say, that several influential Christians of that city are growing in the interest they manifest to these outcasts of society; for they are endeavouring to improve every opportunity of affording them instruction. It is with peculiar pleasure too, the author learns, that the students of the Baptist Academy of the above-named city, are not dead to the affecting necessities of this poor people. Some of the students of that academy spent the whole of one day in endeavouring to find one of their large encampments, of which they had had some previous information, and spent the evening in giving such instruction as appeared to them to be the best calculated to enlighten and reform the people to whom they were so anxious to do good; some of them occu-

pying themselves with the children, and others with the adults. May their example have its due influence on surrounding Christians!

The author must not forget to mention here, that he has been apprised by the clergyman in Scotland, whose letter forms so interesting a part of the ninth chapter, that the account he mentioned to him, as gaining insertion in a statistical publication, has not been published, he believes, in consequence of the death of the gentleman who had interested himself for its insertion in the work referred to; but that he hopes it may meet the public eye in a short time.

And now, having redeemed the pledge which he gave his friends about twelve months since; having furnished them with a history of the Gipsies, such a one as he hopes will be beneficial to the race, whose conduct, condition, and necessities it narrates; he will conclude by thanking those kind friends who have unintentionally contributed to the interest of these pages, and by asking the continuation of their favours, with a view to give increasing interest to an intended second edition. He would not forget publicly to solicit, likewise, the correspondence of ladies and gentlemen who may be in possession of facts or plans likely to interest the public towards the Gipsies.

The author now commits these pages to the all-influential blessing of God, earnestly praying that these poor, hard-faring wanderers, whose character he has endeavoured to delineate, may be speedily rescued from their present forlorn condition, and, that they may even-

tually be conducted to the mansions of eternal bliss, where neither storm nor tempest shall any longer afflict them, but where they shall join with the ransomed of the Lord, in ascribing *blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

THE END.

LIST OF AUTHORS

WHO HAVE WRITTEN ON THE GIPSIES.

H. M. G. GRELLMAN'S DISSERTATION ON THE GIPSIES.

Translated by M. Rapier.

HOYLAND'S SURVEY OF THE GIPSIES.

TWISS'S TRAVELS IN SPAIN.

SWINBURNE'S TRAVELS IN ITALY.

DR C. D. CLARK'S TRAVELS IN RUSSIA.

CAPT. DAVID RICHARDSON. Referred to in the seventh
volume of *Asiatic Researches*.

SIR THOMAS BROWN'S VULGAR ERRORS.

While these are the leading authors, whose works are either composed in, or translated into English, it may impress us with the importance by which the Gipsies have been viewed, to know, that nearly 200 have written about them in other languages.

ERRATA.

Page	Line	
31,	24,	<i>For</i> 'would be in a town,' <i>read</i> , 'would be in, in a town.'
55,	30,	<i>For</i> 'dispatching,' <i>read</i> , 'despatching.'

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