Life and Labours

OF

DUNCAN MATHESON,

*THE SCOTTISH EVANGELIST.*

BY THE

REV. JOHN MACPHERSON.

“REALITY IS THE GREAT THING: I HAVE ALWAYS SOUGHT REALITY.”

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CHAPTER V.

*HIS MISSION TO THE CRIMEA.*

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I: send me.”—*Isa*. vi. 8.

H

IS evangelistic apprenticeship was now at a close. He had obtained “a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Even if he had accomplished little he had learned much. By constant and prayerful study of the Scriptures and the best divines, he had greatly increased his intel­lectual and spiritual stores. His mind was braced by severe discipline, his judgment matured by deep reflection, and his gift of utterance developed by ex­ercise. His knowledge of the truth kept pace with his growing insight into human nature; and the fre­quent rebuffs he met taught him to add tact to straightforwardness in dealing with men. His faith, like his person, was sturdy, stalwart, and full of ro­bust health; his assurance was as clear and calm as a summer morning; and his consecration to God was entire. In his consuming zeal for the salvation of men he was willing to go anywhere or do anything at the Master’s call. Born a soldier, every inch of him a man of war, he was not the less fitted for camps and the rougher scenes of life, now that he stood clad in the whole armour of God, “a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” The man of prayers and tears, and love to souls, had his humble part to play in the gathering of the armies of the nations; and though that part nobly performed finds no place in the annals of the Crimean struggle, the record of the missionary’s cam­paign is on high, and its results, when disclosed in the last great assembly of the human race, will doubt­less receive a nobler reward than the perishing lau­rels of earthly fame.

Our evangelist happening to witness the departure of soldiers for the Crimea in 1854 was deeply moved by the sad farewells. This changed the current of his thoughts and sympathies; and although he did not cease to pray for the perishing millions of China, his heart went with the soldiers, and he began to lay the matter before the Lord. The more he thought of the peculiar circumstances of a soldier’s life, its hardships, its snares, its constant risk and peril, its need of counsel and of the cross, the more he prayed and longed to go as a herald of mercy to the camp, the field, and the hospital, in the distant East, to share his joy with the weary, the wounded and the dying. How this could be brought about he had no idea. His desire was known only to God; but he believed in the Hearer of prayer, and continued to wait at the throne of grace. The call for which he was praying came from an unexpected quarter, and it came stamped with the broad seal of a special providence. It happened in this way. One day he received a letter, which in substance ran thus: “If you are still in the mind to go to the East, reply by return of post, and please say when you could start.” The letter was from the Rev. J. Bonar, convener of the Colonial Committee of the Free Church—a gentleman whom Duncan Math­eson had never seen, and did not know. Surely he thought as he read Mr. Bonar’s note, there is some mistake here. Yet he felt as if the hand and voice of God were in it, calling him to the scene of con­flict. He went and told the Duchess, saying that there was clearly a mistake, but that he was will­ing to go. “How strange!” exclaimed her Grace; “I have been praying that God would incline you to go, and others have been praying also. If there is a mistake, I will send you myself.” He wrote to Mr. Bonar, and ascertained that the letter was in­tended for another of the same name, a Gaelic-speak­ing licentiate of the Free Church, who had been employed for some time among the navvies. The Countess of Effingham desirous of sending a mission­ary to the Highland Brigade, had requested Mr. Bonar to find a suitable agent for the work. Mr. Bonar wrote to the Rev. D. Matheson; but the let­ter going astray, a clerk in the post-office had writ­ten on it, “Try Huntly,” and so it came into the hands of the wrong D. Matheson, according to the proposing of man, but the right D. Matheson, ac­cording to the disposing of God. Mr. Bonar, glad to find a fit man ready to undertake so arduous a mis­sion, requested him to come up to Edinburgh and arrange for taking his departure for the East, in connection with the British and Foreign Soldier’s Friend Society. He whose “kingdom ruleth over all,” and who “holdeth the seven stars in His right hand,” overruled the mistake of the post-office for the accomplishment of a great purpose.

With characteristic decision he went up to Edin­burgh the day after he received Mr. Bonar’s letter, and without an hour’s delay, entered into engage­ments with the Society to go to the East as a Scrip­ture-reader. At the same time he received a com­mission from the Free Church Colonial Committee, and a recommendation “to their brethren at Con­stantinople or other places where Providence may cast his lot.”

The following scrap was found in his room after his departure; “I surrender father, sister, brothers, myself—all, all that concerns me, into thy hands, O my God. For the past, I bless Thee. For the present, I praise Thee. For the future, I trust Thee. My feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Nights end. Partings close. I am thine, O Lord, wholly thine.—Nov. 8th, 1854.” This was counting the cost.

At the quiet rectory at Beckenham, a green spot to him ever after, he was received with unbounded kindness; and the parting blessing of the venerable servant of Christ, Dr. Marsh, was fresh on his heart to his dying day. In contrast to this was the dis­couraging language of certain ministers of the Gos­pel, who, meeting him at another stage of his journey, warned him against speaking to the soldiers about *conversion.* “Youwill be expelled from the camp, if you do,” said they. He replied, that he was going to the Crimea for the very purpose of telling the unconverted soldiers that they needed to be born again, and by the grace of God he would do it, be the consequences what they might. In this way he experienced light and shade.

TO HIS SISTER.

“London, 11th November, 1854.

“I have met with kindness such as I never felt on earth, and have met with some of the Lord’s dear family in the highest ranks of life. Surely goodness and mercy follow me. I feel it—I know it. My heart is stayed on the Lord; it is truly humbling and cheering. Letters come daily from persons I have never seen. My destination is in the meantime Scutari. My whole energies will be devoted to my dear countrymen . . . . . I long to get to my work. I feel no shrinking. I commit my way to the Lord. I go his errand. I seek his glory; it is enough. Do seek to rejoice that He counts me worthy to go. I am calmly resting on his arm. I feel no fears. Truly I am not alone. He bears me up. Clouds, trials, darkness may come; yet all works for good. Dear father and sis­ter, be of good courage, for I am forever the Lord’s.”

“London, 15th November, 1854.

“I long for my work. I see the need great and pressing. I seek no rest till I get it on high. I know to his own God will be a Shepherd, gently leading and guiding them. Never did I feel so much as now the power, the deep sustaining power of grace. Ah, dear sister, it is sweet to be passive in the Lord’s hand; to know his grace, to enjoy his smile. I offer myself to the Lord. I may meet rough tossing, billows heaving, seas swelling; yet the throne, the crown, the kingdom on high—that is our goal—that is enough for me.”

“Off Cape St. Vincent, 22d November, 1854.

“MY DEAR, DEAR JESSIE.—How I shall write you just now I know not, the motion of the steamer is so great. Still I am anxious to send you a few lines as we expect to be in Gibraltar tomorrow. . . . . It seems as if the Lord were giving me such displays of His goodness as to compel me to say, ‘This God is my God forever and ever; He will be my guide even unto death.’ On getting aboard the steamer, I saw my luggage safely put away, and was then conducted to my berth by the steward. I knelt down in it, and committed my­self, you, father, friends, and all on board to the Lord. Felt deeply and calmly reposed. And here I mark his hand—I got a cabin to myself, whilst the other passengers were placed two and two to­gether. The scene as we steamed down the Mer­sey was truly exciting to most; to me it was not. My thoughts were on my work, home, the need of close walking with God; all these pressed on me. I walked the deck alone, yet not alone. I write a note to you. The pilot left us. The wind fresh­ened and we sped onward. Night settled on us, and still I was on deck. Oh, it was strange, pass­ing strange to me; and most of all to watch the phosphorous light dancing on the crest of every wave far behind. I went below as night stole on, and committing all to the Lord, fell calmly asleep.

“Sabbath morning dawned, and with it a raging sea, rolling mountains high; each wave as it broke on the vessel’s side made her quiver from one end to the other; but the wind was favourable and on we sped. I felt that there was no Sabbath on board. All was bustle and confusion. The light-hearted gaiety of souls without God. I had tracts and Bibles with me; these I went and gave the poor sailors, who had none. Never did I see such gratitude ex­pressed; it saddened my inmost heart. Once and again I have asked to be the means of saving souls in this vessel, and it may be the Lord’s will to do it. How solemn a matter to be saved. How deeply momentous the issues that hang on *not being saved.* Not saved, though the Bible is read, the Spirit strives, sermons are preached, providences are sent—solemn thought! Shutting myself in my cabin, I hope I had something of the real Sabbath-keeping spirit. Yea, I dare not question it, for I felt borne up and calmly stayed upon the Lord.

“We had one fearful day going through the Bay of Biscay. Most of the passengers were sick. I felt rather qualmish; but kept on deck, for I was anx­ious to see the ocean in all its fury—and certainly the Bay of Biscay is the place to see this. Now and then as a wave broke on the vessel, the noise resem­bled thunder, but I felt no fear; for ‘He holdeth the sea in the hollow of his hand,’ ‘His ways are in the sea’ was forcibly opened up to me. Who would look for a path in the sea? And yet so strange are his dealings (and to me they have been so) as to look like the opening of a way in the sea.

“My one grand desire is to go and tell of Christ and Him crucified, looking for the descent of the Holy Ghost to own the word for the conversion of souls. I am compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. The eye of Israel’s Shepherd is upon me. Months, years, glide on; eternity seems at hand. For a while, earth has been losing much of its attractions for me; and heaven with its un­dimmed purity, its endless pleasures, its streams of bliss, its unwithering crown, and its blessed God, grows sweeter and sweeter.”

At Constantinople he was received with much kindness by Messrs. Thomson, Turner, and McKutcheon, of the Free Church Mission to the Jews. Bitter was his disappointment on finding that military law strictly forbade his going to the Crimea, and it only remained for him to return home, as other missionary agents had done. That night was spent in prayer; towards dawn, as he tells, he felt in his heart as if God had heard his cry, and would open up his way. Next day accompanied by Mr. (now Dr.) Thomson, he applied to Admiral Boxer for permission to go to the scene of strife; and contrary to all expectation that officer at once granted him his request. Great was his joy and gratitude, and cordially did he praise God for “having touched the Admiral’s heart.”

Losing no time, he embarked on board a transport conveying soldiers, and quickly found himself steam­ing up the Bosphorus, and entering the Black Sea. By order of the Admiral, he was entitled to share cabin accommodation with two chaplains; but when night came these gentlemen, forgetting the law of love, thrust him out. A kind-hearted engineer gave him his berth in the forecastle, but he could not sleep. The conduct of the soldiers and sailors was more than he could endure; it was like “hell let loose,” and he was glad to escape on deck, where under the starry vault of heaven he spent the night, thinking of heaven and home, praying for needed grace, and feeling assured that the unslumbering eye of Israel’s Shepherd would watch over him, and all would be well. At break of day on 5th De­cember they sighted the Crimea, and when they reached Balaklava, the troops were ordered on shore at once, as an attack was expected from the army of Liprandi. “All was mirth and excitement. We could distinctly hear the booming of the cannon, not in mere holiday salute, but in deadly earnest. What a tide of feeling rushed through my mind, as I thought of mothers weeping for their sons, wives for their husbands, and sisters for their brothers, whom they should see no more, and of the brave men fallen in battle, their bodies buried in the com­mon pit near the field of strife, and their spirits pass­ing from the roar of battle into the immediate pres­ence of God. Turning to my text for the day, I was cheered when I found it was, ‘The Lord preserveth those that love Him.’ I felt I was nerved for whatever might befall me; and stranger though I was—knowing no one, as a messenger of peace, with a lion heart I stepped on Crimean soul.

“Alma had been fought, and Inkermann won. The thin red line had been formed on the plains of Balaklava, and the grand death-charge had been made. But the very elements had risen in arms against us. It would be impossible to describe the state of the army at this time. The hospitals were crowded; many were dying. Day after day, ship after ship with its load of suffering was despatched to Scutari. Many of those you met were in rags. Most were emaciated and smitten with hunger. Some were almost shoeless; many had biscuit-bags instead of trousers, whilst others had newspapers tied round their legs; and often such was the wretch­edness that you could not distinguish officer from man, or recognize the best known.”

Matheson, with characteristic generosity, immediately gave away all the clothes he could spare, and then began to distribute his spiritual stores in the shape of tracts and Bibles, of which latter there was a great scarcity in the camp. The books and especially the Bibles were received with the great­est eagerness, and read with wonderful earnestness. Some 25,000 tracts, selected by the Tract Society, by Mr. Drummond, of Stirling, and by Miss Marsh, were quickly put into circulation.

“January 25th, 1855.—How shall I describe the scenes I hourly see. I shrink from it; they are truly appalling. The condition of our army is sad. Yes­terday 600 were brought sick from Sebastopol, and conveyed on board ship. I took my stand in the midst of them, and spoke to them of the only all-sufficient Saviour. Many listened with interest, and at last the gushing tears told a way had been found to the heart. My heart was like to break. Oh, I have often felt since coming here that the one thing needed is the Holy Ghost. All looked haggard and worn. Death is thought nothing of. I had a long conversation with an officer yesterday. He speaks of the demoralization of the army as truly awful, and says swearing and ungodliness are increasing. Since I came here I have not gone ten paces with­out hearing profane swearing. And yet there are hopeful appearances. . . . The taking of Sebas­topol is no easy task. There seems as yet no recog­nition of the Lord’s giving the victory. The men are greatly dispirited; yet, strange to say, long for nothing so much as a battle. I can, and do at this moment, hear the roll of the cannon. At every shot my heart leaps, for usually someone is hurried into eternity. O happy people whose God is the Lord. Truly I feel it, and can really say thoughts of heaven are growing sweeter and sweeter every hour. I long for rest, yet am resigned to his will. O how fondly my affections twine around home and friends! Huntly! I cannot, I will not forget it. I see other scenes; I possess other friends; but the dear saints in Huntly and in Scotland have the largest place. . . . I feel there is nothing I more need than the prayers of all who love the Lord. I cannot tell what I may have to undergo. All is in the Lord’s hands. I need a close, calm, and holy walk with Him. One needs to be always ready here, for it is a death-stricken scene. My comfort in my work is, ‘He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.’ Come, Lord Jesus: come quickly. Amen.”

Mr. Matheson was not slow in seeking out men of his own spirit in the army. His first acquaint­ance was Hector Macpherson, drum-major, Ninety-third Highlanders, a soldier both of his country and of the cross, of whom our missionary used to tell the following story:—One day a chaplain, newly arrived, called on the sergeant, and asked his advice as to the best method of conducting his work. “Come with me,” said Hector, “to the hill-top. Now, look around you. See yonder the pickets of Liprandi’s army. See yon batteries on the right, and the men at the guns. Mark yon trains of ammunition. Hear the roar of that cannon. Look where you may, it is all earnest here. There is not a man but feels it is a death struggle. If we don’t conquer the Rus­sians, the Russians will conquer us. We are all in earnest, sir; we are not playing at soldiers here. If you would do good you must be in earnest too. An earnest man will always win his way.” Such was the advice of Queen Victoria’s servant to the ser­vant of Jesus Christ.

Hector and Duncan on the first Sabbath after the arrival of the latter retired to a ravine, and there amid the deafening roar of cannon, which the mis­sionary thought was always worse on the Lord’s day, they read, and prayed, and sang together the old battle-song of David and Luther:

“God is our refuge and our strength,

In straits a present aid;

Therefore, although the earth remove,

We will not be afraid.”

Here making intercession for their friends at home, for their country, and for the army, they found a Bethel; and for a moment almost forgot that they were in the presence of one of the great­est woes of earth. “Thus we had many a pleasant hour together,” says our missionary; “and the only strife we ever had was about the soldiers’ scanty meal which we divided between us, each insisting that the other should have the larger share. Our watchword without which we never met or parted, was ‘The Lord reigneth.’”

Mr. H. Macpherson, writing of his friend says, “Our first interview took place on a ridge within the entrenchments of the 93c1 Highlanders, which ran along the north side of the plain of Balaklava, opposite the harbour, and about a mile from the vil­lage, and which formed the key of the base of the siege operations of the British army. I was stand­ing watching the movements of the Russian forces, who appeared as if designing to threaten our posi­tion, when I noticed a stranger in the attire of a civilian approaching, who from his clean white breast and respectable dress, contrasting with our rags, I concluded was a minister or lay-missionary, newly arrived. This supposition led me to resolve on ex­ercising caution as to committing myself to him, feeling that unless he was a man of God, and had thoroughly counted the cost, resolving in depend­ence on promised grace to throw his whole soul into the work, he would neither gain the attention nor win the heart’s affection of British soldiers; for car­rying their life in their hand, they are above every class of men prejudiced against and opposed to mere official piety and ecclesiastical hirelingism. As these thoughts were passing through my mind, the stran­ger advanced, and in his own unreservedly frank and manly way introduced himself, saying with real feeling, ‘Oh, Hector, man I am glad to see you. How are you?’ Suspicions quickly vanished, and I felt grateful to the Disposer of every event that in the thick of deadly strife on the plain of Balaklava, I first met Duncan Matheson, who became my fond, fast friend for life. The report I had received from a worthy minister of the Gospel in Scotland, of Mr. Matheson’s character, I found to be in no degree exaggerated, and I reckon it one of my most highly-prized privileges on earth that ever I became ac­quainted. with such a man. Since that day many a happy and profitable hour have I spent in his company; and it has been my rare privilege to be associated with him in evangelistic labours in many towns, villages, and rural parishes of Scotland. I could not fail to respect him for his great ability; I admired his sterling worth; his unwearied, self-de­nying devotedness in the cause and service of God, his manly frankness and unflinching courage, and his large-hearted sympathy with distress, all tended to endear him to me in the bonds of closest friend­ship. Never had the British soldier a more true, loving, and devoted friend than Duncan Mathe­son. I believe there is not a British soldier now alive, who served in the Crimea, but would heartily subscribe to my testimony in his favour; for all, both officers and men, knew, and loved, and respected him. As to the fruit of his labours in the Crimea, the day of God will declare. My own conviction is that he laboured more abundantly, and accomplished more real good among the troops, than all the others, with the exception of the Rev. J. W. Hayward, a noble minister of the Church of England, who de­voted his time, his talents, and his fortune, to the promotion of the temporal and spiritual benefit of the soldier. With this zealous and faithful servant of Christ, Mr. Matheson was most intimately asso­ciated; they were daily together, and went hand in hand in all labours of love.

“Happening to mention to my friend, just after we made each other’s acquaintance, that the first clause of the first verse of the 93d Psalm had been a comfort to my soul, Mr. Matheson, feeling the power of the truth in his own heart, and realizing its appropriateness in the circumstances in which we were placed, seized it as a watchword; and ever after, wherever and whenever we met, ‘The Lord reigneth’ became the password between us.

“Wherever I met my dear friend I was sure to find him, like his Master, going about doing good; sometimes laden with Bibles, sometimes with tracts and other suitable books, and seldom without some temporal comforts for the sick and wounded. Many of the sick, wounded, and worn-out soldiers, was he the means of relieving, and who, but for his devoted, kind, and sympathizing efforts, would have sunk into the cold embrace of death. He was the trusted friend of all, French, Turks, and Italians, as well as his own countrymen. Soldiers of every grade and nationality looked on him as their special friend. How he managed to procure in a time of famine so many comforts for the starving soldiers was a mystery;but none knew better than, he, ‘Where there is a will there is a way.’ His tact and genial frank­ness made him a favourite with the captains of the mercantile steamers employed by the Government, some of whom were truly Christian men. By the graphic and touching descriptions of the destitution and sufferings of the soldiers in the entrenchments, backed by his own evident sympathy, he reached the warm hearts of the seamen; and the never-failing re­sult was a thorough searching of the vessels for everything that could be spared for the benefit of the suf­fering soldiers.

“Entering the encampment of the 93d Highland­ers one icy cold winter day, he observed our desti­tution of fuel either to cook our rations or warm our persons. The great majority of us were clothed in rags; some without shoes; others without a cap to cover their heads from the pelting of the pitiless storm; and some of us with more mud than cloth­ing attached to our bodies. After a few words of loving sympathy he said, ‘Hector, I must try and help you.’ But what could he do in such a case? ‘Why, next day he returned, and informed me that he had made an effort and succeeded in procuring several tons of coals from the different steamers in the harbour of Balaklava, which were conveyed to the camp as soon as possible. This is one instalment of many noble acts of kindness done to the sufferers in that terrible winter. For the relief of the men who were exposed not only to the hail of the enemy’s fire, but to the fierce blasts of winter, almost with­out a rag to cover them, he laboured incessantly, and unweariedly, until his gigantic efforts broke his con­stitution down.

“But what he chiefly aimed at was the spiritual and eternal welfare of his fellow-men. The soldiers understood this; and whenever he spoke to them of salvation they listened with respectful attention. They knew he was no mere official hireling, but a man who loved their souls; and not a few through his instrumentality, by God’s almighty and distin­guishing grace, have been prevented from going down to an unblest eternity. In his love to souls he forgot himself. Often have I had to make a cup of coffee to relieve his fainting frame, after a weary day’s tramping through the mud, laden with pro­visions for the benefit of others, whom he deemed in more absolute need than himself. A more un­selfish man I never knew. With the exception of the late Rev. W. C. Burns, I never knew one so en­tirely devoted to the good of others. The amount of mental and physical labour he went through in the Crimea was truly marvellous, and was enough to break down the most robust constitution. However wet or cold, or however violent the storm, he was always on the move, and always with a special and important purpose. On one of the most tempestuous and piercingly cold nights I ever experienced in the Crimea my regiment received orders to move eight or ten miles to the south of our entrenched position, under cover of the darkness of the night, to dislodge a body of the enemy from a threatening position they held under the covert of a high ridge. We were ab­sent till mid-day following. Matheson was informed of this expedition, and such was his sympathy with others, that although had he chosen to consult his own ease and comfort, he could have secured pro­tection from the inclemency of the weather, he re­mained exposed in our original position until our return. I shall never forget the joy he manifested when he saw us all safely return without a single casualty, with the exception of some of the men’s ears having been bit by the frosty wind.

“Mr. Matheson was well fitted by personal expe­rience, and much owned by God, in encouraging, comforting, and strengthening the Christian soldier in the Crimea, both officers and men. It was a spe­cial evidence of his own living Christianity that he was a sincere lover of all in whose spirit, temper, and deportment he could discover the impress of Christ’s image, without distinction as to sect or creed.”

For a time he lodged on board ship; afterwards he took up his abode on shore. There he found a wretched lodging in an old stable, of which he took possession with right good cheer, remembering that his Master was born and cradled in as mean a place. It was too well ventilated, for the fierce wind blew in at a hundred crevices in wall and roof, and often as it whistled through the crannies overhead it seemed to mock the shivering missionary. In an unoccupied corner he erected a rude and comfortless bed, on which at the close of each day’s overwhelm­ing labour he laid him down to rest, but more fre­quently to pray than sleep. To increase his dis­comfort the stable was infested with rats, and not a night passed but whole armies invaded his couch and rendered him sleepless and miserable. But “necessity is the mother of invention;” our mis­sionary, whose wits often began where other peo­ple’s end, found means of relief amongst the stores lying in one end of the stable; he discovered an im­mense quantity of lucifer matches, which the Brit­ish Commissariat in its wisdom had laid up here. Taking a large supply to his bedside our Scripture-reader drops asleep with a box in one hand and a bundle of matches in the other. By and by, in the silence and under cover of night, the hungry Russian hordes stealthily issue from their entrenchments, and attack the person of the hapless foreigner. The not unexpected sortie awakens the slumber­ing Scotchman, who instantly fires his rare artil­lery; and amidst the horrid noise, the phospho­rescent blaze, and the sulphurous stench, enough to put the Cossacks to flight, the enemy scamper off in all directions, leaving the missionary, for the present, master of the field.

Yet in this rude dwelling he was contented and thankful; and even feared it was too good to last long. “My room,” he says, “is quite a sight. I have paper for glass in the windows; in some of them not even that. My furniture consists of a bed, which also serves for a chair, a Russian chest of drawers, and the hay for Mr. W ‘s cow. A jelly jar, a brown earthen basin, and a Turkish jar are my dishes. I have a sort of lamp for making my coffee. My pocket knife cuts my bread, and it also serves for eating my egg with; a stick serves as a spoon to stir the sugar with; and a bottle serves for a candlestick. I rise early, light my lamp, make my coffee, clean my boots, sweep my room with a few Turkish feath­ers, and I can tell you I was never happier in my life. I have a perfect palace, and I have decorated the walls with copies of the Illustrated London News.’ I fear it is too good to last, but it is in the Lord’s hand. How contented I feel with all, and how well it is that I learned when young to help myself. I am happy as a king, yea ten thousand­fold more so than one without grace.”

From his journals and letters it is not difficult to form some conception of his daily life in the Crimea. Rising early he prepares his breakfast, and seeks refreshment to his spirit in meditation and prayer. Whilst he intercedes for all, the Sardinian army lies upon his heart like a prophet’s burden. Having thus renewed his strength, he carefully selects tracts and books for distribution. His next step is to visit the harbour, where his loud, hearty voice wakens the echoes in many a bluff, kind response on board ship. Humour and pathos are keys to open the heart of Jack, and the missionary is master of both. A sick soldier is in the crisis of disease, and he succeeds in procuring some delicacy for the prostrate war­rior. Another whom he met the day before suffers from a threatening cough; an old woollen shirt may save the poor fellow’s life. Away he goes with his cargo of stores, temporal and spiritual, and trudges through unfathomable mud till he reaches the camp. In the hospitals he ministers to the sick and wounded with the skill and tenderness of a woman; and when by gentle touches of humanity he has smoothed the sufferer’s pillow, he tries to point to Jesus, and allure to heaven.

As he passes through the camp he hails everybody, and is hailed in turn; for his is the peculiar gift of knowing every one, and making himself known to all. Now you hear him talking in his broadest Doric to some countryman, and anon he is jabbering in broken French or Italian. Under cover of a cool, easy, off-hand exterior he conceals an intense desire to say some good, strong thing bearing on *eternity;* and rarely is the opportunity missed of making the home-thrust right under the fifth rib. Sometimes he is repulsed, but he knows conscience is on his side. Sometimes he is answered with a smile, and “Ah, sir, that is all very well, but it won’t do here.” This is a good opening for the missionary’s heaviest shot. “But death is here, and how are you going to meet God?” Occasionally he is met with a raking fire of profanity, and is put to grief and silence. He tries all his keys into the locked heart. Perhaps the man was once at the Sabbath-school; perhaps he has a mother, the traces of whose love even sin can hardly obliterate. He finds an opening at length, and the man who met him with swearing and laughter goes away in tears. Onward amidst the tents the mis­sionary holds his way, a strong sower scattering good wheat upon the waters—the folly of reason, and the wisdom of faith. Sometimes his heart faints within him; but he quickly renews his strength in fellow­ship with someone of his godly friends.

After a hard day’s work he makes his way to the market at Kadi Keni, to “forage” for dinner. Here too he often does some business for his Master. Fre­quently, indeed, he stands for hours amidst a crowd gathered out of many nations, and endeavours to find an entrance for the word of life. On returning home, he cooks his meal only to find that his appetite is gone. But dinner or no dinner his day’s work is not yet done.

The last hours of the day are spent in writing his journal and in attending to a vast correspondence by letter. Many write him from all parts of the three kingdoms, inquiring about their relatives and friends in the army. Not one scrap is neglected, and an answer is duly sent. Commissioned by the sick and wounded, he writes on their behalf to wife, or mother, or sister, or affianced one, far away. Besides all that he must prepare his quarterly report, and not forget the claims upon his pen of his numer­ous friends, whilst the public ear must be gratified by stirring letters in the newspapers and religious periodicals. His writing is not done in an easy chair and slippers; it is subject to frequent interrup­tion by visitors from the allied camps, for whom the old stable begins to have rare attractions. Be he soldier or navvy, Sardinian or Turk, officer or man, the missionary is at his visitor’s service. The pen is laid aside for the employment of his most effective weapon—frank, genial, copious, and forcible speech. His words are often quaint in the extreme, but they are as nails fastened in a sure place. The oddity of his sayings may provoke a smile; but he is a wise fisher of men, and knows how to bait his hooks.

Such then is his daily life in the Crimea; and ere the last sand of the glass has seen him rise from his knees to creep into his corner for the night, it is no more than truth to say that the work of two days has been pressed into one.

A few extracts from his published journals may be here given:

“April 10th. At Sebastopol. A sheet of fire as it were encircled it; the engines of death poured forth their deadly volleys—the sun shone forth brightly, marking forth each embrasure in bold relief in the devoted city. It was a trying sight, and finding no opportunities of usefulness, owing to the excitement prevalent, I retired early to my quar­ters, anxious that the day might soon arrive when the alarm of war should be heard no more, and the din of battle be forever hushed.

“April 14th. Took farewell of the Hospital Ship, where for nine weeks I had been living. My work on board was pleasant and painful—far more pleas­ant than painful; for I sought to know amongst them nothing else ‘save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.’ I had spoken to many of them about their souls—had prayed by their sick beds, and given them many tracts, and the result of all the judgment of the great day shall bring to light. May it be found that the arrow of conviction had reached some heart, and that souls there had been ‘born again to God.’

“April 16th. On board Transport No. — to visit the soldiers invalided for England. Many a poor sick man seemed to revive at the prospect of once again meeting those he loved in his native land. The scene could not be described; it was pleasure mingling with pain; they were going home, yet leaving many friends behind. They had high hopes yet many fears. I had known most of them during the winter, and the most devoted of all my friends and the best loved was amongst them. Gladly was I welcomed each day. I went on board ere they started, and the supply of tracts given for the voy­age was highly valued. To each I gave a Testament for reading on the voyage, the gift of Colonel L—, and had, to remind them of the Crimea, to write my name in each. I parted with them with much sor­row, which I believe was mutual. As I saw the vessel leave the harbour a tumult of feelings filled my heart. These veteran sick soldiers were leaving the land where they had known so many trials—met so many difficulties—seen such deadly work. I could only commend them to the care of Him who holdeth the winds in the hollow of his hand, and who could guide them safely to their own father­land.

“April 18th. I am distributing tracts on the wharf—met a soldier who had been long confined to hospital. I had met him before, and had gained his confidence. He asked me to go aside and talk with him. I did so, and his first inquiry was for a Bible: he said he had never read it, or had one to read, being deeply opposed to it, now he felt the need of reading it for himself. I had much conversation with him about the need of spiritual religion, and commending the Lord Jesus to him and giving him my last Bible, bade him for the present farewell, as he had to go to his battery on the following day.

“April 20th. Spent the afternoon with Colonel \_\_\_\_ , sick on board ship. Rarely, if ever, have I spent such a hallowing hour. He told me much of the Lord’s kind dealings with him, and the marvel­lous way He had led him since called by his Spirit to be a partaker of the glorious Gospel of the ever-blessed God. He has done much for the spiritual welfare of his men, and returns to England beloved by all, yet his loss is deeply regretted. Before leav­ing he made me a present of several copies of the Scriptures in all the languages of the East, and a goodly number of English and French Testaments.

“April 22d. In the evening with the Rev. Mr. G \_\_\_\_ , railway chaplain; held open-air service; the attendance was good, most being soldiers. It was sweet to sing songs of praise on the outskirts of Balaklava, and pleasant to hear the voice of prayer amidst the round of oaths and blasphemy from the huts around.

“In the front, at battery, met one of the most pleasing trophies of grace it has been my privilege to witness, in the case of bombardier \_\_\_\_\_. Truly the meeting was a joyous one to both. He has charge of the hospital attached to the battery, and every good influence he brings to bear on the invalids. It has been his custom, in case he should be taken prison­er, to carry his Bible in his breast with him to the trenches or on the march—as he remarked, ‘if taken prisoner he should at least have one to speak to him.’ Yes, and I believe he hears and follows the voice as few, very few soldiers are found to do. We walked long together, and next day he visited me, and we had prayer and reading the Word. A pleas­ing trait in his character is, he supports an aged fa­ther in the Highlands of Scotland, and that very day gave me seven sovereigns to transmit for him.

“A Russian officer, taken prisoner a few days ago, called on me, and through an interpreter asked for a Bible. I presented him with one, for which he seemed very grateful. An opportunity of giving the Russian Testaments now and then presents itself, and it is embraced.

“April 29th. A good few were wounded last night in the trenches by a sortie made from Sebas­topol. They were brought to hospital today, and to those not seriously hurt I gave a Testament. Poor fellows they seemed much softened and melted. I was, and have often been, much struck by their calm endurance of pain, and their unwavering fortitude.

“A corporal of artillery called on me for tracts and books, for himself and a few comrades attached to the siege-train. They have not the same time many others have, and it was the more pleasing to see their desire for reading.

“Visited Main Guard, and presented each soldier on guard with a Bible. I found confined a soldier transported for life. In a fit of intoxication he had seized a musket and fired it, wounding a man. I spoke kindly to him of his condition as a sinner in the sight of a holy God, and tried to open up the heart-cheering, soul-comforting, soul-saving truth—‘It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all accepta­tion that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—even the chief:’ the strong man was un­manned and bowed to the dust. It seemed deeply to touch his heart—the message of mercy carried to him, and the kindness in visiting him. I pre­sented him with a Bible, which in his solitary con­finement he promised to read, and took farewell of him, to see him no more on earth—in the earnest hope that he might yet be a trophy of redeeming love—a diadem in Immanuel’s crown, in the day when He maketh up his jewels. It seemed on leav­ing as if I could sing with a joyous heart:

‘There is a fountain filled with blood,

Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,

And sinners plunged beneath that flood,

Lose all their guilty stains.’

“Presenting a Testament to a sailor, he said, ‘It’s of no use to offer me that; I hate my work and everything else; my life is a torment to me; and, alas, it’s all one thing.’ Argued with him, if this was so bad a world, would it not be wiser to seek a better one to come? and urged on him the necessity of doing so. He took the Testament with the prom­ise of reading it.

“Visited by Quarter-master-sergeant. We spent the afternoon together in reading and prayer.

“Attended and took part with the Rev. G. G\_\_\_, at the funeral of a man killed by accident; it was a heart-touching scene. In the evening, just as the sun had sunk, we moved beyond the lines; the grave was already made, and the busy hum of voices could be distinctly heard in the camp. As we stood in prayer around the grave, the gentle breeze bore the sound of the cannonade distinctly towards us. The company gathered were select and numerous, and I believe everyone felt as we stood by the open grave, we were in the midst of strangers—far from home, friends, and country. As the address pro­ceeded, marked impressions were made, and I be­lieve I am right in saying, the Lord was with us of a truth.

“Visited by a sergeant of the \_\_\_\_ at three o’clock P.M., and by ten he was dead. Whilst with me I could see symptoms of cholera on his countenance, but little, ah, little did I think, when speaking to him, he would be so soon in eternity. This terrible scourge has again broken out in our army. We are surrounded on all hands by death and disease, and life is felt to be most uncertain. How solemn to see the mighty mass hurrying to the grave—how solemnizing to see such crowds marching to eter­nity. Even during my stay in this land I can look back and see tents recrowded, but not by those I had known; ranks filled, but not by those to whom once and again it had been my privilege to address the Gospel message of salvation. Thousands have passed away, as the leaves in autumn or the snow­flakes before the sun. Often when sinking, at heart, have I wished I could cry in the ears of God-taught souls at home, ‘What meaneth thy sleep? Are you girding yourselves for the conflict? Are you wrestling with the God of Jacob and prevail­ing?’ Ay, and it has come with deeper force, as I have seen the Lord during the last few months gathering home His children from the army, and leaving it well-nigh forsaken of those who fear His name.

“All things at present speak loudly, and urge to instant, deep, believing, persevering prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost, that waters may break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert:

“‘Then shall the earth yield her increase;

God, our God, bless us shall.

God shall us bless; and of the earth,

The ends shall fear Him all.’”

In Mr. Hayward, an English chaplain and de­voted minister of Christ, he found a true friend. In all his troubles Mr. Hayward came to his help. When about to be evicted from his humble dwell­ing, the good chaplain interfered, and he was al­lowed to remain. When the priest at Balaklava attempted to stop the distribution of tracts, his faith­ful friend withstood the priest, and the work went on. They laboured much together. Laden with ma­terial and spiritual comforts, they often sallied forth in company to visit the sick, the wounded, and the dying. Sometimes they did their cooking together, the Rev. chaplain trying his culinary skill in mak­ing a pudding of biscuit, while the lay missionary washed a few potatoes which he had been fortunate enough to procure about the ships. At every junc­ture in the war they retired to a lonely spot to pray; and never could Matheson forget the impression made upon his heart when, as they knelt, Hayward would raise his noble countenance toward heaven, and amidst the thunder of the cannon plead with a voice full of emotion, “Lord, prepare those that are appointed to die.” They organized a service in which, besides prayer, praise, and preaching, Hay­ward introduced the practice of reading all round. This gave additional interest to the meeting; and it was pleasing to see a general and a navvy read­ing each his verse in turn. The devoted chaplain spent his private means in promoting the good of the soldiers. At length, exhausted by his great labours, he fell ill, and was obliged to leave. In his last sermon—a memorable one—he told his audi­ence he had changed his mind in regard to the apostolical succession; he now believed that all who brought souls to Jesus were of the true apostolical succession. His friend, our Scripture-reader, as­sisted in conveying him on board ship, and they laid him gently down upon the quarter deck beside other sick ones, to whom the afflicted chaplain be­gan to speak of Christ. There Matheson and Hay­ward parted, with such pangs of sorrow as large and true hearts only feel. The two faithful soldiers of the cross now worship and serve where the din of war is hushed forever, and the weary are at rest.

Sad were the sights witnessed by the Scripture-reader every day. Hundreds of sick and wounded were brought down to Balaklava—famished, ema­ciated, clothed in rags, many a noble form, a total wreck from lack of timely aid. He wept at the sight. The sufferers fixed their eyes on him in touching appeal, and many uttered a piercing cry for water. He did what he could. Some of them he saw die on the wharf. On board many lay hud­dled together under the open hatchway. Some lay on bags of biscuit—anywhere, anywhere in the hur­ry and helplessness. “Scotland I’ll never see again,” was the heart-piercing lament of a poor Scotch sol­dier laddie. Ah, no! Poor boy, he never did see Scot­land again. A Lincolnshire lad whom he sought and found was unable to speak a word. “Your mother bade me seek you,” said the missionary. At this word the dying soldier suddenly revived, and ex­claimed, “My mother! O my mother!” It was the last flicker of the candle. He said no more, and died. The last tender throb of his heart was given to her who had known its first gentle beat.

Suffering does not necessarily soften and refine. Feelings and affections are tender plants: unless care is taken, rough winds blight and kill them. A heart-hardening process in the army was only too apparent. One day the missionary, marking the conduct of a burying party who had cast the dead into a pit with no ordinary levity, admonished them with much feeling and impressiveness. A party of soldiers was one fine day seen playing at cards in the trenches. A shot laid one of them low. In­stantly they rose, and carrying the dead man away, returned in a few minutes and resumed the game. Despite all this callousness of heart, the missionary often succeeded in making an impression even to tears. In particular, he knew how to reach the hearts of his countrymen, and not seldom did he unseal the fountains of emotion by an allusion to Auld Scotland, the scenes of boyhood, the parish school, a question in the Shorter Catechism, or the 23d Psalm, “The Lord’s my Shepherd; I’ll not want,” learned at a mother’s knee.

He was very careful in respect of the matter con­tained in the tracts he put into circulation. By whomsoever issued he cared not, provided only they contained the truth as it is in Jesus. A great heap of Popish trash, full of Mariolatry, coming into his possession, he was at a loss how to dispose of them. By the help of a party of soldiers, he dug a deep trench. “There,” he says, “we gave them de­cent burial;” adding with grim humour, “We read no burial service over them, and dropped no tears; but quietly said in our hearts, ‘Let the memory of the wicked rot.’” Such was the burial of dead tracts. Another heap, “all about schism, and not at all about Christ,” he thrust into a Russian furnace, at which he and a friend warmed their toes. In all con­science they knew enough already about schism in the Crimea; what they needed was union with Christ and peace. A third parcel of rubbish he took out in a boat, and cast the dangerous lies into the sea. “We put poison out of the way of children,” says he. This, verily, was soldier-like work.

One night, weary and sad, he was returning from Sebastopol to his poor lodgings in the old stable at Balaklava. He had laboured all day with unflagging energy, and now his strength was gone. He was sickened with the sights he had seen, and was depressed with the thought that the siege was no nearer an end than ever. As he trudged along in the mud knee-deep, he happened to look up and noticed the stars shining calmly in the clear sky. Instinctively his weary heart mounted heavenward in sweet thoughts of the “rest that remaineth for the people of God,” and he began to sing aloud the well-known Scriptural verses:

“How bright these glorious spirits shine

Whence all their white array?

How came they to the blissful seats

Of everlasting day?

“Lo! these are they from sufferings great,

Who came to realms of light,

And in the blood of Christ have washed

Those robes which shine so bright.”

Next day was wet and stormy, and when he went out to see what course to take, he came upon a sol­dier standing for shelter below the veranda of an old house. The poor fellow was in rags, and all that remained of shoes upon his feet were utterly insuffi­cient to keep his naked toes from the mud. Alto­gether he looked miserable enough. The kind-hearted missionary spoke words of encouragement to the soldier, and gave him at the same time half a sovereign with which to purchase shoes, suggest­ing that he might be supplied by those who were burying the dead. The soldier offered his warmest thanks, and then said, “I am not what I was yester­day. Last night, as I was thinking of our miserable condition, I grew tired of life, and said to myself, Here we are not a bit nearer taking that place than when we sat down before it. I can bear this no longer, and may as well try and put an end to it. So I took my musket and went down yonder in a desperate state about eleven o’clock; but as I got round the point, I heard some person singing ‘How bright these glorious spirits shine,’ and I remembered the old tune and the Sabbath-school where we used to sing it. I felt ashamed of being so cowardly, and said, ‘Here is someone as badly off as myself, and yet he is not giving in. I felt he had something to make him happy of which I was ignorant, and I began to hope I too might get the same happiness. I returned to my tent, and today I am resolved to seek the one thing.” “Do you know who the singer was?” asked the missionary. “No,” was the reply. “Well,” said the other, “it was I;” on which the tears rushed into the soldier’s eyes, and he requested the Scripture-reader to take back the half sovereign, saying, “Never, sir, can I take it from you, after what you have been the means of doing for me.”

He says he did not find many real Christians in the army. There were a few stars of the first mag­nitude, and they shone conspicuous in so dark a sky. Our lay missionary was not long in discover­ing those who feared the Lord; and he found in them true friends. The first time he entered the tent of Capt. Hedley Vicars, he observed that although the officer was absent at the time, his Bible lay opened upon a sort of table made of an old box. Thus the godly Vicars showed his colours, the open Bible in­timating to all who entered on what terms they might have his fellowship. “His manliness and whole-heartedness,” says Mr. Matheson, “struck you at once. There was nothing morose or gloomy about him; nothing to repel. He retained the fresh­ness of boyhood with wisdom above his years. At our first meeting my heart was glued to him at once.” In his journal he writes: “March 19th. At Sebasto­pol. Met with Dr. Cay and Major Ingram in Vicars’ tent. We had prayer and reading the Word to­gether. It was to us all a well in the desert, a bright spot amidst surrounding gloom. We blessed God on hearing that a day of national humiliation and prayer was appointed. Cay and Vicars accom­panied me on my way. After Cay left us Vicars and I stood on the plateau above Sebastopol, the doomed city, as it was often called, lying in its beauty before us. The sky was without a cloud; the sea was as calm as a pond. It was on one of those sweet evenings you never can forget. Our conversation was on the purity, blessedness and endless peace of heaven, where the din of battle shall never be heard, nor the strifes of earth be known. We expressed to one another much long­ing to reach it. Speaking of some who had gone, we remembered Peden at the grave of Cam­eron exclaiming, ‘O to be wi’ Ritchie!’ and our feeling was the same. We could hardly part. He agreed to meet and spend a day with me at Balaclava.”

On the day fixed for the meeting Hedley Vicars was taken home to his God. Matheson was over­whelmed with grief; and could only exclaim, ‘Dear, dear Vicars!” As he stood beside the grave on the day of burial he felt in his inmost heart as if “an­other link had been snapped on earth, and another bond formed in heaven.”

One of his best friends was Bombardier M’L., a warm-hearted Highlander and a Christian. Just as the alarm was sounded and the men were called to arms, Mr. Matheson on entering the bombardier’s tent found him buckling himself for the fight and putting his Bible into his bosom, saying, “If I fall, it will be there: and if I am taken prisoner, it will speak to me, and I can never be weary with such a companion.” One day when they had retired to a quiet spot for prayer and reading of the Word of God, a shell dropped at their feet. On this they went a little further off; but again the exercises were dis­turbed by another terrible invader which fell be­side them, shaking the very ground beneath them. “Never mind,” said the soldier, “it is only the devil trying to spoil our enjoyment: let us go on.” They had just resumed when whiz, whiz, with a loud fall a thirty-two pound shot lay beside them. The missionary was alarmed, but the soldier calmed his fear by quietly saying,

“Not a shaft can hit

Till the God of love sees fit.”

This brave man Matheson used to tell, once stood alone by his gun in the midst of an assailing Russian host, and in a hand-to-hand encounter maintained his ground till the enemy was driven back, one of the Russians with whom he grappled falling dead at his feet.

The missionary, peaceful though his part of the business was, occasionally experienced danger, and had his narrow escapes. One day, when conversing with a godly officer in a retired spot, the latter said, “We have been long enough here, let us move away.” No sooner had they removed than a 13-inch shell dropped and burst on the very spot where they had been standing. “God had cared for us,” he says, “and we were safe.”

“At Sebastopol during the unsuccessful attack on the Mamelon. It was a fearful night. Thousands were hurried into eternity, and yet our soldiers marched cheering to the trenches, and seemed total­ly unconcerned. The mail had arrived just ere they marched, and you could see them reading the letters from home. Two hours after, they were dead or dy­ing. There seemed to reign an utter recklessness of life, and I could hear the wild oaths as they marched bandied about in the ranks. I had an opportunity of speaking a few words to some of them, and dur­ing part of the night remained with the outlying sentries, in one of whom I felt special interest. At midnight went to the tent of Bombardier —, and had prayer with him. In the morning all was calm, save now and then shot from some heavy gun, and the wounded were carried away in great numbers. It is in such scenes as these one can truly appreciate the reign of righteousness yet to arise on this be­nighted world, and long and pray for its speedy advent.”

One day, 17th June, we find him speaking about the “one thing needful” to “a large draft for the Rifles, mostly boys,” newly arrived. On landing they are drawn up and ranged, before “marching to the front; “and as he slips out and in among them, giving them Testaments and speaking in his own hearty, affectionate way about home, and battle, and death, and eternity, he is pleased to mark unwonted signs of emotion, and remarks that “it seemed as if their hearts had got tender when brought so near the seat of conflict.” These boys were going to be butchered on the morrow at the Redan. “Next day,” he adds, “I was at Sebastopol, and some of these very men were carried past wounded, whilst others had been killed in the fight.”

“Attended and took part in the meeting, specially with reference to the expected assault on the mor­row. The worthy chaplain’s address was most sol­emn, affecting, and impressive. It was indeed a night of deepest feeling, and much of the Lord’s presence was enjoyed.”

In reference to the disastrous attack on the Redan, he writes in his journal: “June 18th. Early in the morning went to Sebastopol. I trust higher and holier motives than those of mere curiosity led me. Was eye-witness to all the proceedings of the fatal morning. It produced feelings that cannot be ex­pressed; to hear and see the deadly conflict, and be witness to the dead and dying carried past, endur­ing their sufferings with calm fortitude and unmur­muring silence. Spoke words of kindness to a few; and sought, as able, to tell others the lesson to be learned, viz., to seek the Lord, who only could grant victory, and put no confidence in an arm of flesh. When the fury of the storm had passed, and some­thing of a depressing calm was felt, looked in at \_\_\_\_ Hospital, but could not stand the sight. Some had limbs amputated; others hands off; and many were suffering from unextracted bullets. There are events in every man’s history he can hardly forget, and through grace, I should like to retain the many lessons taught me on the 18th of June, before Se­bastopol.”

He was well received by the sailors in the harbour of Balaklava. When not admitted on board he left a parcel of carefully selected tracts to be distributed among the men. One day a soldier refusing a tract, a sailor with the wonted frankness and good humour of Jack stepped up and said, “If he won’t, I will,” adding for the encouragement of the missionary, “Thank ye, sir; I like a good yarn.” Captain T\_\_\_\_, master of a transport, used to hoist the Bethel flag on his ship, and Matheson held service on board.

He was also called to minister to the navvies of the Army Works Corps, among whom cholera had broken out. As early as five in the morning he was astir with his Bible and his medicine. His counsel and aid were in great demand, for the navvies had taken it into their heads that no medicines were so effective as his. Something, no doubt, was due to “the effectual fervent prayer” which “availeth much.” This opportunity of usefulness was seized with his usual promptitude and good sense; but the work sometimes proved more than even his strong frame could bear.

Mr. Gymgell, chaplain of the Army Works Corps, being taken ill of cholera, our missionary watched him till he died. Through the long weary hours of his last night on earth, Matheson sat by his bedside ministering to him, till at length, as it drew towards the dawn, the faithful chaplain, breathing out faith and hope, peacefully fell asleep in Jesus. On the Scripture-reader devolved the last offices of friend­ship, and keen were his feelings in transmitting the sad tidings to the widow and children far away. Just as the sun was setting they buried him in a quiet spot near the grave of Admiral Boxer, and Matheson addressed all those present with more than ordinary impressiveness and power. He felt as if the disease had fastened on himself, and he spoke with the light of a near eternity in his soul.

Utterly prostrate, he reeled home to the old stable, and crept into his comfortless bed, where he lay sick, helpless, and alone for three days and three nights. Growing worse hour by hour, he was at length no longer able to rise for his only comfort—a drink of water; and despairing of life he turned his face to the wall to die. This the hour of his extremity was God’s opportunity. The Lord sent an angel to min­ister to him in the person of Mr. Medley, a gentle­man in the Commissariat, who had formerly been a London city missionary. Happening to come to the door, he discovered the forlorn condition of the Scrip­ture-reader, ran to his relief, and never left him till he began to recover. “It was the sound of Mr. Med­ley’s voice singing psalms,” said our missionary, “that first brought me to myself, and from that mo­ment I began to get better.”

For the benefit of his health he took a trip to Trebizond, of which he speaks in a letter to his sis­ter. “I wrote you that I was going to Trebizond. I did go, and was absent a week. I cannot tell you how much better I was for the trip. It was in the ‘City of Aberdeen’ I went, and the passage was beau­tiful. It would be impossible for me to describe the beauty of Trebizond and the adjacent country. I hardly thought such gorgeous scenery was to be seen on earth. Should I be spared to return I may be able to convey some idea of it to you. I was most taken up about its spiritual condition, which is sad in the extreme. Of 60,000 inhabitants there is only one Englishman, the British Consul. The Americans have a missionary there doing a good work; but as he had gone to Constantinople I did not see him. I left a letter for him and some books. Some of the converts I saw and was much pleased with them. I felt, O how deeply! the want of know­ing their language; for as I walked through the city given up to idolatry, I wished I had been able to preach ‘Christ and Him crucified.’ The sight of so many thousands believing a lie gives one an inter­est in missions such as many speeches could not give.

The Turks in Trebizond I found to be most invet­erate against Christianity; but their days are num­bered. . . . Although only a week absent I had many friends wearying for me, and once again I was glad to see them and enter on my work. All friends here, however, must be held very loosely, for they soon remove or are taken away.”

The market-place, Kadi Keni, situated about a mile from Balaklava, was a stirring spot. English, French, Italians, Turks, Jews, Maltese, and others, assembled here. The Jews were extremely debased, but the Maltese, if possible, were more wicked still; for they were sometimes caught in the act of spoil­ing the dead. The market was just the place for our Scripture-reader: here he did much business for his Master. No Jew was more bent on making gain than he was on winning souls; his constant cry was, “Who will buy the truth?”

At Nadi Keni he met officers and soldiers of the Sardinian army, and made their acquaintance. “From the day that the compact, brave, accom­plished, and well-behaved Sardinian army set foot on Crimean soil,” he writes, “my heart was set on doing them good, and I prayed that God would en­able me to spread the Word among them. Know­ing that God could bless one text as well as a thou­sand, I committed to memory from the Italian New Testament that Gospel in miniature in John iii. 16: ‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ I went out, and standing amongst them repeated the pas­sage, and then passed from group to group with my little Gospel message. Then I took the New Testa­ment and went out reading it as best I could, till a deep interest to possess it was called forth, and the time had come for its distribution.”

Cholera, too, came to clear the way for the ser­vant of the Lord Jesus. Many soldiers of the Sar­dinian army were taken ill: there was a lively de­mand for the medicines, of which Mr. Matheson had a large store, and very soon his services were held in as high repute by the Italians as by the English navvies. He saw the door of access opening; he felt assured the Lord was answering his prayers; and so incessantly and lovingly did he labour among them, that he came to be named, “The Sardinians’ Friend.” His kindness won a way into their hearts; prejudices gave way; he became a universal favourite, and many of the Italians received the Word of God at his hands, when they would have rejected it at the hands of any others.

In his journal of June 1st he writes: “Began the distribution of Italian New Testaments in fear and much trembling. Opening after opening presented itself, and the avidity with which many received them was remarkable, whilst others sternly refused them. One officer asked for a copy, and assisted me to supply all his company, remarking, ‘A better book they could not possess.’“ Again, June 2d, “Took a large bag full of Italian New Testaments to market-place, Nadi Beni. Met many Sardinians, and on presenting them with the Word was offered by nine tenths payment for them. Some sternly re­fused. The joy of others was great.”

Day after day the interest increased. One walked five miles in the darkness of night to knock at the old stable door and get the Word of God. Another came begging the whole Bible, because he had found the New Testament so good. “I have a great treas­ure now,” said another, as he put the book in his bosom, and went away. At five in the morning the missionary is aroused by Sardinian soldiers seek­ing the Word of God. They were going to join the advance, and feared losing their only opportunity of procuring a copy. A Waldensian corporal lying ill at this time, in answer to the kind inquiries of the Scripture-reader, said, “The source of all true cour­age is, whilst the body is on earth, the soul is in heaven,”—a truly Waldensian and martyr-like view of the matter. “Spoke to the Sardinian guard,” Matheson writes in his journal, “and told them of the only Saviour of sinners, and gave each of them a New Testament. They said they would take them home to Italy. Visited by seven Sardinian officers, who wished to have Bibles. As an army of reserve, they said they had much time for reading, and would take their Bibles home as a memorial of Eng­lish affection and of the Crimea.” Two Tuscans, burning with zeal for liberty and Italy, enlightened and able to speak English fluently, visited the sta­ble, and heard the good old story of freedom through Jesus Christ. A Tyrolese, of noble countenance, who had fought under Garibaldi at Rome, and shared the perils of his flight, received a copy of the Word, and became attached to the missionary. Thus the work went on day by day, despite all the efforts of the priests, who did their utmost to stop it.

Duncan’s frank, genial disposition, and intense sympathy with the Italians in their aspirations for national liberty and unity, were largely instru­mental in opening the door for the Word of God among the Sardinian troops. God gave him favour with the officers. Dr. S\_\_\_\_, who could speak English, became his friend. That gentleman had been led to embrace Protestantism by reading the Bible, and comparing the religion of Rome with the truth. He introduced Mr. Matheson to other officers, who invited him to dinner. The missionary made a speech, Dr. S. being interpreter. After depicting in glowing colours what he firmly believed would be the future of a free and united Italy, whose flag should one day be unfurled on the Capitol of Rome, he proceeded to speak of the Gospel as the greatest glory of a nation, and Jesus Christ as the only true liberator of men. His sincerity and enthusiasm carried all their hearts as by storm, and thenceforth “The Sardinians’ Friend” enjoyed all but unbounded liberty and respect in carrying on the work of the Lord in the Italian army.

Thus his field of labour was constantly widening, and knowing that the day of opportunity would soon close, he pressed into every breach with in­domitable courage and unquenchable zeal, till at length in the capture of Sebastopol he saw a certain indication of the end of his mission. His account of the final bombardment and assault deserves a page.

“Balaklava, 10th September, 1855.

“The din of battle has been hushed for a time, and I have found a little leisure to write. I hardly know where to begin, and I do not for a moment conceive I shall be able to give you any right idea of the transactions of the last few days. My last told you of the mighty preparations going silently and mechanically on for the final assault. For days and days nothing was seen but the transit of am­munition, and the transport of gabions, etc., for the front. The fire for some time back every night had been truly terrific. It seemed the Russians well knew how our works were coiling themselves around their devoted city, and if they could not prevent this, they seemed determined to annoy us. What was often thought to be the reopening of the bombardment was only meant to allow the French at the Malakoff and us at the Redan to finish the works under cover of it. On the morning of the 6th it seemed as if all batteries had opened. Gun after gun sent forth its deadly charges, and during the whole day nothing else was heard but the whiz of shells as they flew through the air. The accuracy of our aim was remarkable. In one minute you could count nine shells bursting upon the parapet of the Redan, and the Malakoff seemed entirely shrouded in a sable covering of smoke and dust. Thus it continued during the day, and as evening had settled on us, one of the Russian ships in the harbour was seen to be on fire. Slowly the flames flew up the rigging, and soon the burning fragments were scattered around. It was a bril­liant sight. The dark night—the horizon lighted up for miles—the city seen as if by day—the sound of the rifles, as they went off, pop, pop, in the advanced works—the heavy cannonade—and the star­like fuses of the shells, as they rolled through the air, made it all awfully imposing. For hours the ship burned, and when morning broke you could see the hulk burned to the water’s edge, and the other vessels lying lazily in the spot where they have so long been.

“If the fire of the 6th was heavy, it was as noth­ing to the fire which opened on the 7th. Every spot seemed to possess a gun, and from every side the smoke, fire, and noise were terrific. It seemed as if all the guns and mortars in the French left went off at one moment. Volley after volley shook the air, and the whole seemed as made of living fire. For a short time it seemed as if they had spent their fury, and as if the work were done. The guns were only cooling. In a little while they burst forth with greater fury than before. Thus during the whole day it continued. There seemed no slackening, no flagging, no wearying. Now and then the Russians replied, but it was feeble and faint—not one shot for the thousand given. Thousands of spectators, chiefly, yea, almost all, soldiers, crowded the heights, where a passing glimpse could be had as the smoke cleared away. It was touching to see them in little groups discussing the probability of an attack, and their remarks were often of a mellowing cast. Grey-haired soldiers felt certain of it, though all was kept profoundly silent, and it sent a strange thrill through the heart to see some of the young, only joined a few days before, gambolling to the sound. During the night there was no cessation, and the rockets flew at intervals, kindling the city in various places.

Sleep was far from our eyes. The night seemed long and dreary, and the sighing of the wind on the fierce blast seemed to sound in the ears like sighs deep and loud from a sepulchre. At length morning broke, cold and cheerless. The sun now and then seemed ready to shoot forth, but kept back, as if afraid of shining on the work of the bloody day. The wind was strong, and carried the dust in whirling eddies through the camp. It blew well-nigh a hurricane, and seemed ready to carry all before it. We ap­proached Cathcart’s Hill and found the whole line guarded by our dragoons. One could scarcely stand for the cold, and yet the interest of the moment ab­sorbed every thought. The cannonade seemed still fierce, and now and then through the strange min­gling of smoke, fire, and dust, you could catch a glimpse of the two spots of interest—the Malakoff and the Redan—greatly battered, and only now and then firing a solitary shot, as tokens of being yet unsubdued.

“By seven A.M. the Light Division had marched. By eleven the other divisions had assembled, and marched to their respective posts. They wound down the various ravines in good order, and seem­ingly knowing the desperate nature of the work they were to do. I saw several soldiers’ wives weep­ing after them as they went. Each man carried for­ty-eight hours’ provisions. Their advance could not be seen, for the wind carried the dust and smoke in darkening columns, shrouding all well-nigh in mid­night darkness. It was blowing into our works, and straight away from the Russians. A large building burned in Sebastopol, and yet it was scarcely no­ticed, so eagerly did all look for twelve o’clock. It came. We heard the crack of musketry at the Malakoff, and the cannonade still went on. In a few minutes the report, ‘The Malakoff is taken,’ reached the camp. The 3d Division in reserve gave three hearty cheers, which could be distinctly heard through the camp above the din of all. The oppo­sition at the Malakoff was faint. In ten minutes the eagles of France floated on it. It seemed un­expected. The French works were so near it—one bound, and it had fallen. All eyes turned to the Redan. Here, in a moment, the battle raged. Such hot musketry has rarely been seen. Our men mounted its parapets, and were hurled into the ditch below. Man after man ascended, and one officer, mounting the parapet, waved his sword and cheered them for­ward. He was soon laid in the dust. Mass after mass pressed forward, and, over the dead bodies of their comrades, got within. They had gained it, but the dense mass of Russian infantry poured in countless thousands upon them, and “one battery within, unseen, played hard. The Russian force, in leaving the Malakoff, poured into the Redan, de­termined to make it the final settling-ground. The few of our soldiers that got a footing made a noble stand, but they were as a drop in the sea, or a leaf in the forest, compared with the dense masses that came against them. They had to retire, and yet time after time they rushed to the assault, and kept the enemy from gaining one inch of ground. Be­tween the Malakoff and Redan the contest fiercely raged. Victory seemed to hang tremblingly in the balance, and moments passed as hours—so deep was the suspense. At three o’clock the wounded began to be carried up. It was a sad and melan­choly procession. The Woronzoff road was one con­tinuous stream—officers and men all alike. Some walked themselves, limping, whilst the blood oozed from their wounds, and now and then, as the wind threw the cloak or covering a little aside, you saw the pale cold face of someone who had gone from the battle to the judgment-seat. As I stood mark­ing the sickening sights, three soldiers’ wives rushed down the ravine, asking after their husbands, and presenting a dreadful spectacle of misery and grief. A ball from some of the Russian batteries fell close beside them, and they had to run with all speed to the rear. The wind still blew, and the cold contin­ued intense. Now and then it lulled for a moment, and the sun burst brightly forth. All was silent along the French right, and only our batteries and the French left kept up the fire. The mark was still the Redan. It was evident the Russians were losing heart.

“Night closed on the scene, and the wind died away. The reserves were marched off for the work of the coming day. The town was on fire in sev­eral places, and the shipping seemed without a gun. Explosion after explosion took place. At two o’clock—one louder than the rest. Part of the Redan had been sprung. The Highlanders, who behaved nobly, held in reserve for the next assault, entered, and found it evacuated. The Russians had fled, and, whatever else may be said, made a masterly retreat, displaying the most consummate generalship. As they went, they fired all behind them, and our men were not allowed to follow, which was well, for yes­terday explosions were taking place the whole day. In the night they had sunk their shipping, so long the terror of the Allies, and the cause of so many deaths. The eye had got so long accustomed to the sight of these mighty vessels, and now it is cheer­less to see the waves gently cresting over the spot where they were, and to glance at the large bay without a speck, save a few harmless steamers cow­ering under the guns of the opposite shore.

“Yesterday, we had our first quiet Sabbath in the Crimea. How pleasant, how calm, how refreshing it dawned upon us! Before, all used to be bustle, and the cannonade kept no Sabbath, and had re­spect to no commands. Not a gun was now heard. The stillness of death seemed to reign, and the deep­est interest to be felt in knowing who had or had not survived. Many a sad blank was found, and I had to weep specially over one friend who had only arrived from England two days before, and who fell at the first attack. He was an officer of the Rifles, and if honoured with a tombstone, the epitaph truly may be, ‘He walked with God.’ Only a few en­tered the town yesterday, and our troops moved cautiously, there being so many mines springing. It is all mined. Not a building remains uninjured. Shot and fragments of shell pave every spot. Build­ings have been scattered in ruins, and what has been left the flames have devoured. It has a desolate, dreary aspect, and the wind howls hideously through its deserted streets. The dead lie all around, and heap upon heap meets the eye at the various points of sharpest contest. Yesterday and today, the last offices are performing for the dead, laying them in graves on the spot where many of them fell. The stern tide of war has mercilessly swept them away, and left many to deplore their loss. Friend and foe lie together, and Sebastopol is in the possession of our army.

“It has been got at a dear rate, and the price of it has been much blood. How many thousands, yea, tens of thousands, have found their graves before it, there to await till the trump of God shall summon the sleepers to arise! When I think of the mingled joy and weeping the sound of this victory shall produce at home, my soul is filled with deep­est feeling. I feel greatly it will be laid to the bra­very of our army, and to the skill of our command­ers; but those whose hearts are filled with divine light, and who know anything of the tremen­dous difficulties overcome, and the magnitude of the struggle, will give all the glory to the Lord, to whom it belongs.”

The following letter to Mr. P. Drummond, Stir­ling, will furnish some idea of his work, and the free course of the word of God in the Crimea:

“Balaklava, Sept. 20th, 1855.

“MY DEAR MR. DRUMMOND**:** Now that the town of Sebastopol has fallen, and the din of battle for a time has ceased, I have found a little leisure to write to you. And first I desire to thank you very sin­cerely, in my own name and that of others, for the many kind grants of tracts you have sent from time to time, since December last, and to assure you all have been widely scattered, and in many cases grate­fully received. I also enclose you a thank-offering from a few friends of £7 10s., to help you forward in your work. The silver and the gold are the Lord’s, and as such we cast it into His treasury.

“I hardly knew from what point to start to let you know of my work since entering this field of death and bloodshed. It has been an eventful, thrill­ing, soul-trying time; and yet in the midst of all, much of the seed of the kingdom has been scattered—seeing since the fourth of December last I have given away—tracts, 52,000; Bibles, 622; Tes­taments, 1,477; French Testaments, 770; Bibles, 32; Italian Testaments, 4,300; Bibles, 200; Welsh, Rus­sian*,* and German Testaments, 173; books for offi­cers, 450.

“The work has now and then been pleasant, yet seldom has a joyous heart been known, seeing so much abounding iniquity and such an utter recklessness to the things of eternity. You cannot think what a vast wilderness of ungodliness our army is. You cannot move a step without hearing that name, dearer to you than all others, continually blas­phemed. Gambling has been carried on in the hos­pital, the camp, the trenches, to an amazing degree; and the curse of our country, drunkenness, is wide­spread indeed. The sufferings of last winter were not overdrawn, nor was the lesson to be taught ever learned. Judgment hung heavy on us, and it passed away unheeded. The Lord had a few holy witnesses in our army, but most of these were taken away by death, the bullet, or removed to England. No widespread blessing has ever descended, and tens of thousands have passed to the judgment-seat. The sins of our nation were punished in our army: and a slumbering church started for a moment to sink into a deeper sleep than before. Often when ready to faint have I been sustained by the blessed truth, ‘All that the Father hath given *shall* come;’ and some measure of faith in the omnipotent power of the Holy Ghost has revived the drooping heart, and enabled me more urgently to present Christ and Him crucified to dying men. Few have cared for the soldier’s soul; an exception here and there with joy may be made—but Popery and Puseyism have had it much their own way. The means to meet the wants have been totally inadequate, and every barrier has been thrust in the way of those that would. Evangelism has met with little favour, and Rome has plied her arts with untiring assiduity. What has tended much to demoralize our army has been the almost total extinction of the Sabbath. The Crimea has, I may say, known no Sabbaths. True it is, for a few minutes the form of parade-ser­vice has been gone through, and the men instantly hurried to fatigue. Let those who would like to see what Britain would be without Sabbaths visit the Crimea, and they will see the soul-destroying effects of it. The poor soldiers long for it to recruit their over-worked systems, but the demands of man can­not afford it, and the ceaseless toil must go on. I wish to draw a veil over much that I have seen in the Crimea these ten months. The scenes witnessed, and the dark pictures presented, often make the blood run cold, and draw tears from the eyes. Sure am I if it were really known at home by those who know the value of their own souls, they could not but cry, weep, pray, beseeching the Lord to open the windows of heaven and pour down a great and an abundant blessing. One cannot but admire the calm endurance of our army, and stand amazed at their contempt of danger, and the unflinching bra­very ever manifested; and oh, how well it were if a real deep and abiding awakening took place! then it would be bravery drawn from a right source, and endurance of suffering the result of right principle. Much prayer ought to be made for our neglected army, for it is high time to know the real spiritual state of it, and to awake out of sleep regarding it.

“You are aware, in the end of May, the Sardin­ian army landed here. Hearing of its coming I had sent for thousands of Italian Testaments, not know­ing but the Lord would open a way for their distri­bution. I began the work with much prayer, yet in great fear and trembling. At first it went on slowly. Many prejudices had to be removed, and much wisdom to be evinced. Cholera broke out among them, and many hundreds died. It soft­ened them much; soon group after group called on me for the Word, sometimes thirty in one day. Since the 1st of June it has continued; one brought his companion, and another his brother, till 1,500 have so visited me. I cannot give you any idea of their eagerness to possess the Word. I have known many come miles for it; and never have I seen such joy as they manifested while gazing on the precious gift. Had I time it would be pleasing to me to send you more details, for it has been a glori­ous, cheering work. Time after time I have gone through their camp, and seen some in little groups reading it, others in their tent; and in the hospital nothing else is read. Many officers have visited me, written me, or sent for Bibles; and in some regiments every officer, from the colonel downwards, has got a copy, while most of the medical staff have also been supplied. A spirit of earnest inquiry is at work with some, and an apparently anxious desire to know the truth by most. Wondrous are the ways of God. Italy, long shut, is opening; Popery is losing its power; the mask is being torn; light thrown around; and who can tell the amount of blessing the 4,700 copies of God’s Word given to the Sardinian army may be the means of accomplish­ing? It is touching to hear them sayoften, ‘My father, my mother, or my sisters, possess not this, and if I return they shall have it.’ Those that have been invalided and sent home carried it with them; and, as they embarked, have held it up to me, say­ing, ‘This is my memorial of the Crimea.’ The work is still going on, and I expect, if the door is still open, to circulate 1,000 more. Opposition was at one time greatly threatened. A Maynooth priest in our army tried to stir the Sardinian priests against the work, but ere his plans were fully mature he fell sick, and had to leave. One thing is clear, Sar­dinia is lost to the Pope, and every fresh bull ful­minated is making the breach wider and wider. Oh for living men for Italy to preach the everlast­ing Gospel, and for the descent of the Holy Ghost from on high to call the dead to life It presents a glorious field. It is ripe for the harvest. Who will enter in and raise the standard of the cross, so long trampled in the dust; yea, buried under forms, traditions, and soul-destroying ignorance?

“I cannot find time to tell you of the progress of the truth in Turkey. The only ray of hope is in the American Mission amongst the Armenians, which is greatly prospering. The Turk is what he was. There is no more opening of his mind to receive the truth. His enmity to Christianity is as deep as ever, and the effect produced by the presence of the Allies is bad indeed. As a nation they are dying out; evi­dently *doom* is written on Mahomedanism, and it is well. Gladly would I see the Crescent prostrate in the dust, and a Christian state raised on the ruins. The time is fast hastening on; the night is pass­ing; the day breaketh. Soon the cry shall be heard throughout earth’s millions—‘Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.’

“Wishing you all success, and seeking for you much of the hallowing, humbling grace of the Eter­nal Spirit, I am, in much haste, your affectionate friend,

“DUNCAN MATHESON.”

From September till the winter set in he continued his labours—not, however, without frequent interrup­tions from sickness and prostration. “Many say, rest; take things easier,” he writes at this time. “I cannot rest, for it is a mighty graceless army, and needs most tremendous exertions. Oh that I might be the means of saving souls!” Much did he feel the loss of Christian friends. “Captains Craigie, Vic­ars, and Beaufort are gone. Lieut. Wemyss died on his way to England, and has his grave in the waters of the Bosphorus. I feel it much—keenly, deeply. Oh how cheap is life here! You sorrow for one, for many, and next day you sorrow for more, till the mind gets quite hardened. Many talk of hundreds dying as if it were nothing. Most look not into eter­nity, and know not the value of souls. I often think it is well. I counted the cost ere coming here. I have not been disappointed. It is useless to think of tri­als, if the Lord prosper you in your work. . . . You and others fear for me. I alone fear not for myself. Am I not in the Lord’s work? Can anything happen without his permission? If I live, let it be to his glory. If I die, may it be for his glory. I am not my own. I know there is victory through the blood of the Lamb; and what after all is death? The entrance to eternal rest—the door to God’s right hand.”

Again and again he is smitten down by the com­bined effects of fatigue, exposure, and want of mate­rial comforts. In a letter he says: “Since I last wrote you I have known what it is to be laid low. Indeed, when I wrote you I felt rather unwell, but thought I should rally, as I have often done. I was seized with violent diarrhoea, accompanied with fe­ver, which continued nearly eight days, five of which I was totally confined to bed. A few days after I took ill my kind friends, Drs. Derriman and Brown, pitched a tent for me at their hospital, and their at­tention to me was unremitting. Through the mercy of God, I am restored again, and in my own house, and at my work. Many of the poor Sardinians called on me during my illness, and I had to hand them copies of the Word of God from my bed. Indeed everyone was exceedingly kind. Most of those who sought to labour are now either dead or left. The doctors say I ought not to remain another winter here on any account, as those exertions I have through grace been enabled to make must recoil on the system. This is in the Lord’s hands.”

His privations were often well-nigh past endur­ance. Often had he suffered the gnawings of hun­ger, till at length he lost his appetite entirely. “How gracious the Lord is,” he says in a letter to his sister; “the last two days I had the delicious pleasure of being hungry.” Again, “I am getting sorely out of clothes. Last week I got a present of a new pair of boots sent from England. Next day they were stolen. I had my last shirt on. I could not find another; but a staff doctor called, and made me a present of one yesterday. So the Lord provides.”

At length his failing health compelled him to leave the Crimea, and return to Scotland, where he arrived about the end of the year.

After spending six weeks at home, he set out again for the East, rejoicing, and counting himself more highly honoured than if he were the ambassador of a king. His connection with the Soldiers’ Friend Society had ceased on his return home; but, liber­ally aided by the Countess of Effingham and others, he went forth absolutely his own master, and with an eye single and full of light. Feeling assured that he was called by the great Master to seize an oppor­tunity such as might never recur, he girt up his loins, and at once prayerful as well as self-reliant, cautious as well as enthusiastic, he took his way to the scene of his former labours and sorrows.

His stores of Christian literature for gratuitous distribution were immense, varied, and judiciously selected. Besides Bibles, tracts, and other books in the several languages of the East, he carried with him a considerable number of copies of the Shorter Catechism with proofs, in Italian, under the title of “Compendium of Christian Doctrine,” and also Paleario’s “Benefits of Christ’s Death,” in the same language. His own countrymen were not forgotten. At Gibraltar, Malta, and almost everywhere a slow lumbering voice would be heard asking, “Hae ye ony Bibles wi’ Psaums?” Knowing and sympathiz­ing with the likings of his countrymen, he was fully prepared to supply honest Sandy’s want.

It may be worthwhile to notice that his services were eagerly sought at this time by more than one Missionary Society or Committee. The “Jews’ Con­version Committee” offered to “employ him as an assistant missionary of the Committee at Constanti­nople, at a salary of £150 a year.” At the same time the Free Church Colonial Committee desired to secure his services for the East; but fearing lest he should be trammelled in his work, he declined every offer, in order that he might be free to carry out his own peculiar mission in his own way. Dr. John Bonar, Convener of the Colonial Committee, again wrote him in noble, generous words of encourage­ment. “You go,” he writes, “to unfurl the Lord’s banner in the sight of assembled nations. You go to breathe words of peace from the Prince of peace amid the din of war. You go to sow the incorrupt­ible seed of the Word, which liveth and abideth for­ever, amid the very things which beyond all others show the vanity and uncertainty of all earthly and human things. You go to speak to men of their souls and of eternity, in the midst of the very things which may summon them to that eternity while you yet speak. You go to give the word of life to those to whom it is a sealed fountain at home; and, in a word, to do good to *all* as you have opportunity. Going on such an errand, and called to fulfil so im­portant a mission, we bid you God speed.”

LETTERS TO HIS SISTER.

“London, March 6th.

“I long much to get away. I have got everything for my mission I could desire. Today I have been at Beckenham. I have got forty copies of Cap­tain Vicars’ Life. Mr: Moody Stuart went to the Edinburgh Bible Society, and got £25 for me for French Bibles. Mr. Learmouth has paid for 1,000 Bibles for me.”

“March 14th.

“At sea, off the Spanish coast. We are nearing Gibraltar, and on getting ashore I expect to post this letter for you, that it may relieve any anxiety you may feel. . . . To be united to Jesus is the one great thing. What is all else beside? A dream—a shadow—nothing. Today I was led to think of my awakening and after-life. What a miracle of mercy it has all appeared. To be used at all by the Lord is truly wonderful. Yea, it is all His grace—His own peculiar dealing. I long for nothing more than spiritual life. It seems to me, looking at the work to be done and the greatness of eternal things, as if I had not yet really begun to live. What an amount of time have I lost. How little it has been really occupied for the Lord. How little accom­plished. Life, life, the endless life of grace, is all I need, and all I want. It is difficult to write with the motion of the vessel. We speed on our voyage. Such is life. Yes, we are passing along. How soon shall it be all done here.”

 After touching at Malta, where his soul was vexed at the sight of the Popish mummeries of Good Friday, he reached Constantinople on the 31st March. Here he began the work of Scripture distribution at the Sardinian Hospital at Yenikoi, where there is a great rush on the part of the Italian soldiers to obtain copies of the Word of God. Doctors, officers, and men are waiting for him, and their joy is great on seeing their old friend with his precious stores. Day after day he passes, and the work seems to grow. He again proceeds to the Crimea.

“Crimea, June 16th.

“I do not anticipate staying long in the Crimea. All will depend on my entrance amongst the Russian soldiers. In all my previous journeys the Lord has graciously prospered me, and I hope in this I shall be able to sing the same song, and talk of the same goodness. Since my arrival it has been an inces­sant whirl. I would I could get rest! But it cannot be. The doors are too open, and the readiness to receive so great, that it must be “now or never.” I expect a thousand French Bibles soon from Lon­don. I have already given above five thousand copies of the Word in all languages. Oh for the breath from on high! My heart is set on the Lord. I love his service. I seek grace to glorify Him. Soon all will be done. It is passing away.”

In the arduous work of Scripture distribution in the Sardinian army he received no small help from an Italian priest, who had been favourably impressed by the dying testimony of his nephew Paolo, a young soldier converted by reading a copy of the New Tes­tament given him by Mr. Matheson. When coun­selled by his uncle to confess, Paolo replied that he had confessed his sins to Jesus Christ, and having received forgiveness, he needed not to confess to man. His beautiful death touched the heart of the priest, who appears to have been a quiet, kind-hearted man.

Early in 1856 some of the Sardinian officers had written to the principal newspaper in Turin, and challenged the priests to come to the Crimea, if they dared, and stop the circulation of the Scriptures. On this an accomplished Jesuit was sent, who on his arrival threatened to have the fellow hanged who was, contrary to all law and order, spreading heresy and Bibles among the good soldiers of Italy, and the children of the Pope. Matheson providentially dis­covered the Jesuit and his scheme, and informed certain officers (his friends), who outwitted the priest and he was obliged to sneak away as he came.

One day he found his spiritual stores exhausted. A ship with a fresh stock of books was seen for days in the offing; but stormy weather prevented all ac­cess to the vessel. Becoming impatient he got a boat, manned by several stout Aberdonians, and taking the tiller himself, he put off to the ship. In the face of a tremendous sea they endeavoured to make way to the vessel; and when all but baffled, the missionary, in his bluff, hearty style, cheered them on saying, “Row, boys, row; I’ll, may be, tell this yet on the Castle-gate of Aberdeen.” They suc­ceeded in reaching the vessel, got the books, and returned to the harbour in safety.

In the report of the Society for Promoting Chris­tian Knowledge, Mr. Matheson, in reference to his work among the Sardinian soldiers, says: “My house at Terrikoi was literally besieged, and day after day I had to return to Constantinople for fresh supplies. On the return of the steamer many were awaiting me on the quay, and sometimes all my books were gone before I could reach the Locanda. Many fresh invalids, scarcely able to walk, applied to me there; and instead of any opposition being thrown in my way by those in command, I was greatly aided by them; indeed they were the first to ask for Bibles. . . . . . In six days I had given away 500 Bibles—46 of these to officers. At Terrikoi I did not offer one copy; all were asked for; and pleas­ing indeed it was to bestow it on one and another and another, who remarked, was robbed of mine at Milan;’ or, ‘I have long desired one to take home, seeing that in my distant village it cannot be found.’

“The work being completed there, I hastened to the Crimea; and if the interest at Terrikoi was great, it was far transcended by that manifested on my arrival here. Soon the object of my mission ran like wildfire through the camp, and singly, in couples, in groups, yea, in masses, I was visited. In one day seven hundred thus came to me, and were supplied. Officers of all grades called for Bibles; and I have in my possession very many letters sent me by some of them in high standing for the Word. It was per­fectly agonizing to have to send away hundreds without it; and I have known soldiers walk six miles, four or five times in succession, for Bibles. Now and then small supplies arrived, and many, in the very act of embarking, came running breathlessly for that which to them had now become more precious than gold.’ The new edition was indeed the more highly valued; and many were the expres­sions of gratitude sent to friends in England for the noble gift. Had I had ten times the number they could have been distributed, as over and over again, when all were gone, many, I hear, offered all they had for a copy. And surely it is pleasing to think of 1,000 Testaments and 674 Bibles of this edition being amongst them, and now in Piedmont. Of the 674 Bibles distributed, 250 were given to officers who called for them.

“A nobler army than that of the Sardinians can­not be found. Many, very many of them, are men of great intellect; and it is no unusual thing to meet with men in the ranks who are classical scholars, and who would adorn any society in any country in the world. They have left this land for the land to which they so fondly cling—and whose emanci­pation from spiritual thraldom they long to see fully consummated—loved by all, and with an affection deep-seated and sincere. What most gladdens the heart is, that few return home without the book of God, the record of eternal life, the Gospel of Christ, In faith we look for mighty results. Piedmont is rising among the nations. She has taken a noble stand. Let but the Word of God be scattered there in rich abundance, in copies of the faithful version of Diodati, the only translation, save in a few in­stances, I have ever been asked for; nor let it ever be forgotten that they, and they only, are free whom the truth makes free.”

At length his work was finished in the Crimea. One result was that eighteen thousand copies of the Word of God were carried into priest-ridden Italy in the knapsacks of the soldiers. He was sent to read the Scriptures to his own countrymen, which he did, and at the same time sent a host of Scripture-readers into the dominions of the Pope.

After the proclamation of peace, the Russian sol­diers came freely into the camp of the Allies. Our missionary’s heart was stirred anew: a fresh field pre­sented itself; he was not slow to embrace the oppor­tunity; and he met with no small encouragement among the Russians. Sometimes he was awakened at the dawn of day by a Cossack on his shaggy steed, come to beg a copy of the New Testament. “My friends the Cossacks,” he says in a letter, “showed me much kindness, and I had to submit once and again to the embrace of Russian soldiers, smelling strongly of onions!” The beautiful mon­astery of St. George, situated on a high perpendic­ular rock on the sea-side between Balaklava and Kamiesch, he found occupied by seventeen monks, with their superior. Thither he repaired with a bag of Russian New Testaments, and, with the assistance of his friend Dr. C\_\_\_\_, presented each of the monks with a copy, which they received most gratefully, and with earnest request for the entire Bible. The missionary, as he passed from cell to cell, offered fervent prayer that God would bless each and all of those peace-loving dwellers in St. George with the saving knowledge of His glorious name.

It was a touching sight to behold, as our mission­ary did, the former dwellers returning to seek in vain their once happy homes. So changed was everything by the desolation of war, that often did the poor people, on looking around upon the scene of their former habitations, lift up their voices and weep; and my reader will not marvel when I tell him that the tender-hearted man of God wept with them.

The allied armies took their way back to the set­ting sun. Our missionary waited till almost the last man had embarked. “Going to the top of a hill, I looked abroad upon the desolate scene. Miles of huts were left standing without a solitary occu­pant. Not a human voice was to be heard. Here and there a Russian might be seen prowling through the deserted camp. On my right lay Inkermann and the beautiful valley of the Tchernaya, with the Rus­sian cavalry grazing on its field of battle. A little beyond, in sweet repose, was spread out the plain of Balaklava, scene of heroic daring unsurpassed in the world’s history. Sebastopol reposed in calm beauty, rendered more touching by its ruins. Fur­ther off the Black Sea looked in the rays of the set­ting sun like a mirror of glory. Wherever I turned my eye the hill-sides were covered with graves, and every ravine was like a charnel-house. With bursting heart and streaming eyes I thought of the many friends I had lost, and the myriads of broken hearts and bereaved homes far away. All alone I went to take my farewell look of Vicars’ and Hammond’s graves. Thought upon thought, quicker than the lightning, flashed through my mind as I said to my­self, What an army shall arise from these graves on that great day! Each spot will be instinct with life. What a different scene from that once witnessed here, when man girt on his armour to meet man, then fought and conquered, or laid them down to die! These men will rise from the dust of death to face not man but God. At the blast of the archangel’s trump the sleeping warriors shall awake. But what an awaking to those who were wrapped in a Christ-less shroud and laid in a hopeless grave! And how shall the dead in Christ arise with joyous songs of triumph as they shout, ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?’ They shall mount up ‘to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall they ever be with the Lord.’”

Returning to Constantinople in June, he plunged into the work of Bible distribution among the French and Turks.

“Constantinople, 3d July.

“Since my last I have been exceedingly busy. My labours have been entirely amongst the French and Turks. I gave 190 Bibles in one day to the French, besides a large number of tracts and books. I wish much silence kept regarding my work amongst the Turks, though in some cases it has oozed out. Scarcely a day passes without some Turkish officers calling for the Bible. With Mr. M’Kutcheon I have given 300 copies already. Since my arrival here 6,600 copies of the Scriptures, in all languages, have been distributed What a picture our poor countrymen give of Christianity here. You hardly see any one drunk but an Englishman or a Scotchman; and English oaths are the first thing many learn here. The cursed drink, how it ruins the soul, how it hinders the Lord’s work. The Church at home countenances it, and the ruin of thousands must lie at the door of professed Chris­tians who support it and lend it their influence.”

In the midst of his incessant and absorbing labours his own vineyard was not neglected; nor was the spiritual welfare of his friends and native place for­gotten, as the following letter will show:—

“Constantinople, 5th July, 1856.

“MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND: How quickly the time rolls past. Its tide is ceaseless. Its current is often unmarked. Its filling up as it drifts along presents a solemn history. Done with it all, how soon! Yes, done with it to enter eternity. The prospect is often solemn, and well-nigh makes, in view of it, the heart cease to beat and the soul to be still. I am a deathless being; I am marching to the world of spirits; I shall soon be unclothed. Of that world I know but little. The certainty of its being mine to spend my forever with Jesus is my only concern. Lord, more grace! more grace! more grace! that the thought of this may swallow up all others. Make me to feel the gilded things of earth nothing, and lead me to see a glory in the things of holiness surpassing in brightness, splendour, and endurance all else besides.

“Five months have passed since I took farewell of Huntly, the scene of many a sorrow, the field of many a conflict, the spot of glimpses and of sweet­est communion. When, oh when, shall the day of visitation appear? When shall the clouds break? When shall the pall of death that has hung so long above them be rolled away? Lord, soon! soon! soon! In memory I look at the blanks that have been made—sad blanks for us certainly. One saint after another has been called away. Our little com­pany has been lessened, and Death seems to say to the rest of us in no doubtful voice, ‘Be ready! be ready! be ready!’

“Since leaving I have been preserved in deaths oft. Twice have I visited the Crimea, and endured misery enough to crush the stoutest. That dark scene I have bidden likely a last farewell. I can­not tell you my feelings as I gazed from the ves­sel’s deck on the sun setting behind its hills, and casting its retiring rays on its rugged shore. I had escaped. His word had had free course. I was safe. I longed for someone to help me to praise, for I could not. Alas! I still carried a diseased soul, a corrupt heart; and hour by hour well may I say, ‘If I had only hope in this life, I were of all men the most miserable.’ I need no uncommon trials to keep me lowly. I need much grace to keep me at his feet. Daily do I get deeper and deeper discov­eries of my own heart, and the past seems to have only been a mere touching of the edge—a mere glance at the surface. I would often seek to hide in some desolate wilderness, and there seek to cry for the only thing I need—mercy! mercy! mercy! I hope it is better with you. How well to be at his feet. How well to be soured of earth. How well *to be shut up* to salvation through Jesus. Weak as this hope of mine often is, I cannot yield it. It has out­lived many a storm; it has upheld me in furious tempests; it has twinkled in solemn, trying hours. A religion of *reality* how rare. Far clearer than be­fore I see the current religion hollow and insecure. It is the fruit of no trial, the result of no divine fire, the product of no omnipotent power. The spark shall go out at last. Thy searching, O God, give me. Thy work let it be mine. I would seek to find my all in Thee. To find our all in God, how high the thought! how exalting the prospect! how humbling the immense distance from its posses­sion! One day it may come. The night shall cease. What is impossible with God? Alas! that this fickle heart of mine should ever wander away. Alas! that it should ever seek at the cisterns what it can only find in the fountain. Pray for me. You can have no conception of the state of this city. I never walk its crowded streets or look on the dark cypresses marking the place of sepulture, but I sigh and am sad. It lies heavy on me. One day it shall be the Lord’s. Little is doing, and things seen per­sonally are very different from what is seen through reports at a distance.

“To all the friends I send my Christian love and affection. Mrs. F seems often as if with me. Is poor M , or I , or B yet fleeing from the wrath to come? H\_\_\_\_, M\_\_\_\_ , C\_\_\_\_, all, I hope, remember me. How precious time is here. I often long for the rest of one hour, but I cannot find it. May the grace of the Lord Jesus rest on you. Uprightness of heart and integrity of soul I feel I need much. What a place *integrity* has in the Word! Divine leading and integrity go together. Surely, one day we shall sing in the heights of Zion. What hinders it? We deal with an unchanging God. I hope to hear soon from you. In much haste.

“Yours in Christian bonds,

“DUNCAN MATHESON.”

“Constantinople, 16th July, 1856.

“I have very lately bidden the Crimea and all its many scenes and trials farewell. Scarcely one soldier, English, French, or Sardinian, is left in it. A few connected with the commissariat may be; of the line not one. The winding up was a scene of constant bustle and much hilarity. All were glad to be off, and the cheers of the soldiers were much heartier on leaving than on entering.

“I was witness of many touching scenes, but the saddest of all was the exodus of the Tartars. Such a scene I never witnessed. The old men raised their hands and wept as they took their last look from the vessel’s deck, and the poor women buried their faces in their hands, scarce daring to cast a look upward. Many of our soldiers I saw deeply affected; and yet the great mass of the Tartars thanked God that they had the prospect of getting from under Russian oppression, and smoked, laughed and chatted as if nothing was wrong. They are a poor race, and strong in their affection for Mahomedanism, much stronger than many of the Turks are. I fear a strange tale may yet have to be told of them under Turkish rule, and breathing the air, the deadly tainted air, of the Dobrudscha.

“My object in going to the Crimea was accom­plished. I had been asked to come, carrying the Word of Life to the Sardinians. My arrival was known to a few, and soon it ran as wildfire through the camp. In one day seven hundred soldiers and officers visited me, asking for Bibles; and ere the last soldier had left the scene of their trials and tri­umphs I had given 2,347 Italian Bibles, 1,230 Italian Testaments, and upwards of 3,400 books and tracts. I did not offer one copy, I did not present one tract. All were asked; and 250 officers of all ranks either called or wrote for Bibles. It was all done in open day. It was known to thousands. There was no disguise, and no efforts to proselytize. They asked for God’s Word—who would withhold it? They had it; and pleasing is the fact, that 18,000 copies of it have entered Piedmont during the last twelve months. Noble men, they deserve well at Britain’s hand! They entered the struggle when all looked dark and gloomy. They have fought well, and sus­tained the honour of Italy; and their conduct has been such as to call forth universal admiration. I never met a republican in their army. All love their king and country, and long—how evidently long no other can tell—for the emancipation of fair yet down-trod­den Italy.

“A story once appeared in our leading journal, copied into all the other papers, of a complaint and prohibition being made against the giving of the Bible. We believe the then correspondent (not Mr. Russell, whose accounts I have ever been truthful and correct) was deceived. No prohibition was ever ut­tered; and if complaints were made, they were not heard of. The whole army were implicated. What could be done? Generously they were left to their own convictions, and General Della Marmora and our own generals deserve the thanks of all who love and value the Bible. To the friends in and around Huntly I send my hearty thanks for generously help­ing me in this work,

*“*I am no politician; but I cannot but feel that a solemn time is at hand regarding Italy. It is im­possible to keep such a noble people long in slavery, or under the iron heel of despotism; and I know there is not one man in the Sardinian army but has felt anxious for the time when he shall be called to the field to unfurl the banner, and strike the blow. They have learned much in this struggle. They have been inured to hardship, and trained to the vicissitudes of a camp; and in the next war of Ital­ian independence, we believe Piedmont shall be the rallying-point round which all will cluster. States­men stand aghast at the wrongs of Italy, and know not how to interfere. Its regeneration is a question surrounded by many difficulties; yet the solving will one day come. Naples has her crowded prisons; the fair plains of Lombardy are trodden by the Austrian vassal; Tuscany seeks to stifle the truth; Rome is kept by the soldiery of France. The ques­tion of Italy is closely connected with the East. If war should arise there, the nations of Europe will be more or less involved. Then comes the time for Russia to strike; for no one here believes her preten­sions are finally laid aside, and are led to feel that Turkey, drained and inert, can form no bulwark against either Russian diplomacy or arms, if left alone in the conflict.

“No one can credit the hatred existing between the Muscovite and Turk. Their enmity to us will soon subside; for in the Crimea I had much intercourse with the Russian soldiery, having had the privilege of giving them 480 copies of the Scrip­tures. These I found them very ready to receive, and many were the expressions of their gratitude. In few countries is the censorship of the press so strict as in Southern Russia, and there is well-nigh a total lack of literature of any kind. In the city of Simpheropol, there is not one bookseller’s shop, and not a page of literature is sold. For years not a copy of the Russian Scriptures has entered Odessa, and the Russian prisoners who had received them were deprived of them on landing. From all quar­ters they came visiting ruined Sebastopol, and it was often painful to see them looking in blank as­tonishment and sorrow over the place where their houses had been, and trying to fix the boundary of their lot. There seems a servility in the Russian soldier not to be found in the English or French. What may be done, now the Crimea is their own again, no one can tell. It is supposed tourists will have no liberty of inspecting, and the terms of the treaty may not be carried strictly out.

“As to Turkey, its real condition is not known. Its exchequer is exhausted—its resources unexplored—its army much wasted—its progress just where it was. They are generally far from grateful for the help we have rendered, and feel the same contempt for the Giaour as before. The prejudices of some of the higher classes are exploded, and some have got the length of thinking attempts at reformation are necessary. At home things regarding Turkey have been much exaggerated. The promulgation of the new law has excited high hopes, and been hailed with joy, as well it may. But who is to carry it out? Turkey makes laws and then is powerless in putting them into effect. With many it is a ques­tion if she really means it; but we believe the time is drawing on for great reforms, and sweeping changes cannot be made in any nation in a day. Good laws may be made, but a people needs to be created to value them, or carry them out. Christian­ity for Turkey is only what can save her, and give her a place among the nations of Europe far greater than she can ever have under the reign and rule of the Koran. Serious disturbances are apprehended, but they may come to nothing; and Britain will, we hope, demand the carrying out of those reforms to obtain which the flower of our army have found graves in a foreign soil, many of our homes have been left desolate, and our resources drained.

“I have had much intercourse with the French since March here and in the Crimea, having along with a friend given them 2,000 copies of the Scrip­tures, in very many cases asked. In some cases they came for miles for them. Glad are they to get home. The East has lost its attractions, and in their real character they look and long for something new. They have extended their influence immensely in the East, and one would often think it is dominant. No effort has been spared for its becoming so, and the study of the French language in the Turkish colleges has greatly helped it forward. A little time will be necessary ere the bearing of things can be clearly seen. Everything at present is at a stand­still, and of trade there is little. On Saturday the English sovereign was less in value than it has been for years.

“I had intended to give you an account of the missionary operations here, but I have not time at present. Doors are opening on every hand. A spirit of inquiry is abroad. The sleep of many years has been broken by the stirring events of the war. Everything is in motion. Now is the time for the Word to be scattered, and to let the nations that have so long been in darkness have the sound of the glorious Gospel, whose message is ‘Peace on earth, and good will to men.’

DUNCAN MATHESON.”

In Constantinople he devoted much of his time and attention to the French, by whom he was treated with the greatest consideration and kind­ness. When he went to Sweet Waters, where a French division was stationed, the officer in com­mand ordered out his men, and when they had fallen into rank, the missionary was permitted to go the round and present each man with a New Testament, tract, or book.

His heart was set on doing something for the Turks. In the ancient temple of Mahomedanism chinks were opening through which silvery rays of Gospel truth were quietly stealing. Matheson, hav­ing picked up a little Turkish, used to frequent the burial-places, and wait there for hours, praying that God would open some Mahomedan mourner’s heart to hear the truth concerning one Jesus. Never did the prayer remain unanswered. Some sorrowing one, standing or sitting by the grave of their dearly-beloved, would listen to the stranger telling in his few blundering words about Him who is the resur­rection and the life.

This indiscriminate distribution of the holy Scrip­tures was not unattended by the evils of waste and abuse. Yet there were not wanting instances of good springing out of this very evil. A Turkish lady one day received from her grocer a parcel wrapped in a leaf of the Bible. The leaf was read, an interest in the strange book was awakened, and the lady sent a member of her household to inquire if the merchant could send her another leaf of the same kind. All that remained of the precious Vol­ume was carried home, and who can tell but the interest awakened may have deepened, under the Spirit’s teaching, into faith and salvation?

An intense longing to put a copy of God’s Word into the hands of a pasha or some other Turk of influence was gratified in a curious way. One day, when distributing the Scriptures at Sweet Waters, he was attacked by an infuriated mob of Greeks, whose religious antipathies had been thoroughly aroused. To escape their wrath he took refuge in a ship. Next day a gentleman, brother of a cer­tain pasha, called at his lodgings to convey the re­grets of the great man at the ill-treatment the mis­sionary had received from the Greeks, at the same time requesting for the pasha’s use a copy of the Word of God. My readers will not forget that at this time an Englishman was held in peculiar honour by the Turks, hence the pasha’s apology. The mis­sionary, of course, did not fail to send the book of God to the pasha, nor did he forget to praise God for this answer to his prayer. On the Greeks he sought revenge by endeavours to disseminate among them the glad tidings of great joy that are for all people; but his success was small. One family of Greeks appeared to derive benefit from his labours; but for the most part the way was not prepared for the entrance of the Word of God among them.

As winter drew near he prosecuted his enterprise with redoubled energy. Daily did he take his stand at the Golden Horn, and distribute his books to the thousands crossing to the other side on their way to all parts of Asia. “The work gets harder,” he writes. “The Turks and Greeks get more prejudiced. Yet the Lord reigneth, and all his purposes shall be ac­complished. . . . How soon all wanderings here shall close. Life’s sand is running fast. We hear the summons daily. Oh to hear it indeed, and pre­pare to meet God! I look daily forward to this, to be with Him and like Him.”

“Constantinople, Nov. 5th.

“Since I last wrote you I have been very ill and confined, but I am better, and at work again. I was so weak that one day when I tried to rise I fell, and have got one eye bruised. I suppose I must have fainted.”

“Constantinople, Nov. 18th.

“I feel weak indeed, and have had medical advice. There is no danger, but I must cease work, and when called to do so I am like a chained lion. The total lack of any comfort has been much against me. Many a day almost without food, and have had to be contented with food of any kind. . . . Since March I have been enabled to distribute nearly 10,000 copies of the Scriptures—1,000 of them to Turks—and 60,000 tracts and books in all languages. The value of all has been about £1,000, and truly I may say the Lord has provided. . . . I had a letter from Piedmont lately. The work is going on nobly there. Perhaps I may get ‘The Knowledge of Sin,’ by William Burns, translated into Armenian. Dr. Dwight is examining it at present. Truly he is a godly man.”

Entirely prostrated, he lay for some time at the point of death. During this period he was tenderly watched by his friend Mr. M‘Kutcheon, of the Jew­ish Mission, and to him, under God, he believed he owed his life. As soon as he was able to rise, he settled his affairs and left Constantinople for Egypt.

From Egypt he sailed for Italy, where he visited his friends:

“L\_\_\_\_, Italy, 1857.

“MY DEAR SIR: In my last I gave you some ac­count of matters in the East, which I hope you duly received. Since leaving Constantinople I have vis­ited Egypt, ascended its pyramids, drunk of its river, and gazed with deepest horror on the spiritual state of its inhabitants. I have heard the groans of the oppressed Sicilians, and seen the gloomy prisons of Naples, its blinded devotion and its down-trodden condition. I have walked the streets of Rome, ad­mired its palaces, entered its catacombs, once the refuge of oppressed Christianity, and talked amidst its ruins to its enslaved people, and every day has convinced me we know little of Popery at home, and deal far too lightly with such a soul-destroying sys­tem. As it is in Italy no one can portray, no mind can fully conceive, and no language can express. Every eye is turned towards it, and every Christian heart utters the cry, ‘How long, O Lord?’ In Sicily the people sigh for freedom, but still cling to the system that has chained them. It is a fair and lovely land, but it is blighted. The number of priests in it is incredible, and the education of the young is wholly in their power. I saw here a brazen head of John the Baptist in a charger carried from door to door, every one placing money in the charger; and in many streets you meet a man demanding money, having on a box carried for the purpose the words, ‘For the souls in purgatory.’

“At Naples it is worse. On every church you read, ‘Indulgences granted;’ and you see at every step men and women prostrated before the picture of the Virgin; and at one column raised in her honour it is written, ‘An indulgence of fifty days granted to all praying here.’ I saw on the Grand Square more than one thousand people prostrate before the Host, and asked one what it was. To which he replied, ‘It is Jesus Christ.’ Terrible is the condition of Naples. Terror is marked on every face; and I could hardly get one to speak to me, because every third person in the streets is a spy. Many shops are shut, and you feel the very atmosphere oppressive; whilst cannon is to be seen pointing down its prin­cipal thoroughfares. Naples is a land where few Bibles have yet entered, and the people are deeply sunk in ignorance, and bound to Romanism more than any other people in Italy. Political and spir­itual freedom are the results of Protestantism, and go linked together. Naples knows neither. . . . Bibles! there are no Bibles in Rome. I entered every bookseller’s shop in it, and could only find two—one in Latin, the other in Italian. Preach­ing! there is none in Rome. The glory of the cross is darkened, and the way of salvation through it is never proclaimed. You have relics—Madonnas, holy altars, indulgences, by thousands, and masses for living and dead; but no pointing to the Lamb, no inviting of weary sinners; no justification by faith. Christian literature! truly you may say there is none. You have heaps of lying legends of lives of saints, of flimsy novels; but the Index Expurgatorius excludes all works worth the reading; and sprinkling with holy water is considered more safe than unloosing the mind and giving scope to the intellect. Freedom! ah, it is not in Rome. Ask the inquisitors, and they will tell the price of seek­ing it, and as you ask, listen to the music coming from the Pope’s dragoons. Commerce, trade, agriculture—alas! a withering blight is on the land, and the fairest portion of God’s earth is left unfilled. So true is it, that wherever Popery has most potently maintained herself, there life has become extinct, and prosperity and morality have disappeared, as if under the influence of some mysterious malediction. The worship of Italy is the worship of Mary—pictures of Mary—statues of Mary—churches to Mary —columns to Mary—songs to Mary—prayers to Mary, in every spot. Idolatry where is it, if you see it not in Rome? Go to the church of Ara Coeli, and there you will see a small image of Jesus, with many kissing its feet, and crossing themselves before it. Wait for a little. The priests take it up, enter a coach, and drive—that the sight of it may cure some dying person! Yes. Startle not. The priests told us it had performed many miracles; and the people prostrating themselves before it is a proof that they believe it. Common is it to see written over many altars—‘Specially privileged;’; ‘For the dead;’ ‘Every mass said at this altar frees a soul from purgatory.’ And in large gilded letters you often read—‘Plenary indulgences granted by special favour of the Pope.’ Where is the Luther to cry with trumpet-tongue, and proclaim the vicious na­ture of such Pagan Christianity to its blinded devotees, pointing them only to Him who is the Way, the Truth, the Life? Sadly deserted are the churches of Rome, and most of the educated have become in­fidels. They asked for bread, but got a stone. The craving for something better could not be met; for the Gospel was buried, and Christ was not named. It is the natural result of such training, and sad is the account to be rendered by the authors of it. Pleasing was it to go from all this to the gloomy catacombs, and see engraved tombs of the early Christians—the calm, sublime hopes which they en­joyed! Simple are the inscriptions, yet what so cheering?—‘In Peace;’ ‘In Christ.’ Rome has nothing here to favour one of her doctrines. They knew them not.

“Need I tell you, Italy knows no Sabbaths. Feast-days have more authority; and the people look astonished when you tell them God has com­manded all His day to be kept holy. It is their day of greatest enjoyment. Every theatre is opened in Rome; and if anyone had witnessed the Sabbaths of the Carnivals now ended, they would go home resolved to keep it inviolate, and be led to bless God they lived in a land where in great measure the keeping of the Sabbath is known. In this matter—and it is well it should be known—the Protes­tants on the Continent—ministers and people, are very lax. They do not look on it with the same sacredness that we do. The evil effects of such views daily appear, and almost universally our own countrymen leave keeping of Sabbaths at home. One fact is worth mentioning: I have never yet seen one in Italy drunk, and during the days of the Car­nival thousands met every day.

“And now you will be ready to ask, What is do­ing in Italy for the spread of the truth, and how does the work succeed? The question, for many reasons, is difficult to answer. I can say nothing of Rome, but that I believe many of the people would hail the Bible, if it were put within their reach. Throughout all Italy there is a preparation in the people’s minds for this, and in many instances far, far more. They desire to see the Book which is kept from them. Tens of thousands of them have their eyes open to the evil of Papacy. This is well, but it goes no far­ther. In the case of thousands—yea, millions, at­tachment to the Romish religion, if not to Pope and priests, is as strong as ever. Even in Piedmont this is the case; and in the case of others, here and there saving conversion has followed the reading of the Word through the divine blessing. This is espe­cially true of Tuscany, where every effort is made to keep it from them, and where the surveillance is stricter—much stricter than ever it was before. Tus­cany is the tool of Austria, and yet the work goes on the more it is tried to crush it, and souls are born to God. Here and there small companies meet for worship, and in wondrous ways the truth finds en­trance. Many are Protestants in name, though not apparently savingly converted; but there are un­doubted trophies of grace, and much, very much, to cheer and encourage to prayer. I have no hesita­tion in saying, if liberty were granted, thousands, many thousands, would hail the Gospel, and the de­mand for the Word would be so great it could hardly be supplied. In Piedmont—the only free country in Italy, and on which the hearts and affections of so many are set—the work goes on in some places rap­idly. We must now separate the political from the spiritual. One party—the greatest—seek political freedom, and others seek to know the truth. A re­markable advance has been made. The Word is finding entrance by thousands, and is read. Men here and there, knowing the truth themselves, are boldly declaring it, and the Lord is giving testimony to the Word of his grace. One case has reached us of the Bible given in the Crimea having been blessed. A soldier brought one home, and gave it to a farmer near A\_\_\_\_. He began to read it with his wife and family, and all became deeply interested. His neighbours also came to hear it read, and joined with the farmer and his family in sending for a Waldensian Evangelist; and thus a small church is formed in the midst of a dark corner of Piedmont, which may yet extend wider and wider, till many be embraced in its fold. I do not know what may be the future of Italy. I cannot say how soon revolution may shake it from one end to another. I believe it is not far distant. Endurance has its limits, and men may be made slaves only for a time. The light is beginning again to rise on it. Its progress we should watch with fear and trembling, being neither too sanguine nor depressed. We cannot estimate the value of one soul. God has lighted a light—shaded for a time it may be—but out it cannot be put, nei­ther by popes nor princes—neither by the fires of martyrdom nor the bolts of a prison. Our duty is clear, our path open, our command plain. Prayer, much prayer, must be made, and specially for God to raise up men fitted to carry on his work, and in their devoted, earnest, holy lives to exemplify the doctrines they teach. We know his truth shall tri­umph, and triumph gloriously, and that even now the first streaks of light on the horizon are but the prelude of the full flood of light which shall yet arise on this sin-blighted world.

“Ever your affectionate friend,

“DUNCAN MATHESON.

“Mr. P. Drummond.”

“Turin, March 13th.

“I have not had a minute to write you till now, for I have been intensely occupied. I arrived at Genoa on the 6th, and remained three days. I could hardly walk a step without soldiers running and saluting me, etc. I had much joy in the presence of some of them, and on meeting some English friends. On Sabbath I addressed a meeting in the Free Church, and felt greatly assisted. On Monday I came here, and immediately started for the Waldensian valleys. Yes, I have seen them, and truly every spot is full of interest. At La Tor I visited the college, church, and schools. What a simple, intelligent people! How can I tell you of the scenes here! It is like the march of a conqueror. I can­not move a step without being accosted. Sixty sol­diers have been round me in a circle at once. Hun­dreds have shaken hands with me. Poor fellows! they are deeply, deeply grateful. I feel a deep, very deep, interest in them. Today I have been in the Parliament House with Mr. Milan, the Vaudois dep­uty, and was much and deeply interested. Truly freedom is here. Do forgive my brevity. Every moment is occupied. I was in Florence since writ­ing you, and escaped, though carrying eight copies of the Word into it. This is a wonderful field, and I expect much to be done here. The Lord has helped me to set many things in motion since my arrival. To Him be the praise.”

In March, 1857, he brought his stay in Italy to a close. This visit was in reality the accomplishment of a great Christian work. He had been enabled to make his mark on a vast number of the Italian officers and soldiers. “The Sardinians’ Friend” is not yet forgotten; and, while his memory is treasured in many a brave heart, there can hardly be a doubt that he was the divinely-chosen instrument of enshrining the Word of God in the affections of thousands who, but for his gigantic exertions, would have returned to their native land to live and die in worse than Egyptian darkness. That the fruit of this wide and prayerful sowing of the seed, at the first blush of Italy’s spring, will be glory to God in the salvation of many souls we cannot but believe.

Passing rapidly through France, he reached home ere yet the sun of the northern summer had waxed hot. To rest, to tell his story, and prepare for new labours, needed a breathing-time.