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393 0327509

TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS;

TO WHICH IS ADDED

AMOUNT OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

Pres AMONG THE POOR DURING 1879.

BY

OCTAVIA HILL.

(For Private Circulation only.)

LONDON:

BY BRIGADE PRINTERS,
10, MARYLEBONE ROAD.

1879.

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1875

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14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W.,
December, 1879.

MY FRIENDS,

It is well in the opening year to pause and look how we stand with regard to our work.

First let us consider the houses. Of all the twenty courts formerly under my care, and now under yours, it may certainly be said that they are being managed thoughtfully with a view to the interests of the tenants, and at least on a self-supporting footing. Your presence in them warrants the expectation that the more you gain experience, and, with experience, power and hope, the more practice gives you facility in dealing with technical matters, the more life you will be able to infuse into your work, and the easier and the happier it will become to you. I cannot tell you how much I have felt for those of you on whom since I went away has fallen the burthen of all the accidents, troubles, and responsibilities which, arising from the tenants' misfortune, carelessness, or ignorance, affect the property in the courts. The questions you have had to settle were new to many of you, were difficult, and I cannot help thinking they must often have seemed to some of you who cared much for the people hardly worth your time. On the other hand there was danger that those of you who took up these definite questions of business might become engrossed in them. Am I wrong in thinking that

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some of you are finding gradually by experience what you gain by the technical work which no mere district visiting can give you?—that others are obtaining such mastery and facility with the mere business that they will soon find strength and time to develop all the better work which should grow out of it?

I should like to note down what it appears to me you are all feeling as to the difference between the charge of a court where the people are your tenants and much other visiting among the poor. I do not deny that all work should possess some of these characteristics; but I do not think that other kinds gain them so easily. The care of tenants calls out a sense of duty founded on relationship; the work is permanent; and the definite character of much of it makes its progress marked. Have you ever asked yourselves why you have chosen the charge of courts, with all its difficulties and ties, rather than other benevolent undertakings which are more easily taken up and thrown down? The burthen of the problems before you has been heavy, and the regularity of the occupation has often demanded of you great sacrifices. Why have you not chosen transitory connection with hundreds of receivers of soup, or pleasant intercourse with little Sunday scholars, or visiting among the aged and bed-ridden, who were sure to greet you with a smile when you went to them, and had no right to say a word of reproach to you about your long absences in the country? Why did you not take up district visiting, where, if any family did not welcome you, you could just stay away? Because you preferred a work where duty was continuous and distinct, and where it was mutual. And

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then all the petty annoyances brought before you at such awkward moments, with so little discretion or good temper,—all the smoky chimneys, broken water-pipes, tiresome neighbours, drunken husbands, death, disease, poverty, sin,—call not only for your sympathy, but for your action. From the greatest to the least the problems have implied some duty on your part. "What ought I, in my relation to the tenants, to do for them in this difficulty?" you have each had to ask yourself. From the merest trifle of a cupboard key broken in a lock, to the future of some family desolated by death, or sunk into misery from drink, *all* has asked for your sympathy, *much* has demanded your action. Nor have you chosen for whom these duties shall be undertaken: the family are tenants, that fact implies your relation to them. Thus you have not felt the duty a self-chosen one; the tie has been closer, more like that in your own homes,—deep, real, lasting,—not always easy,—often involving management of trifles, giving no sense of self-congratulating pride as in a work of supererogation. It has implied a share in the people's pain—as we bear one another's burthens at home; but bringing, I know you have all felt by this time, something of the same quiet sense of indestructible connection, a solemn blessing in fulfilment of simple duty. It has brought to you also, I feel sure, a real attachment to your people. You know they are yours; they know it; and as the years go on this sense of attachment will deepen and grow. Sometimes, when the difficulty of dealing with the manifold technical matters is very heavy upon you, you will all remember that these grow *much* lighter the more experience you gain,—that the power among

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your little flocks increases tenfold after a time,—above all, that the burthen of absolutely right action in this, as in all positions of life, is not with you, only the duty of trying to see and do right. If you keep this steadily before you, your Father will be continually bringing out of all your feeble efforts and clumsy mistakes all manner of great joy, and help, and wonderful results you never thought of; and a great sense of supporting help will be with you, a sort of cloud to shelter you by day, and fire to light you by night; you will feel that it is He who gave you the relation to your tenants, is helping you in it, as He helps us each in whatever duty He calls us to, never giving the command without the power.

The charge of tenants has been valued by you too, because the duty is mutual: it implies your determination, not simply to do kindnesses with liberal hand, popular as that would be, but to meet the poor on grounds where they too have duties to you. The fulfilment of these takes away the glamour of almsgiving: it substitutes the power of meeting the people as they are, on simple human ground, as fellow-citizens, not mere receivers of your alms. You have all felt the effort of trying to keep them up to the mark; the effort, I know, will be less and less to you each as time goes on; the love that springs from the duty will be more and more. The day will come to each of you, who are happy enough to go on working long, when the business will seem easy routine, and the tenants will be to you like a large family of friends or of children, with many memories in common; when even the places—those ugly London courts—will be to you so dear; for you

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will remember how and where you made them lighter, cleaner, better: the rooms, the yards, the streets will be associated with faces that brighten when they see you, and with victories over evil which you helped to achieve by your presence, or which you had the great privilege of seeing achieved—you hardly know which it was—you felt so one with the spirit that conquered the wrong.

I am glad to record the considerable extension of the work, not only in London, where houses have been purchased in various places (two new blocks in Marylebone), but steps are, I understand, being taken to set it on foot in Liverpool, Manchester, and Paris, and it has been begun successfully in Dublin this year. It is very important that all measures should be taken that should ensure its being well done wherever it is begun, and I would advise all who are thinking of purchasing houses to put themselves into communication with my fellow-workers before buying any court, in order that they may have the full benefit of the experience already gained. At Leeds they were wise enough to find a lady who was willing to come up to London and work side by side with us five or six weeks, and so gain an insight into much which it is difficult to learn except practically; and in Dublin the work has been begun under the direction of a lady who had managed a court here. I am sure my fellow-workers would gladly show and help any one thinking of undertaking houses. Indeed, if the plan is to extend safely and well,—extend somehow it evidently *will*,—I would earnestly commend to every one concerned the absolute necessity of training future collectors. Let those of you who have the charge of

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courts introduce, side by side, with yourselves promising fellow-workers, who may see and learn now what is being done, and may, in the future, be ready to fill vacant places. Everybody is building and buying, but I was appalled to find, on my return, how few were doing anything towards training volunteers. And yet, if you think of it, *all* the technical work is new to the very ladies whose spirit is needed for the conduct of these houses when built and bought; and it is no use to have the right spirit if the technical matters, all the sanitary and financial arrangements, are in a mess. Beware of well-meant failures. Have your drainage, and your clean stairs, and your distempering, and your accounts, all as perfect as possible, and to do that you need trained workers.

For the information of those who have the conduct of houses, I ought to mention that I have arranged with Mr. C. H. Chevens, Manager of the House-Boys' Printing Brigade, 146, Marylebone Road, that he should print and keep in stock the various collecting books, rent books, order books, and forms which we use, so that any one can purchase them. I have also placed with him a few copies of the one shilling American edition of "Homes of the London Poor," which contains all the book except the article on the Hampstead Fields. Macmillan's edition is out of print. He has nothing now of mine except "Our Common-Land," which does not treat of the Houses, but of Charity and of the Commons.

When I last wrote to you I was a little downcast about the Commons. I suppose one never ought to be downcast. I had hardly left England before the

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Kyrle Society took up the subject with the greatest zeal, and formed a Sub-Committee, which I do think has done as much as it was possible to do for the cause in the present state of public feeling. The acquisitions of land for the people cannot be *very* many in a single year till the general interest in the subject has spread and deepened very considerably; but I do not think a small band of earnest persons *could* have worked more zealously or achieved more, and that by the sheer might of work, than that Sub-Committee has done. They have been daunted, too, by no fear of failure, however large and impossible the object to be obtained might look. They seem just to have said they would do as much as in them lay, and leave the issue with others. The consequence is that they have done much to cultivate public interest; they have let nothing fail through their own fault; they have had some failures, but at least one splendid success. Of course you will know I mean the purchase of Burnham Beeches for the people. I don't under-rate what others did. We all know the Corporation paid the money, and the Commons' Preservation Society helped greatly in the conduct of the matter; but neither one nor the other would have brought the thing to pass without the quiet persevering labour of Members of the Sub-Committee I speak of, or the high, confident, sustained hope they had throughout, that however large the thing might look, there was a chance that *some one* would *give* this great gift to the people if once the way were made quite clear and the business done, and the scheme got into workable form. In this hope; in spite of the discouragements and almost scorn of those who didn't believe in success, steadily

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was the work carried on, till it was ready for acceptance or refusal; and only those who have carried on a work in its early days, in spite of disbelief, know how much that means. Other smaller successes, too, that Sub-Committee has had, and several schemes they have prepared in the same way, doing all their part: these now await the decision of others. The Sub-Committee has offered to find money for due supervision of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and of St. Anne's Churchyard, Soho, if the Trustees of the one, and the Vicar of the other, will but allow them to be opened to the public. Will they? At any rate the Sub-Committee has done its part, and must now leave the next step to others. One still more critical question is being decided probably while I write—that of whether the site of Horsemonger Lane Gaol shall be used as a garden, or playground, for the poor inhabitants of the crowded neighbourhood of Southwark. The Sub-Committee has had enormous labour in bringing that question well before the Magistrates, on whom the decision now depends. If they consent to give the ground, will you help them to plant and lay it out? The Vestries have promised their share, and others will, I fancy, help; but a good deal will be wanted.

I am very anxious to bring before any possible future workers the great need of volunteer help in the various gardens and playgrounds already gained for the poor. We find the Superintendents sometimes a little inclined to think more of the flowers than of those for whom they were planted; and we want a little hospitable-heartedness poured into them by the presence of those who are not tired by work, or continuous intercourse with the people. It is less

trouble to have playgrounds empty than full, but they hardly fulfil their purpose so! The Board School playgrounds are announced as at last opened in compliance with our request, but it is hard on the care-takers to imagine that they can keep the playgrounds full of life and order without help, especially till the children have learned to play. The same thing holds good of our own playgrounds in Freshwater Place, Lambeth, and Whitechapel. We pay some one to open the door at proper hours, and to see that no gross abuse is made of the privilege of the ground being open; but we can hardly expect the door-keeper to see that the swings are not monopolised by two or three children, that the see-saw is not made utterly useless by too many children sitting resolutely on it; nor can we expect them to teach the children games. If there were any, especially strong young people, who could and would devote one afternoon a week to going to some of these playgrounds or gardens, at any rate till the children learn to play, it would be an immense help, and they would find a sphere of great usefulness open to them. In the hot summer, flowers, or beads, or pictures, or seaweeds, or needlework, might make groups of little children very happy in the gardens; children who else would be either shut up in the one close room, in which the whole family live and sleep, or else exposed to the dangers and demoralization which meet them when playing in the streets. In the playgrounds, the loan of skipping-ropes, instruction in games like *terza* or *puss-in-the-corner*, or the use of songs with movement used in Kindergarten schools, would make elder children happy, good, and active. Young gentlemen, too, might gather together

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the lads who are too old for the little playgrounds, and take them to Battersea or Victoria Parks, where there is room for cricket or prisoner's base, and thus much healthy out-of-door life might be promoted, and the high spirits and animal energy which often lead such lads into mischief find its due exercise and vent. A drilling-master has kindly promised to give a course of six drilling lessons, during the Easter holidays, to some of the elder girls, in one of our playgrounds, which will show volunteers how to carry this on in various places. It has been found that the girls in work-houses delight in being drilled, and it has done them much good. Mr. Edmund Maurice, who is Secretary of the Sub-Committee for Open Spaces, will gladly tell any one where and how they may be present at these lessons, or where and when they can best help in the gardens and playgrounds. We have a few most valuable workers, but they are not training nearly enough people to extend the work, and it is much needed EVERYWHERE.

I want to thank those who so kindly helped with the money for the Whitechapel Playground. It is now laid out very nicely. It, as well as other such, needs, I think, now the life I have spoken of above.

While I am on the subject of money spent on beautiful things, I may add that I spent during the past year some, given me specially for such objects, on laying out a little garden in Mile End, and also in carving a large figure of St. Christopher, soon to be placed outside St. Christopher's Buildings in Barrett's Court. The figure is one which I began enlarging long ago, from Albert Dürer; friends have most kindly finished it, and are getting it carved. The confidence, to which service brings St. Christopher,

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that God is the strongest of all powers, had always made him a saint I liked to remember in Barrett's Court, and accidental associations made me very fond of him; but it was quite startling to me in the Tyrol to learn, as I did, for the first time, when I saw his great figure on the churches where pilgrims used to be received, that he was the special protector of travellers, and I used to have a strange sense of his being there to teach me a message needed there among the beauty by a wanderer far from home, quite as much as ever it was in Barrett's Court. So I liked to think I had asked to have the buildings named after him, and I used to think that, if ever I came back, I should like to put up his figure there, that others, perhaps, might learn about him more than they else would know, and hear him tell the same old message of how he found the devil not the strongest after all.

But I didn't only put him up for my own pleasure, nor for his history. I was much struck while I was abroad, as every one must be, with the beauty of the outside of the houses, and old words, by an author we all know, read long ago, as to the generosity of *external* decoration, haunted me, and I kept thinking what we could do if I lived to come back again, to make the outside of the houses of the poor beautiful. First I thought of Albert Dürer's St. Christopher, and I determined on that first of all. But then, in North Italy, I was impressed with the beauty and simplicity of the brick architecture of the town-halls and houses, and, in the Tyrol, by the quaint irregularity of the home-like oriel windows, set on at the corner of the tiny houses in the village streets, with pretty little separate conical roofs, and I seemed to

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see that this home-like irregularity, this prominence of roof, this simplicity of brick ornament, could be at once applied to our people's houses, whenever and wherever there was money to do it. That any of us might make a gift of a window here, or a cornice there, or a balcony in the other place. I saw that the possession of many groups of houses, by those who had cared to buy them for the good of the poor, and put them under our care, would enable us to have the rare privilege of giving these additional structures to those who deserved to have them, that they would be a delight to all who passed down the street in proportion as they grew to like what was home-like, quaint, and pretty. So I have arranged, if the owners like it, to devote some money specially given me for beautiful things, to putting a little oriel window at one corner of the new houses for the poor in Lambeth. I paid this sum, and that for carving St. Christopher, through the Kyrle Society, as they can see to the building while I am away, and one hopes their subscribers may care to do more of the same kind.

I have been able to arrange a thing or two of this sort, but the work near to the people is still shut from me by illness. Only I have to ask you once again whether you will strengthen our hands that the old work I left going on, and still know ought to go on, may not fall through. We ought to have for it in the coming year nearly £150 to render it efficient. For though one or two things I set on foot long ago are well carried through and done, yet on the other hand one of my fellow-workers in the South of London needs strong support in money, that her own great power among the people may be

effectual. Where there is personal power, wisdom, devotion, labour, no particle of energy ought to be crippled for want of money, if it be possible to avoid it. My sister, Mrs. Edmund Maurice, too, is now in such connection with a district in the East of London that she has considerably extended her knowledge of individuals to whom help is really important. She spends marvellously little in proportion to the good done, for she gives thought, and gets others to give thought, but the money she does want is wanted much. I always used to help in such cases long ago from my donation fund; I want still to do it if it be possible.

She heard some time ago of a poor girl sleeping on door-steps and in the street, willing to go to a place, but with no clothes fit to go in. "Send her to me," she said, though half-doubting if the girl meant work. The girl, an orphan, came at the appointed time, with very ragged clothes, and a large white apron over her torn jacket. After a little talk, my sister got her into a home and, later, to service. Mrs. Maurice only had to pay 7s. 6d. to save that girl, for part of the money for the clothes was repayable from her wages, and part was supplied by a clergyman; but to have such a 7s. 6d. ready, to have the power of becoming responsible for much more, if the call for action is sudden, is very important.

Again, my sister said to me, the other day, "What do you THINK about your donation fund next year? Will your old friends send to you though you are still away? I ask because there is a carpenter struck blind at 27 years old; he wants to learn a trade, and has walked all over London and found the Institution in Berners Street. It will cost £10 to teach him. His wife will support him and the child

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meantime." What should I answer? My friends, I said, I thought you would send help as of old. I don't retract a word of what I said to you last year about its being better for you yourselves to know and help the girls sleeping on door-steps, and the men struck down by sudden calamity. But it needs experience to know how to do this wisely, and circumstances prevent some people from even knowing the poor: and to those of you who do not require all your available money for those under your own care, I should like to say that I advise you to send me as help long ago. So far from my work dying with my absence, it has grown,—not in my hands, but in the hands of those whom I know to be doing valiantly and well. Strengthen them, not only to complete or support what I planned, (this in itself will cost still a large part of £150, what with all the valuable classes, and playgrounds, and clubs, and finishing the education of some orphans,) but strengthen them still more; strengthen them for their own work, which is growing, for all the gentle, separate help they are giving, day after day, to the poor and the outcast.

I do not know if I shall be back among you to be of any use, it looks more like it than it did, but whether I am here or not, my sister will use *well* any money you send her.

Now, may I thank you all for all you have done, I will not say for me, but for my people, which is so much more. I wish I could do, or be, more which would be helpful to you all, and could at all express the sense I have of your goodness and your kindnesses. All through the long silences, believe me, I think of you all.

OCTAVIA HILL.

Donation Account.

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Receipts.

	£	s.	d.
Cash in hand	172	1	3½
Miss Barrett	1	0	0
C. B. P. Bosanquet, Esq.	4	10	0
Lady Cadogan (Cobbling Class)	5	0	0
A. G. Crowder, Esq.	5	0	0
Miss Fletcher	5	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Gillson (Pension. A), <i>annual</i>	2	12	0
Mrs. Henley	25	0	0
F. Hill, Esq. (Whitechapel Playground)	0	10	0
Miss E. Harrison (Ornamental Tiles)	0	10	6
Miss Jekyll	16	0	0
Mrs. Lewes	5	0	0
Mrs. Lyell	8	0	0
„ (Commons' Preservation Society)	5	0	0
„ (Whitechapel Playground)	5	0	0
Miss Lyell	5	0	0
Miss Meek	2	2	0
Mrs. Oldham	5	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Pooley	1	1	0
A Servant	2	0	0
W. Shaen, Esq., per (Whitechapel Playground)	5	0	0
Mrs. W. Shaen	2	0	0
Mrs. L. Stephen	10	0	0
Miss Helen Taylor	1	0	0
Mrs. Arthur Whateley	2	0	0
S. Winkworth, Esq. (Pension A, up to Lady Day)	6	10	0
Mrs. S. Winkworth	10	0	0
„ <i>2nd donation</i>	5	0	0
Mrs. Wright	25	0	0
Hornsby Wright, Esq.	3	0	0
Miss Wilson	1	0	0
Miss Yorke	25	0	0
Total	£370	16	9½

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Expenditure.

	£	s.	d.
Books and Shelves (Barrett's Court Library) ..	2	10	0
W. (boarded out)	5	14	0
Clubs (Rent and Fuel)	52	0	0
Keeping W. M. at School	13	0	0
„ R. W. and E. at Homes	11	5	0
Excursions to the Country and Museums	3	0	6
*Commons' Preservation Society	5	0	0
Care of Playgrounds and Mending See-saw	11	18	0
*Laying out Whitechapel Playground and Mile- End Garden	65	10	0
Providing Hospital and other Relief to the Sick	8	19	0
Employment for Poor People, Outfits, &c.	2	13	2½
*Ornamental Tiles	0	10	6
May Festival	2	10	7
*Oriel Window, per Kyrle Society	30	0	0
*Carving Figure of St. Christopher, per Kyrle Society	13	10	0
Clothes and School fees for Poor Children boarded out	2	0	11
Mission Woman for Dust Sifters (Lambeth)	31	4	0
Teacher and Leather for Cobbling Class	2	6	11
Rent, Fuel, and Light for three Girls' Classes Bank, Library, and Mothers' Meeting	18	17	9
Printing, Stationery, &c.	5	13	10
†Cash in hand	82	12	7
Total	£370	16	9½

Examined and found correct—A. P. FLETCHER,
 December 22nd, 1879.

* These sums were given by special desire; or from the known sympathies of the donors.

† This balance is nearly all appropriated.

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LETTER TO MY FELLOW WORKERS,

TO WHICH IS ADDED

ACCOUNT OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

WORK AMONG THE POOR,

DURING 1878.

BY

OCTAVIA HILL.

(For Private Circulation only.)

LONDON :

PRINTED BY GEO. PULMAN, 24, THAYER STREET, MANCHESTER SQUARE, W.

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DERWENT BANK,

December, 1878.

It is well, my friends, that we should fix our eyes very resolutely on all that has been gained during the past year. At the end of last year, twenty courts which had been bought by various gentlemen and ladies interested in the improvement of the tenants and their houses, still, in greater or less degree, depended on me for supervision. I had tried, as you all know, to render them independent of me, and had succeeded very imperfectly. But when I left England the volunteers who were collecting consented most kindly to accept more responsibility than of old. Several gentlemen were good enough to undertake to audit and supervise the accounts. My assistants, who used to work in a little company under my direction, were placed in direct communication with the volunteers and auditors, and these latter were asked to report direct to the owners of

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the courts, and obtain their decisions on all important matters. The work is thus entirely decentralised. The place I once filled—the place it was well for me to fill while the attempts were in their infancy, need be no longer filled.

The advantage of the change must be clear to any one who thinks about the work. Every collector knows that the court under her care depends on her for any progress it is to make; she cannot fancy that I am any longer thinking how to light a dark staircase, where to clear a yard blocked up with building; she knows that she alone is watching over her people. She must decide whom to keep, whom to dismiss, whom to employ, how to gladden the tenants, how to purify the houses. She can act swiftly and securely, for she is certain that no decision of hers can possibly clash with any plan or thought of mine. Any capacity for constructive ingenuity that is in her has free scope; all the sense of protecting pity that she has will be called out, for her people must look to her alone for it.

The auditors are gentlemen accustomed to business, and the management of money. They do easily accounts which many ladies find difficult, they see clearly the safe and wise thing to do about money. Each has one, two, or three courts only to think of, and can think out the small financial problems, bearing on them with care. Their experience is brought to bear

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without excessive calls on their valuable time, and these calls, such as they are, come at hours they can manage. It may be of wide-spreading importance to any future development of the plan on a large scale that several men of business should understand the management and accounts connected with the houses of the people, even though the scale on which they learn it is now still a small one.

The owners who had always so very kindly seconded me and trusted me about the conduct of their properties,—so kindly and fully that perhaps I hardly referred to them all the questions I might have done—now know as they never knew before, that the courts are in very deed their own, that I was but a vicar with semblance of power, and that it is their will, and their will alone, on which the progress in these courts finally depends. Several of them have been looking into things, caring for them, deciding on them, as they never did before; they know far more of those who are working in the courts; and, though most of them reside out of London, or are for other reasons not able, or not prepared to enter into details of business, I hear of them now and again in their courts, and feel that my old dream of landlords of towns coming into a near relation to their tenants and estates as they do in the country, is more sure to be realized than if I had been still at work.

Of course the change is not *all* gain, and no one knows

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so well as I just where it is loss, and how, and the thought of it cuts me like a knife, and of course it was not quite my own idea of how things would go. I fancied that new courts would be bought in London by new landlords, as they are now being bought there, and in provincial towns, and that I might to the end, perhaps for a long life, have kept my old place among the owners, and fellow-workers, and tenants I had lived among so long, and it is no use calling loss and collapse, gain and vigour. We must face the fact of pain, and even loss. But when God appoints our course, our little plans and imaginings all pale and fade, and, even trembling, we go out to do His will, and know that somehow it is better than ours, though the pain never dies away, and the loss abides. And I know that it is not given to many to see in their life-time the thing which they have worked for grow to vigorous independence of them, and show its own life and power of further growth, like a tree planted by the water-side, drawing vigour from earth, and water, and sun, and which shall live when the hand that helped to plant it is cold. And whenever I think of my trees, I never fail to thank my Father that He has made the streams by which they are planted so full of water, and that they do not any longer depend on my watering morning and evening.

The Club at Barrett's Court seems to have survived its day of difficulty. It has been revived by the energy of those who have most conscience in the court. I

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trust they will not make it exclusive. I am delighted it should be in the hands of those who really have a strong feeling of what is right and wrong. The distinction sorely needs enforcing in the court, there is a great tendency to think that good nature is the only good. It is refreshing to think of the club re-organised, re-ordered, numerous, well-attended, commercially sound, and in all ways a living influence for good. The men have put up the memorial to Mr. Cockerell there.

I mentioned last year a piece of ground in Whitechapel, which was attached to Lady Pembroke's newly bought houses, and which I hoped would be made into a playground, or garden for the people. The ground, I hear, looks even more valuable now it is cleared. But it will cost a good deal to fence it, and keep it well managed till the people have learnt to keep order there themselves. Money is very much needed for this, I hope any of you that can help, will do so. It would be a pity to lose the ground, and, as it is proposed to use it for the whole neighbourhood, its expenses cannot be charged on the houses which it adjoins, and which will indeed require every farthing of their income spent to improve them.

I have told you in what way I feel that the houses for which I was responsible have really gained by my absence, but, the Commons Preservation Society, to which I had hoped to be useful has certainly suffered.

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The Committee is composed mainly of Members of Parliament, very busy men, who are doing the parliamentary work thoroughly; indeed some of them think they have successfully got through the worst part of *that*. But then the Society had functions, distinct from this parliamentary work, in which I hoped to help. It has to help those who oppose in the law-courts the numerous illegal enclosures which take place in England; for this it needs large funds. These funds ought to be drawn from hundreds of annual subscriptions, not necessarily large sums, we can hardly expect the people who are *very* rich and have large sums to give, and probably own land, to care so much for what remains of the common land as professional men, and working men, whose only link with the land is the share they have in its open spaces. It is we, it is they, who should come forward with our guinea or our five shillings, year by year, till the work be done of preserving what commons are left, *and that before it is too late*. I had hoped to interest these people, to make them want to give their money, to help them to bring the weight of public opinion to bear on the preservation of open spaces. To be a link between those members of parliament, the busy men giving their legal experience and advice on the Committee, and the large unthinking public, losing their commons while they hardly knew it seemed, my special place. It is empty now, and the time is passing, and I am afraid my last book, "Our Common Land," which I hoped would speak while I

was silent, does not speak quite as powerfully as the living voice would. And I should often be sad if I did not know God cared for England and its people and its commons.

My sisters say they will gladly take charge of money, or names of annual subscribers, for the Commons Preservation Society, as they do of money for my other work, if any of you care to send it, and that is for the moment all I can do.

This brings me to the question of my own donation fund. I am bound to give you, the donors who have so kindly trusted me, and strengthened my hands for work, some account of the way in which, during absence, I have fulfilled the trust committed to me by you. My letter was printed last year, before I knew I was going, or I would have spoken to you then, but I felt sure you would know that I saw my way to spend your money as I believed you would wish it spent, or I would not in silence have retained the charge of it. Indeed I did; the money has been spent entirely to my satisfaction, and what I am sure would be to yours. My sister, Mrs. Edmund Maurice, took charge of it for me: I gave her notes of the various regular expenses such as those for maintenance of orphans, help of clubs, supervision of playgrounds, &c. These permanent expenses, all of which I had planned myself, amount to a little more than £150 a

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year. I also gave her a list of all sums which had been sent me for any special purpose. After providing for these, I asked her to spend the balance according to her own discretion.

Now I would ask you to note that my donation fund has for some years, though entered as one account, practically fulfilled two perfectly different objects. It has given me the money to meet the needs of those individuals whom my life, so very near the poor and the workers among the poor, taught me to know well, so that I could help them when the great times of trouble came; some of them I knew really as friends, many of them with that watchfulness which enabled me to discover permanently helpful ways of re-establishing them. I had done this, but Mrs. Maurice can do it far better than I. I have *entire* confidence in her judgment about it; and partly her greater leisure, and her utter sympathy, and quiet, and the fact that she is not dealing with quite such large things as I latterly did, made me extremely happy in the knowledge that she would make the fund *more* useful than I could in this way. The number of people she has saved with it, and watched over, giving time with the money, would be a delight to you all if you could know it. It is not therefore want of entire reliance on her judgment that makes me write what follows, but, my friends, you know the fund you sent me was large, and it had another function which my sister's place

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and life have not called her to fulfil. I was myself in the midst of the leaders of great works, I knew of them before they were great, when they had only the capacity of growing great, I knew when the time of crisis came; and what is true of the work was also true of the workers, I knew many of them in the days of their beginning, before the world did and they grew strong, and when the world misunderstood them, or had not large enough hope to see as they saw, and they faltered for want of encouragement and help. You had trusted me with sums to cherish the early sparks of life in a great work, to support it at the moment of crisis, to cheer lonely workers and to encourage them in difficulty, and I could do it with large sums, and over a wide field, because you trusted me, and I was on the spot. These larger grants my sister has made this year, for I could direct her about them from far off—but—to be honest as I must be the more carefully because many of you will trust me—the power of doing this will inevitably decrease with longer absence, and my sister is not, as I say, placed precisely where she could *continuously* do it. I ought to say to you all then (hard as it is not to cling on to the hope that whatever life is before me might be such as to bring me back to the old places to work in the old ways, and that in time not to lose my clue to the great works I cared for) that I believe you would be wiser if you entirely review, as from the beginning, the wisdom of sending money to me in the opening year.

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There are however several things I had in hand, the wisdom of which cannot change for many a year; training of little orphans, support of my own clubs, and keeping open of little playgrounds, and other things, all which I have looked into myself years ago, and where near and dear friends are at work from whom I hear regularly and whom I know and trust. These undertakings cost about £150 a year, and the balance which appears in the annexed account is nearly all of it appropriated, so we may be said to have nothing in hand. If these friends were straitened, or if the things I care for fell through for want of money I should be sadder than I am.

If any of you, or rather if all of you altogether, for any memory, or in any trust, will send me that £150 I shall be glad. Every penny you send beyond it, my sister will spend in wise ways, and she knows much of old friends and fellow-workers, whom I trust, and who are working in out of sight places.

But it seems natural, it seems right, that my donation fund should not be much larger than these needs require, the great grants from it seem a little unnatural any longer, and the hope of making them could only be kept up by one who was clinging on to dead things. Let us be brave, you and I, and accept the changed conditions. Will you not each of you consider whether in your own neighbourhood, or some place

where you can come really near the people, you can yourselves spend on and for the poor the sums which you used to send to me, or whether you yourselves know any younger workers among the poor whose discretion is as great as their hearts are kind, to whom you should send it? Watch over your gift, learn what it does, and how it does it, and never think I shall misunderstand the blank in the list of my donors. Indeed, if it brings you nearer yourselves to the poor, to those out of the way, you will be nearer to me too, though there be no outward link. How could my donation fund die better, and die we know it must some day any way, than by bringing all you who helped me to yet nearer ways of serving the poor? Do not fear for me, I could not fear for myself. I think some of you will carry on, or through to their end, the things I leave in my sister's hands, and will find her a faithful, thoughtful, wise, and sympathetic distributor of all you care to send her; but if you can get nearer still to the poor anyhow else, take my absence as a message reminding you that that is always best, better than trusting me, or any one. And, believe for me, as I steadfastly believe for myself, that if it be God's will to bring me back to any of the old places, the old work, and the old friends, He will not leave my hand without any power which He wants me to have, whether of money or anything else. Money would come, or the want of it would be best. He would order that, as He has ordered all. Does He not create both souls and tan-

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gible things? Whomsoever He wants He will strengthen to fulfil His purpose, we may await His command to come or to go, to labour or to pause, and without one little fear for *His* England which He has made *our* England, nor for our little places in it, where we once had influence; it was all from Him.

“ God doth not need

Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best, his state
Is kingly, thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest
They also serve who only stand and wait.”

DONATION ACCOUNT.

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RECEIPTS.

	£	s.	d.
Cash in hand	182	2	6
Miss Aitken	0	2	6
Mrs. Bond	5	0	0
K. Brock, Esq.	1	0	0
Mrs. Browne	3	0	0
Miss E. M. Bush	3	0	0
Miss Campbell	1	0	0
Miss Chalmers	1	0	0
Mrs. S. E. Clark	0	5	0
Nathaniel Curzon, Esq.,	25	0	0
Mrs. Duckworth	15	0	0
Lord Dunsany	10	0	0
Mrs. Durrant	0	10	0
Mrs. Faunthorpe	5	0	0
Miss Fletcher	5	0	0
A Friend	5	5	0
A Friend	10	0	0
Miss E. Harrison	0	10	0
Miss Jekyll	10	0	0
The Misses Kennedy	1	0	0
Mrs. Lyell	1	0	0
Miss Lyell	0	10	0
Miss F. Martineau	5	0	0
Miss Martineau... ..	1	0	0
Miss C. Martineau	1	0	0
Miss Meek... ..	1	1	0
J. T. Nicholetts... ..	1	0	0
Mrs. Pooley	1	1	0
J. Ruskin, Esq.,... ..	80	0	0
Mrs. Rawlinson... ..	0	5	0
Mrs. Shaen	5	0	0
Mrs. Scaramanga	2	0	0
Mrs. William Shaen	2	0	0
Col. Smith	1	1	0
Mrs. Stallybrass	0	1	0
Miss Willington	2	0	0
Mrs. S. Winckworth	30	0	0
Miss King	0	10	0
Mrs. Wright	25	0	0
Four Young Servants	0	1	0
Miss Sparling	1	0	0

£444 5 0

EXPENDITURE.

	£	s.	d.
* Books and Furniture	9	18	10
* Orphans (boarded out)	23	0	0
Girls' Classes and Library (rent and fuel)	15	17	1
Clubs (rent and fuel)	34	10	9
Keeping E. at a School	6	10	0
" W.M. " 	13	0	0
* St. Thomas' Poor Fund	10	0	0
Playgrounds	11	8	6
Employment for poor people	6	11	2½
* Lambeth Charity Organization Society	1	1	0
* " Mrs. C. and Mrs. S	3	0	0
* Commons Preservation Society	20	0	0
* Free Library, Whitechapel	10	0	0
* East End Pension Fund	10	0	0
Expenses of Printing, Stationery, &c.	6	15	0
Country Excursion (Barrett's Court Girls)	0	7	1
" " Lambeth	6	0	0
" " Little Edward Street	1	3	11
" " Bell Street	2	0	0
" " Whitechapel	12	10	0
* Laying out Gardens and other spaces	37	2	2
Carriage of Parcels received	0	7	9
Clothes for Children	0	14	0
Providing Hospital and other relief to the Sick	8	7	8
Parties for Tenants, Drury Lane	6	4	8
" " Lambeth	2	19	6
" " Barrett's Court	2	0	0
" " Freshwater Place	0	10	0
May Festivals, Lambeth	3	18	7
" " Marylebone	4	3	6
* Society for Befriending Young Servants	0	11	0
* Ornamental Tiles, Freshwater Place... ..	1	11	6
Cash in hand	172	1	3½

£444 5 0

** These sums were given by special desire; or from the known sympathies of the donors.

N.B.—The balance in hand seems large, but it is all appropriated for special objects, except £9 8s. 3½d.

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LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS,

TO WHICH IS ADDED

ACCOUNT OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

WORK AMONG THE POOR

DURING 1881.

BY

OCTAVIA HILL.

For Private Circulation only.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY WATERLOW AND SONS LIMITED, GREAT WINCHESTER STREET, E.C.

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LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS.

ONCE more, dear friends, I am sending you an account of what I have been able to do with the money with which you have entrusted me. I am sorry that I have so little to add of any work done by myself. There is very little which my strength and my home duties now allow of my undertaking for the poor. At the same time, looking back on the year which has just closed, I cannot but feel that the things I have been able to achieve, as it were, by the way, simply from being at home among my old friends and fellow-workers, have been neither few nor inconsiderable. The fact is, that though, just now, I am not, and cannot be, responsible for any work among the poor, I am in such close and constant communication with those who are, and the years of work in the courts have given me such a radical knowledge of them all, that I am really able to be of use in fifty small ways without feeling the fatigue, and now and again I am called in about great matters where my experience is useful. All this I say to remind myself, and to assure you, that, very deliberately, I have satisfied myself that I do not feel wrong in asking you still to trust me as of old, and to look upon me as representing the poor, though I have still so little definite work with them.

If this little letter is to contain a record of the most important facts affecting the work among the poor for which I have laboured and thought, I ought here to record the repurchase from Mr. Ruskin, during the past year, of the

two courts which were the earliest entrusted to my care. Last spring I learned that he wished to sell them. I knew that the determination was a wise one; he had proved to many others able to give personal attention to the courts that the scheme was practicable and beneficial, many were willing to undertake such work, and there seemed no reason why he should continue it. But you will realise that I wanted to keep the tenants who for years had been my neighbours and friends still in near relation to ourselves, and to secure that they should be thoroughly well cared for. Mr. Ruskin entered most kindly and heartily into my wish, and sold to me the court which I had had longest under my charge, a little group of three houses, within a stone's throw of my own house. That is now my very own; and I am thankful that the fact of ownership implies a continuous duty towards the people there, which must always claim due fulfilment even when home duties are many.

The second court which Mr. Ruskin had bought, and which contains the playground and the first trees I was instrumental in planting in London, was too expensive for me to purchase back, yet in some ways I was more attached to it than to the other, and saw even greater danger for it if it passed away to ordinary landlords. For to any one not trained to think first for the people, and temperately to accept 5 per cent. only, and let the balance be spent, or renounced, for their good, there would certainly be an overpowering temptation to build on the playground and cut down my trees. It was rather a sad time when I thought it might all pass out of our hands; yet I thought Mr. Ruskin wise to sell it, and he was very cordial about my trying to find a friend of my own as purchaser. When they heard about it, my old friends Mr. and Mrs. Shaen said they would like to buy it. There seemed a singular appropriateness in the arrangement; they had known its history, and some of the many thoughts bound up with it,

and the hopes and plans for it from the first. It was Mr. Shaen who, in the early days, had expressed confidence in the plan when no one else, except Mr. Ruskin, had believed in it, and steadily on through the advancing years I had owed to him all strong support and valuable help in business for all the courts. Mrs. Shaen had been one of my earliest friends in London, to them both I was linked by memories which make their possession of the place I had loved a great satisfaction to me. I was, you may readily believe, thankful indeed to help them to purchase the court, which they have done, and I feel the strongest hope that in their hands it may prosper better than it ever has done, for I am sure that on every side they enter into the purpose of the work, and will bring that knowledge to bear strongly on this one court. If, in return for all their trouble, they ever love the place and the people half as much as I do they will be well recompensed. Meantime, I feel it doubly mine in being theirs.

So much of my other work this year has been bound up with other people and other societies, it becomes difficult to write of it. You will all have seen in the public papers how our Smoke Abatement movement has grown and thriven. There may not be to be found in the present exhibition the simple, cheap, cheerful smoke-consuming grate suitable for all our own rooms at once, which would meet our needs instantly; but a large and important step has been made this year in forwarding the cause we have at heart. The object is well and prominently, not only before the public, but before inventors and manufacturers; and I think the invention of such a grate as is wanted for domestic use in sitting-rooms will not long be found beyond the reach of British skill and science. Meantime, every *improved* grate (and there are numbers in the exhibition) is both cheaper and better, mainly because it ensures more complete combustion,—that is, it more thoroughly burns up coal, and consequently emits

less smoke. Of these improved grates numbers are being bought, and more will be bought, continually.* The improvements for manufacturing purposes are, I hear, considerable. The immense gathering at the opening of the Exhibition was, to my mind, very cheering; for when many Englishmen really *want* to do a practical thing, they usually find a way to do it, and I cannot help thinking that the effort to abate smoke will steadily grow, bringing with it gradual success.

Of the scheme for establishing classes for teaching working people to sing, in all parts of London, in which I am deeply interested, and in promoting which I have been engaged, I will not write here, because it is the work of the Kyrle Society and will be duly noticed in their reports—this is true also of the Smoke question, but as I mentioned it in my last letter to you, and as I am to a large degree responsible to our Kyrle Society for that branch of its work, I felt that you would be interested to hear of it. Moreover, it was a vote from the fund with which you entrusted me, that enabled the Kyrle Society to unite with the National Health Society in establishing the fund with which the joint committee began the good work it has since done.

With regard to the fund with which you have again so kindly trusted me, I can only once more assure you of my gratitude for it, and tell you what a help and strength it has been. Money like this, on the spot, in the hands of one who is in the centre of workers, has a manifold use: it is, as it were, spent many times over, for it enables me often to go on strongly and independently and with a care-free heart in many a good thing for which I do not know that anyone

* Manchester is considering the advisability of at once opening a Smoke Abatement Exhibition. A deputation from that City has been up to see the London Exhibition, and correspondence is now going on between our own Committee and the Manchester authorities.

is ready to give money. Often, after all, others do come in to take the expense themselves, and your money is not spent on that undertaking at all, but is carried on to some future one. It is curious how often this happens.

My sister, Mrs. Edmund Maurice, is still taking charge for me of numbers of individual poor with all the old wisdom and care. The very large sum you will see in the balance-sheet set down as spent in providing hospital and other relief to the sick, and that for employment for poor people, outfits, &c., means, as I have seen often and often, a very great deal of help given, just in the most helpful way, with separate thought and care and economy. I am doing a little of the same kind myself now with some of my other fellow-workers, but nothing to be compared with the amount. Mrs. Maurice is doing for me. Her assistant, for whom one friend so kindly pays, links her with a large, poor, outlying district, where no other ladies are at work. She mentions to me with special satisfaction, among the people helped by this fund, two tiny children who were never expected to walk, but whom she boarded out in the country for some months, and who are now plump healthy little things.

I have received, but just after my accounts were closed and ready for auditing, a very munificent donation, the account of which will appear in next year's letter. It opens before me larger vistas of possible money help to my friends hard at work among the poor than I ever began any year with before. While the thought of its administration fills me with joy, it fills me, too, with a sort of awe—for who am I that such power should be given me?—and can only hope that I may be made humble and gentle, for in such a temper alone can the needs of the poor be made visible. The trust is like a call to me to tell me that you, my friends, those whom I know well and those I have never seen, look to me with confidence that I shall still be able to be your representative among the poor, however broken I have become

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during the late years, and your hope sometimes is a lesson to me to keep my own high, where no earthly mists can dim it. I think it right to mention this large gift, but I hope it will not make any of you, my old friends, think I do not need your help this year. I think I shall want it as much as ever, for this sum, being a large one, will probably be best spent on large objects, and the work I have had on hand for years should not suffer. Moreover, the mere fact of administering it will bring me face to face with much want, and for that I may need greater resources than are at my disposal. Send money then to me as of old, if you easily can, only remember *never* send it if it prevents your giving to any person or things you yourselves know and watch, and for which you are certain your gifts are helpful, for those gifts are best of all and thrice blessed.

In conclusion, I have but one subject more to refer to, and that is our great need of additional workers in our courts. The courts are numerous, the funds for their purchase are practically unlimited, but the quiet, steady, permanent workers, whom it is worth while to train, and who afterwards exercise an abiding influence in our courts, though they are increasing in number and very greatly in efficiency, are not by any means as numerous as they should be. During my absence every one has been buying courts, and so few, comparatively, have been training workers. I have now taken one to train myself, and one of my best friends, who is in daily communication with me, is ready to train another, and I would at all times be thankful to tell workers where they could serve a sort of apprenticeship. Surely there must be many volunteers who would care to take charge of some group of tenants, large or small, near their own quiet homes, or in some dreadful district of poverty, with the sort of quiet continuous control which may slowly mould the place and people to conformity with a better standard than prevails in poor

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courts in general. Surely there are some who would prefer the simple and natural relation to the poor which springs from mutual duties steadily fulfilled, to the ordinary intercourse between uncertain donors, and successive recipients of chance gifts. If any one should read this who would care to learn how to take a court and its occupants quietly in hand and establish such rule there as should be beneficial, if they come not with high hopes of gushing gratitude, of large, swift, visible result, but remembering the patience of the great husbandman content to sow good seed and trust that in time it will bear fruit somehow, if they come ready to establish gradually such arrangements as must tell on the lives of their poorer neighbours, if they come with reverent spirits prepared to honor all that is honorable in the families they have charge of, and gradually to let the ties of real friendship grow up so that poor and rich may be friends as in a country parish, let them come to me and I will shew them work that I think they will feel opens to them a sphere of unnoticed usefulness such as few others can equal. Let them come quickly, for the need is great.

14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W.,
January, 1882.

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RECEIPTS 1881.

	£	s.	d.
Cash in hand	110	17	7
Mrs. Astley	2	0	0
Miss Benecke	0	5	0
Rev. and Mrs. E. Carpenter...	0	10	0
Mrs. S. E. Clark	0	5	0
A. G. Crowder, Esq.	5	0	0
C. E. Flower, Esq.	3	0	0
Miss Forman	1	1	0
Mrs. Gillson (Pension, A)	5	12	0
Do. (general purposes)	5	0	0
Rev. T. Hill	0	2	6
Alfred Hill, Esq.	10	0	0
Mrs. Fredk. Hill	0	10	0
Miss Howitt	1	0	0
C. James, Esq.	2	2	0
Mrs. Keightly... ..	20	0	0
Mrs. Macaulay	0	5	0
Mrs. Richd. Martineau	1	0	0
Miss Monro	3	0	0
Mrs. Oldham	5	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Pooley... ..	1	1	0
Mrs. W. Shaen	2	0	0
Miss Amy Smith	0	10	0
Mrs. Leslie Stephens... ..	10	0	0
Miss Stephens... ..	0	5	0
F. T.	1	0	0
S. Winkworth, Esq. (Pension, A)	13	0	0
Mrs. S. Winkworth	20	0	0
Do. Second Donation (work for Mr. S.)	5	0	0
Do. Third Donation	10	0	0
Mrs. Wright	25	0	0
Miss Mary Wells	1	0	0
Miss Yorke	10	0	0
	<u>£275</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>

(11)

EXPENDITURE.

	£	s.	d.
Boarding out (Clothes, Schooling and Partial Board for 10 Children)	17	17	9½
W. M. Industrial School	13	0	0
Excursion to the Country and other Entertainments	20	0	0
Care of Playground	10	8	0
Providing Hospital and other Relief to the Sick...	26	11	7
Employment for Poor People, Outfits, &c. ...	15	0	8
May Festival	4	3	7
Mission Woman for Dust Sifters (Lambeth) ...	15	12	0
Rent, Fuel and Light for Club and Girls' Classes, Barrett's Court and Freshwater Place ...	27	7	1
Kyrle Society (Open Spaces)	30	8	0
Pension, A	20	0	0
Working Men's College	10	0	0
Furniture for starting Temperance Hall	3	10	0
Books for Library	0	19	5
Salary for Assistant	10	0	0
Printing and Postage of Letter to Fellow-workers	4	0	4
Cash in hand	46	7	7½
	<u>£275</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>

Examined and found correct,

A. P. FLETCHER.

2nd January, 1882.

N.B.—The funds entrusted to me come from two very clearly marked classes of donors. The one anxious that their money should be devoted to the direct help of the sick and poor. The other class wishing to strengthen my hands that I may help forward in its difficult stages any great movement. My sister and I recognise this distinction, and in deciding about every grant, carefully consider whose money it is that is used, and follow the wish of the donors faithfully.

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LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS,

TO WHICH IS ADDED

ACCOUNT OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

WORK AMONG THE POOR

DURING 1880.

BY

OCTAVIA HILL.

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MY FRIENDS,

I have not been long back in England, and there does not seem much which I need say to you as to work, but I do not like to omit sending you a few words of thanks and of New Year's greeting, now that I am rendering you an account of the money with which you have entrusted me during the past year.

You will see that we begin with a balance for our regular work, of which I am very glad; it relieves me of a great sense of responsibility, and I am very glad to know that any money you are good enough to send me will be available if fresh important need arises, for I am seeing very few of you, and shall have little opportunity of telling you what is wanted.

A great part of the work during the past year has been the direct assistance of separate poor families. I know this will interest some of you more than anything else. It certainly is satisfactory in several ways. It brings the giver into such close relation with the recipient that the real effect of the gift is clearly seen. The gift is associated with that gracious human sympathy which is so sadly lost in much of the *large* charity which comes from afar and occupies itself with masses of people. Even the charity which deals with the eradication of evil, though it be grounded on human sympathy, is often not seen to be so by those whom it benefits; for it is sympathy guided by memory and penetrative imagination, and it is often invisible for long years to those whom it serves; action prompted by it often causes temporary pain, and rouses bitterness even among those whom finally it will help. Such work has indeed its own peculiar blessing, that which follows self-sacrifice, and constancy tested by pain; there falls a special sense of communion with God on those who, in order to help His children, accept misinterpretation and loneliness. If such duties lie straight before us, we must fulfil them cheerfully; but we may, on the other hand, be thankful, when life leads us face to face with the few, and those really cared for; when smile, and look, and voice, and thoughtful kindly act, translate into life, to the people for whom we live, the care and sympathy we feel. We may

be thankful for ourselves, we may be much more thankful for them, for we are able to carry them much further with us in any reforming, or educating, work we want to do for them. We win and carry with us their hearts, and our discipline is felt to be gentle, and their efforts are lightened by our encouragement, and cheered by our hope. It is, I believe, *only* by such individual work, lighted by love, and softening pain by near sympathy, that those who have fallen out of the way by ignorance, by sorrow, or by sin, can be led back, and by it alone can natural human intercourse be restored between the rich and poor inhabitants of our great city.

I never talk with Mrs. Edmund Maurice over her plans for the people she is helping with your money without feeling how real and how good is such personal work. During part of the past year she has been deprived of the help of a paid worker, who used to assist her in this sort of work, and enabled her to extend it to the people in a very poor East-end district. But lately, through the liberality of a great friend, I am able to give Mrs. Maurice this added power again, and we begin the New Year with it.

I cannot here tell you of the number of people cured by country air, established in self-supporting positions, helped through sickness and trained to work, all by the fund you supplied to us. There has been a very large number, one which, in proportion to the expenditure, has been surprising and delightful to me. But I will not write of these now. Mrs. Maurice asks me to tell you about the money sent specially for the blind man and the cripple, as circumstances led her to change somewhat the plans she had in view when I wrote to you of them. She writes:—

“In regard to the blind man mentioned in last year's letter, it was found that his health was too bad for him to learn a trade. The money given for him, therefore, was used for employing his wife till she could find work. She made for me some clothes for children boarded out, and for girls going to service. After a time she procured regular work at a warehouse, by which she earns 18s. a week. This winter, however, she has been out of work again, and was laid up with rheumatism for a time, so the rest of the money was used in supplying her with flannels and coals.

“A cripple's carriage was bought with the money in my hands, with some little help from other societies, for the boy of fourteen, who has a mechanical turn, mentioned last year. It was hoped that he could go backwards and forwards in this carriage to a shop to learn watchmaking, as that is a trade in which cripples are often employed. This, however, failed, partly owing to the boy's delicacy, partly to slackness of trade, but the carriage has been a great blessing to the lad, as it enables him to go out in the fresh air, and move himself about, the doctor said this would keep his limbs from being paralysed. He went into the country this year, and took his carriage with him, so that he was able really to enjoy the change.”

Mrs. Edmund Maurice has done one fresh thing this year, of which I am very glad. She has arranged periodically for some far quieter excursions into the country than can be secured when large numbers go together. The large parties are jolly, and sociable, and bright, and may give to a large group of tenants a sense of corporate life, happy memories in common, and promote neighbourly feelings among them, but the quiet influence of beauty and country stillness *they* cannot give. Small parties occupy much time, but they seemed well worth arranging, and some of the money given for country excursions has been used for these fortnightly parties, a different group going every fortnight. Mrs. Edmund Maurice says:—

“I arranged last summer to bring little parties of six or eight very poor women, most of them widows, from the East End to Hampstead. They came to tea at a little cottage and then took a long country walk. Journey and tea only cost 1s. each. Many of them were people who had not seen the country for years, and their delight in the beauty and quiet was very touching. It was also a great rest to the women to escape from the sound of the children's voices; but they always went home loaded with wild flowers “to surprise the children when they wake in the morning.” One widow who had supported her bedridden husband for a long time, till his death, had gathered a large bunch of daisies. When one of the women laughed at her for not gathering some of the rarer flowers, she said, “I always love daisies because they were such a pleasure to my poor husband. He liked to have a saucer-full of them by his bed, and watch them open in the morning. He used to offer the children a

farthing a-piece for the daisies.' Another woman was so delighted to hear the cuckoo, she had not heard it since she was a child in the country. One wished she could but take some of the good air back, she always had a headache at home.

I have, I think, in previous letters, told you that the money sent to me comes from two distinctly marked sets of people, the one deeply interested in personal work among the sick and poor, and sad, whom they know that I have always sought and loved; the second, who believe me to be—not so much in the centre of important work—as trained to be swift to see opportunities for beginning it, to know work which will be far-reaching in its helpfulness in time to come, and which needs strong support in its early stages.

A little of this latter work I have been able to do even in this broken year. I have done it in connection with our Kyrle Society, the workers of which still gather round us in this house, and make us strong to carry through anything which seems to us good, which falls within the scope of the society.

Some of you will, I know, be interested to hear about this larger work. I must tell you, then, that I was much impressed while abroad with the better out-door life of the people in towns. I saw that this was not wholly due to the greater amount of fine weather, but in some measure to the prettier public gardens. If I lived to come back, I told myself, I would see if the Kyrle Society could not get rid of the smoke. We had indeed enumerated the abatement of smoke as one of our objects, when the society was formed, but up to that time nothing had been done, members were all busy with other parts of the work. It was time we should grapple with this evil, too. It appeared a natural sequel to what we had tried to do to secure open spaces, when once the world seemed waking to the necessity of obtaining those, to endeavour to make them such as trees and flowers and grass would grow in, and show their natural colour and brightness. Immediately on my return I proposed to the Kyrle Society to appoint a sub-committee to deal with the prevention of smoke. They at once consented, and asked the National Health Society for their co-operation. This was cordially given, and a joint sub-committee was at once appointed. It was too late in the season to do more than name our committee and fix

the date of meeting in the autumn. A sudden general public interest began to show itself in the autumn, and we were all ready to use it and to increase it.

Our committee found, what I certainly had hardly realised before, that there were smokeless fuels, and smokeless grates in plenty, that the fuel must be cheaper, the grates simpler before they would meet with general approval, but that a very little would just turn the scale in favour of their adoption. I was mainly interested in the question of household fires as likely to affect London air most powerfully, it was evident that what was needed was to examine and report on the cheapest and simplest of smokeless grates and fuels. This our committee is now prepared to do. Through the kindness of the Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1851, buildings at South Kensington have been lent to our committee, that they may hold an exhibition of various inventions for preventing smoke. Professor Frankland, Professor Abel, and many other scientific men have joined our committee, and promise to report on the various inventions. The exhibition will assuredly stimulate inventors still further, already many exhibitors have sent in their names, and numbers of improved grates and fuels have been brought to our notice. The buildings will require to be put in order, and the exhibition will involve expense which at present the committee has not funds to meet. But I earnestly hope so beneficial a movement may not fail for want of money to carry it through. When once we are able to pronounce on the best stoves and fuels for various domestic purposes, we shall try to make the facts well known, and I have no doubt there will at once be a great number of people ready and glad to use them.

The saving ought to be enormous, the smoke all consists of unconsumed fuel. Some scientific men say that as much as three millions out of the five million tons annually used in London flies away in smoke, and so does harm and no good. Be the proportion what it may, the waste in mere fuel is considerable, to say nothing of the cost of extra washing, caused by the destruction of all kinds of material by dirt, and the artificial light required in the day-time. But, independently of any question of saving, many of us would, I believe, be ready to make an effort to diminish smoke, were it only for the beauty and comfort

and cleanliness, and for the life of the flowers we might then preserve round us.

It was interesting to me to learn that the law does forbid smoke, so far as it can be prevented, issuing from factories, large and small, from steamers, and from all chimneys other than those of private houses. I was glad to learn the machinery of the law, and that it is entrusted by the Sanitary Act of 1866 to vestries, as well as by that of 1853 to the police, so that we can each of us, in our capacity of ratepayers, bring it prominently before those who are bound to put it in force. So far as regards steamers it rests with the Conservators of the Thames to carry out the law. I have no doubt that, owing to the general interest now awakened, all the bodies entrusted with powers under the law will be roused to fresh energy.

As to my own future work I am afraid I can tell you nothing at present. I am not well enough, even if it were my first duty now, to take up any public work. I am sure you all know my desire to serve the poor is not slighter than in the old days, but I come back to find many things changed, and the changes imply different duties.

Were I inclined to regret this I should remind myself that various kinds of life may all be equally helpful, and I have always maintained that a life given wholly to the poor was one-sided, that our work among them should be less engrossing, and grow more naturally out of our home life. I think sometimes I feel this now more than ever, because so very many people are throwing themselves almost restlessly into work exclusively for the poor, and seeming to think that *that* only is good. I feel as if any one who has entered fully into public work, and has strength, when duties change, to step quietly back into an out-of-sight ordinary household, and be thankful and quiet there, and to look upon her position there as just as distinctly an appointed one, might almost do more good than if she hurried back to large undertakings.

I am *sure* this would be so if it were not for those terrible wildernesses of poor, and only poor, which cover large tracts of our city, wildernesses with the dwellers in which, except by deliberate purpose, no educated person would naturally be brought into contact. These do seem to demand that we should not all be satisfied with our home, and the poor naturally near to us and it. I have not forgotten, I never could forget, those tracts of London. I am not in

them now; whether I ever shall be again will depend, not on what I decide to be intrinsically—or even in the present age—the noblest life, but on what degree of strength may be mine in the years I still have to live, and on what may be the nearest, simplest duties which open out before me. Once my way was clearly out among the poor; now it is equally clearly not there. Where it may lie in the future who can say?

One thing more let me add. Whether my life henceforward be amongst rich or poor, in a quiet house or in the great world, there is one service you, my friends, have rendered me, which will make me specially bound to live whatever remains to me of life not *unworthily*. The sudden collapse from an active life, where every act brings result, is apt to lead one to a great sense of valuelessness. This is a temptation. You helped me to resist it. Your confidence, your help, your affection taught me, when I had to be most completely inactive, that, useless as I seemed, there must be a strange value in my life; the memory of you all goes on whispering to me still that message, which all human trust and love is for ever bearing to human creatures when they are tempted to despise themselves—that message, which you and I, whenever our work was worth anything, were carrying to the poor, in old days, which was the root and strength of whatever we were able to do,—that they must never despise, never despair of, themselves; that God in His love, and man in his, had put great honour on them. “Remember,” it seemed to say, “be reminded by our abiding care for you, of what you were meant for. It isn’t wholly a question of action; you may fail in action again and again, but by all the Divine, by all the human love which ever gathered round you, you are bound to remember that you were meant to live among the angels, meant to hold communion with great souls, living and dead, present and absent. You are greatly honoured. See, however small and faulty you are, God has entrusted you with *some* power to serve or cheer your fellows.” Love waits patiently for our full growth, for it sees what we are meant to be; it always tells us that we are worthy, meant to be worthy of that full love and magnificent trust which is the sunlight in which human spirits grow.

14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W.,
January, 1881.

RECEIPTS 1879-1880.

		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
Cash in hand	..	82	12	7	Brought forward	..	215	8	1
Anonymous	..	40	0	0	Miss Lucy Martineau	..	10	0	0
Mrs. Atkinson	..	1	10	0	Mrs. Oldham	..	5	0	0
Mrs. Bates	..	1	0	0	Mr. and Mrs. Pooley	..	1	1	0
Mrs. Bond	..	5	0	0	Shareholders of Cen-				
K. Brock, Esq.	..	5	0	0	tral London Dwell-				
W. S. Browne, Esq.	..	2	2	0	ings Company	..	3	0	0
Miss Cave Browne	..	3	0	0	Mrs. Stephen Ralli..	..	5	0	0
Rev. E. Carpenter	..	5	14	0	A Servant	..	2	0	0
A. G. Crowder, Esq.	..	5	0	0	Mrs. E. Spender	..	2	2	0
Miss L. Denison	..	2	0	0	Mrs. L. Stephen	..	10	0	0
Miss M. Duer	..	0	10	0	S. R. D.	..	1	0	0
Miss S. K. Duer	..	0	10	0	Sir U. Kay-Shuttle-				
Mrs. Fawcett	..	0	10	0	worth	..	5	0	0
A. P. Fletcher, Esq.	..	2	2	0	Miss A. Shuttleworth	..	0	4	1
Miss A. Fletcher	..	5	0	0	Mrs. Taylor	..	10	0	0
Miss Foreman	..	1	0	0	W. Tendron, Esq.	..	5	0	0
C. E. Flower, Esq.	..	2	0	0	F. T.	..	1	0	0
Miss F.	..	1	0	0	Mrs. Whately	..	1	0	0
Miss Gander..	..	5	5	0	Miss Mary Wells	..	1	1	0
Mrs. Greaves	..	1	1	0	S. Winkworth, Esq.				
Miss H. Gurney	..	1	1	0	(Pension A up to				
W. Bullock Hall, Esq.	..	1	0	0	Lady Day)	..	6	10	0
Rev. Canon Harrison					Mrs. S. Winkworth..	..	24	0	0
(Pension A to Xmas.)	..	2	12	0	Miss Wing	..	5	0	0
Rev. S. Hill..	..	0	2	6	Miss White	..	5	0	0
Mrs. Hughes	..	2	0	0	Miss M. White	..	5	0	0
Miss Jackson	..	3	0	0	Mrs. Wright	..	25	0	0
The Misses Johnston	..	25	0	0	Wm. Wynyard, Esq.	..	1	0	0
J. K.	..	0	6	0	Miss Yorke	..	20	0	0
Mrs. Lyell	..	8	0	0					
Mrs. Macaulay	..	0	10	0					
							£369	6	2

Examined and found correct,

A. P. FLETCHER.

12th Jan., 1881.

EXPENDITURE.

		£	s.	d.
Boarding out Two Children (School-fees, clothes, &c., for Six others)	..	29	10	7½
W. M. at Industrial School	..	13	0	0
Industrial School for B. R., and W. J., and K.,..	..	18	12	6
Excursions to the Country and other Entertainments	..	14	4	9
Negotiations about Recreation Ground	..	3	3	0
Care of Playgrounds	..	10	13	0
Providing Hospital, and other Relief, to the Sick	..	21	18	1½
Employment for Poor People, Outfits, &c.,	..	9	16	7
Mangle	..	4	0	0
May Festival..	..	3	17	2
Unveiling St. Christopher's Statue	..	2	0	0
Mission Women for Dust Sifters (Lambeth)	..	15	12	0
Rent, Fuel and Light, for Three Girls' Classes, Bank, Library, and Mothers' Meeting..	..	21	13	10
Club Rent and Fuel	..	41	12	0
Cripple's Carriage	..	9	10	0
Kyrle Society (to set on foot the Smoke Committee)	..	10	0	0
Pension (A)	..	20	0	0
East End Pension Fund	..	5	0	0
Printing and Postage	..	4	5	0
Cash in hand*	..	110	17	7

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Examined and found correct,

A. P. FLETCHER.

12th Jan., 1881.

N.B.—The funds entrusted to me come from two very clearly marked classes of donors. The one anxious that their money should be devoted to the direct help of the sick and poor. The other class wishing to strengthen my hands that I may help forward in its difficult stages any great movement. My sister and I recognise this distinction, and in deciding about every grant, carefully consider whose money it is that is used, and follow the wish of the donors faithfully.

*This balance is all appropriated.

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LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS,

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

ACCOUNTS OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

WORK AMONG THE POOR

DURING 1886.

BY

OCTAVIA HILL.

For Private Circulation only.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY WATERLOW AND SONS LIMITED, GREAT WINCHESTER STREET, E.C

LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS.

MY FRIENDS,

It is a beautiful spring morning when I sit down to write to you, a great contrast to the wintry and dark days when I usually prepare my report. I have been waiting to do this because of a great success, and a great hope of possible further advance, for which I desire to ask the co-operation of any of those who trust me, and feel they can help.

I mentioned in my last letter to you that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were pulling down many of the old cottages in Southwark. I had been much impressed by the way in which the tenants cared for small cottages, and had noticed many reasons which amply justified their choice. I am aware that there are many well-managed blocks in London, but the arrangements for management in others are defective. In too many instances where numerous families reside, and the staircases, laundries and yards are used in common, they are under the supervision of one man, who is exposed to great temptation to overlook disorder. Even with the best will in the world, he is often powerless to enforce order, and to secure a good tone among the families in a large block. There is no organised system of government, except through him. The consequence is that if anything goes wrong, the quiet, steady tenants have no redress, they therefore leave, the rampant ones grow more unruly, good tenants avoid the place, which moreover through mismanagement has become insanitary. Empty places are tenfold more difficult to keep in order than those that are let, directors are in despair, the block stands half empty, while the neighbouring houses are over-crowded, and there are ten or twelve applicants for any of them that fall vacant, but none

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for tenements in the block. Think what living in such close quarters must be, if there is no one to provide for the protection of the weak, or to consider and meet their wants. You get a family where the man works by night, he wants to sleep by day, the family in the next room are noisy and vigorous, there is no one to move him to the quiet corner of the block. Or there is a timid widow with little girls, she does not dare let them come up the noisy, ill-kept staircase, she wants to bring them up well, and the neighbours' children all use bad language. Think of the roughness and insolence of the drunken woman in the common laundry, of the dirt on the stairs when the tidy friend, or particular employer, comes to visit, of the drunken revel at night, echoing through the large building, and compare it with the quiet, separate little home in the cottage.

Then picture to yourself the utter impossibility in the block building of getting any kind of individual taste developed, such as the little separate yard allowed. Go down one of the courts of cottages which still linger in parts of London, pass through one of the passages and glance along the small back yards; in one you will see plants and creepers carefully trained, in another rabbits, in a third a little shed for wood, in a fourth all the laundry arrangements well provided, in a fifth the little delicate child sits out unmolested, in nearly all some evidence that the man has something to work at and improve when he comes home. The place has the capacity of being a home, not a couple of barrack-like rooms. If the court is well managed, the flags in front form a safe playground for the children living there among a small group of neighbours whom they know.

"Well!" you say, "but is not the day for all this gone by? Land is too valuable in London for us to build cottages, we must have blocks." Let that be granted for the moment, but that does not preclude those who own such cottages from keeping them where they are built. And I wish that any words of mine might avail with even one such owner, to induce him to pause and consider, very seriously, whether, at any rate for a time, he might not manage to drain, and improve water supply and roofs, and thoroughly clean such old buildings, instead of sweeping them away. As to cost, the cottages are far more valuable than the

cleared space; as to health, they may be made, at a small cost, far more healthy than any but the very best constructed and best managed blocks. As to the life possible in them—of which the charitable and reforming and legislating bodies know so little—it is incomparably happier and better. Let us keep them while we can.

And suppose we grant that London is coming to block buildings, and must come to them; the preservation of the cottages gives time for the question of management to be studied and perfected. The improvement may come from the training and subsequent employment of ladies like my own fellow-workers, under the directors of large companies, and in conjunction with good resident superintendents. Or it may come from the co-operation of a consultative body of good tenants, to assist the managers. Or it may come by the steady improvement of the main body of the roughest tenants, making them gradually better fitted to use things in common. But, seeing in all classes how difficult it is to get anything cared for which is used in common, unless there be some machinery for its management, I think this latter remedy should rather be counted on as making the work easier, than as sufficient in itself.

While I am on this subject, may I remark that it would be well if those who build blocks would consider, in settling their plans, what machinery they are mainly trusting to for securing good order. If they depend on getting a small group of families with self-respect and self-control, who will take a pride in their separate staircase, they will build those staircases up straight from the street; but, if they are hoping to take in the rougher working people, let them plan the position and out-look of their superintendent's rooms, and bring the staircases down, say, to a common yard, the entrance to which their superintendent's rooms command.

In a rough neighbourhood this precaution may be needed, even if the tenants themselves are tidy, careful and trustworthy, for the police are not bound to watch private staircases, which, being used by many families, are apt to be open at night, and frequented by strangers with the worst results. Much trouble and expense may be saved by well considering these points before building. One advantage of bringing the staircases down into a large yard or play-

ground is that the grown-up people, passing and repassing, are a protection to, and restraint upon, the children playing there.

Noticing all this, I asked the Ecclesiastical Commissioners if they would see me, and talk over the whole question, as it affected their Southwark Estate where they have had large, good, new blocks built, and where they had also cottages standing. They were very kind about seeing me, and we had a long talk, with the result that, I believe, they will, by preference, leave cottages standing, instead of clearing them away, so long as they are not interfering with plans for new streets or rebuilding.

Also I asked them whether—as they had already cleared away so many cottages, thus depriving the children of a number of small play-places; and, as their new blocks had, quite unintentionally, failed to secure garden or playground, even for the tenants who lived there, while the high blocks of tenements and warehouses had shut out more and more light and air from all the dwellers in the district—they would see their way to give a plot of land for garden and playground for the public. They said that there were grave difficulties about it, but, on consideration, especially as the land suggested was immediately opposite their own tenants' residences, they decided to lease to responsible trustees, at a nominal rent, for 999 years, a space of land, on my undertaking to get it laid out, and kept up as a garden and playground.

I hardly could believe so great a benefit would have been secured. There it is, in the very heart of Southwark, just opposite high buildings, where five hundred families live; near to numerous small courts, which are reached under arches and by narrow passages, where hundreds live; close to large Peabody and Industrial Dwellings; an out-door sitting room, a third of an acre in extent, where, in time to come, the trees may grow, and crocuses flower, and where tired men may sit and smoke on summer evenings, and women, weary of noise indoors, may just cross the road with their work, and breathe cooler air; a playground where children, too small to go to park or gymnasium, may run about freely. We are to have a small portion of the playground covered, where, on wet days, they may play

battledore and shuttlecock; and we are to have a tiny pond with fish, and a drinking fountain, and what not, in the days to come.

One friend is undertaking the whole cost of this for us, through the Kyrle Society. I had asked this Society to lay out the ground, and they are superintending the work, and managing the legal arrangements?

But now, it is to complete this scheme that I am asking your help this year, and if you are able to give it to me it will be the very greatest delight to me, and I cannot but think will be useful in time to come. Finding that I had not to collect the large sum needed for laying out the garden, I at once entertained the hope of carrying out my long-cherished wish of having a hall in connection with a garden. We have no place at all where we can meet groups of our tenants in Southwark; those under my care now number 1,600.

I have sixteen ladies working with me regularly there, and a large group of others who help occasionally. We want space for carving and mosaic classes, for musical drill, for winter parties, and lectures and concerts, for dances and acting. We have a good workmen's club there, and a hall will be an important adjunct to it. But, independent of our own needs, in my opinion, a hall in connection with a garden has a special value. We are to have a band-stand in the garden, and hope to have a band there on a Saturday afternoon. Suppose it rains; ought we not to be able to adjourn to the neighbouring hall? If we have a flower-show of the window plants, does not the same hold good? Moreover, might not a hall have newspapers, magazines and books; so forming a reading room and public library in connection with our garden?

Moreover this special site has high warehouses on two sides, and a street with the many-storeyed tenement houses on the third. What is to come on the fourth? "Not high warehouses, if it be possible to avoid them," I said to myself. So I set to work to make my plans, and I think I may say that I feel pretty sure that I have the refusal from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of the lease of the adjacent land on the fourth side. If I obtain help, I shall erect on it six small four-roomed cottages with yards. These cottages

(8)

will be most tempting and happy little homes, I hope. They will overlook the garden, and will enable us to bound it, not with a ten-foot wall as arranged, but with an iron railing, through which the tenants will look, and those in the garden will see a row of little cottages, I hope rather pretty, and certainly only two storeys high. At one end of the garden, and communicating with it by large doors, would be the hall. It would have an entrance at the opposite end from a street, so as to be used by night or day. I hope, if the scheme is carried out, to place in one cottage some family who would have permission to sell refreshments, and I should provide accommodation for their doing so. We shall have a flat roof forming a sort of terrace over the children's covered playground, where there will be tables and chairs, so that, if people like, they could have tea and coffee out of doors.

I propose to make the cottages a separate, and, if possible, a remunerative investment, but low cottages on valuable ground will make this very difficult, and I could only accept the money of those to whom possible loss of interest would not be serious. I estimate the cost of these at £1,300.

For the hall I propose to ask you all for gifts, pure and simple. As it is only leasehold, I want to invest enough to pay ground-rent, as I think without this provision trustees might hesitate to accept the trust, and certainly its usefulness would be crippled if it were not handed over to them free of ground-rent. Altogether I think we ought to have for the building and ground-rent about £2,000.

The scheme is one very near my heart, and if you can help me I shall be very glad, but if you cannot—and I know how many claims most of you have—I shall drop the scheme, feeling sure that, had I been meant to do it, the power would have been forthcoming, and that He who loves His earth, down to the last clod of it in Southwark, and His people, down to the feeblest and forlornest there, has some better thing in store for them of which I have not even thought.

You will ask me of our year's work. I think on the whole it has been very good, this garden and the great gift for laying it out being by far the largest real gifts for the people I ever had, or dreamed of.

(9)

Our work has grown. In July, the directors of the Company which owns the blocks referred to above in Southwark, asked me somewhat suddenly to take charge of 240 tenements. Thanks to the help of my experienced and most zealous workers, Miss Ironside and Miss Johnson, I was able to do this, and steady progress has been made there. But it was a strain on our machinery, and I had to spare Miss Ironside from Deptford, which has been a difficulty to us there. Still, I am satisfied that the only permanent success will depend on developing the local help, and, therefore, I am not wholly sorry that we were thus forced to depend more on it. Deptford is certainly the part of our work which lags most behind in success, but I do think that we have made progress even there this year.

We want more workers, but they ought to be first-rate to be of much use; we want people prepared for sacrifice, for steady and for quiet out-of-sight work, and we want people in full vigour, neither too young nor too old, and ready to give a good deal of time. These are not easy to find, but we have found some, and we hope for more. Specially should I be glad of co-operation from Blackheath, St. John's, Chislehurst, Beckenham, or any of the South-eastern places from which Deptford is easily accessible. Also, I specially need the help of gentlemen—one who has been with us while preparing to enter the Church will be leaving us soon, and we shall miss his help sadly. For some of the work in the houses, for our clubs, gymnastics, cricket, and for some kinds of business, we cannot get on without more gentlemen now our work is so large.

The donation fund has been of increased value during the past year. As my leading fellow-workers grow in experience and power, much becomes possible to them as to devising really wise ways of helping individuals among the poor, and I am able, as I never did before, to trust their judgment in such matters, while, as our area of work increases, more such claims arise. It is of the greatest moment to us that our hands should be well strengthened for any such when they come before us. There are boys to get to sea, girls to put to service, bread winners to send to the country, the patients to send to hospitals, the little pensions to provide if the club breaks; all this, and more,

(10)

wants doing, and is being wisely done in various centres from the fund. Also some of the classes and entertainments are now more numerous as the work extends, so that more money is wanted for them—and I find Mrs. Maurice, besides the personal work she can herself see to, is a sort of banker to my other responsible fellow-workers, though I fear they often meet more of these expenses themselves than they should do with all their hard work and many claims.

May I mention one gift specially remarkable, not only for its size, but for the object to which it is destined. That of £1,000 for some *beautiful* suburban open space. I have a special object in view for it, and till matters can be arranged about it, the money is invested in Consols, in the joint names of myself and Miss Harriot Yorke. The interest will be expended in the same object. This gift, the first, I trust, of many which the rich will one day learn to give, is all the more precious because it comes among those first which mark the clear eye that sees the beginning of important movements, and which herald the fuller sight. It is in the early days that the seer is tested, and has an opportunity of obedience to the call which reaches the listening ear. No help given in the full flood of public approval ever comes with such a sense of blessing.

Will Parliament Hill Fields go to the builders, and neither representatives of ratepayers, nor great donors, realise their opportunity till it is lost?

OCTAVIA HILL.

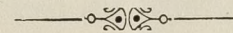
14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W.

P.S.—Since writing this I have heard of the sudden death of Mr. William Shaen. He and Mrs. Shaen were almost the first friends I had in London. For more than twenty-five years he has been my adviser in all the work I have undertaken and much of the difficulty which I have

(11)

encountered. From the early days when first Mr. Ruskin purchased the houses, to the very week of his death, when I was consulting him about my Southwark Hall, there was no plan about which I had not his sympathy and help. From the time when each scheme was only a vision of what might one day be, up to the time when the deeds came to be drawn, he followed its history, and helped me at every stage.

He never gave me any advice that I regretted having followed, his counsel proved right both as to worldly wisdom and as to that higher wisdom which outlasts all worlds. Gifted with a tenderness that found expression in the gentle reception and ever ready help of the poorest and most out-of-the-way, with a justice that perceived the claims of all concerned in any business, with a magnificent intellect that grasped the essential point of all questions he dealt with, and a truth that could not swerve, he will be missed by hundreds whom his silent help has blessed, and by none more than by myself. I hardly know how much my work has owed to his advice, and it needs all the courage I have to take it up again without him.



(12)

RECEIPTS, 1886.

	£	s.	d.
Cash in hand	82	15	3½
Mrs. Allen	0	12	0
Miss M. Ball	0	10	0
Mrs. Bird	0	10	0
Miss Buckin	0	10	0
Mrs. Coxhead	15	0	0
A. G. Crowder, Esq.	5	5	0
G. E. Elliot, Esq.	5	0	0
Miss E. Fisher	1	1	0
Chas. Flower, Esq.	5	5	0
Miss Forman	1	1	0
Miss Frankau	3	0	0
Mrs. Gillson	2	12	0
Lady Goldsmid	50	0	0
Miss Gosset	1	10	0
Mrs. Graham	2	0	0
Miss Glanville	5	0	0
Per F. Hill...	0	5	0
Miss L. Harris	10	0	0
Mrs. Hart	0	10	0
Arthur Heathcote, Esq.	3	3	0
Miss Head	1	10	0
A. Hill, Esq.	10	0	0
Miss Hogg	1	1	0
Miss B. Holland	1	1	0
Mrs. Hollist	5	0	0
Miss Humphreys	5	0	0
Miss Hunter	0	10	0
Miss Johnson	1	1	0
Miss Amy Johnson	0	10	0
Rev. Dr. Littledale	3	3	0
Mrs. Macauley	1	0	0
Mrs. Malkin	4	0	0
Rev. H. F. Mallet...	5	0	0
Mrs. Julian Marshall	13	0	0
Miss Meek	2	0	0
F. Nettlefold, Esq.	20	0	0
O. Nettlefold, Esq.	5	0	0
Miss Florence Nightingale	2	2	0
Mrs. Oldham	10	10	0
Mrs. Leslie Stephen	10	0	0
Miss Lucy Stone	1	1	0
H. Stephen, Esq.	3	3	0
Miss Tait	3	0	0
Mrs. Tarratt	10	0	0
Miss Thompson	2	0	0
Miss M. Wells	1	0	0
The late Stephen Winkworth, Esq.	6	10	0
Mrs. Stephen Winkworth	126	10	0
Lord and Lady Wolmer...	5	0	0
Mrs. Wright	10	0	0
Mrs. Wilde	0	5	0
Loans returned	1	5	0
Mrs. Walker	5	0	0
	<u>£471</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>3½</u>

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EXPENDITURE, 1886.

	£	s.	d.
Industrial School for F. B., A. B., L. H. and E. H.	38	16	0
Boarding out (clothes, schooling, and partial board) four children	8	10	11½
Providing Hospital and other Relief to the Sick	11	18	0
Pensions for A., M., B. and S.	36	5	0
Employment for poor people, tools, &c.	7	9	6½
Excursions to the Country and other Entertainments	59	12	3
Girls' Home, Charlotte Street	10	0	0
* Education—K.	46	13	6
Tower Hamlets	11	0	0
Furniture for a Hospital	0	8	0
Rent for Classes, &c.	23	19	2
Care of Playground	13	0	0
Plants and Flowers for Tenants	1	13	3½
May Festival	2	9	0
Home Art Class for Tenants	1	8	0
* Salary of Assistant	7	10	0
Printing and Postage of Letter to Fellow-Workers	4	15	6
Loans	4	2	0

Cash in hand, December, 1886 182 1 1

£471 11 3½

Examined and found correct,

A. P. FLETCHER.

15th January, 1887.

* Special Donations.

WOMEN'S SERVICE LIBRARY

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LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS,

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

ACCOUNTS OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

WORK AMONG THE POOR

DURING 1884 & 1885.

BY

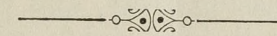
OCTAVIA HILL.

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY WATERLOW AND SONS LIMITED, GREAT WINCHESTER STREET, E.C.

LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS.



MY FRIENDS,

It is two years since I have written to you, and I can no longer delay rendering an account of my stewardship, at least so far as the printing of my balance-sheets is concerned. I assure you they have been carefully and duly audited by my kind friend, Mr. Fletcher, though I did not think it well to print a letter last year. The truth is, I have been under a very strong conviction that silence was better in these days than any words. There seems such a rush of talk about work for the poor, so much self-consciousness forced on the doers of it, so ruthless a dragging to the light of all simple, neighbourly, quiet acts that would fain be done in silence as a natural and simple duty, that I felt as if it were really better not to write anything even privately to you, my old friends and fellow-workers. But I must print my balance-sheets in common duty of treasurer, and it seems unnatural to send them without a few words of thanks to all who have so generously and kindly helped me with money. Then, if I acknowledge the money, how can I be silent about the even greater help of faithful and continuous work? And then, how ungracious not to tell those of you who are far away in country places a little of the progress of the work with which you have helped! Besides, times change, and there may be things to say neither gossiping nor popular, which are hard to utter, and are not sure to bring any clamour of talk, being truths that the world would like to turn from, but which a low voice within says to me, "Write or say, for those that will hear, who may not be so near the facts of life in a great city as you, and who will accept Truth though her beautiful face is veiled, and she looks sad and stern, but who know her as

(4)

the daughter of God, and desire to see her, and ask for her guidance even if she leads them through ways they would not choose, but who trust, that where she leads, the paths are firm, if stony, and, though they are dark at first, must lead out into the sunlight and presence of God." And the truth, so far as I see it, is, that the days are full of difficulty; the temper of the poor is difficult, the old submissive patience is passing away, and no sense of duty has taken its place; the talk is of rights, not right. The ideal the poor form for themselves is low, and the rich support them in it. The rich, on the other hand, while they are continually coming forward more and more to help the poor, are thoroughly cowardly about telling them any truth that is unpalatable, and know too little of them to meet them really as friends, and learn to be natural and brave with them. We have great relief funds and little manly friendship, idleness above and below, and an admiration for what is pleasant which degrades all life. This temper makes work difficult, and sometimes fills one with wondering awe about the future of rich and poor.

But, my friends, let us take heart. There is much work done thoroughly, and in God's sight, which will stand the fire and be proved as good pure gold. Wherever it exists, it tells in a quite marvellous way. One true-hearted clergyman, one conscientious mistress of a house, one firm mother who teaches her boy what duty means, one faithful workman, one human soul who looks day by day through earthly things clearly to the Lord of them, one statesman who is careless whether any follow or applaud, but who makes straight on for what is right, all of these prepare the way of the Lord, and do something to make England what we all wish her to be.

Now as to my own small undertakings. I have, since I last wrote to you, been successful in establishing my work in South London, according to the long-cherished wish of my heart. In March of 1884, I was put in charge by the owner of forty-eight houses in Deptford. In May of the same year, I undertook the care of several of the courts in Southwark for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. In November of the same year, the Commissioners handed over to me an additional group of courts. In January of 1885,

(5)

I accepted the management of seventy-eight more houses in Deptford. A friend is just arranging to take forty-one houses in Southwark, on lease from the Commissioners, and one lady has bought the freehold of another house in a court where we have long been at work. On the other hand, the Commissioners have decided to pull down some of the houses in Southwark, new buildings having been erected by a company on land belonging to the Commissioners. But I hope to retain the trained workers and a portion of the tenants, who will be thus displaced, if I am able to find suitable houses to be bought in the neighbourhood, for which purpose I have a promise of money. The staff of my fellow-workers has largely increased, and so has their efficiency. There are now many more about whom I know that, if a court is committed to them, they think out what will be for the welfare of the tenants in a considerate and responsible way, which is quite independent of me or my advice. I ought, however, to repeat here once more that there is much which is technical and which *must* be thoroughly learnt, and that unless intending workers set aside time to learn their business thoroughly with us or others who have experience, they will do more harm than good by undertaking to manage houses.

One distinct advance that is noticeable since I last wrote is the readiness shown by men of business and companies to place their houses under our care. A deeper sense of responsibility as to the conduct of them, a perception of how much in their management is better done by women, and, I hope, a confidence that we try faithfully, and succeed tolerably, in the effort to make them prosperous, have led to this result. This method of extending the area over which we have control has been a great help. It has occurred at a time when, owing to the altered condition of letting in London, I could no longer, with confidence, have recommended to those who are unacquainted with business, and who depend on receiving a fair return for their capital, to undertake now the responsibility of purchasing houses.

When we began in Southwark, we secured an almost entirely new group of volunteers, who learnt there under one or two leaders, and who now form a valued nucleus from which to expand yet further.

(6)

In Deptford, I was obliged at first to take with me helpers from some distance, as we had none near there; but gradually, I am delighted to say, we have found many living in Blackheath and its neighbourhood who are co-operating with us, and we hope they as the years roll on will be quite independent of us.

Of the success of our work? Well! I am thankful and hopeful. Of course it has varied with the nature and constancy of our workers, and with the response our tenants give us. The new places always tax our strength, and we have had our difficulties in them, but we seem to make steady progress; I feel all must go well in proportion as we love our people and aim at securing their real good, and base our action on wise and far-sighted principles. There is not a court where I do not mark distinct advance, but none know better than I how much more might have been done in each of them, and how much lies before us still to do.

May I here say what an intense joy it is to my sister Miranda and to me to see some of our former pupils entering the ranks of workers both in the houses and in the neighbourhood of their own homes. It is specially delightful when they are associated with us in this new relation.

The Kyrle Society, which takes up now what I always felt to be an integral and important part of my duty, has steadily grown, and has certainly been successful in calling attention to the need of the people for what is beautiful. The importance of securing open places in London, for which it was the first Society that laboured, is now fully recognized. The importance of larger spaces, such as Parliament Hill, was brought prominently before the public at a meeting at the Duke of Westminster's, in May of 1884, at which I had the honour of reading a paper.* Whether that particular scheme will be carried through or not will be decided by a Bill now before Parliament. I was very anxious myself that a certain portion of the land should be secured by private donors, that they should contribute, for instance, the lovely nine acres known as the

* N.B.—“Colour, Space, and Music for the People.” Price 3d. Kegan Paul.

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Elms, supposing that the Vestries and Metropolitan Board and the Parochial Charities contributed a large enough grant for purchasing the rest of the land. We have understood that the Metropolitan Board would only carry out the scheme if contributions were forthcoming, and I cannot but think that in this metropolis, where rates press so heavily on the poor, there should be many a rich and generous hearted man who would like to contribute something, above his bare share of the rate, to give to his fellow townsmen some few acres more of sloping grass, with stately trees, a place where the noise of carriages is not heard, and the toil and rush of life pauses for a while. I should like myself nothing better, if I had the money, than to make so great and lasting a gift to the people—and I rather hope, when the Bill is in a more advanced stage, that the Kyrle Society may be the medium of securing some such gift, from those whose labours have been abundantly blessed by resultant wealth, or who inherit much from their ancestors. If all fails, it may be possible to the Kyrle Society to rescue, at least, a few acres where the hill top enables the Londoner to rise above the smoke, to feel a refreshing air for a little time and to see the sun setting in coloured glory which abounds so in the earth God made, but of which so small a share remains visible to the inhabitants of our huge town. One great gift of a generous man, a whole £1000, I am keeping to secure what I can there. I often wonder it is not met by many another. The time will surely come when the regret will be deep if those slopes are lost to the public, which is slow to realize its opportunities in time.

Now, as to the gifts of money you have sent me, you cannot think how grateful and glad I have been for them. They have met needs without number, and there are such histories lying behind the bare figures which appear in the balance sheet as would move you, too, to glad thankfulness that you had been able to charge them with such power of blessing, if only you could know about it all. But the veil of reverent and tender sympathy makes me prefer to say nothing further here.

One new balance sheet appears here; it marks a new departure. It records the gifts of those who wished their

(8)

donations spent in houses. I explained to them that the houses under our care were self-supporting, and did not need gifts. But I asked leave to accept the gifts in order to form a permanent fund, from which advances might be made to be used in courts when first they came under our care to effect the repairs, which should have been gradually done in years long before we managed them, more quickly than the rental allowed, and also to enable me now and again to risk in a justifiable way some purchase of a house or substantial improvement of it, or to supply some addition for the tenant's good which the landlord could not be expected to provide. In this way we underpinned and rendered quite dry and healthy two small houses which have now nearly repaid the whole sum advanced. We rearranged all the water supply in one street in time for a hot summer when we expected cholera; we have also many a time put work in hand for some poor man out of work, which else must have waited. It has been a most helpful part of the donation fund, and kept *as a loan fund*, so as not to interfere with the substantial independence of the courts, is most useful.

Now, good-bye, my friends. I wish I could see you oftener, and tell you more of all the joy that there is in the trying to do even this little which you are all in various ways strengthening and helping me to do. But I know that you are ready, as we all must be, to put our little seed into the ground invisible, and to believe that God will bring out of it, in His own good time, fruit a hundred fold.

OCTAVIA HILL.

14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W.


RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE.



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19

(10)

RECEIPTS, 1884.				£	s.	d.
Cash in hand, Jan., 1884	184	16	11
Anonymous	5	0	0
A Friend, per Mrs. W. Shaen	5	0	0
A Well-Wisher at Torquay	...	...	...	20	0	0
Miss Brand	...	...	...	5	0	0
Per Rev. H. Bulkley	...	...	...	2	16	6
A. G. Crowder, Esq.	...	...	...	5	5	0
Dalewood Parishioners, per Rev. C. L. James	...	...	...	1	7	7
Miss Forman	...	...	...	1	1	0
Charles Flower, Esq.	...	...	...	3	3	0
General Lynedoch Gardiner	...	...	...	2	0	0
Miss Gossett	...	...	...	2	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Gillson	...	...	...	12	12	0
Miss Glanville	...	...	...	20	0	0
Canon Harrison	...	...	...	2	12	0
G. M. Hicks, Esq.	...	...	...	10	0	0
Mrs. Hailston	...	...	...	1	0	0
Per Miss Johnson	...	...	...	1	10	0
Miss Lushington	...	...	...	1	0	0
Rev. Dr. Littledale	...	...	...	7	7	2
Mrs. Julian Marshall	...	...	...	16	0	0
Wm. Moore, Esq.	...	...	...	0	10	0
Mrs. Macauley	...	...	...	1	0	0
Mrs. James Macdonell	...	...	...	0	10	0
Miss Monro	...	...	...	4	0	0
Mrs. Gower McCrea	...	...	...	1	1	0
Mrs. Oldham	...	...	...	5	5	0
Mr. and Mrs. Pooley	...	...	...	1	1	0
Rev. Charles Plummer	...	...	...	5	0	0
Miss Pipe	...	...	...	2	2	0
Mrs. Leslie Stephen	...	...	...	10	10	0
Miss Stephens	...	...	...	0	5	0
Mrs. Wm. Shaen	...	...	...	2	0	0
Mrs. Scott	...	...	...	1	1	0
Miss Tait	...	...	...	3	0	0
R. P. Tebb, Esq.	...	...	...	3	0	0
Stephen Winkworth, Esq.	...	...	...	14	0	0
Mrs. Stephen Winkworth	...	...	...	20	0	0
The Misses Waters	...	...	...	2	2	0
Miss Mary Wells	...	...	...	2	0	0
Miss Wansey	...	...	...	2	0	0
Mrs. Wright	...	...	...	10	0	0
Miss Webb	...	...	...	5	0	0
Miss Yorke	...	...	...	10	0	0
				£414	18	2

(11)

EXPENDITURE, 1884.				£	s.	d.
Boarding Out (clothes, schooling, and partial board for 7 children)	...	...	...	10	9	7½
Industrial School for M. K., T., E. H., L. H., G. S.	...	...	...	34	7	6
Excursions to the Country and other Entertainments...	...	...	...	22	7	8½
Care of Playground	...	...	...	10	8	0
Providing Hospital and other Relief to the Sick (chiefly Children)	...	...	...	40	0	0
Rent of Rooms for Classes	...	...	...	11	12	0
Pensions—A., G., B., E., T. H., M., Br.	...	...	...	54	7	7
Employment and Apprenticing	...	...	...	30	1	0
Miss Poole's Orphanage	...	...	...	2	2	0
May Festival	...	...	...	2	5	5
Education—K....	...	...	...	45	4	6
Salary of Assistant	...	...	...	10	0	0
Printing and Postage of Letter to Fellow-Workers	...	...	...	3	9	11
Transferred to Houses Account	...	...	...	20	0	0
Cash in hand	...	...	...	118	2	1
				£414	18	2

£414 18 2

Certified to be correct,

A. P. FLETCHER.

January 14th, 1885.

N.B.—The funds entrusted to me come from two very clearly marked classes of donors. The one anxious that the money should be devoted to the direct help of the sick and poor. The other class wishing to strengthen my hands, that I may help forward in its difficult stages, any great movement. My sister and I recognise this distinction, and in deciding about every grant, carefully consider *whose* money it is that is used, and follow the wish of the donors faithfully.

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19

(12)

RECEIPTS, 1885.				£	s.	d.
Cash in hand, Jan., 1885	118	2	1
Miss Ball	0	7	6
Per Miss Ball	0	2	6
Mrs. Charles Buxton	...	...	...	10	0	0
The late Miss Fullagar	...	...	...	1	0	0
Charles Flower, Esq.	...	...	...	2	2	0
Miss Forman	...	...	...	1	1	0
Mrs. Gillson (Pension A)	...	...	...	2	12	0
Miss Hardcastle	...	...	...	0	6	0
Canon Harrison (Pension A)	...	...	...	2	10	0
Rev. Thomas Hill	...	...	...	0	10	0
Miss Johnson	...	...	...	1	0	0
Mrs. Lewes	...	...	...	1	12	6
Dr. Littledale	...	...	...	5	5	0
Mrs. Macauley	...	...	...	1	0	0
Miss McNair	...	...	...	5	0	0
Mrs. Julian Marshall	...	...	...	5	0	0
Mrs. Mason	...	...	...	2	0	0
Miss Meek	...	...	...	2	0	0
Miss Middleton (Parochial Mission)	...	...	...	20	0	0
Miss Constance Oldham	...	...	...	2	10	0
Rev. Charles Plummer	...	...	...	5	0	0
Mrs. William Shaen	...	...	...	2	0	0
Mrs. Leslie Stephen	...	...	...	10	0	0
Miss Wells	...	...	...	2	0	0
Miss Jane Wells	...	...	...	1	0	0
Mrs. Stephen Winkworth	...	...	...	40	0	0
Do. do. (for K.'s Education)	...	...	...	50	0	0
Stephen Winkworth, Esq. (Pension A)	...	...	...	6	10	0
Miss Wordsworth	...	...	...	2	0	0
Mrs. Wright	...	...	...	10	0	0
Miss Yorke	...	...	...	10	0	0
Loan returned	...	...	...	1	0	0
Materials returned	...	...	...	0	0	4½

£323 10 11½

(13)

EXPENDITURE, 1885.				£	s.	d.
Boarding Out (clothes, school, and partial board for 6 children)	...	...	...	14	14	1½
Industrial School for F. B., L. and E. H.	...	...	...	39	0	0
Hospital and other Relief to the Sick	...	...	...	4	19	10
Pensions—A., G. and B.	...	...	...	22	10	0
Employment and Apprenticing	...	...	...	11	9	6
Excursions to the Country and Entertainments	...	...	...	35	5	6
May Festival—Plants, Flowers, &c., during the Year	...	...	...	8	0	0
Care of Playground	...	...	...	7	16	0
Rent of Rooms for Classes	...	...	...	10	1	6
Education—K.	...	...	...	44	18	6
Salary of Assistant	...	...	...	7	10	0
Materials for Mounting Pictures	...	...	...	0	8	1½
Cheques	...	...	...	0	0	7
Parochial Mission, Deptford	...	...	...	20	0	0
Transferred to Houses Account	...	...	...	12	2	0
Tower Hamlets Pension Fund	...	...	...	2	0	0
Cash in hand, December, 1885	...	...	...	82	15	3½

£323 10 11½

Examined and found correct,

A. P. FLETCHER.

February 1st, 1886.

361.70941

19

(14)

From December, 1883,

DONATIONS FORMING FUND

1883.					£	s.	d.
	The Marchioness of Salisbury	...	...	...	20	0	0
	Mrs. Pryor	...	...	...	25	0	0
	Mrs. Cook	...	...	...	5	0	0
1884.							
Oct.	Miss. E. Fisher	...	...	...	1	0	0
Nov.	Caritas...	...	...	...	5	0	0
Dec.	Rev. C. Plummer	...	...	...	5	0	0
"	Transferred from Donation Account	...		...	20	0	0
1885.							
Feb.	Mrs. Charles Buxton...	...	...	...	10	0	0
"	Miss Gossett	...	...	...	1	0	0
"	D. Cruikshank, Esq....	...	...	...	5	0	0
April.	C. Dodswell, Esq.	...	...	...	1	1	0
Sept.	Mrs. Gillson	...	...	...	5	0	0
Oct.	Miss Fisher	...	...	...	1	0	0
Dec.	Repaid by Property A	...	...	...	6	0	0
"	Transferred from Donation Account	...		...	12	2	0

£122 3 0

(15)

to December, 1885.

FOR IMPROVING HOUSES.

					£	s.	d.
	Survey Fees	...	...	...	1	1	0
	Training Worker (specially given for)	...		...	15	0	0
	Advance to Property A	...	...	...	20	0	0
	Do. do. B	...	...	...	14	0	0
1884.							
Sept.	Do. do. "	...	...	...	25	5	0
Dec.	Do. do. "	...	...	...	14	16	3
1885.							
March.	Do. do. "	...	...	...	3	17	6
June.	Do. do. "	...	...	...	3	10	3
Sept.	Do. do. "	...	...	...	6	17	0
Dec.	Do. do. "	...	...	...	5	14	0
"	Do. do. "	...	...	...	10	0	0
"	Do. do. "	...	...	...	2	2	0

OCTAVIA HILL.

£122 3 0

361.70941

19

32756

LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS,

TO WHICH IS ADDED

ACCOUNT OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

WORK AMONG THE POOR

DURING 1883.

BY

OCTAVIA HILL.

For Private Circulation only.

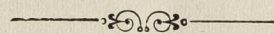
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LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS.



MY FRIENDS,

Those of you who have been in the habit of receiving this letter, will realise that it is nothing but a little summary of account of donations received, and of thanks to the kind donors, which gives an opportunity for my saying more quickly and better than I could easily write it, anything that concerns our own little body of fellow-workers, or any remark, or news, as to public questions which may interest you.

In the first place, I am desirous to bring before you a few facts respecting Open Spaces. My work regarding them has been done this year mainly as a Member of the Kyrle Society, so that I am obliged here to treat of some of the same subjects which are to be found in the Kyrle Report.

The Kyrle Society has this year been able to carry to a satisfactory conclusion the negotiations for handing over to the vestries three gardens in poor districts. It has arranged plans and secured money for laying them out. One of these gardens is in Spicer Street, Mile End, one near Gray's Inn Lane, and one in Bethnal Green. The donations for these gardens, amounting in all to about £600, were mainly received by me, but as they came to me as Treasurer of the Kyrle Society in answer to letters in the papers, an account of them does not appear here, but in the report of that Society. I refer to them here, because many of them came from old friends, and fellow-workers, and with kind letters; also, because much of our strength this year has been thrown into the provision of open spaces. The increasing appreciation of the value of open spaces is most satisfactory, but much has still to be done

now public interest in the matter is aroused. Not only ought all our Metropolitan burial grounds that are closed to be preserved as gardens for the people, and some general law passed which should prevent their being built over, but larger hope, and greater liberality and sense of citizen duty should surely, before long, provide for securing larger areas, in suburban districts within easy reach of the poor of London. The hills, especially, that are still unbuilt over, in the near neighbourhood of town, are of paramount importance. The view, the air, the pleasure of going up and down, all render hilly parks, or recreation grounds, of peculiar value. Yet we have not an inch of ground saved for the public at Highgate; and Traitor's Hill (from which the view extends as far as to the Crystal Palace, and where there is always a breeze), looks doomed to be covered with buildings; this is the more to be regretted, as it is accessible to all the poor and increasingly crowded district of Kentish Town, and enables all North Londoners to reach the Heath through fields, instead of by weary streets.* An effort on the part of some small shopkeepers at New Cross, to save a hill near there which belongs to the Haberdashers' Company, does not seem likely to succeed. In fact, it is strange to notice that, though other towns in numbers have had parks given to them, the thousands of rich people who owe their wealth to London, or who avail themselves of its advantages, have not, so far as I know, given one single acre of ground, that could have been sold for building over, to Londoners, for recreation ground, or park, if we except Leicester Square.

The revelations made in the report of the Medical Officer of Health for Bethnal Green, as to the prospect of dwellings for working people being erected on the Peel Grove burial ground, which is a mass of graves, and the uncertainty as to whether the law can stop their erection, will surely lead Parliament, next session, to introduce some clause into the Building Acts forbidding the use of burial grounds as building sites. The Commons Preservation Society will, I believe, take action in the matter, and all public support ought to be given to them. How necessary some such general law is, and how difficult it is to defeat separate schemes,

* I am glad to hear that a movement is just set on foot to endeavour to save this ground if possible.

may be seen from the history of the bill by which the London and North Western Railway Co. proposed to take the burial ground of St. James's, near Tottenham Court Road. The graves would have been disturbed in order to build, on part of the ground, stables for omnibus horses, and an open space would have been lost, which was situated in a populous neighbourhood, and which was overlooked by a row of poor houses, a hospital, and a factory; yet the bill passed the House of Commons and the second reading in the Lords, and was only saved by the spirited action of the St. Pancras vestry, which opposed the bill at every stage, and was finally victorious before a Committee of the House of Lords.

The Commons Preservation Society intends this year to take up the preservation of public rights in connection with the Thames, examining and vindicating rights to walk along the towing paths, to row on the backwaters, &c. They will need funds and public support, which it is hoped may be forthcoming for this new and important branch of work.

The importance of the smaller central open spaces, as an adjunct to the houses of the poor, appears to me not generally recognised. House-room is so costly in London, that, at best, the poor can have but limited accommodation indoors; and open spaces, such as churchyards, or board-school playgrounds form nurseries, play rooms, gymnasia, outdoor sitting rooms, and often, for the men, dining rooms, when they are working far from home. All the funds in the hands of the Kyrle Society which are available for these gardens are now appropriated, and they expect, almost at once, to be asked to lay out a disused burial ground in Bermondsey. The laying out is costly, as the local vestries which take over, maintain, and manage these gardens, will not do so unless they are well-drained, and unless strong, permanent, wide paths are provided.

I feel, myself, very strongly, the importance of rendering such gardens very beautiful, and had hoped to have received contributions to have paid for carrying out a scheme for placing an inscription in a Lambeth garden. The design was most kindly drawn and given to the Kyrle Society by Mr. Statham. It was planned to be executed in permanent colour, that is, in glass mosaic. The words were George Herbert's—

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"All may have, if they dare try, a glorious life or grave." I liked to think of the words being there, they were to run the whole length of the blank outside wall of the church, which bounds the garden. I believed the words might go home to many a man as he hurries along the crowded thoroughfare near, if he caught sight of them between the trees, their colour attracting his notice, perhaps, first, in its contrast with the dreary dinginess all round. I liked to think some busy man might renounce a profitable bargain, or might even dream, for a minute or two, of renouncing it, for the sake of some good deed. Or I have sometimes liked to fancy a working man, from among the men who sit in that public garden, might be reminded, as he read the words, that though his life was out of men's sight and seemed occupied with little things, seemed perhaps somewhat broken and wasted, there was the possibility of nobleness in it, if bravely and unselfishly carried on. But to whatever heart it might or might not go, the words seemed fit to be spoken to each one of the multitude, hurrying in and out, or pausing there, and worthy to be set, with some care, in lovely colour, to last for years. However, I got little answer to my appeal, and it seems that few care to help about it.

To come now to the question as to the houses. I need touch on nothing here except the personal work. We have a larger number of workers in training for management of houses than I have had for some years. Some of them shew promise of being soon capable of taking the lead in more responsible positions than they now occupy. I am consequently ready with their kind and increasing help, to take over two, or possibly three, more poor courts or blocks of buildings to manage for any owners caring for the people, who may wish to place them under my charge. I should prefer to take old houses, and should like them to be in a decidedly poor neighbourhood. I am sure old houses form much the best training ground for workers among the poor, besides which in them, inevitably, one can meet and help a lower class of people than in any new buildings, however cheaply they may be let. If a court is taken over full of its old inhabitants, there are some among them who have the opportunity of being raised in and with it, who never could have such an

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opportunity in any new buildings. In letting to new tenants one must ask for good references; the drunkard, the dirty thriftless woman, is rarely accepted, cannot be accepted; the poor may indeed be received, but not those whose character is doubtful: the preference is fairly and rightly given to the sober, industrious and clean. But buy up, or take over, a court full of the less hopeful tenants, and it becomes your duty to try them; some of them always respond to the better influences, and are permanently raised. In old houses, moreover, unsatisfactory tenants can be tested much more easily, there is no risk of their destroying expensive appliances, they can be encouraged by the gradual improvement in proportion to their own care of the places they are in. In new houses nothing is to be gained by tenants by their care, for nothing is to be added, while much may be lost by their carelessness. In old houses the reverse is the case, the fresh distemper, the mended grate, the new cupboard, can be offered as a reward for care, while one or two more banisters broken or burnt are not a very serious loss to the landlord. Now though all classes of the poor want help of one kind or another, and the encouragement of the striving is perhaps *more* lost sight of just now than reform of the thriftless, yet the former is work which many are fitted to carry on; the latter must be done, if it is to be done at all, by some such agency as our own. Ladies must do it, for it is detailed work; ladies must do it, for it is household work; it needs, moreover, persistent patience, gentleness, hope. There is great need that someone should build quite simply for the very poor; it requires special experience to plan and manage such houses, still I do not purpose in the opening year to enter upon this work. The more personal one, I am satisfied, is even more pressing, it cannot be done except by some such group of workers as our own. The need of it is not clearly before the public yet; in all the late stir the cry has been as to the dreadfulness of the houses and the landlords, if all that is true under this head were remedied to-morrow, the public would see—clear sighted workers face to face with the poor *do* see—that a large class would remain, which could not, without education, be drafted into better houses. With that class we, if anyone, must deal, and I would earnestly

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ask those who are working with me not to lose sight of that fact, not to be led away by tempting plans for rebuilding, but to remember that singly the people must be dealt with, that face to face only can their education be carried on, that it will take years to accomplish, and many workers will be needed for it, and for the sake of London and our country time should not be lost; and that we, like our Master, must set ourselves to seek and save that which is lost.

I should wish our fresh courts then to be in a poor district, we have so much strength now that we ought to be face to face with a larger body of the poor once more. Two or three of my friends, who will themselves manage them, are willing to buy courts. I hope they will buy old ones rather than build new. For myself I feel rather doubtful as to whether, in the uncertainty as to public action, buying at all, just now, can be safely recommended to anyone who depends on receiving a fair interest for their capital; and so, having now a pretty strong band of workers, I would rather manage for those who now own than recommend purchase to my friends; still, much might depend on the price, the neighbourhood, and the state of the houses.

A few words of thanks are due to those who have so kindly, and generously helped me with money. Taking into account the money sent me for Open Spaces, I never received so much in any year before. I have, besides, had a very great number of offers of money for houses. I have not been able to accept these as gifts, for I am firmly convinced that the people should pay for their houses. I have not been able to accept them either as shares, for a part of my own special work has been to connect individuals possessed of education, conscience and means, with particular courts in London. In this way has been established the relation between landlord and tenant, with all its mutual attachments and duties, as it exists in many country places. I have never, therefore, formed a joint-stock company for purchasing courts, but have got some one person to buy each group of houses. Some of the kind donors have allowed me to use their offered contributions for other purposes, to some I have replied that if a company is formed by men of practical experience to build simple houses for the very poor, I shall be delighted to put them

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into communication with the directors; at present, however, so far as I have heard, there is no company which is managed by those who have a full knowledge of the subject, and which has adopted sufficiently simple plans to suit the requirements of the very poor.

With the money sent straight to the donation fund a great deal of good has been effected. All the personal power, all the gentle watchfulness, all the thoughtful wisdom which have helped us in past years have been again ready for those who have been assisted from this fund. I have been, and am, very happy about this part of our work.

I am, my friends, with always deeper gratitude,

Yours faithfully,

OCTAVIA HILL.

14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W.

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RECEIPTS.					£	s.	d.
Cash in hand	143	10	4
Miss Astley	5	0	0
Miss Ball	0	10	0
per Rev. H. R. Collum	4	11	4
A. G. Crowder, Esq.	...	...	...	...	5	5	0
C. L.	...	...	...	...	2	12	0
Miss Forman	...	...	...	...	1	1	0
— Fothergill, Esq.	...	...	...	...	0	8	4
C. Flower, Esq.	...	...	...	...	3	3	0
Mr. and Mrs. Gillson (Pension, A)	...	...	...	...	5	4	0
Do. (general purposes)	...	...	...	...	5	0	0
Miss Gosset	...	...	...	...	1	0	0
Alfred Hill, Esq.	...	...	...	...	10	0	0
Rev. T. Hill	...	...	...	...	0	5	0
Mrs. Lynch	...	...	...	...	10	0	0
W. Matheson, Esq.	...	...	...	...	1	1	0
Mrs. Macauley	...	...	...	...	1	0	0
Hon. Mrs. Maclagan	...	...	...	...	3	0	0
F. Nettlefold, Esq.	...	...	...	...	20	0	0
Miss Oldham	...	...	...	...	3	0	0
Sutton Palmer, Esq.	...	...	...	...	10	0	0
Miss Pipe	...	...	...	...	10	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Pooley	...	...	...	...	1	1	0
Mrs. Stephen Ralli	...	...	...	...	3	0	0
Mrs. Southwood Smith	...	...	...	...	0	10	0
Mrs. Leslie Stephen	...	...	...	...	10	10	0
Mrs. Wm. Shaen	...	...	...	...	2	0	0
Stephen Winkworth, Esq. (Pension, A)	...	...	...	...	13	0	0
Mrs. S. Winkworth	20	0	0
Do. (special for education)	50	0	0
Mrs. Wright	10	0	0
Miss Yorke	20	0	0
					<u>£375</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>

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EXPENDITURE.					£	s.	d.
Industrial School for F. B., G. S. and M. K.	37	6	8
Boarding out (Clothes, Schooling and Partial Board for 4 Children)	6	7	2
Providing Hospital and other Relief to the Sick	...	...	...	...	8	18	6
Pensions for Mrs. E., and Mrs. H. and M. G.	...	...	...	...	7	18	6
Employment for Poor People—Outfits, &c.	...	...	...	...	2	11	10½
Excursions to the Country and other Entertain- ments	...	...	...	...	5	19	3
*Miss Poole's Orphanage	...	...	...	...	10	0	0
Do. do.	...	...	...	...	5	0	0
*Education	...	...	...	...	31	8	0
Rent for Classes, &c.	...	...	...	...	8	6	6
*Pension, A	...	...	...	...	20	19	6
Care of Playground	...	...	...	...	16	8	0
Care of Garden	...	...	...	...	16	0	0
*Salary of Assistant	...	...	...	...	10	0	0
Printing and Postage of Letter to Fellow Workers	...	...	...	...	3	11	1½
Cash in hand	..	...	...	...	186	16	11
					<u>£375</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>

Examined and found correct,

A. P. FLETCHER.

* Special Donations.

N.B.—The funds entrusted to me come from two very clearly marked classes of donors. The one anxious that their money should be devoted to the direct help of the sick and poor. The other class wishing to strengthen my hands, that I may help forward in its difficult stages, any great movement. My sister and I recognise this distinction, and in deciding about every grant, carefully consider *whose* money it is that is used, and follow the wish of the donors faithfully.

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TO WHICH IS ADDED

ACCOUNT OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

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OCTAVIA HILL.

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MY FRIENDS,

I think some of you may like to know what I have been able to do in the past year, though it has been one more of private than of public work. It has not been, in my estimation, any worse for that. I hope the same citizen spirit which of old led men to make gifts to their city, or to obey its call, burns in me as strongly at least as in earlier days, nor do I feel as if my ear had lost its attentive habit of listening for the call, and the day may come when great undertakings may again occupy my time, but, in an age when a restless activity is abroad, and public action appears to have strange fascination for many, it often seems to me as if the fulfilment of detailed duty, in and near home, in the very best way possible to me, was far more helpful than the excited response to the eager calls which come pouring in day after day. After a long unavoidable break had occurred in all my public work, I accepted the voice speaking by that break, as telling me I was right in believing that on my return home *my* duty, at any rate, lay in making *sure* of all thoroughness in the work near me, and seeing that it was, as far as I could make it so, very good. On my return therefore, partly from

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want of strength, but much more, as believing it best, I took up my home duties and those in a few courts which had the nearest claim on me, and, to the utmost extent of my power also, the thorough training of fellow-workers. The old courts were well started, I had little temptation to touch them; the open spaces question, which had seemed unrecognised in past years, and sorely needing attention, I returned to find recognised as important in the minds of hundreds, and to the offers of public work which have reached me since my return I have replied with an invariable and unhesitating "No." I *know* there is good and important work to be done on a large scale and in public, but somehow it seems to me as if it were better, in all quietness, to see that the things near at hand were done thoroughly, and as in God's sight, so far as one may. The spirit seems so much more, too, than the form of the work, and if one works on a large scale one works often for systems. Now systems are bad or good, to a great extent, according to the spirit which animates them, and in public work contentions are many, and the spirit of it is often questionable, moreover, much work in large schemes is necessarily delegated, so that the spirit of the leader is not in direct contact with those for whom the work is set on foot. I would rather work in the unsought-after, out-of-sight places, side by side with my fellow workers, face to face with tenants, than in the conspicuous forefront of any great movement. If a great movement need a forlorn hope let us be proud to lead if we can, but the forlorn hopes in English philanthropic work are fewer now than they were a few years back, thanks to awakened English sympathy and principle, and what seems to me our danger

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is that we shall many of us rush out to lead, and that near us, in neglected places and hours, weeds shall grow up in our vineyards. Therefore for the present I am quietly weeding my vineyard, side by side with future workers, and hearing the old words I have for years been so fond of, and which I fancy I must have quoted to you before—

"Let others miss me, never miss me God."

They always seem to me a sort of warning not to leave the out-of-sight work undone, and when old friends and new leaders write and tell me of any public things they want done, I always seem to hear these words as I put the letters from me, and write my variously worded but uniform "No."

What then have I been at with the past twelve whole months given for labour? Many a little thing it wouldn't interest any of you to hear, but of public work, mainly the following.

A friend whose health has failed, built a block of buildings near her own house in Chelsea; she had hoped to be a "neighbour" to the tenants in the Bible sense of the word, but it wasn't to be. The people and the building were much on her mind, and I bought them, in conjunction with a friend of mine, partly out of love for the builder, and not to let her work and hope fall fruitless, and partly because, pondering on it, I felt that it would be well if houses for the people in that part of London could be entrusted to some kind-hearted lady who would be a "neighbour" to the tenants, and who could not work in far off east or south London, but might be glad of a little group of friends near her. The old courts were, moreover, most of them well started and independent of

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me, and therefore, I wanted more space to train new workers, of whom there is great need.

The financial problem about these houses is, however, a difficult one, and to train others, one must know one's tenants and houses well, so I have been, up to now, more or less obliged myself to keep these buildings in my own hands, and I only wish it were to go on, so happy has even my very slight intercourse with the tenants made me. Taking it up again after some years, I am more than ever impressed with the delightfulness of the work, the great power given by the relation to the tenants, and the vista of good work that opens before one in the courts.

At Paradise Place too, I have been in and out, more or less, not nearly enough, not enough to plan several improvements as to appliances, nor to raise the standard of cleanliness, but long enough to try a rather interesting scheme. I found the rents had been raised during my absence—rents in Marylebone have risen everywhere: I was sorry, as we could have made the old rents pay, and I was about to lower them, but I determined instead to return a bonus at the end of the quarter to those who paid every Monday before 1 o'clock without failing once. I am able to return discount thus to each tenant. The plan has worked admirably.

In Freshwater Place, I have been very anxious about my trees, but we have followed the advice of Mr. Downs, who planted them for Mr. Ruskin, and I hope they may do well: we are looking anxiously to see. My friends Mr. and Mrs. Shaen are one in heart with me, as to all that should be aimed at there, and they have, as their representative there, one who has known and worked with

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us for years, so though I am little there, these and many other reasons make it seem one of my *special* courts.

In Barrett's Court, however, one of the greatest achievements of our year has been accomplished. One of my friends has rebuilt another large part of the court, making now three quarters of it rebuilt. The new buildings are very satisfactory, and sometimes when I go down there and just think of what the court was in 1865 or 1866, when I first drew a map of it, with all the old houses and buildings over the back yards, I can hardly believe that our little band of workers can by gradual steps have wrought so great a change of form and of spirit.

One of our main causes of thankful delight is St. Christopher's Hall, which forms part of the last block built; it is a large red brick hall, with platform, separate entrances, and is capable of holding about 500 people. It is just such a room as for twenty years I have dreamed of having, but never thought to have. I believe that in the time to come we shall do much there. It has already made our winter parties much happier and easier. I talk about *having* it. It isn't really mine in any sense, but belongs to a friend so much one with me that it is to me as if it were in very deed my own.

With Barrett's Court my links are almost as close as in the old days. I am in and out continually, and the friends working there are with me so much that I follow the histories of the tenants, and plan and discuss the improvements and decisions as if I were really collecting there.

But I must not write of the other courts or I shall never have done.

As to the donations, of which an account is attached, no

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words will tell you what they've done for us. That strong sense that the power is ours to act and support at critical times, nerves and enables us for numerous undertakings of which no record is given. The individual care which we are able to secure for so many of those who need help, constitutes a reforming power of singular force. It seems often as if applicants for money help obtained in addition strong and faithful friends and sympathisers for life, and were transported into an atmosphere of love and holiness in which evil died. I mustn't tell the details of this work, but the impression of it is increasingly strong on me, and if any of you ever have occasion to appeal for aid for your protegées, instead of so generously helping us to help those unknown to you, something of its blessing will be clear to you.

In connection with the Donation Fund, I should mention a special donation sent for the benefit of little children's health. It has been very valuable in several ways; with part of it two children have been sent into a little home near Flitwick where there are some mineral waters that seem to be particularly beneficial to London children. The Home has a garden and field attached to it, and is superintended by a very kind matron, herself an excellent nurse. My sister writes to me "The two children I have sent there have been perfectly cured. One, a boy who had suffered for a long time with a bad throat and general debility, the other, a child of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years who had always been ailing, could not stand and all its teeth decayed as they came. It now, after eight weeks, begins to run about, is *quite* well and no more of its teeth have decayed.

It is very satisfactory to see in how many cases the help

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given is radically helpful, starting something which hereafter lives of itself. Mrs. Maurice writes: "I paid the first quarter for H. P. at the school, that his mother, a widow with several children, might get a start with the payments which have to be made in advance: *she has kept up the payments herself since then.*" And again, "The machine supplied to the wife of that blind man at Hoxton has raised the family out of want. She is now getting plenty of work." These are only two instances; but this note of self-supporting success runs through the whole of this branch of the work to a delightful and surprising extent.

The £2 mentioned as contributed towards the purchase of a harmonium, is for a service got up by the people themselves in one of the courts first purchased. The Superintendent lends her own room for it, and she and her husband suggested the plan themselves, invited all the people who went nowhere else to worship, made the room pretty and comfortable, got their own daughter to play the hymns, and organized a simple short service every Sunday evening. Many come in who are shy of going elsewhere, many who have been to no place of worship since they left the country in their youth. The Superintendent and her husband went freely to live in the court nine years ago to help; since then much has been done to make the place cleaner, healthier, more respectable, flowers and creepers have been introduced, and many have taken and kept the pledge, numbers of social gatherings had been held; at last they felt that the time had come when they might ask their neighbours to meet them on yet higher, deeper, better ground—those of them at least who felt they could—and the services were accordingly begun. They felt it a very solemn responsibility

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for they feel the meaning of their faith and its reality will be tested by life and deed, but trusting in God's grace and helping power they are not afraid, but feel that all of us can ask for power to make our prayers real by our effort to walk rightly, and our daily work good, by the memory of our daily prayer. They know that when our lives have done their utmost, though they fail, God takes up the teaching of those we love, and carries it farther than we had ever dreamed. It has been a pleasure to me that, especially as I am so seldom with them, this little contribution from the fund should speak to them of my deep sympathy and my confidence that they are right.

Some of the large sum anonymously contributed last year is still, I am thankful to say, in hand. I have been able with it to do some most valuable things, especially with regard to some open spaces, of which two are in exceptionally poor neighbourhoods, and are now frequented by numbers of the very poor.

I usually find, in writing this letter, that there is some important new work opening out, with which I may, or may not, be myself connected, but to which I am anxious to draw the attention of my friends, that they may watch it, and see whether they care to help it forward. This year I feel this specially strongly with regard to a scheme just being undertaken by a few gentlemen. They have it in contemplation to apply for one of the sites cleared under the Artizans Dwellings Act, and to build on it expressly for labourers, in contradistinction to mechanics. The fact that the unskilled labourers displaced by the Act are not accommodated in the rebuilt houses is patent to all. These gentlemen have determined, I understand, to meet

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the difficulty of replacing the poorer people by adopting a simpler plan of building. I hope they will secure that their arrangements for water and drainage shall be much simpler than they are in the buildings, which, by the help of companies, have done so much to meet the need of mechanics' dwellings. In building for labourers the arrangements should be less expensive, though equally healthy: this they can easily be, and I hear that the very simple plan, which has been used in much smaller blocks, for securing separate access to each room will probably be adopted, so that the rooms will be separable, and a man need not immediately, whatever the size of his family, or their ages, hire a suite of rooms.

If the promoters of this scheme keep these two points in view, and plan well as to the all important question of management, and take advice in all their building arrangements of those who have watched the small points on which depend the comfort of a room to a working man's family, and consider the value of every atom of expenditure to the minutest point of detail, so as to keep down their rents, this undertaking of theirs appears to me as if it might be almost the most important in its effect on the life of the poor of London of any I am now watching. A great deal of capital will be required, as the sites are large, and the need of cheaper houses great, but I hope it will be forthcoming. The scheme is intended to be remunerative, and to show that well-planned homes for unskilled labourers *can* be made to pay. Houses which will be light, clean, airy, well drained, well supplied with water, though cheaper, because not providing so many appliances as those built specially for mechanics, and not

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necessitating the hire of three or four rooms. I shall be very glad when the time comes to hear from any of you who may feel inclined to consider the advisability of taking shares, and to give you any advice I can on the point, or information as to my opinion of the prospect the scheme has of being successful and beneficial.

Before ending this letter, I must return to an old subject again. I have spoken often, but must speak again, of the need of workers. In the houses, we are wanting trained workers sadly. The work grows, and the workers, though they are increasing, do not keep pace with it. The need is, it is true, greatest of those who can take the lead among the tenants, bear responsibility, think and judge wisely, and devote regular time. But these leaders grow out of the ranks of the helpers, so we want people to come forward to be trained. None are of use who have not set their minds to working for the real good of the poor, not to please them—still less to please themselves—but to be helpful. Women ready to be serviceable, courteous, patient, observant, firm and punctual—women, who looking round upon their group of tenants, feel to them as a little group of friends to whom they have duties, and who have duties to them, a sort of enlarged household to be made, as they would make their own at home, orderly, happy, self-respecting, helpful and good, and who will look at the houses, as at their own, where all should be in order, and well kept up. And I would ask those already training, to keep this idea before them, to think with all their might for, and of, the tenants and the houses, to imagine what, if I were not there, they would try to make of both,

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so the sooner will they be fit queens in the domain where we have set them now as hand-maidens, so will the work in their hands be able to be extended to some of the many courts to take which I receive such heart-stirring appeals, so shall they leave me free to train those who should be following them. So finally shall they need me, and such as I, no more.

OCTAVIA HILL.

14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W.

For Donation Account see next page.

(14)

RECEIPTS.

	£	s.	d.
Cash in hand	46	7	7½
Anon.	500	2	0
Miss Astley	5	0	0
Miss Maud Berry	0	10	0
Shareholders of Central London Dwellings Co.	3	2	0
Mrs. Bond	10	0	0
Miss Meta Bradley	0	5	0
J. Cropper, Esq., M.P.	1	0	0
A. G. Crowder, Esq.	5	5	0
Rev. Estlin and Mrs. Carpenter	5	0	0
Chas. Flower, Esq.	2	2	0
Miss Forman	1	1	0
W. H. Hall, Esq.	1	0	0
Rev. T. Hill	0	2	6
Mrs. Macauley	1	0	0
Mrs. C. Mitchell	1	1	0
F. Nettlefold, Esq.	20	0	0
Mrs. Oldham	5	0	0
Miss Constance Oldham	4	0	0
Miss Pipe	1	1	0
Mr. and Mrs. Pooley	1	1	0
Mrs. Sargant	0	2	6
Mrs. Wm. Shaen	2	0	0
Mrs. Leslie Stephen	10	10	0
Miss Stephen	0	5	0
Mrs. Wright	25	0	0
Hornsby Wright, Esq.	3	0	0
Stephen Winkworth, Esq.	13	0	0
Miss Yorke	10	0	0

£677 17 7½

(15)

EXPENDITURE.

	£	s.	d.
*Open Spaces	280	0	0
*Recreation Ground & Gymnasium, Lambeth	46	0	0
*Temperance Hall and Coffee Room	55	0	0
*Pension A	20	0	0
Pension G	5	0	0
Providing Hospital and other relief to the Sick	22	13	9
Boarding out (Clothes, Schooling, and partial Board for 14 children)... ..	21	7	8
Industrial Schools, W. M., G. S., H. P.	19	7	11
Employment for Poor People, Outfits, &c.	12	7	5½
Care of Playground	10	8	0
Mission Woman to dust sifters (Lambeth)	15	12	0
*Salary for Assistant... ..	10	0	0
Rent, &c., Classes	6	10	0
Excursions to the country and other Enter- tainments	2	0	7
Creepers for poor people's gardens	1	8	0
Harmonium	2	0	0
*Protestant Mission Abroad... ..	1	1	0
Printing, and Postage of Letters to Fellow- Workers	3	10	11
Cash in hand	143	10	4

£677 17 7½

Examined and found correct,

30th January, 1883.

A. B. FLETCHER.

N.B.—The funds entrusted to me come from two very clearly marked classes of donors. The one anxious that their money should be devoted to the direct help of the sick and poor; the other class wishing to strengthen my hands that I may help forward in its difficult stages any great movement. My sister and I recognise this distinction, and in deciding about every grant, carefully consider *whose* money it is that is used, and follow the known wish of the donor.

* Special donations.

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LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS,

TO WHICH IS ADDED

ACCOUNT OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

WORK AMONG THE POOR,

DURING 1877.

BY

OCTAVIA HILL.

(For Private Circulation only.)

LONDON :

PRINTED BY GEO. PULMAN, 24, THAYER STREET, MANCHESTER SQUARE, W.

14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE,
December, 1877.

ONCE more, dear friends, I sit in the shadow of the closing year, and ask you to look back with me on what it has brought. Of what has been lost in it some of you will need nothing to remind you, the great gaps which death has left among us are clear enough. But we must look across them, the holy and good spirits which cannot actively help, or audibly teach us, must not be far from any of us who knew them. We must live in the memory of what they were, in the consciousness of their continuous life, we must be sure to live worthy of the honour of having been allowed here to call them friends. The separation between us and them, while we so live, is but an outward thing, we long to see their faces, to hear their voices, to receive their thoughts, to rest upon their kindness or their love, the sense of pain or loss no time takes away, but we

know that we are near them while we live in distinct memory of their teaching, and harmony with their lives.

We must also try to remember that though they sleep, or have passed into some world of mightier action, or yet deeper feeling, we here have distinct duties among the men and women to whom their death is nothing, duties to fulfil with regard to the tangible things of this world, of which a strict account will be asked us; that One who knows us set us this work, called us to this struggle, and leaves us still here to fight it. The trumpet-call of duty summons us, the sense of high and important work must inspire us, the tenderest love of God protects us while we stay, and appoints the length of our days. No little task He sets us is beneath His care, can it be beneath ours? Busy, obedient, patient, hopeful, listening intently for His command above the stormy sounds of passion, pain, or struggle, let us be sure the still small voice will reach us, and following its guidance can it lead us anywhere but straight to our Father? What then have we, as a group of workers done in the busy outside world since the year began?

One thing, though not first in date, I may mention first. It was done for the living, but in memory of the dead. We have taken charge of five little orphans. We have placed them in families where they will grow up as members of households. We felt that just as pauper children growing up in large schools under abnormal

conditions failed to find and fill their places in life as happy, useful citizens, so it was with orphans of a higher class, and that we might take these little friendless creatures and instead of placing them in orphanages, where even after the drawbacks of election were passed, no home-life opened to the children, we would look out for happy country homes where child-life was a clear gain to foster-parents, and there we would plant the young things. Orphanages and industrial schools seemed to us to fill a want as mere schools when children had widowed mothers to watch over them, bestow individual love, and provide a home in holidays or after life, but for children wholly orphaned it seemed to us different. We take destitute children needing homes, not being paupers; mere poverty is not sufficient claim on us. Our funds are not large, we had no wish for a strong permanent association with funded property. We thought our work should live, shrink, or increase, naturally, according to its value, that the donors should know and remember the special children taken, should give again for them in the years to come if they cared to keep them in the homes, and under the influence we had selected for them; that the villages where they are, the people who watch over them, the small committee which chooses and places the children should be under the eye of those who trust us with funds. Some of course *cannot* watch the work in detail, all ought to know enough of its value to give or withhold with intelligence. In charitable

work above all let us remember and enter into the spirit of the words, "I will not offer unto the Lord that which costs me nothing." The easy complacency which hands over the cheque and thinks no more of it, quiets for a moment the conscience of the donor who doesn't want to do *very* selfishly, but who has never realised that the limit of his duty is that of the power given him by his Father. We, who were working in memory of a human generosity which gave its utmost, under the influence of a divine love which gave itself, asked to give ourselves, our thoughts, our money, our heart, our time; we are bound together afresh by the united work, and the small children we have taken become henceforward part of our charge in life.

The buildings in Barrett's Court have been during the past year finished and all filled. They are called St. Christopher's Buildings, in memory of the old saint who found after he had learned to serve the poor and helpless, that good was in reality the strongest power.

It is well to remember what once stood where those buildings stand, how sun and light and air have purified the ground there, and clean, fresh, wholesome work now replaces the decayed and rotten work. If we ever rebuild the rest of the court it may be well to try to rebuild it as separate houses, not as a block, it is not good to concentrate too large a population on a small area, and we have now two large blocks containing a considerable number of tenants; it would, I think, be well not to increase the population on the remaining

space, but whether this is financially possible remains to be seen; I am in no hurry to rebuild.

The Club in Barrett's Court has sustained so heavy a loss in the death of Mr. Cockerell that it will be difficult for it to survive. His deep perception of right, and sympathy with it wherever found, so that it always increased where he was, combined with the entirely liberal view that discussion, self-government, and freedom, were essential to the healthy education of man, this rare combination of qualities which taught him to leave the management to the Club itself, and yet ensured a steady improvement, will be hard to find again. Still I believe that work such as his in Barrett's Court will not die, and I do trust that in some way or other the Club may recover its shaken footing. The problems before us in this court seem to me in some ways more serious than ever they were, the place is full of vigorous life, apt to run into terrible sin, but trembling too in the balance; if we could but win the hearts and lead the spirits there, the vigour would be powerful for so much good. We ought to be a great deal there; for conviction, reverence, refinement, and gentleness, such as we ought to have acquired in our homes, does impart itself insensibly where intercourse is frequent, and friendships naturally grow up.

Lady Pembroke has purchased fifteen houses in St. Jude's, they are old houses likely to be very troublesome, but affording a power of control in a part of the parish where it was sorely needed, this ought to be a

great cause of thankfulness to us. What interests me very much in the place is that there exists at the back of the houses a capital bit of ground which I greatly hope Lady Pembroke will make, or let us make, into a garden for the tenants, it is really quite a good sized bit of ground for London. We think of asking her too about building there a parish room specially planned for entertainments, concerts, or parties, much prettier than the school-rooms and free from heavy desks and school-furniture. This will be the first building where I have not had to consider the independence of the tenants, and how to make the scheme pay. It will be purely an uncommercial speculation, depending on gifts, so we hope to be able to build a really beautiful, though of course very simple room. Several of Lady Pembroke's houses have been used as common lodging-houses, these will most of them be turned into dwellings for families, one will I hope be kept as a really good common lodging-house for men, under responsible managers, and where I hope gentlemen will help us by spending the evenings sometimes with the unsettled and somewhat wild frequenters of such places.

We have lately undertaken to manage a small block of houses in Westminster, and are in treaty for one in Kensington, but the main extension of the work (which has been considerable) has been by purchase made by private people quite independent of us here, which is of course much more satisfactory. I am ready to purchase in Lambeth now, as a lady is going to reside there

to manage houses, but I have not met with suitable courts. I have a capital list of persons who will give money, more than I shall need a great deal unless, the Artizan's Dwellings Bill comes into swift force in Whitechapel.

In referring to last year's report I see that I brought before you strongly the need of getting the managers of old fashioned charities, the clergy, and the district visitors, to study wiser ways of helping the poor, which I thought they would do best by co-operating with the Charity Organization Society. This I feel even more strongly now. I had an unexpected opportunity of bringing the matter before the Archbishop of Canterbury, who entered into it and gave most kind co-operation. He arranged a meeting of all the Metropolitan clergy at Lambeth Palace. I worked hard to make it meet the want, very hard; one never knows what anything may have silently done, but it seems as if the conference only illustrated instead of meeting the need. The clergy in general did not come forward as leaders; those who did were not welcomed by the meeting; few seemed to realize that they were only asked to consider how best to meet the growing thoughts of the age, or that they had anything to learn from social reformers. I cannot say that I date any change from that meeting. Nor can I see any marked improvement in this direction from other causes in other places in London. The two sets of workers seem to be going further apart; the wise thinkers appear to

me to be hardening themselves, and going farther away from the gentle doers, but the fault is, it appears to me, almost wholly with the latter: the Charity Organization Society in every district in which it works, in every paper it issues urges, entreats, the clergy and their workers to come forward, and yet they hold aloof.

The Charity Organization Society gets stronger by the infusion of young blood; all the young thinkers join it, and on the Committees where it seems to me they ought to meet the leaders of all gentle thought (the clergy, the givers) there are few to be found. The Charity Organization Society itself is suffering grievously at the centre; the tone gets harder, the alienation deeper. They ought to be brought into close contact with the workers among the poor. But the fault is with the workers among the poor who will not join them. It often makes me anxious to see this. I can only watch with awe, raise my voice of warning or pleading with both parties here and there, tell each how much it appears to me to need the other, and leave the issues to the great Commander of all things, who certainly has not forgotten us here below, however much we forget Him.

I am convinced the South of London needs more help than any part, and that it is specially difficult to send workers of the kind I think it wants because we have no good leaders or centres there. The East is far richer in them. I therefore no longer attend regularly in my own place on the Marylebone Charity Organization

Committee, though they are kind enough still to let me be a member. I am busy at work in Lambeth. We have a capital group of workers there now, so that the work goes really well, but we sorely want more of the Lambeth, or at any rate South London, residents, on the Committee. I hope they will rally round us soon. We want more gentlemen on the evening Committee: as we are sending our three best lady-workers to other districts we may want more ladies on the morning Committee; they need not necessarily be residents. The lady of whom I spoke who is going to live in Lambeth in order to work among the poor may make a good link with the Lambeth people.

In my last report I referred to the need of spaces as open air sitting rooms for the poor. The subject belongs perhaps properly to the Kyrle Society, but as it is one so very near my heart, and as I mentioned it last year, I may be allowed to return to it. The question has made far greater progress than I had dared to hope it could in so short a time. Drury Lane churchyard has been planted and opened, so has St. John's Waterloo Road. Canon Nisbet has been in communication with me about the St. Giles' churchyard, a capital bit of ground running down to Seven Dials, its wilderness of tall rank grass, and shivering leafy trees would, even if untouched be something green for the people to look at, if the great wall which hides them were but down, and should the untidy neglected looking graves, and green damp paving stones be put in order, and bright

beds of flowers made in the grass, and some of the trees given a chance of larger life, than their fellows allow them at present, should the great gates be opened, and a look of care and brightness given, what a possession the place would be to the residents near! This I trust may be done; for on every side the subject seems awakening attention, and churchyard after churchyard is spoken of as likely to be planted and opened. The school-board has considered a scheme for opening its playgrounds to the children on Saturdays and after school on week-days. A memorial is being sent to the Attorney-general asking him to consider the advisability of devoting some money from the City Charities to laying out such gardens. A meeting was held by the National Health Society last May at which the Duke of Westminster presided, where I read a paper on the subject, and the best of it all is, that though friends of mine are active here and there about it, the movement does not owe its strength to us or depend on us, but the longing to forward it seems general and widely diffused.

I will not here mention the Commons; many of you will learn from my new book how very deeply anxious I am that the thirty-seven schemes for inclosure which will probably be before the House this year should not be passed without careful consideration of the value of such beautiful rural spaces to England in the future.

The scheme for using Thirlmere as a reservoir is occupying my earnest attention, and I hope all of you who

can, will help to prevent the Manchester Bill's passing into law without careful consideration by Parliament of the possibility of supplying the needs of South Lancashire in some effectual way without destroying the Lake scenery. It is confidently asserted by men of scientific knowledge and experience that the problem is by no means a difficult one, but the facts are not likely to come out unless public opinion is brought to bear. We ought not as a nation, to bow to the greed of Manchester, and her dense incapacity for seeing or caring for beauty, but before we trust one of our loveliest lakes, and three valleys to her keeping, should know whether indeed there are not wells and collecting grounds in which she may build reservoirs without using one of the few peaceful and unspoiled spots in England, and monopolising water to sell for profit to a whole county, without restrictions as to the way in which she mars the scenery. If sadly we find that in spite of her new red sandstone and its wonderful resources for well-digging, in spite of her untouched miles of moorland between the Ribble and the Lune stretching far up into Yorkshire, Lancashire must resort to the lake district for water, at least let it be first distinctly proved to Parliament, or before a disinterested Committee composed partly of men who do care for the beauty so far that they would not consider the price of a reservoir out-weighed it, exactly what is necessary. If the Lake district must be invaded by engineers and water companies, at least let them be under proper restrictions

imposed by Parliament, and let the water, when obtained, be distributed cheaply over all Lancashire, not all given to Manchester for her to trade in without restriction, else there will be great temptations to other towns to take other lakes, and we shall have the maximum of destruction and the minimum of good.

Help to get Parliament to look into it, help to bring out the thought of the men who prize the peace and beauty of the valleys of England, all of you who can.

Perhaps we may not succeed, though I have good hope. But I told you last year what I think about success. Our failures may bear fruit in time to come, long after we are gone. Such an agitation as this is distinctly educational for the nation, and it may help to save other places. We cannot tell what may not grow out of our failures, they bear direct fruit in training us to fortitude, and to the habit of looking on to magnificent completion of our feeble beginnings, and indirectly it is marvellous how surely after many days bread cast on the waters is found.

You will notice, or at least I notice, very sadly, how year by year this little letter has to do with larger and more public questions. In one way I ought to be thankful, but I cannot be wholly so. My work becomes less home-like, more struggling; there is in it necessarily more of opposition; it brings me into contest with people further off, whom I do not know well, nor care for at all. I accept the responsibilities of the position, it has been clearly sent me, I never sought

it. Also I know that a smooth life when all men are friendly is not wholly healthy for us, and that the Church and her members have had to be militant at all times, for there are the world, the flesh, and the devil still to fight. We may not enter into peace yet in one sense, but in another we may. The peace in the midst of war we can always win for ourselves.

The more of opposition I have myself had to do, the more it has been necessary to me to dwell on the duty not only of patience but of gentleness. When I cast my bread on the waters, I have had to make sure that it was bread,—not a hard stone cast at a brother, but bread to feed him, which he may one day find and feed on, though he does not see it now. Let us be gentle. The might and endurance of gentle things is very great; the earthquake shatters the rocks and hurls them violently down, and we notice what it is doing and think it forcible, but the little cyclamen winds up and up, its thread-like stem penetrating between the stones that form the gigantic heap that marks the Syrian murder, and its frail flower blossoms above all the stones; kings declare war, and statesmen struggle, but the child's voice penetrates to the heart of a man and alters it; the ways of the Lord are slow and gentle, destruction is sometimes swift, but even that is often led up to by the unnoticed slight actions of years, and the building up is usually gradual. And then, let us be gentle because we know so little. Even when most indignant against wrong and bound to put down or fight against it to the

death, let us separate the thought of it from the wrong doer; there are depths in all the people we have to attack we never dream of, mysteries we never fathom, least of all when we are ungentle; we strike wildly at something we see, really see, but what may there not be we never saw? With bowed heads in reverence for every human being let us be so gentle; where we know and love deeply in some slight measure we may dare to be stern, but we must take care; it is only the Father who can rightly pierce with fiery dart through and through a human being, for He never wounds what is good in him, nor by seeming ignorant of it rouses the self-justifying spirit. His action is ever just; He alone in giving pain can bring His own love home to the heart of His child; we all know it. There is something in the touch of His hand when He touches our life before which we yield in trust. We *know*, however little we *see*, that it *is* the powerful hand of Love.



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LETTER TO MY FELLOW - WORKERS,

TO WHICH IS ADDED

ACCOUNT OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

WORK AMONG THE POOR

DURING 1875.

BY

OCTAVIA HILL.

LONDON:

WATERLOW AND SONS, PRINTERS, GREAT WINCHESTER STREET, LONDON, E.C.

MY DEAR FRIENDS AND FELLOW-WORKERS,

Another year has passed over us unmarked by any great changes, yet I think it has been one characterised by steady progress.

I need not sketch again the various undertakings we have in hand, as I did so last year. I propose only to mention—1st, The points in which advance has been made in the objects then set before you; 2nd, where I think we shall still trace the same defects in our work; and lastly, I shall briefly notice any new development of our duties.

I feel specially that progress has been made in the subdivision of our work. I pointed out last year that the tenants in each block of houses could not be cared for, nor the houses themselves dealt with, as they ought to be, unless more concentrated thought were devoted to them by those who had power and will to act without referring questions back here for decision. Decidedly progress has been made in this direction.

The most notable improvement has been due to those ladies who are so kind as to act as my regular assistants. I find them almost daily better able—they have been, from the first, most kindly willing—to take up, and efficiently carry through, the business connected with each block of houses, to comprehend what should be aimed at, and to do it. Some of the volunteer collectors have certainly improved wonderfully, all of them a great deal, but my assistants have made most progress. Now this is certainly very satisfactory, for they seem to me to have just the position which will enable them to carry forward the work admirably. They have three or four courts each, just enough

for them to look after thoroughly as to general arrangements, and yet they must feel that their domain is too large for them to attend to the details of personal work or of business themselves, therefore they will naturally seek to develop all the power of those ladies who each take one block only, and to delegate as much to them as possible, being always ready to advise, to relieve guard, or to form a medium of communication between those ladies and myself. I trust that when they have themselves gained experience, they will see that the noblest, because the most useful thing, is to slip gradually away from place after place as it can be filled by others, looking out always for the power they can develop in their fellow-workers. The old law "He that will be greatest among you let him be as him that serves," is eternally binding; and if they can realise that the best service is to develop the power of work in many, so that they shall help others to bring to bear on the poor all that concentrated thought, all that bright influence and refreshment which people can give who deal only with a few, and who come out from homes full of varied interests and life they will be doing a better work than if they threw themselves, however heroically, into any breach, and spent their strength devotedly, but hopelessly, in trying to deal with hundreds—nay, thousands of the poor. They will find that though it costs them something to retreat from the delight of carrying through to completion much interesting work, which they must plan and leave to others; though it costs them something to break links that were forming, and go to whichever of their courts needs them most, instead of staying where the fruit of their work begins to rejoice them—they will not lose their reward. For they will begin to feel how much better a thing it is to help others to excel than to excel oneself; they will feel how good it is to see work they care for planted so that it no longer depends on them, and to know that they are so planning their lives that all which they think beneficial in the fifteen courts we now have may, through others whom they shall teach, be carried out for hundreds of the poor they never saw. When I can feel that I have three or four friends side by side with me day after day, set with me on accomplishing this one object, I shall

feel my strength multiplied many fold. I am myself taking their work in one block of buildings, and that of the volunteer collectors in another, that I may be face to face with the same difficulties, and may make out if I can the best way to meet them. I am satisfied that my assistants have not yet found out the best way of communicating with the collectors, or getting the full benefit of their help. The assignment of particular courts to individual assistants has worked well, what I still wish to see is that the volunteers should take the lead, each in their own block of buildings.

I am very anxious to urge upon my fellow-workers who are district visitors in St. Mary's, St. Luke's, or St. Thomas', and who are good enough to undertake to report on cases to us for the Guardians and School Board the extreme importance, now that we have a capital machinery, of using it thoughtfully for important ends. For instance, I do not hear of much information voluntarily contributed to the School Board officer. Yet it is the visitor who should be the first to know of the arrival of a new little flock in her street. Perhaps the parents may be fresh from the country, and may not know the schools near; perhaps they may have been in a neighbouring street, and have removed to escape prosecution and keep their children idle, dirty, and untaught, almost certainly particulars about the children ought to be entered in the School Board officer's books, that his returns may be accurate, and that he may have his district well in hand.

Again, the visitor's reports to the Guardians are coming in much more regularly and promptly, and I am quite sure it must be a help to the visitors to trace accurately the action of the Poor-law authorities in their district, and that information as to the actual items of help reaching applicants from charitable sources, and the various clues furnished about their circumstances must be of value to the Guardians, but many reports reach me which I cannot but feel might have been much fuller. Valuable they are, but more valuable they might have been. Has it ever occurred to the visitors to think out any ways by which these reports might be improved? First of all, might it not be well for the visitor to call sometimes at the

Charity Organisation Committee in Marylebone Road, and ask to look at papers relating to a case about which she knows little. Without making it a rule, which might be difficult, it might be done now and then. Any visitor can call there, and if the case is on the books much valuable information would be obtained in a minute or two. There are some two or three thousand Marylebone cases recorded there now, I believe, so that there is really a chance of finding the one needed. In St. Mary's parish the papers relating to cases which have been dealt with during the month are borrowed from the Charity Organisation Committee, on a given day, for the use of the visitors, that they may make an abstract in their district books, but I fear little use is made of this opportunity. If it were, the books themselves would be far more valuable to present to future visitors, and ample reports could be made to the Guardians when asked for, without the trouble of calling at the Charity Organisation Committee. Again, the return of income of applicants for poor law relief is often manifestly impossibly small. Every St. Mary's pensioner must have in all 7s. weekly, yet I get many a report which does not contain the items of this 7s. I am not saying that every report should be exhaustive; this could not be achieved without great labour, and is not needed, and the shortest report may be of value, but I do think reports might often be fuller without much trouble, and that it might sometimes be worth while to give really exhaustive reports on the points which bear on the question of whether or not any given form of relief would be beneficial.

And now, having completed the task of pointing out in what direction I think improvement is needed in our present work, let me dwell on what newer work lies before us. We have been very happy in securing a great many fresh workers, who have come in most heartily to join in what we are doing. I think it is splendid to find so many and such earnest ones. Of course we want more. I suppose we always shall, for fresh work is ever opening out before us. Perhaps the place where I most feel workers needed now is for the Charity Organisation Society in the South of London. It is of the deepest importance that the

Charity Organisation Society should not become a fresh relieving society, for added societies are an evil, and besides it can never investigate cases, and organise charities as it ought if it becomes a relief society. But the Charity Organisation Society must secure abundant and wise relief where needed, and it must stop that which is injurious. To accomplish these two ends it must win the confidence of private donors and relief agencies. Besides this if its investigations are to be trustworthy and effectual, and gently conducted, they must be watched over by people of education, and with deep sympathy with the poor. You cannot learn how to help a man, nor even get him to tell you what ails him till you care for him. For these reasons volunteers must rally round the Charity Organisation Society, and prevent it from becoming a dry, and because dry, an ineffectual machinery for enquiring about the people; volunteers must themselves take up the cases from the Committees, must win the co-operation of local clergy, and support them in the reform of their charities, must themselves superintend the agents, and conduct the correspondence, and for all this work we want gentlemen, specially for the poorer districts. Do you know what people tell me? That they don't expect to find honorary secretaries for the thirty-seven district committees willing to work steadily and who have time to spare! I know how many people there are busy all day, and I am thankful to think of it, for work is a happy, good thing, and when such people give of their not abundant leisure generously to the poor it is valuable in kind, for they bring to bear the power of trained workers, and the fervour of those who have sacrificed something to make their gift. But do you mean to tell me that among the hundreds who have no professional work, young men of rank or fortune, older men who have retired from active work, there are not thirty-seven in all this vast rich city who care enough for their poor neighbours to feel it a privilege to give a few hours twice or thrice weekly or even daily to serve them? My friends, I am sure that there are. The sense of the solemnity of life and its high responsibility is increasing among men, and the form it is taking is that of desiring to serve the poor. The same spirit which prompted men in another age to free the Holy Land, to

found monasteries, to enter our own Church, now bids them work for men as men; for the poor first, as having nothing but their manhood to commend them to notice. "Oh, yes," I am told, "you will find gentlemen of leisure attend committees in the West, but the poor districts are too far out of the way." Out of the way! Yes, so out of the way that we must set the need very distinctly before rich volunteers, or they will never come across it now that the poor and rich are so sadly divided into different neighbourhoods. But show them the need, and never fear the distance. What, a paltry three or four miles which they would walk before they began a day's shooting, and never count it in the day's work! What, the trouble of a short railway journey, and the annoyance of dirt and noise separate their poorer fellow citizens from those who, if there were a war and a cause they believed in, would meet danger and death in hideous forms without shrinking! The need is not before their bodily eyes, their imaginations are dim and indistinct, but let anyone they trust take them quietly for a few days face to face with the want, without exaggerating it, simply and silently, and if there are not thirty-seven men of leisure who will come forward, and work too, yes twice or thrice thirty-seven, then I don't know English hearts at all.

Whether they will find the problems very easy to deal with when they come face to face with them is another matter. But they must have patience, and realize that problems must be well looked into before they can be solved, and are not solved except by men resolved to grapple with difficulties one by one as they arise. How many of the thirty-seven will be wise enough or great enough to make themselves the centre of other workers I don't feel sure; but of their going, and of their working when once they see the want, I have no doubt.

Our own work this year has been rather perfecting itself than extending, which, you will remember, we determined last year would be the best thing to aim at. I hardly know whether the increased hope of making places beautiful should count as extension or perfection, but distinct advance has been made in this direction. My sister's small society, of which most of you have heard, will be a

great help to all this in the future. I hope before this dawning year passes away to count at least one open space preserved among a waste of houses to be made fair and free for the people. I hope our own tiny plots of ground, back yards and small forecourts, may be fuller of trees or grass, or creepers. I hope that at least our club and institute rooms, which are the common sitting-rooms of our courts, may be furnished with brighter colour. I hope that we may have a more organised body of singers, led by a conductor whom they know, and ready to sing in out-of-the-way places.

I am thankful for much progress already made in all these ways; thankful, very thankful, to all you my fellow-workers, who seem nearer and dearer year by year; thankful to the many generous donors who have trusted me so largely with their help, of which I herewith render what small account figures will give; thankful for life which is so full of rich blessings, memories, and hopes, and precious possessions; thankful for the great patience all my fellow-workers have had with my many sins, negligences, and ignorances; thankful for the certainty that these will not be allowed to retard whatever God will have accomplished; thankful, above all, for His love, which bestows all human love and fellowship to enrich and ennoble life, and which binds us all together, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, old and young, joyous and sad, into one great company, able to help and bless each other, and each individually and together to look up to Him as our King.

OCTAVIA HILL.

14, Nottingham Place, W.

DONATIONS RECEIVED FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES DURING 1875.

£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Cash in hand	43	10	11		
Mrs. Duckworth	10	0	0		
Mrs. Allen, Jan. 9th, April 10th, May 29th, and July 10th	3	12	6		
Mrs. Pollard, Jan. and Oct.	15	0	0		
Mrs. Lindesay	1	0	0		
Mrs. L., returned	0	7	3		
Mrs. Scaramanga	1	0	0		
General Stuart	0	5	0		
Lady Thompson	5	0	0		
Miss Alice Fletcher	0	7	0		
The Honourable Mrs. Liddle	2	0	0		
Lady Grove	1	1	0		
Mrs. Gascoigne	1	0	0		
H. A. Forman, Esq.	1	0	0		
James Cropper, Esq.	5	0	0		
Mrs. Gillson	10	0	0		
Mrs. Spender	2	0	0		
The Misses Martineau, Mrch. and November	3	13	6½		
W. S. Seton Karr, Esq.	1	0	0		
Charity Organisation So- ciety, for Miss W.	2	0	0		
Returned for C. W.	1	0	0		
Miss Baldwin	1	2	4		
Mrs. E. Sumner	0	10	0		
Miss Tatham	1	0	0		
The Rev. Basil K. Wood (for flowers)	0	3	0		
Mrs. Shaen	2	0	0		
Edward Bond, Esq.	5	0	0		
Mrs. Wright	25	0	0		
Miss S. J. Harris	1	0	0		
Mrs. Ralli, May and October (for May Festival)	2	0	0		
Miss Edwards (for May Festival)	0	5	0		
Lord Ronald Gower	20	0	0		
Miss Forman (for May Fes- tival)	0	5	0		
Mrs. Fitch	2	0	0		
Mrs. Cornwall	2	0	0		
Mrs. Strong (for May Fes- tival)	0	5	0		
Miss Taylor	1	0	0		
For May Festival	1	0	0		
Miss Wells	1	0	0		
Per Miss Meredith	25	0	0		
Mrs. Bond	2	0	0		
H. Parnell, Esq.	1	1	0		
The Rev. H. R. Haweis	3	3	0		
Sir George Phillips, June & November	15	10	0		
Countess of Camperdown	5	5	0		
Honourable Augusta Barrington—June & Nov.	3	0	0		
Miss Nevinson, for E. M.	0	5	0		
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Hart	1	0	0		
Countess of Ducie	5	0	0		
A. G. Crowder, Esq.—June and July	20	10	0		
K. Brock, Esq.—June and November	1	0	0		
Hornsby Wright, Esq.	1	1	0		
Mrs. Cookson	1	1	0		
Miss Manning	5	0	0		
Central Dwellings Com- pany Shareholders	3	3	0		
Mrs. Wilkins	0	10	0		
Miss Roberts	1	0	0		
Edward Spender, Esq.— July and October	9	5	0		
Miss Coates	1	0	0		
Miss L. Tagart—July and October	5	10	0		
Mr. and Mrs. Pooley	1	1	0		
Miss Hooper	1	0	0		
R. W. Monro, Esq.	0	10	0		
— Phillips, Esq.	0	10	0		
J. W. Hales, Esq.	1	1	0		
Charles E. Seth Smith, Esq.	3	0	0		
Mrs. Macaulay	1	0	0		
C. Critchett, Esq.	1	0	0		
R. D. Wilson, Esq.—July and August	5	10	0		
Sir C. Trevelyan	2	0	0		
Hon. and Rev. Augustus Legge	5	0	0		
Mrs. Robert Bruce	25	0	0		
Phillip Holland, Esq.	10	0	0		
R. P. Harris, Esq.	2	0	0		
Miss Sellar	1	0	0		
Miss Schuyler	5	0	0		
Lady Mary Hamilton	10	0	0		
G. F. Watts, Esq.	50	0	0		
Miss Burnaby	1	0	0		
For Gas at Girls' Institute	0	16	9		
Miss Armitage	3	0	0		
The Misses Sterling	37	10	0		
Mrs. Lipscombe	5	0	0		
Charity Organisation So- ciety	0	10	0		
Mrs. Whately	5	0	0		
Mrs. Mallet (for railway fares)	0	7	6		
St. Mary's (for R.)	2	0	0		
Printing	0	8	0		
Miss Trevelyan	1	0	0		
Miss Bell	0	5	0		
Returned W. L.	0	4	3		
Interest on Savings	0	3	2		
Carriage of Flowers	0	9	9		
Miss Armitage	1	0	0		
Parcel, returned for	0	1	2		
				£468	19 1½

We have also to thank the following ladies and gentlemen who were so good as to entertain some of the Tenants at the Summer Excursions:—

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Johnston.	Mr. and Mrs. Paddock.
Mr. and Mrs. Lake.	Miss Coates and Miss James.
Mr. and Mrs. Gwyn Jeffreys.	Miss Hill and Miss F. Hill.
Mrs. Pollard.	

This form of help is of very great value to us, as the arrangements for the Summer Parties are complicated, and we should be glad if any ladies or gentlemen who propose to entertain the tenants would give us notice as soon after Easter as is convenient to them.

EXPENDITURE OF THE SAME.

£	s.	d.
St. Jude's, Whitechapel	16	0
for Convalescents	4	4
Barrett's Court Club, Rent and Repairs	53	12
Tenant's Excursion, Walmer Street	38	15
" " Barrett's Court, and Henrietta Street	26	0
" " Granby Place and Parker Street	16	14
" " Freshwater Place	12	12
" " Bell Street	4	14
" " Albert Buildings	11	4
" " Paradise Place	2	13
" " New Court, Whitechapel	1	0
" " Little Edward Street	1	7
May Festival	3	7
Lincoln's Inn Festival	2	11
Winter Party, Freshwater Place	2	8
" Granby place and Parker Street	2	3
" Mr. Somerset Beaumont's Tenants	0	19
" Bell Street (two years)	3	13
" Albert Buildings (two years)	5	19
" Children	0	16
Concert for Blind	3	12
Playground, Freshwater Place	11	5
Albert Buildings	2	6
Child at School (W.M.)	4	0
" (W.L.)	15	5
" (Pasteur)	13	0
Outfit for C. W. to go to service	2	0
Donation to Reformatory at Hampstead	5	0
Payment for Patients at Convalescent Houses, R. B.	2	14
" " " " J. R.	2	0
" " " " P. D.	0	15
" " " " Lady Camperdown's protégé	1	16
Expenses for School Board and Guardians' Work, and Printing,	12	9
Postage, and Account Books	0	17
Interest on Savings	3	7
Employment of various poor People	3	15
" Children	1	1
Lambeth Work Society	5	17
Migration of family to Yorkshire	10	0
Provident Dispensary	5	5
Council of Charity Organisation Society	2	0
Miss W.	27	19
Expenses for Teetotal Society, Service, and Band	0	8
" room for class, New Court, Whitechapel	6	3
" Womens' Institute, Barrett's Court	2	16
Pensions, Mrs. K. and Mrs. J.	1	10
Galvanic Machine	0	6
Expenses for Library	0	5
Oil Paints for decoration	0	5
Fares for tenants to party	0	1
Carriage of things to party	3	17
Carriage of Flowers	1	16
Food, Clothes, and Furniture	0	16
Gas for Girls' Institute	1	16
Coals for Workroom and various small items	101	10
Cash in hand		
	£468	19 1½

14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W.,
December, 1879.

MY FRIENDS,

It is well in the opening year to pause and look how we stand with regard to our work.

First let us consider the houses. Of all the twenty courts formerly under my care, and now under yours, it may certainly be said that they are being managed thoughtfully with a view to the interests of the tenants, and at least on a self-supporting footing. Your presence in them warrants the expectation that the more you gain experience, and, with experience, power and hope, the more practice gives you facility in dealing with technical matters, the more life you will be able to infuse into your work, and the easier and the happier it will become to you. I cannot tell you how much I have felt for those of you on whom since I went away has fallen the burthen of all the accidents, troubles, and responsibilities which, arising from the tenants' misfortune, carelessness, or ignorance, affect the property in the courts. The questions you have had to settle were new to many of you, were difficult, and I cannot help thinking they must often have seemed to some of you who cared much for the people hardly worth your time. On the other hand there was danger that those of you who took up these definite questions of business might become engrossed in them. Am I wrong in thinking that

some of you are finding gradually by experience what you gain by the technical work which no mere district visiting can give you?—that others are obtaining such mastery and facility with the mere business that they will soon find strength and time to develop all the better work which should grow out of it?

I should like to note down what it appears to me you are all feeling as to the difference between the charge of a court where the people are your tenants and much other visiting among the poor. I do not deny that all work should possess some of these characteristics; but I do not think that other kinds gain them so easily. The care of tenants calls out a sense of duty founded on relationship; the work is permanent; and the definite character of much of it makes its progress marked. Have you ever asked yourselves why you have chosen the charge of courts, with all its difficulties and ties, rather than other benevolent undertakings which are more easily taken up and thrown down? The burthen of the problems before you has been heavy, and the regularity of the occupation has often demanded of you great sacrifices. Why have you not chosen transitory connection with hundreds of receivers of soup, or pleasant intercourse with little Sunday scholars, or visiting among the aged and bed-ridden, who were sure to greet you with a smile when you went to them, and had no right to say a word of reproach to you about your long absences in the country? Why did you not take up district visiting, where, if any family did not welcome you, you could just stay away? Because you preferred a work where duty was continuous and distinct, and where it was mutual. And

then all the petty annoyances brought before you at such awkward moments, with so little discretion or good temper,—all the smoky chimneys, broken water-pipes, tiresome neighbours, drunken husbands, death, disease, poverty, sin,—call not only for your sympathy, but for your action. From the greatest to the least the problems have implied some duty on your part. “What ought I, in my relation to the tenants, to do for them in this difficulty?” you have each had to ask yourself. From the merest trifle of a cupboard key broken in a lock, to the future of some family desolated by death, or sunk into misery from drink, *all* has asked for your sympathy, *much* has demanded your action. Nor have you chosen for whom these duties shall be undertaken: the family are tenants, that fact implies your relation to them. Thus you have not felt the duty a self-chosen one; the tie has been closer, more like that in your own homes,—deep, real, lasting,—not always easy,—often involving management of trifles, giving no sense of self-congratulating pride as in a work of supererogation. It has implied a share in the people’s pain—as we bear one another’s burthens at home; but bringing, I know you have all felt by this time, something of the same quiet sense of indestructible connection, a solemn blessing in fulfilment of simple duty. It has brought to you also, I feel sure, a real attachment to your people. You know they are yours; they know it; and as the years go on this sense of attachment will deepen and grow. Sometimes, when the difficulty of dealing with the manifold technical matters is very heavy upon you, you will all remember that these grow *much* lighter the more experience you gain,—that the power among

your little flocks increases tenfold after a time,—above all, that the burthen of absolutely right action in this, as in all positions of life, is not with you, only the duty of trying to see and do right. If you keep this steadily before you, your Father will be continually bringing out of all your feeble efforts and clumsy mistakes all manner of great joy, and help, and wonderful results you never thought of; and a great sense of supporting help will be with you, a sort of cloud to shelter you by day, and fire to light you by night; you will feel that it is He who gave you the relation to your tenants, is helping you in it, as He helps us each in whatever duty He calls us to, never giving the command without the power.

The charge of tenants has been valued by you too, because the duty is mutual: it implies your determination, not simply to do kindnesses with liberal hand, popular as that would be, but to meet the poor on grounds where they too have duties to you. The fulfilment of these takes away the glamour of almsgiving: it substitutes the power of meeting the people as they are, on simple human ground, as fellow-citizens, not mere receivers of your alms. You have all felt the effort of trying to keep them up to the mark; the effort, I know, will be less and less to you each as time goes on; the love that springs from the duty will be more and more. The day will come to each of you, who are happy enough to go on working long, when the business will seem easy routine, and the tenants will be to you like a large family of friends or of children, with many memories in common; when even the places—those ugly London courts—will be to you so dear; for you

will remember how and where you made them lighter, cleaner, better: the rooms, the yards, the streets will be associated with faces that brighten when they see you, and with victories over evil which you helped to achieve by your presence, or which you had the great privilege of seeing achieved—you hardly know which it was—you felt so one with the spirit that conquered the wrong.

I am glad to record the considerable extension of the work, not only in London, where houses have been purchased in various places (two new blocks in Marylebone), but steps are, I understand, being taken to set it on foot in Liverpool, Manchester, and Paris, and it has been begun successfully in Dublin this year. It is very important that all measures should be taken that should ensure its being well done wherever it is begun, and I would advise all who are thinking of purchasing houses to put themselves into communication with my fellow-workers before buying any court, in order that they may have the full benefit of the experience already gained. At Leeds they were wise enough to find a lady who was willing to come up to London and work side by side with us five or six weeks, and so gain an insight into much which it is difficult to learn except practically; and in Dublin the work has been begun under the direction of a lady who had managed a court here. I am sure my fellow-workers would gladly show and help any one thinking of undertaking houses. Indeed, if the plan is to extend safely and well,—extend somehow it evidently *will*,—I would earnestly commend to every one concerned the absolute necessity of training future collectors. Let those of you who have the charge of

courts introduce, side by side, with yourselves promising fellow-workers, who may see and learn now what is being done, and may, in the future, be ready to fill vacant places. Everybody is building and buying, but I was appalled to find, on my return, how few were doing anything towards training volunteers. And yet, if you think of it, *all* the technical work is new to the very ladies whose spirit is needed for the conduct of these houses when built and bought; and it is no use to have the right spirit if the technical matters, all the sanitary and financial arrangements, are in a mess. Beware of well-meant failures. Have your drainage, and your clean stairs, and your distempering, and your accounts, all as perfect as possible, and to do that you need trained workers.

For the information of those who have the conduct of houses, I ought to mention that I have arranged with Mr. C. H. Chevens, Manager of the House-Boys' Printing Brigade, 146, Marylebone Road, that he should print and keep in stock the various collecting books, rent books, order books, and forms which we use, so that any one can purchase them. I have also placed with him a few copies of the one shilling American edition of "Homes of the London Poor," which contains all the book except the article on the Hampstead Fields. Macmillan's edition is out of print. He has nothing now of mine except "Our Common-Land," which does not treat of the Houses, but of Charity and of the Commons.

When I last wrote to you I was a little downcast about the Commons. I suppose one never ought to be downcast. I had hardly left England before the

Kyrle Society took up the subject with the greatest zeal, and formed a Sub-Committee, which I do think has done as much as it was possible to do for the cause in the present state of public feeling. The acquisitions of land for the people cannot be *very* many in a single year till the general interest in the subject has spread and deepened very considerably; but I do not think a small band of earnest persons *could* have worked more zealously or achieved more, and that by the sheer might of work, than that Sub-Committee has done. They have been daunted, too, by no fear of failure, however large and impossible the object to be obtained might look. They seem just to have said they would do as much as in them lay, and leave the issue with others. The consequence is that they have done much to cultivate public interest; they have let nothing fail through their own fault; they have had some failures, but at least one splendid success. Of course you will know I mean the purchase of Burnham Beeches for the people. I don't under-rate what others did. We all know the Corporation paid the money, and the Commons' Preservation Society helped greatly in the conduct of the matter; but neither one nor the other would have brought the thing to pass without the quiet persevering labour of Members of the Sub-Committee I speak of, or the high, confident, sustained hope they had throughout, that however large the thing might look, there was a chance that *some one* would give this great gift to the people if once the way were made quite clear and the business done, and the scheme got into workable form. In this hope, in spite of the discouragements and almost scorn of those who didn't believe in success, steadily

was the work carried on, till it was ready for acceptance or refusal; and only those who have carried on a work in its early days, in spite of disbelief, know how much that means. Other smaller successes, too, that Sub-Committee has had, and several schemes they have prepared in the same way, doing all their part: these now await the decision of others. The Sub-Committee has offered to find money for due supervision of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and of St. Anne's Churchyard, Soho, if the Trustees of the one, and the Vicar of the other, will but allow them to be opened to the public. Will they? At any rate the Sub-Committee has done its part, and must now leave the next step to others. One still more critical question is being decided probably while I write—that of whether the site of Horsemonger Lane Gaol shall be used as a garden, or playground, for the poor inhabitants of the crowded neighbourhood of Southwark. The Sub-Committee has had enormous labour in bringing that question well before the Magistrates, on whom the decision now depends. If they consent to give the ground, will you help them to plant and lay it out? The Vestries have promised their share, and others will, I fancy, help; but a good deal will be wanted.

I am very anxious to bring before any possible future workers the great need of volunteer help in the various gardens and playgrounds already gained for the poor. We find the Superintendents sometimes a little inclined to think more of the flowers than of those for whom they were planted; and we want a little hospitable-heartedness poured into them by the presence of those who are not tired by work, or continuous intercourse with the people. It is less

trouble to have playgrounds empty than full, but they hardly fulfil their purpose so! The Board School playgrounds are announced as at last opened in compliance with our request, but it is hard on the care-takers to imagine that they can keep the playgrounds full of life and order without help, especially till the children have learned to play. The same thing holds good of our own playgrounds in Freshwater Place, Lambeth, and Whitechapel. We pay some one to open the door at proper hours, and to see that no gross abuse is made of the privilege of the ground being open; but we can hardly expect the door-keeper to see that the swings are not monopolised by two or three children, that the seesaw is not made utterly useless by too many children sitting resolutely on it; nor can we expect them to teach the children games. If there were any, especially strong young people, who could and would devote one afternoon a week to going to some of these playgrounds or gardens, at any rate till the children learn to play, it would be an immense help, and they would find a sphere of great usefulness open to them. In the hot summer, flowers, or beads, or pictures, or seaweeds, or needlework, might make groups of little children very happy in the gardens; children who else would be either shut up in the one close room, in which the whole family live and sleep, or else exposed to the dangers and demoralization which meet them when playing in the streets. In the playgrounds, the loan of skipping-ropes, instruction in games like *terza* or *puss-in-the-corner*, or the use of songs with movement used in Kindergarten schools, would make elder children happy, good, and active. Young gentlemen, too, might gather together

the lads who are too old for the little playgrounds, and take them to Battersea or Victoria Parks, where there is room for cricket or prisoner's base, and thus much healthy out-of-door life might be promoted, and the high spirits and animal energy which often lead such lads into mischief find its due exercise and vent. A drilling-master has kindly promised to give a course of six drilling lessons, during the Easter holidays, to some of the elder girls, in one of our playgrounds, which will show volunteers how to carry this on in various places. It has been found that the girls in work-houses delight in being drilled, and it has done them much good. Mr. Edmund Maurice, who is Secretary of the Sub-Committee for Open Spaces, will gladly tell any one where and how they may be present at these lessons, or where and when they can best help in the gardens and playgrounds. We have a few most valuable workers, but they are not training nearly enough people to extend the work, and it is much needed EVERYWHERE.

I want to thank those who so kindly helped with the money for the Whitechapel Playground. It is now laid out very nicely. It, as well as other such, needs, I think, now the life I have spoken of above.

While I am on the subject of money spent on beautiful things, I may add that I spent during the past year some, given me specially for such objects, on laying out a little garden in Mile End, and also in carving a large figure of St. Christopher, soon to be placed outside St. Christopher's Buildings in Barrett's Court. The figure is one which I began enlarging long ago, from Albert Dürer; friends have most kindly finished it, and are getting it carved. The confidence, to which service brings St. Christopher,

that God is the strongest of all powers, had always made him a saint I liked to remember in Barrett's Court, and accidental associations made me very fond of him; but it was quite startling to me in the Tyrol to learn, as I did, for the first time, when I saw his great figure on the churches where pilgrims used to be received, that he was the special protector of travellers, and I used to have a strange sense of his being there to teach me a message needed there among the beauty by a wanderer far from home, quite as much as ever it was in Barrett's Court. So I liked to think I had asked to have the buildings named after him, and I used to think that, if ever I came back, I should like to put up his figure there, that others, perhaps, might learn about him more than they else would know, and hear him tell the same old message of how he found the devil not the strongest after all.

But I didn't only put him up for my own pleasure, nor for his history. I was much struck while I was abroad, as every one must be, with the beauty of the outside of the houses, and old words, by an author we all know, read long ago, as to the generosity of *external* decoration, haunted me, and I kept thinking what we could do if I lived to come back again, to make the outside of the houses of the poor beautiful. First I thought of Albert Dürer's St. Christopher, and I determined on that first of all. But then, in North Italy, I was impressed with the beauty and simplicity of the brick architecture of the town-halls and houses, and, in the Tyrol, by the quaint irregularity of the home-like oriel windows, set on at the corner of the tiny houses in the village streets, with pretty little separate conical roofs, and I seemed to

see that this home-like irregularity, this prominence of roof, this simplicity of brick ornament, could be at once applied to our people's houses, whenever and wherever there was money to do it. That any of us might make a gift of a window here, or a cornice there, or a balcony in the other place. I saw that the possession of many groups of houses, by those who had cared to buy them for the good of the poor, and put them under our care, would enable us to have the rare privilege of giving these additional structures to those who deserved to have them, that they would be a delight to all who passed down the street in proportion as they grew to like what was home-like, quaint, and pretty. So I have arranged, if the owners like it, to devote some money specially given me for beautiful things, to putting a little oriel window at one corner of the new houses for the poor in Lambeth. I paid this sum, and that for carving St. Christopher, through the Kyrle Society, as they can see to the building while I am away, and one hopes their subscribers may care to do more of the same kind.

I have been able to arrange a thing or two of this sort, but the work near to the people is still shut from me by illness. Only I have to ask you once again whether you will strengthen our hands that the old work I left going on, and still know ought to go on, may not fall through. We ought to have for it in the coming year nearly £150 to render it efficient. For though one or two things I set on foot long ago are well carried through and done, yet on the other hand one of my fellow-workers in the South of London needs strong support in money, that her own great power among the people may be

effectual. Where there is personal power, wisdom, devotion, labour, no particle of energy ought to be crippled for want of money, if it be possible to avoid it. My sister, Mrs. Edmund Maurice, too, is now in such connection with a district in the East of London that she has considerably extended her knowledge of individuals to whom help is really important. She spends marvellously little in proportion to the good done, for she gives thought, and gets others to give thought, but the money she does want is wanted much. I always used to help in such cases long ago from my donation fund; I want still to do it if it be possible.

She heard some time ago of a poor girl sleeping on door-steps and in the street, willing to go to a place, but with no clothes fit to go in. "Send her to me," she said, though half-doubting if the girl meant work. The girl, an orphan, came at the appointed time, with very ragged clothes, and a large white apron over her torn jacket. After a little talk, my sister got her into a home and, later, to service. Mrs. Maurice only had to pay 7s. 6d. to save that girl, for part of the money for the clothes was repayable from her wages, and part was supplied by a clergyman; but to have such a 7s. 6d. ready, to have the power of becoming responsible for much more, if the call for action is sudden, is very important.

Again, my sister said to me, the other day, "What do you think about your donation fund next year? Will your old friends send to you though you are still away? I ask because there is a carpenter struck blind at 27 years old; he wants to learn a trade, and has walked all over London and found the Institution in Berners Street. It will cost £10 to teach him. His wife will support him and the child

meantime." What should I answer? My friends, I said, I thought you would send help as of old. I don't retract a word of what I said to you last year about its being better for you yourselves to know and help the girls sleeping on door-steps, and the men struck down by sudden calamity. But it needs experience to know how to do this wisely, and circumstances prevent some people from even knowing the poor: and to those of you who do not require all your available money for those under your own care, I should like to say that I advise you to send me as help long ago. So far from my work dying with my absence, it has grown,—not in my hands, but in the hands of those whom I know to be doing valiantly and well. Strengthen them, not only to complete or support what I planned, (this in itself will cost still a large part of £150, what with all the valuable classes, and playgrounds, and clubs, and finishing the education of some orphans,) but strengthen them still more; strengthen them for their own work, which is growing, for all the gentle, separate help they are giving, day after day, to the poor and the outcast.

I do not know if I shall be back among you to be of any use, it looks more like it than it did, but whether I am here or not, my sister will use *well* any money you send her.

Now, may I thank you all for all you have done, I will not say for me, but for my people, which is so much more. I wish I could do, or be, more which would be helpful to you all, and could at all express the sense I have of your goodness and your kindnesses. All through the long silences, believe me, I think of you all.

OCTAVIA HILL.

Donation Account.

Receipts.

	£	s.	d.
Cash in hand	172	1	3½
Miss Barrett	1	0	0
C. B. P. Bosanquet, Esq.	4	10	0
Lady Cadogan (Cobbling Class)	5	0	0
A. G. Crowder, Esq.	5	0	0
Miss Fletcher	5	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Gillson (Pension. A), <i>annual</i>	2	12	0
Mrs. Henley	25	0	0
F. Hill, Esq. (Whitechapel Playground)	0	10	0
Miss E. Harrison (Ornamental Tiles)	0	10	6
Miss Jekyll	16	0	0
Mrs. Lewes	5	0	0
Mrs. Lyell	8	0	0
„ (Commons' Preservation Society)	5	0	0
„ (Whitechapel Playground)	5	0	0
Miss Lyell	5	0	0
Miss Meek	2	2	0
Mrs. Oldham	5	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Pooley	1	1	0
A Servant	2	0	0
W. Shaen, Esq., per (Whitechapel Playground)	5	0	0
Mrs. W. Shaen	2	0	0
Mrs. L. Stephen	10	0	0
Miss Helen Taylor	1	0	0
Mrs. Arthur Whateley	2	0	0
S. Winkworth, Esq. (Pension A, up to Lady Day)	6	10	0
Mrs. S. Winkworth	10	0	0
„ <i>2nd donation</i>	5	0	0
Mrs. Wright	25	0	0
Hornsby Wright, Esq.	3	0	0
Miss Wilson	1	0	0
Miss Yorke	25	0	0
Total	£370	16	9½

Expenditure.

	£	s.	d.
Books and Shelves (Barrett's Court Library) ..	2	10	0
W. (boarded out)	5	14	0
Clubs (Rent and Fuel)	52	0	0
Keeping W. M. at School	13	0	0
„ R. W. and E. at Homes	11	5	0
Excursions to the Country and Museums	3	0	6
*Commons' Preservation Society	5	0	0
Care of Playgrounds and Mending See-saw	11	18	0
*Laying out Whitechapel Playground and Mile-End Garden	65	10	0
Providing Hospital and other Relief to the Sick	8	19	0
Employment for Poor People, Outfits, &c.	2	13	2½
*Ornamental Tiles	0	10	6
May Festival	2	10	7
*Oriol Window, per Kyrle Society	30	0	0
*Carving Figure of St. Christopher, per Kyrle Society	13	10	0
Clothes and School fees for Poor Children boarded out	2	0	11
Mission Woman for Dust Sifters (Lambeth)	31	4	0
Teacher and Leather for Cobbling Class	2	6	11
Rent, Fuel, and Light for three Girls' Classes Bank, Library, and Mothers' Meeting	18	17	9
Printing, Stationery, &c.	5	13	10
†Cash in hand	82	12	7
Total	£370	16	9½

Examined and found correct—A. P. FLETCHER,
December 22nd, 1879.

* These sums were given by special desire; or from the known sympathies of the donors.

† This balance is nearly all appropriated.

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LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS,

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

ACCOUNTS OF DONATIONS RECEIVED

FOR

WORK AMONG THE POOR

DURING 1893.

BY

OCTAVIA HILL.

For Private Circulation only.

LONDON:

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361.70941 19

LETTER TO MY FELLOW-WORKERS.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Once more I am sitting down to write to you a record of some of the incidents of a year's work, and to render an account of my stewardship. Each year that I do so there is an ever larger group of fellow-workers to whom I feel it is due that so much has been accomplished. As I pause their faces rise before me, and the memory of what they *are* seems to me more than what *they do*. The words, "a crowd of witnesses," occur to me. Witnesses of what? witnesses of Whom? Wherever faithful work, struggling to be perfect, is done; wherever loving lives are led longing to bring blessing, there is a witness of a God of Love, of Order, of Peace, sometimes unseen by those who witness for Him, but shining through them, and in time, we trust, revealing Himself to them—sometimes about their path and about their bed, present in very deed, and known to them.

With a continually larger amount of business detail to see to let us each strive in our very hearts that, while working steadily to get these in good order, as faithful stewards bound to have all we are put in trust of well done, we yet keep around ourselves such an atmosphere of prayer and of stillness that the spirits of those we serve, and our own no less, may be filled with peace. It is an age of hurry, an age too of strenuous endeavour, let us see that in our own lives we secure such pause and such peace that we can hear the still small voice, or the angels

proclaiming glad tidings. We are allowed to offer our service, but it is a part of a great whole over which our Father watches, and we, and all his other children, are to *be* what He would have us, no less than to *do* it. Of all, therefore, of the many causes of thankfulness with which this letter must be full, its deepest and most heartfelt is for what you all are. As I think of you, each in your place, I feel as if you might, in all the dark places where you are shining, be like the souls Dante saw, each growing rosier and brighter with fulness of light. Better this than the tangible work, though that, transfigured by the spirit in which it is done, is preparing the way of the Lord too.

Quite immeasurable is the spiritual influence: I can but report concerning the actual work. First, of the places put under our care, or rather of those specially to be mentioned this year.

Encouraged by the satisfactory result of Red and White Cross Cottages and Gable Cottages, I suggested to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners that they should themselves build similar cottages on their own ground in Southwark. They met my suggestion most cordially, and, after careful thought, decided to build nine new cottages. These are just completed, they have been put under our care, and the first tenants are moving in. They are very near Red Cross Hall and Garden, close to the new Public Library, and opposite to a new church. The sun comes brightly in at their back windows. We begged the Commissioners to leave small borders against the walls of the tiny yards, so that tenants may plant creepers, and, at least, a few crocuses and ferns,

The daughter of a former fellow-worker and friend this year offered to help with money for building for the people. She at the same time came to work in one of our courts, so that she will know better how wisely to manage houses in the time to come. Encouraged by her offer, I approached the ground landlord of an estate near Lisson Grove, for whom we were managing a block of dwellings, with the result, finally, that my young friend took from him the lease of a plot of ground immediately behind his

own block of dwellings. Here she is erecting six cottages; the foundations are now being dug, and we are with keen interest watching the work. Not only will the cottages be delightful in themselves, but, being low, they will let light and air into the block behind them in a far larger degree than such buildings as would probably have been erected. We are hoping to plant a hawthorn and almond tree or two in the small yards, and a poplar in the yard of the block which is at a lower level. I hope it will grow tall, and that its top will catch the sunlight often in an evening when the tenants watch it from their windows. But this planting is for next year.

I came down to breakfast one morning lately, and found on my table a letter from Mrs. Russell Gurney, whom I had not seen for many years, saying she had left to me in her will a block of model dwellings which she and her husband had built years before, but that she would like me to take it now. The gift went right to my heart, and I was delighted. But I asked her to make it a trust, and she kindly consented to let it be added to the trust I mentioned to you in my last letter. The deeds are now being drawn. The houses are quite in the West End, and must be, I should think, a very great comfort to the many poorer people who want to be near their work, yet for whom rents are prohibitory, except where a little oasis has thus been preserved for them among the acres covered with huge houses. I think that some of my fellow-workers who cannot go into the out-of-the-way places will find it a very delightful thing to have thus a small group of tenants under their charge, and I believe that real friendships and much personal intercourse will be possible between them.

Mr. and Mrs. Blyth have taken over the additional blocks in Islington which I mentioned in my last letter.

So much as to new areas. Of the courts and buildings formerly under our charge all have gone on well, and are happy in having no very remarkable changes to record.

Only Deptford I must mention, because it has been for such years our great difficulty. Here we have to record

the loss of our friend and fellow-worker Miss Chase, who has returned to America, and whose zeal and sympathy can never be forgotten by those who knew her. In spite of this loss, assuredly the street has made very distinct advance this year. The change of staff to which I referred last year has produced better effect than I had dared to hope. Under a continuous, a firm, a vigilant and a wise rule, even these poor people are beginning to feel the blessings of government. Much loving and heroic service is also being done for them, but this is easier to secure than the patient and wise firmness of quietly thoughtful government, indifferent to popularity because based on conscience, which it has been our great satisfaction at last to secure there. The charity we had, the continuous rule, we never achieved before. Under it the people and the place show marked improvement, though it is still the court which is distinctly behind all the others in its condition.

In connection with the houses I may mention that during the past year two ladies, one from Dundee, and one from Amsterdam, have come to stay some months with us, to study further the management of houses as we do it in London. Both were ladies of considerable power, and during the time they were with us they managed to make themselves of very real service to us, so that we have to thank them, while I hope that what they saw will be of use to their respective towns. I am sure they will be wise enough not to adopt anything we do here as if it were necessarily suitable for other places. It is only our best effort to meet local and present needs. They will, I hope, only use their experience here as suggestive, and to be adapted to the wants of their own cities.

Before I leave the question of the houses, I ought to record that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have decided to endeavour to give to those who hold leases under them the advantages of fixity of tenure, by offering to them leases for 999 years on a very slightly advanced ground rent. The Trustees of Red Cross Hall and Cottages have decided to avail themselves of this offer of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the deeds are to be ready for signature

before March. The Garden was already held on a 999 years' lease, and as the amenities of this greatly depend on the Hall and Cottages, and all the life of the one is bound up with the others, I am very glad to think the long tenure will be thus rendered possible.

I wrote to you last year about the Kent and Surrey Committee, and the great need there was of fresh workers for it, and specially of an Honorary Secretary. The report of this Committee will be issued soon, so I will only say here that, in consequence of my appeal in last year's letter, the matter was brought to the notice of Mr. Thomas Farrer, who undertook the Hon. Secretaryship, and this has been an immense help to the Committee. I have chronicled successes, and here I must record a defeat, one which has greatly disappointed us. We have not succeeded in preserving the footpath to which I referred last year. This has not arisen from any want, however, of our being heartily supported, and being able to fight for it to the last. We had money enough given us to carry the case up twice to Quarter Sessions. Once we were successful, owing to the irregularity of proceeding on the part of the enclosers. The second time the matter went to a jury, who took into consideration the relative value of the widening of a road to the station, which the landowner who wished to close the path offered to do at his own cost. The two questions were quite distinct: in our estimation either the Highway Board, or the landowner whose building on adjacent land renders the widening advisable, should have paid for it. If such equivalents are to be taken into consideration, the public may lose any field path in England in order to save the ratepayers from paying a highway rate when building operation necessitates fresh roads in other parts of the parish. I hope those who trusted us with their money will not feel too disheartened. I think myself that it was by no means thrown away. I believe that the fact of a fight is a help in preventing closure. I also think a point was secured by the first trial, when the landowner had to pay costs and to begin again in proper legal form. Besides this, I feel we cannot always foretell the result, and must advance in hope of a victory, when sure that, whether it come or not, we ought to struggle for it. I have never

been unmindful of, or inconsiderate to, donors; it would be dreadful if I were so, when they are so very responsive and good to me; but I do believe that many would desire to stand by us in our struggles when they are right, and would be as proud to take defeat with us as victory—prouder, perhaps. Defeats have a singular blessing about them. Every one is ready to help the winning cause. It is on the defeats that the victories are built, as a bridge upon piles out of sight. May I be with the defeated in the early struggles of a great cause! never shall I be more useful. After the defeat one can slip out of the way.

Not but that we glory in victories very thankfully when they come, though, perhaps, our hallelujah has a deeper sound for the memory of defeats of long ago, and of those who stood beside us in them. Here at least is a very bright one. Hilly Fields is won! Mr. Hunter and Mr. Derham have struggled on during the whole past year, as during previous ones, through obstacles that would have daunted less persistent leaders. They had the great satisfaction this month of seeing the last obstacle overcome, and in the most satisfactory way. The Lewisham Board of Works, which ought to have led the van, had the grace at last to vote the balance of money needed, and the Hilly Fields are saved.

I have several times mentioned in these letters the Women's University Settlement, with which I have been so much bound up during the last few years. That connection continues and strengthens. I find there the training for many of my new volunteers, while, as they grow in knowledge, they return to form some of my best workers. I think the Settlement finds my work, too, one of its best training fields, and a sphere that would afford scope for some of its well-trained workers.

I spoke of the scholarships we hoped to found there, and asked if anyone would provide, for a year, the £50 necessary for a year's training and residence for a scholar. Two friends most kindly responded. By this means within the year two ladies have been started in remunerative posts, and two are still under training.

Now we come to donations. Our labour would be comparatively fruitless, and oh! how much harder, if it were not for the ever ready, ever generous help that reaches us from farther off. In large measure have I been thus trusted this year. I have received quite lately three large donations, which greatly swell my balance-sheet, and which it will be my business at once to distribute, with the careful co-operation of my fellow-workers. The money for our group of orphans, pensions, and others for whom we have undertaken definite responsibilities so long as we are able to fulfil them, is independent of these special funds. I wish the donors of both could know all the blessings they bring, but that is impossible without seeing the brightened faces and the cheered homes where the help comes.

We have had delightful summer parties again for our people. Miss Johnston and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hill again entertained a large group of tenants, and Sir Spencer Wilson most cordially and kindly received another group at Charlton Park on the August Bank Holiday.

Besides this, Dr. and Mrs. Longstaff arranged to entertain on Saturday or Sunday afternoons every week for a very long summer season, groups of about 20 at their lovely place at Putney. These formed the most enjoyable opportunities for many London workers to gather together a group of those to whom such an afternoon's rest and pleasure was specially helpful. They were received by Dr. and Mrs. Longstaff themselves in the most sympathetic and hospitable way, and the real personal interest shewn, and the quiet summer beauty have made a deep impression on many.

The work at Red Cross Hall and Garden have gone on most successfully on the old lines. Our thanks are very heartily given to the many kind friends who have come down on Thursdays and Sundays to sing, to act, to show microscopes, and to help; also to those who, for our Sundays, as on other occasions, have been so good as to send us flowers. The drill and gymnastics have gone on as usual.

The new feature at Red Cross this year has been the Flower Show, which was held on July 15th. A separate report has been printed, so I will only here add how very pleased I was to see how much the people responded, how large the number of the exhibitors was, how cordially Southwark furnished the local Committee, and what a very happy day we had on our one out-door summer fête in Southwark. I hope this year may see such another day, and that as the years go on, more garden fêtes may be possible there.

We have no fresh panel commemorating heroic deeds to record this year. We have, however, succeeded in getting the money for the last one, and are hoping soon to see another. Mrs. Barrington is getting out, at my request, a balance-sheet of the donations received, and the expenses. The plaster of the panels is paid for, for the entire set. The other Sunday a gentleman recited a beautiful ballad about a heroic rescue from fire, ending with an adjuration to us all to forget ourselves in thought for others, and so to be found ready should the call come for great and sudden sacrifice. The hall was hushed in breathless attention while the words re-echoed through it. As I passed down among the audience just afterwards I was twice stopped. One man said, "Did you see how every eye was turned to her," pointing to the Alice Ayres. A woman said, "I couldn't but think of Alice Ayres." "Did you know her?" I asked. "Yes, I always dealt there," she said, "and I *was* glad when they put up that panel there."

My friends, two have passed away from us since I wrote to you, who have left a memory behind them which, in its way, is to us, too, a trumpet call: Miss Brooke, whose faithful, humble, loving work and generous gifts will long be a witness of the noble out-of-sight lives which exist in England, to which Mr. Hughes refers so beautifully in his preface to his "Memoir of a Brother," and which he says so truly form the strength of England, which would come out in a crisis, and which is always telling in out-of-the-way places. Miss King, too, in the full energy of high-hearted and high-

souled youth, snatched from among us while we were all rejoicing in her help, and prophesying of her future. It opened to her in ways we did not dream of. May we live here in memory of such gone before, and be as ready to step into His nearer presence when we are called!

OCTAVIA HILL.

190 MARYLEBONE ROAD,

Christmas, 1893.