

## His Couch.

(By Kate A. White).

Just a pathetic little bundle of skin and bone, rags and dirt; a mop of tousled fair curls caked with black slum mud, and a tiny sharp wizened face! Knocked down by a motor car outside the Mission Church on Good Friday night, he had been taken into the hospital opposite.

The doctor looked him over with shrewd kindly eyes, then shook his head. "If this happened to be a healthy child," he said, "there would be nothing to fear, for his injuries are surprisingly small; but in this little chap's case it is different. He is in such a state of weakness and neglect that he may not get over the shock."

Day after day the child lay there, in his hours of consciousness winning the hearts of all by his brightness and quaint flashes of Cockney wit. But there were times of delirium, when those who heard him shuddered, for from the childish lips poured forth torrents of oaths and blasphemy, all jumbled up with entreaties "not to be beaten," scraps of hymns and prayers, and reminiscences of the Mission pictures, evidently seen and much appreciated on Good Friday evening. No one claimed him, and apparently no one wanted him.

When questioned, he clung to the nurse in an agony of fear. "O don't let 'em send me back. Bill kicked me out, and said 'e'd 'arf kill me if I showed my face there again." She gently reassured him, and drew from him further information. "No, I never 'ad no farver and muvver as I can remember. Bill and Sue took care of me. Nime! What's that? I never 'ad none. O-h, they called me Shrimp 'cos I allus never growed."

At first it seemed as though the bright, brave little spirit would win through, but after a while it became evident that he was not gaining ground. "No vitality, and total lack of recuperative power," the doctor said. Then the day came when a screen was placed round the bed, and the voices of those who had grown to love the little lad were hushed as they passed the spot.

At the bedside stood two of the child's special chums, the nurse, and the chaplain. The chaplain was a great broad-shouldered man with "noticeable grey eyes" and a firm, sensitive mouth. Born and brought up in a refined home, with every advantage which love, good taste, and worldly means were capable of giving, he had vowed that his whole life should be spent in ministering to his less favored brethren. He was deeply loved by the people amongst whom

he worked, and his visits were eagerly looked forward to by the patients in the hospital. Still, though ever ready with cheery good humor and loving sympathy, to be a friend to any who needed his help, he was coming only slowly to a realisation of the riches of the Christian faith, and was over-diffident in offering spiritual help.

As he stood now, looking down with a troubled face at the evidently dying child, the nurse handed him a small paper-covered volume, and then knelt down very quietly by the little white bed. The book was written by a missionary bishop, and described how in his work amongst the natives he had himself come to an ever-deepening and widening understanding of Christ's teaching. The natives were taught, simply and as a matter of course (after careful preparation) to make their Communions. Disappointments there were—many and grievous. But to counteract this there were the faithful few: a band of communicants, who by their altered lives bore eloquent testimony to the Christ power working within them.

Underlined was a passage telling how, confronted by the terrible and loathsome disease and sickness, so rife among the natives, the Bishop had been thrown back upon Christ's promise, "Greater works than these shall ye do." He felt that what our Lord said He must surely have meant, and found that with the need came the power. By means of "anointing with oil in the Name of the Lord," and the laying-on of hands, many and wonderful miracles of healing were performed.

The chaplain read and re-read the passage, then put down the book. His face was aglow with the light of a great revelation which had come to him with almost blinding intensity. He knelt down for a moment. Then going up to the child, he put both hands firmly and tenderly on the fair curls, holding them there with gentle pressure. "Child," he whispered, "I claim my privilege as a Christian, I exercise my office as a priest, and lift you up into the healing presence of God. May Our Lord bless you, and give you health of body, soul, and spirit."

As he spoke the child stirred slightly, the breathing became more even; a faint tinge of color crept into the ashen cheeks, the lines of suffering disappeared from the little face; the child slept. Before the very eyes of the awed and amazed watchers a miracle had been performed; and they knelt in adoration before the invisible Presence.

When, after many hours of health-giving slumber, the child awoke, he had a wonderful tale to tell of One

who had been with him through the night. "I know'd 'Im, Miss," he said eagerly to his chum the nurse, "I know'd 'Im the minute I set eyes on 'Im, I know'd it was 'Im as blessed the little 'uns. 'E looked so sweet and loving, and all sort of shiny, and I see the marks on 'Is 'ands, and they was all shiny, too. And Oh! it was a just fine to feel 'Is arms round me; and when 'E left, 'E put 'Is 'and on my 'ead, and told me I'd got to be good and brave and one of 'Is soldiers 'cos that's why 'E'd made me well. And aint I just going to," added the boy with an exultant smile. "A pretty fancy" said the doctor when he heard the story, "a very pretty fancy, and a happy one too, for this wonderful thought in the mind of the child has so acted on his body that he seems on the fair way to recovery. In fact I should not be at all surprised if he's better than he has ever been." But the gentle sweet-faced nurse, who knew and understood, went about her work that day with feet which seemed as though they trod on air, and a look of such beamingly happy radiance that furrows were smoothed from pain-worn faces and tired eyes regained their lustre as they followed her down the ward. "Bless the bairn," said one old soul who was being carefully tended by her, "the smile of ye and the look of ye are like Heaven begun."

That night she poured out her soul in passionate thanksgiving to the great Healer; not only for this fresh manifestation of His power, but also for the fact that she had the means to provide for this poor little waif, and could place him in the healthy, happy atmosphere necessary for the perfect development of body, soul and spirit, so that the work of healing so wonderfully begun that day might be carried on.

(From "The Church Teacher," kindly sent to us by our Gisborne correspondent).

## Henry Williams Centenary.

The following is a verbatim report of the speech of the Rev. E. M. Eruimi referred to in our Synod report:—

Mr President, my Fellow Clergy and Laymen:

I beg to move that on this the Centenary year of the arrival of the late Archdeacon Henry Williams in New Zealand, this Synod desires to express its heartfelt gratitude to God for the many blessings both temporal and spiritual granted to the Maori people as a result of the life work of himself and his wife and family.