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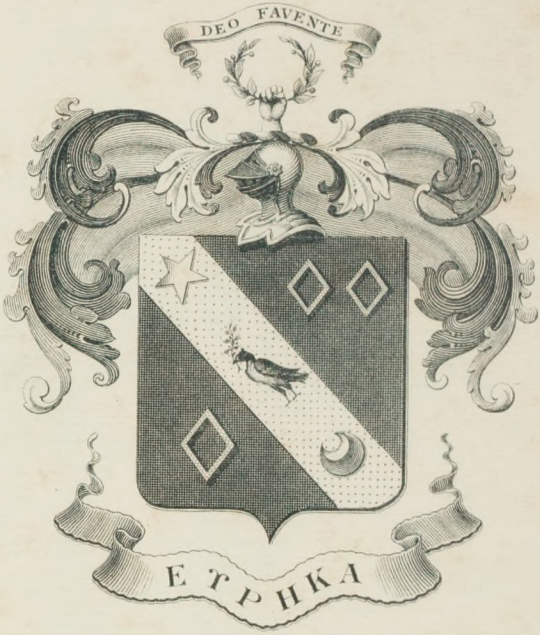

David Scott Mitchell.

"IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE."

"I cannot remember the birthdays of all my children," said Louise Taplin, matron of the Ashfield Infants' Home, "so I celebrate them all on my own natal day." And this pretty custom, reminiscent of Chrysanthemum Land, so commended itself to all who were brought into contact with this noble woman, or in touch with the work she had in hand, that when "Tappy," as her babies loved to call her, kissed them a last good-night, and "wandered away to an unknown land," it was decided that October 1 should always be the children's and "Tappy's" birthday.

It comes again on Sunday, this feast of affectionate remembrance, and just as Louise Taplin celebrated the day, so do those who love her memory. Only, before the merriment begins, a short visit is always paid to the quiet grave in St. John's Churchyard, Ashfield, where sleeps so peacefully all that is mortal of the beloved matron-mother. She who now stands in Louise Taplin's place, takes a few of the older babies, little red-frocked, white-pianfored, miniature men and women, gathers them round that quiet spot, and tells them of the one whose real birthday it is, but who cannot be with them today. Little hands scatter the purest of flowers over the mound, gathered from the garden that was once "Tappy's" delight, innocent lips murmur, "Our Father," and then the tiny band returns to the home, to make merry over their birthday and hers. Not a single inmate is forgotten. Everyone under that roof-tree is the recipient of some gift, not very costly, perhaps, but weighty with much love. Then comes the "Taplin Tea Party," with cakes, and sweets for all, and romping and merry-making ends the happy day.

Some of the guests at that birthday feast are the waifs and foundlings of our big city—motherless and fatherless. But whatever their parentage, they are children needing love and care and protection. All this, and more, is given them in the home that, for 15 years, was Louise Taplin's joy and pride. A tiny scrap of humanity will be brought to that spot, so wretched, so puny, so miserable, that it scarcely seems worth while trying to do anything for it. And, lo! in a few weeks you would not know it. It is round, rosy, fat, laughing, dimpled, quite the show baby of the home. Such a transformation, too, takes place in the mothers who enter with their babies. Weak, delicate, and often incompetent, a short stay in the home in the restful, healthful, cheerful surroundings brings out all that is best in them. Every grown-up person is a mother there, and the splendid system that prevails cannot fail to benefit the women who come under its influence. It is in the children, though, that one's interest centres. Sleeping in the big Taplin ward, built "in affectionate remembrance," sitting under the shade of the trees planted by the matron-mother, playing about the verandahs or on the cool green grass, eating their meals so prettily at their little low tables, or learning their lessons in the kindergarten, one cannot help loving the innocent mites who smile and laugh and hold out their tiny hands to the strangers. "Angels of God in disguise" Dickens called the children, and "Tappy" knew, and those who have come after her know, that to many a heart-broken, sorrow-stricken man and woman they have proved such.

The years are piling high over the grave where Louise Taplin sleeps. The children whom she tended have reached manhood and womanhood. Many are the birthdays which have been celebrated since she folded her kindly, loving hands, so long busied with what Ruskin has called "woman's highest work—for the multitude who have none to love them, for all who are desolate and oppressed." But no finer tribute could be paid to one of Australia's noblest women than by keeping her memory green in this October feast of affectionate remembrance.

E. T.

Sydney Morning Herald
Sept. 27. 1911.

LOUISE

TAPLIN.

LOUISE TAPLIN.

Written as a tribute of undying love and admiration for my friend, and in aid of the Infants' Home, Ashfield, Sydney.

BY

HETTIE RUNDLE.

"The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman."

Honiton:
JOHN M. TUCKER,
HIGH STREET.
1902.

LOUISE TAPLIN.

Part 1.

IN EUROPE.

On May 21st, 1901, Louise Taplin died at Ashfield, Sydney.

Her name is unknown to the world, but if a true and vivid history of her influence and her work could be written, the "Record of her Noble Life" would immediately place her among the ranks of those women whose memory and example shall be an inspiration to all who come after them.

But such a biography can never be written,

Louise Taplin was early separated by circumstances from her own people who would otherwise have been able to supply the necessary links in the chain of the story of her life, and her whole existence being one of earnest and incessant action—*doing not thinking*—she has left no diaries, no records of any sort behind her to help her bewildered biographer.

The utmost that can be attempted, is to record such scenes and incidents in her varied life, as it may be possible to collect, before they have faded from the memory of her many friends.

Louise Taplin was born in or near London in the year 1855. Her father was the idol of her early childhood and he must have been a remarkable man. He was a friend of Charles Dickens, and the original of the well known character of "Mark Tapley" in Martin Chuzzlewit, and though he died when Louise was quite a little girl, we may surely recognize that his daughter's cheery and invincible optimism was a precious inheritance from this much loved father.

When Louise was six or seven years old, she spent some time in the Island of Jersey, and Victor Hugo, who was at that time exiled there, used often to beg her from her mother and take her for walks with him over the cliffs. She laughingly said this of episode, "You see my beginnings were fine, whatever the end may be."

The eventful year 1870-71 found Louise living with an aunt in Paris, and when the city was besieged by the Germans, she was shut up in it. Her aunt died during the siege, of privations and hardships, and Louise only fifteen years of age, was left quite alone in the besieged capital. She then, for protection, went to live in a Roman Catholic sisterhood, and naturally at such a young and impressionable age she was much influenced by the religious views of those with whom she came into intimate contact. She has often told me the strange incident which prevented her from joining the Romish Church at that time. It occurred during the Commune, after she had spoken to the Mother Superior of her leanings towards her faith and whilst she was, in a measure, on probation, before being admitted a member of her church.

One dark evening, as Louise was hurrying back to the convent from some mission of mercy amongst the sick poor, she heard sounds of a desperate struggle, and a man's voice imploring: "Hülf, Hülf!" He was an unhappy German surrounded by half a dozen desperate Communists who were dragging him towards the Seine to drown him. With the dauntless courage which never failed Louise, she went straight up to the angry group and said in the French which she spoke so perfectly

"How *dare* you murder my fellow countryman!"

"Your fellow countryman! Why you are English and this fellow is a vile German for whom death is too good!"

"I am an Englishwoman and he is an Englishman" protested Louise: "let him alone this instant, or it will be the worse for you!"

She had a way with her which caused her to be obeyed where others would have been defied, and the Communists released their hold on their victim.

"Do you swear that he is an Englishman?" they asked.

"Yes, I swear it!" said Louise—and at those words the Communists turned away and hurriedly decamped.

The rescued German who could neither speak nor understand any French, now began confusedly and profusely to thank his deliverer. At that moment the veiled figure of one of the sisters touched Louise on the shoulder.

"What does this mean?" she asked: "I have been listening to what took place. The man you saved is a German, and you said he was English—did not you know?'

"Yes I knew!" said Louise looking at the sister with her large frank honest eyes.

"Then why did you say he was an Englishman?"

"To save his life."

"But you swore a false oath"

"Yes, and I will do so again to-morrow to save an innocent man's life!"

However all the Sisters regarded Louise's action as a great crime for which she must do severe penance, and this was so opposed to her sense of right, that she vowed she would not join a church which held such views. She was never again, though living so much abroad, tempted to become a Roman Catholic, but she was fond of attending Roman Catholic churches if the music or the preaching were notable. To the end of her life she remained a member of the church of England, but her views were so broad and her charity and tolerance so unbounded, that nothing narrower than the New Testament itself limited her creed.

She could tell many stirring stories of the siege of Paris, but the suffering of it all, made her shrink in after years from dwelling upon its incidents. As an instance of how hard pushed she used to be by hunger she said, she well remembered, wandering through the flat of her aunt, who lay dying, and finding in one of the drawers some old white kid gloves—these were indeed valuable, for stewed in the grease from a tallow candle, they made a most delicious dish, in taste and appearance something like a thick insipid blancmange, with which she nourished (?) the poor invalid and herself.

As her father had been long since dead, the atmosphere

of her own home was uncongenial to her, and Louise had therefore to earn her own living away from it. A few years after the siege of Paris she went into one of the largest Paris Hospitals and there received the training of a sick nurse. She was truly by *nature* a nurse, and needed no training, but no doubt her experiences in the Paris Hospital gave her some useful technical skill and knowledge, and helped to strengthen, even *her* iron nerves. One day a young English boy who had just left Rugby and was living for a few months abroad to study French, was brought into the Hospital suffering from enteric fever. He was very ill and under the treatment then practised by the French doctors, which I believe was one of semi starvation, the poor lad grew worse and worse till one night the physician said his case was a hopeless one, he could not possibly live till morning.

"Do you quite give him up?" asked Louise who was nursing the boy.

"Yes! he cannot live!"

"Then may I do what I like with him?" queried Louise. The physician assented, he knew the lad could not live through the night, and if the English nurse wanted to try some English experiment on her fellow countryman, it could do no harm, so he went away, and Louise sent out instantly for a bottle of the best brandy and the best port wine, and all through that long night she sat by the patient's

side and kept him alive by constant minute doses of stimulants and beef tea—the crisis passed—the boy was alive next morning, and after a long convalescence, was nursed by Louise back again to complete health and strength. In grateful love to his nurse, the young fellow earnestly desired to devote his whole life to her, but Louise had no such regard for him and purposely vanished from his sight.

Afterwards Louise lived in Dresden for several years, first as governess, but very soon as dearest friend and counsellor with an English family to whom all her life she remained most tenderly attached. It was there, in the winter of 1878-1879 that the writer of these memories first met Louise. She exercised an almost magnetic influence on me from the first, but it is difficult to explain *why*. She was of medium height, with a good figure (which was more French than English in its style) her complexion was bright and clear, and her face was instinct with kindness, joyousness, intelligence and power, but her only real beauty was her hair, which reached in thick brown waves almost to her feet, and was magnificent when thus falling around her, but when done up, its masses, I always thought, made her head look too big for her body. The most striking impression she made on me then and always, was one of strength and power—physically, mentally and morally—in the very tone of her voice there was a decision which brought conviction with it, every action was prompt, unhesitating, such express

ions as : "I hope to do such and such a thing," "I think so and so," she never used, with her it was always : "I will do," "I know so and so," and her certainty was warranted, she *did* know, and she *did* do, all that she ever set herself to carry through, except one important matter in which she was thwarted by Government, of which more later on. This confidence in herself, inspired everyone with whom she came in contact with equal confidence in her, so that her friends got into the way of shaking off all their cares and responsibilities onto her willing shoulders, where nothing seemed a burden and which nothing seemed to weigh down. For Louise had "la joie de vivre" more strongly than anyone I have ever known, the optimism she inherited from her father, bathed this gray old world in brightest sunshine for her and she enjoyed its innocent pleasures to the full. Especially was this so during the years she spent in Dresden, where her friends the M——s took a prominent part in the gay social life of the city and where Louise was the main spring of so much of the gaiety that went on. Theatres were always to the end of her life, one of her favourite relaxations (also private theatricals, for she acted well) and music of all kinds from operas to chamber music she thoroughly appreciated, though in Dresden perhaps she enjoyed the dancing most of all, but in her pleasures, as in everything else, others came first and self last of all. Being a beautiful dancer she was always a most favourite

partner, but, if sufficiently at home to do so, she would hide herself in some unoccupied room during the whole of a ball, if she found that there were not enough partners to "go round" and that other girls were sitting out whilst she danced. And to any call of duty—whenever it came—she was ready to respond without one backward glance at the pleasures she was leaving behind, and which, let it be ever remembered, she enjoyed to the very utmost, far more, not less, than most people who cling to them to the last. One season's gaiety in Dresden was cut short by the youngest son of the M——s, developing diptheria in an acute form. Louise instantly sent the rest of the family out of the house, took up her position as head nurse, and pulled the boy through almost single handed.

Louise's most notable characteristic after her strength, some might say, before it, was her absolutely marvellous power of sympathy. She often made me think of Lowell's lines :

> "Nor slighted any want or pain as small
> But whose great heart took in and felt for all."

It must have been this gift which won her such innumerable and steadfast friends wherever she went; whatever one's trouble, or one's joy, or one's anxieties, or, even one's weaknesses, Louise felt not only for, but *with* her friends in them all, nothing was small or despicable, except sin, in her eyes, and even for sin she could very often find,

either a remedy or an excuse —only for cruelty, in any shape or form, she had no pity.

So marked and wonderful was this gift of sympathy, and so strong had become my habit of relying on it, that even now, when she has gone where, so far as human knowledge extends, her tenderest love, *can* reach us no longer, I seem to feel it encircling me still, and still, in my thoughts and prayers, I tell Louise the incidents of my life.

What I say of my own feelings in this matter, I know from the testimony of others, is true of them also.

For children she had something more than is implied by the word sympathy, she had an absolute fellow feeling, she became as one of them, they were to her, so much more interesting even than grown ups, in infancy because of their helpless dependance on her, in childhood because of the latent possibilities yet undeveloped in their young lives! She believed that a child would become what his parents or guardian trained him to be, and, in that light, could any care or self sacrifice or trouble on the part of his elders, be worth reckoning. But "trouble" (not sorrow alas!) was a word she expunged from her dictionary, nothing was a trouble to her which helped others.

In the same way, though in their proper and lower place she had great love for all animals. A trifling incident which occurred during her last visit to me shortly before her death

will illustrate this. My children had a favourite cat who was out of health and whom she had been doctoring for us: one day just as she and I and the children were starting out on some expedition, she discovered the poor cat lying among the flower beds in a state of collapse. Not willing to spoil the children's pleasure for the afternoon, she manoeuvred us all into the kitchen garden, out of the way, then running upstairs she fetched down the sal volatile, and in a thimble which she had in her pocket, administered a dose of it to the poor cat, then she rejoined us, and we went for our drive; on our return, when she saw the resuscitated cat walking slowly down the path to meet us, she told us of the crisis which she had pulled him through.

In things big or little, all through Louise's life, she was the same—prompt in action—but most thoughtful in her consideration for others.

At Dresden, Louise came into intimate contact with the young English students who were studying mining at the neighbouring town of Freiberg, her presence was as a magnet drawing them from Freiberg to Dresden, but when she saw that this must necessarily mean neglect of work she made a hard and fast rule as to how many visits a week they were to pay her, I think it was only one!

On one occasion she and I spent a delightful day at Freiberg with my brother and another student. Our hosts met us at the station with a sleigh (it was mid winter) and

drove us round the town to see its sights, of which the only one I can now recollect was a horrible blood stained hall where the students fought their duels. Then it was proposed that we should go down one of the mines, and we, nothing loth, got ourselves up in the clothes of two mining lads, with lanterns stuck in our hats and waited till the "Fahrkunst" was free from miners and ready for us to go down by it. I lost my head, and very nearly my life too, with the difficulties of this descent, which, on the Fahrkunst was really much too dangerous and difficult a business for an ordinary woman, but Louise did not know what nervousness meant, and the difficulties were child's play to her, though a year or two later the Fahrkunst was abolished, as too dangerous even for men to use.

It was whilst Louise was with Mrs. M———, that she was taught massaging in the following rather quaint manner.

The family went to Amsterdam that Mr. M——, who was suffering severely from rheumatism might be treated by the first and most celebrated massaging doctor in the world Dr. Metzger, who at that time and for many years after was attending the late Empress of Austria. Louise accompanied Mr. M—— on his first visit to the doctor; the waiting room was full of patients, and at the slow rate that the white jacketed butler was calling them one by one into the consulting room, it must evidently be a very long time before Mr. M——'s turn would come. Fearing that the delay would

weary him, Louise edged herself nearer and nearer to the door, and the next time the butler appeared she slipped a gulden into his hand and whispered in his ear : "as quickly as possible, please ! "

Mr. M——'s turn *did* come surprisingly quickly after that, but what was Louise's utter consternation when they were shown into the consulting room to discover that the great doctor and the butler were one and the same man !

Whether it was the absurdity of her mistake, or the extraordinary amount of common sense and knowledge which Louise displayed in explaining Mr. M——'s case to the surgeon (for Mr. M—— could speak nothing but English and Dr. Metzger appeared not to understand one word of that language), at any rate Dr. Metzger offered to teach Louise then and there the science of massage, an offer she was only too thankful to accept. So she came to his surgery every day for many weeks, and towards the end of her lessons Dr. Metzger used to allow her to massage his cases for him under his superintendence, and wished her to stay on permanently with him as his assistant. Louise refused to do this, but her skill in massaging proved most useful to her in after life.

In six weeks time Mr. M—— was cured and he came to Dr. Metzger for the last time, and told Louise to ask for his account ; Dr. Metzger did not immediately produce it and Mr.

M—— impatient of the delay, expressed his feelings on the subject in the somewhat forcible language which an Englishman likes to use on occasions; he was cut short by Dr. Metzger's saying suddenly in almost perfect English:

"Here is your account!"

But it required all Louise's tact and ability to smooth over the awkardness of that situation!

That same evening Louise dined with Dr. and Mrs. Metzger, as she was saying goodbye to them she tried to express her thanks for the Doctor's kindness towards her. "It has been nothing but a pleasure to me" said Dr. Metzger: "and I want you to accept this little gift in memory of the happy hours we have spent together," and so saying, as he bowed her out of the door, he thrust into her hands the gulden she had given him on the occasion of their first meeting.

Louise always kept it as a memento of an amusing episode.

When the M——s were all grown up, Louise felt that they no longer needed her, and though they would willingly have kept her always with them, she insisted upon finding some other useful sphere of work, and undertook the tuition of the little sons of a Monsieur Carapanos, a Greek gentleman of great wealth and influence.

Whilst with his family she had many new and delightful experiences. It was Monsieur Carapanos' duty, officially to travel all over Greece and sometimes into Turkey, and her experiences in these foreign lands were never fading memories of great joy to Louise, whilst the friendships she made in Greece were destined to become most dear and most lasting.

No country she ever visited, except her own, was so beautiful to her as Greece. Her best loved Greek friend (now Madame D——), writing of these times says: "How she loved the Acropolis, and would climb up the steep hill leading to it at all times! I remember once, when we were sitting together on the steps of the Parthenon at sunset, she turned to me after a long silence saying: "Oh! how you Greeks ought to work to be worthy of the heritage of this dear land!" on another occasion, when some great question of public interest to the Greek nation had seemed to leave me indifferent, she said in her most enthusiastic tone: "you are a woman, you have a heart and you have brains, and some day you will have influence, and this *must* interest you!"

Madame D—— has recently told me that her first meeting with Louise in Athens in 1882, was the turning point in her own life: no one could be intimate with Louise without being the better for it, she brought out the best in everyone, and selfishness and littleness of heart, or ignobleness of

purpose, melted away before the noble selflessness of her life. The following characteristic incident occurred during one of Louise's many visits to Athens.

She was walking one day with an old friend of hers, a Mrs. Dickson, since dead, and an English clergyman, who was only a bird of passage, along some public promenade in the cool of the evening, when they noticed on one of the benches, a young woman dressed in draggled finery and not over clean, but looking terribly ill. Louise stopped to speak to her, and finding that she had just recovered from some illness which she would not specify, Louise at once suspected it to be a confinement, and that the girl had left her infant at the Foundling Hospital and dragged herself a mile or more from the spot, to be far away when her crime was first discovered (this surmise was afterwards found to be correct). Louise immediately sent Mrs. Dickson for a cab, and she herself took hold of the poor girl round her waist to support her steps. On this the clergyman interfered. "You should not do that Miss Taplin! you know nothing of where the creature comes from, or what she is!"

"Yes I *do*!" said Louise turning suddenly on him, her eyes ablaze with indignation: "she is a woman in trouble, who needs my help, that is enough for me!"

The other incidents I can recall during the two or three years Louise spent in the near East are the following.

She was one day sitting with her pupils in the window of an Hotel in the Island of Crete, when she saw some English sailors running after a veiled woman, who sped like the wind before them, they thought her some Eastern beauty whose charms they did not intend should escape them, but the true facts instantly flashed across Louise's brain, and without waiting even to put on a hat to protect her from the scorching mid-day sun, she darted out of the hotel at lightning speed after the sailors, she was strong and active in those days, and she very soon caught them up, and begged them to cease from their chase, for the woman was in reality, no veiled beauty, but a dreadful leper, who was bound by the laws of the Island, to escape from contact with every human being. The sailors, like the good Englishmen they were, thanked Louise heartily for having put a stop to their ignorant cruelty, and later on she obtained permission to visit the lepers quarters and bring her sympathy into their stricken lives.

Whilst at Constantinople she had a very funny experience. A fat pasha became desperately in love with her ! He offered to put away his entire harem if she would only consent to be his wife, and then, in truly melodramatic style, he literally fell on his knees at her feet and implored her not to reject his offer. Louise kept her gravity with great difficulty whilst she endeavoured to refuse him with becoming dignity, but she lost it completely when her rejected lover found

himself too stout to rise from his knees, and she had to help him up!

From Constantinople, Louise started with Monsieur Carapanos and his family for a tour through the frontier provinces of Turkey and Greece. Monsieur Carapanos was fully occupied with his official duties, and the rest of the party seem to have entirely depended on Louise for organisation and arrangements generally, in spite of a large retinue of couriers and servants. One day, perhaps unwisely, Louise walked alone with her small pupils, a couple of miles or so, beyond the gates of the town, they were then visiting, and as they sat and rested by the wayside, she saw a very rough looking man coming towards them, she instinctively guessed his purpose to be evil, and as he was approaching them, she, unobserved, picked up a large sharp stone, which she held hidden in her hand. He came close up to them and with some excuse of wanting to know the time he snatched fiercely at Louise's watch chain which hung round her neck. In an instant, she raised her right arm and struck the brigand such a blow on the forehead with the stone she held, that he fell back stunned, and she and her terrified pupils took to their heels and fled back to the city. Louise said she felt dreadfully afraid she had really injured the man (though this is improbable) and the next day she went back alone to the scene of the adventure, to see if his mangled remains were still lying on the spot where she had laid him low, which, needless to say, they were *not*!

In March 1882 Louise writes to me from Athens : "You will forgive not hearing from me sooner, when I tell you that I have been shut up in a sick room for the last six weeks nursing the father of Monsieur Carapanos who had typho'd fever very badly and who died last Friday. I suppose you never have, and I hope you never will, nurse a fever case, one's *every moment* is taken up by it, and especially where little help can be obtained Old Monsieur Carapanos' death has upset all our plans, for it is the custom in this country for the relations to shut themselves up in the house for forty days, after a death has occurred, they don't even go out for drives during that time. On the 40th day they have a ceremony at Church, and we shall leave a day or two after for Larrissa, Arta, and other places. I can't tell you what a splendid time I have been having (except of course during the last few weeks) in this country of gods and heroes. Greece is certainly the most interesting country I have ever seen, and the Acropolis must surely be the most beautiful and fascinating building in the world, it is far grander in its ruins than any other place I know. To attempt to describe it to you would be folly, for no description could give you even a faint idea of its wonderful beauty, or of the view from its summit of sea and mountains all standing out against the sky, sea and sky clearer and deeper than I ever saw blue before. I have been so often to the different ruins that I have become a kind of walking guide

book ! Athens is a fast growing town, with some fine streets and a number of very handsome houses, the finest of which is Dr. Schlieman's, built entirely of white marble and in the style of the houses of ancient Troy, Mrs. Schlieman is charming, and the doctor, like so many great men, rather old. The Greeks are hospitable and gay and clever, and more frivolous than I expected to find them, the women are not very handsome, but nearly all have the most magnificent eyes and hair, black of course. The men are better looking and have the most perfect manners I ever saw ; even the country people, who have no sort of education, have a natural grace of manner which would put many a young Oxford or Cambridge man I have met, to shame ! I have been to Marathon, and Mount Olympus, and to Missolonghi, where Byron died, and do so enjoy everything and every place in this most interesting country ! There is a great deal of dancing here. I went to a most delightful dance on a Russian man of war. The King of Greece was there and honoured me by dancing three waltzs with me, and telling me I was the best dancer he had ever danced with ! to which I replied : " He was the first *King*, if not the first *person*, who had ever told me so ! " unluckily I could not return the compliment. Afterwards he talked to me a great deal and asked me if I did not like his sister, the Princess of Wales, and many other questions."

In 1883, the Carapanos boys having outgrown a

woman's care, Louise left them, and became governess to another Greek lady, a Madame S——, who had a little girl of eight years old (Virginie) and and a baby boy, who shortly afterwards died in Louise's arms. Mrs. S——, was a vain disagreeable, bad tempered woman and Louise was very uncomfortable with her. Knowing what she had to put up with, a Madame Cornelius, sister to Madame D——, begged her to accept a very high salary and to undertake the education of her four girls in Liverpool, Louise would not consent to this, because she could not bear to leave the little Virginie to the caprice of her mother, but when Madame S—— refused to allow Louise to visit her old and dear friends the M——s, on the death of their father, she at once left Madame S——, and went to the M——s.

Connected with Mr. M——s death, Louise had a strange experience which the Psychological Society might well wish to fathom.

Louise was with friends in Venice at the time ; she had not then the slightest idea that Mr. M—— was ill (neither was he, until a few hours before his death) and she knew the whole family to be in Dresden. She was therefore much surprised when, on going to High Mass at St. Mark's, she saw Mr. M——s tall figure standing up near the pulpit : she was sitting some distance off him, but he saw her and gave her a smile of recognition, and afterwards he seemed to

be steadily watching her during the whole of the service But at its close, in the crowd, Louise somehow lost sight of him. She knew he was not staying at her Hotel, so after dèjeuner, she took a gondola, and with her pupils went round to all the principal Hotels in the place to find out where he could be. His name was not down in any of the visitors lists and at last she gave up her search, and concluded he must have been only passing through Venice, on his way to Trieste, where he might have been seeing one of his sons off to India. The next day Louise started for Paris.

On her arrival there, a telegram was put into her hands from Germany, telling her that Mr. M—— had died at the exact hour that she had seen him in St. Mark's. She continued her journey to Dresden without delay, to be with his family in their hour of need.

Louise told me this incident during the last visit she paid me shortly before her death, she did not attempt to explain it, but I know she felt there was a deep meaning in t, and that it seemed to bring the Spirit world, which she was so soon herself to enter, nearer to her.

Shortly after this Madame D—— became engaged to be married. She wrote to Louise, who was in London at the time, telling her how much she longed to see her and that she hoped to do so, when she came to London later on. What was Madame D——s surprise and joy, when one day Louise suddenly burst in on her in Paris!

"I questioned her wildly!" said Madame D——— in telling me of the incident: "but she answered me quietly: 'do you think I could wait a whole fortnight more to see if you looked *really* happy?' She had come over for two days, *only for that*" Madame D——— added: "and money was not very plentiful with her just then—that *was* a friend.!"

For the next two years Louise lived with Madame Cornelius, spending the winters in Liverpool and the summers in Penmaenmawr, a quiet breathing time, I fancy it was to her, a little rest in one of life's pleasant backwaters, before being hurried along once more in the strong current of life's work.

I must now briefly touch on a subject which Louise shrouded in no mystery at the time, and which she only did not refer to in later years, because it had then become too painful to be mentioned.

She had a younger brother "Will" to whom she was passionately devoted. He had been articled to a firm of solicitors in Paris, but the firm failed and with it his prospects in life, so he did, what many a gentlemen has done before and since, enlisted in a cavalry regiment. No doubt all would have gone well with him if he had been strong enough to bear the necessary amount of roughing it which his choice entailed. Unluckily one illness succeeded another, so that he was hardly ever out of hospital, and at last, he was

so seriously kicked by his charger, that he was discharged as incurable, and once more sent adrift on the world.

Of course Louise came to the rescue. With her optimistic energy, she made up her mind that the climate of Australia would restore his health, and that he would be able to find light and congenial work out there. But she could not bear the thought of his having to commence life again in a far off country all alone, and she made up her mind against the entreaties of her many friends, that if he went out, she would go too. He consented to go and she took his passage in a sailing vessel, believing that the voyage would set him up more than anything. She could not afford to waste so much time herself, for her funds were low after paying her brother's passage, and with her, time meant money, so she took her own passage III Class in one of the big liners. Everyone protested against this, but she would accept neither help nor advice, and she subsequently told me she was : "*so* glad she had had her own way, because there were so many poor helpless women with their young children and she was able to take the babies quite off their hands, and be a help in so many ways ! "

As a matter of fact, Louise's brother, at the very last and after she had started for the other side of the world for his sake, refused to leave England, and his fate must be left as an unsolved tragedy, but that is the story of how and why Louise went to Australia !

And however useless her sacrifice in going there seemed to be, in the first instance, and however much her friends in Europe continued to regret her absence, who shall say, in the light of her future career, that her Australian life was not the noblest fruition and fulfilment of all her earlier training and experiences.

PART 2.

IN SYDNEY.

In 1886 Louise Taplin was temporarily appointed Lady Superintendent of the Infants' Home at Ashfield Nr. Sydney. Shortly afterwards the post was given to her permanently, and she retained it till her death.

Henceforth therefore, the absorbing interest of her life centres in the Home.

It was established in 1874 as a Foundling Hospital in Sydney itself, but before Louise came to it, it had changed its character and its situation. Mr. Carl Fischer, one of its earliest friends, gives an interesting account of the purchase of the Ashfield property, he writes: "I purchased the property of the present Home and presented it to my wife; at that time, the Infants' Home (then the Foundling Hospital) had great difficulty to find a shelter, Mrs. Fischer out of love and kind heartedness at once surrendered her property to the Hospital and gave up her beautiful home.

Of course we were not rich enough to present it all. The funds of the Hospital paid £1,200 the first instalment of purchase, Mr. Thomas Waller advanced the rest of the money and took up the mortgage. Not only did Mr. Waller do this, but he would take no interest and contributed £120 annually as a subscription and this realeased the mortgage after several years. He also contributed the sum of £500 when there were no funds soon after the opening of the Home. It was however Mrs. Fischer's interest in the work and her love for the children which made her give up her pretty home at Ashfield."

When Louise came to the Home its objects were:

(1) To receive mothers with their first illegitimate children (in 1887, nine of these mothers were under sixteen years of age!)

(2) To receive the children of widowers, or of husbands whose wives were in Lunatic Asylums or in prison.

3. To receive foundlings.

Ashfield is a beautiful spot, and out of a small beginning, the Home gradually grew under Louise's fostering care, into a model establishment of its kind, with an isolation ward, a large well furnished play room (which was built with funds entirely collected by Louise) a suitable laundry, etc., etc. But for a long while the want of sufficient funds to carry on the work of the Home was a grave anxiety to

Louise and her many friends. 'In former years' says the annual report of 1890 : "the Government grant was pound for pound up to £1000 on the subscriptions, for the last few years only £500 has been granted, and this year, without any reason being given only £300 was voted for the Infants Home."

To give some idea of the size of the Home, I may mention that in 1889, 130 children were admitted and 67 mothers, and to show how economically such a large establishment was managed under Louise Taplin, the total expenses for the year were £1680.

In the sad year 1893-94 when so many Banks were failing all over New South Wales, the subscriptions fell off so terribly that the Committee, after a prolonged and anxious discussion, decided that the Home must be closed, at any rate for the present, as they were not justified in increasing the debt which already hung round their necks.

By that time Louise had become so absorbed in her work, and so devoted to her little ones, that the thought of its all coming to an abrupt termination was quite intolerable to her, and she begged the committee to keep the Home open for just another three months, during which time she promised them she would work it, so as not to cost them a penny ! It was a big undertaking and one which nothing less than Louise's boundless love and courage could have

faced, and the strain it envolved on her left its mark on her till her death, if indeed it did not hasten her end.

She at once dismissed every single paid attendant, henceforth she, and the ignorant, helpless young and sometimes vicious mothers, were to do the entire work of the Home. Louise herself of course undertook the hardest duties of all, the night work among the infants, but it will be easily understood that tho' her nights were incessantly disturbed, she cannot have had much rest by day either, when she was literally the only competent person in the whole establishment!

Even these efforts could not feed the many mouths which Louise had promised to support, and it was her boundless confidence in the goodness of man-kind which was to solve that problem for her. She wrote to all the large farmers and cattle dealers and provision merchants in the country round and she just simply begged for food for her family: "My children will be starving," she said: "unless you help, and I am *quite sure* you will not suffer this to occur!" She was quite right, they did not, for in answer to her appeal, there came pouring into the Home, bags of potatoes, and sacks of flour, and quantities of bones to make soup for the babies, and some of the courser joints for the mothers, and with the help of the milk from the cows, which fortunately belonged to the Home, and the Home poultry yard, as Louise said: "One way and another, we managed to pull

along, and at the end of the three months, and here her eyes would fill with tears as she told the story : " an old lady died and left us a splendid legacy of nearly £2,000, and so there was never again any question of closing the Home.

A quaint story Louise told me too in connection with this legacy :

" For some years " she said : " a queer little old lady used to visit the Home at all times : she was very small and very shabby, and always looked so neglected and even hungry, that I thought she must be very poor indeed, and my heart went out to her, and at whatever hour of the day she paid her unexpected visit, I always managed to give her a meal of some sort : if it was 12 o'clock I used to pretend I was dining extra early that day, and make her have some cold luncheon with me in my little sitting room, or if it was too late or too early for having lunch under any pretence, I could always pretend it was tea time ! Besides feeding my little friend, many a time have I mended the holes for her in her shabby black gloves and once I remember I even had the audacity to retrim her bonnet for her ! For many months her visit had ceased entirely when one day the solicitor to the Home spoke to me through the telephone and said : " Good news for you ! The Home has been left a legacy of something like £2000 ! "

I gasped out my delight and enquired by whom ? and and the answer was, the name of my little shabby friend !

The death rate in the Home for the four years 1883--4 5-6, (previous to Louise becoming the head of it) averaged ·36 °/o. In 1888 it had fallen to 19·4°/o, and in 93 it fell to 7 °/o, while for the next six years the average was below 11 °/o. When it is remembered that the infants admitted to the Home have scarcely ever had a favourable start in life and have sometimes gone through the trying ordeal of being left in a parcel on a doorstep, or in the garden of the Home itself, this sudden fall in the death rate can only be interpreted as showing exceptional skill and care in management

Enthusiastic herself in the good work of the Home, Louise infected others with the same feeling, by simply asking them to : "come and see," and there were few of those who took the trouble to do so, who did not afterwards become subscribers. A lady in Sydney who was one of Louise's most intimate friends, writing of her work says : "Louise's influence was not confined to the babies only. One object of the home is to assist unmarried mothers with their first nfant by providing a temporary home for both mother and child. To such, the home was a real shelter, the little ones were saved from the baby farms and the mothers ("God help them as Louise did) sometimes under sixteen years of age, one even of fourteen, were freed from the terrible temptation of infanticide. Here was no cant, but real sympathy generous silence and welcome help, which often broke down the stubborn and may be vitiated opposition. Sometimes a

delayed marriage ensued, or useful work was first taught to and then found, for the poor victim. But perhaps Louise (or " Tappy " as she was called first of all by her babies and afterwards by all her intimate friends in Sydney) was seen at her best, when having extorted from some circus manager free tickets for his entertainment, she would load up the Home pony cart with some dozen of the older babies and personally conduct the procession to the railway. At the station would be seen the queer little crew, each one early taught to hold the one in front by the pinafore shepherded and protected by nurse and matron, to the wonderland of clown and performing animals. A trained nurse and brave woman is always a useful member of society, but as matron of the Home, Louise's other and rarer qualities gave her an influence that was invincible. She really loved children, *al*- children, with the large heartedness which belongs to rea motherhood, tempered with a judgement and power of management that few mothers display. No prettier scene is possible, than the group of four year old children saying their prayers at " Tappy's " knees, or some twenty of these waifs and strays with smiling and expectant faces ranged along the play room of the Home to receive their share of 'biccys' from 'Tappy'. Her influence was so marvellous that visitors used to playfully accuse the matron of mesmerism. It is my deliberate opinion, taken from repeated and close observation that there was, under Louise's management, less weeping and

squabbling amongst her sixty children, mostly motherless, than in an average family of five !

Louise had two lasting troubles in connection with the Home. One was, that it was never large enough to hold all the applicants she would have liked to take in. That she did her utmost to expand it will be believed when I say that she invariably allowed two of the little ones to sleep in her own room : " Their cots are not very big, " she used to say : " and it makes me able to take in two more."

Her other trouble was the one I referred to at the beginning of this memoir, as perhaps the only great object in her life which she did not achieve.

When the babies were five years old, the state interfered with her work, and took the children away from her and " boarded them out ". This, though part of a necessary and perhaps wise government scheme, was always a heart burning question to Louise. If possible she secured the adoption of the little ones by some kind hearted people, but of course she could not always do this and certain children were always on her mind. One in particular, little " Dimple ' he was rather undersized and by a pious fraud she managed to keep him considerably over his five years, till he had became a real help to her, as well as a most beloved companion, but she had to give him up at last, and though it was to a good home, it nearly broke her heart.

Birthdays after the first, she could never bear to celebrate for this reason, so she kept her own instead (on October 1st) and gave presents to everyone and made it a red letter day in the Home.

Louise used her best endeavour to induce government to make Ashfield an exception to their rule : her dream was to persuade them to entrust her with the same amount of money that they spent annually on boarding out the same number of children, she would then have had a separate cottage built for them in the grounds of the Home, with efficient teachers, and she would have kept her children near her and sheltered them with her great love, till they were old enough to go out into the world. The saddest part to her of losing them as she did, was that just when they were beginning to realize her love and consequently need it most, they lost it. If her life had been spared I feel sure she would have carried out this scheme someday, but God said that her work on earth was ended, when to the labourer it seemed but begun.

Louise came to Europe twice between 1886, and her death in 1901, and the following incidents in her life, and details of the Home, were given me, during one or other of those visits, I reproduce them as accurately as I can, but only from memory

Louise had a cheerful sitting room on the ground floor opening out onto the shady verandah. Here the babies crawled

in and out, for they were always welcome, however busy she might be. She had her meals, nominally alone, in her sitting room, but it was one of the most cherished treats of theelder babies, to be allowed, two at a time, in strict "turns" to sit up at her table during her breakfast and her mid-day dinner, and it was such a bitter punishment to forfeit this privilege, that it was only inflicted on rare and very serious occasions. In this sunny sitting room, made bright and beautiful by the gifts and photographs and needle work of her numerous friends, Louise was always ready and glad at tea time, to greet with her hearty welcome, either her own personal friends, or the friends of the Home, though every day from eleven till four, the Home was open to the inspection of visitors. During the latter years of her life Louise tried to take a "half holiday" once a week when her friends generally arranged for her a riding expedition, or a theatre party, or a good concert. Sundays were with her, the busiest day of the week, because she then arranged for as many as possible of her assistants to go out, and took almost entire charge of the little ones herself. To the very last, and in spite of the anxieties connected inevitably with her position, and the overwork which was gradually undermining her magnificent constitution, Louise loved the wholesome pleasures of her life next best to its duties, and if she had never had anything to do with the Home, she would be missed and mourned from a purely social point of view

almost more than any one individual in Sydney. And yet, how comparatively little time she devoted to society! One half day a week, and late in the evening, when she ought to have been in bed and trying to sleep, she spent an hour or two, if not occupied with Home accounts, on her world wide correspondence. Yet, she somehow managed to keep abreast with all the good literature of the day, as well as with the social and political question at home and abroad, and with everything connected with art and music. She crowded more work, more thought, more play into one week of her life, than most folks put into a month. No doubt she was burning the candle at both ends, and perhaps she knew it, but to a nature like hers, idleness leisure, rest, were impossible unless she was utterly worn out, and even so it was only when she was on board ship that she was completely idle, then she would sleep a great deal both day and night, showing clearly how much more rest she needed than she habitually allowed herself.

She had her grasp on the minutest details in the life of her babies. Her whole day was spent amongst them, her first task in the morning being to wash and dress the dozen or half a dozen tiniest and most delicate of her family who needed special care, she used to say she could throughly wash and dress the most delicate infant, provided everything was ready for her, as she took care it always should be, in exactly six minutes.

The kitchen of the Home, where the work was done by the mothers, occasioned Louise much trouble, because, as she said, they could none of them cook when they came to the Home, and those who were quick at learning, went away to situations before long, it was always the slow and stupid ones who remained on. So Louise had to be incessantly in and out of the kitchen, one of her greatest struggles being daily, to ensure that the stock pot, where the soup for all the babies was made, should be perfectly sweet and fresh, not always so easy in the tropical climate of Sydney as it would be in England, but fancy if *all* the little ones had been made ill by one bad dinner! Therefore, every single day, Louise not only superintended things in the kitchen, but as a last precaution, she was always present at the children's dinner, and tasted the soup before they did.

How well they behaved during that meal! Louise always maintained that good behaviour amongst children, was merely a matter of example. Sometimes if a child came into the Home at two or three years old (perhaps because its parents were for the time in Hospital) he would behave as the children of cottagers generally do, very badly indeed at table, jumping up and down, making crumbs on the floor, chattering, (which Louise did not allow at meals,) and perhaps screaming. The Home children were shocked at such behaviour, but Louise never said anything to the delinquent, and to her own children she used to say: "Poor

little fellow ! He has never been taught any better, he will soon learn to be good if you show him how." And in two or three days the child would invariably leave off his naughty tricks *and behave as the others did.* The children were always given, at meals, a spoon and a crust of bread which they called their 'fork' and used as such, and were taught to eat up at the end of dinner. One day a new comer who did not know this custom, not unnaturally broke it, and a visitor who was watching the little ones with Louise, was somewhat astonished to hear one of the elder children exclaim :

"Oh ! 'Tappy ! ' Look at that naughty little boy ! He has eaten his *two* forks ! "

The visitor was greatly relieved to learn the harmless nature of the forks !

Louise studied the individual characters of her children as a mother does. There was one little foundling, (she felt sure he was of gentle birth, and she always hoped to get him adopted by gentle folk, I do not know if she succeeded,) whom she called Nansen, because of his extreme love of exploring and persevering ingenuity. In his early babyhood, he would crawl along the passages to find out where the gas and water pipes led to, and one day when he was about two and a half, and had been promoted to the kindergarten class, he slipped out of his place during the morning lesson, and

did not happen to be missed for nearly two hours. Then he was found on the verandah, sitting down on the floor, surrounded by the fragments of a large new mail cart to hold four children which had lately been given to the Home, and which he had completely taken, not broken, to pieces. When he was discovered, he was attacking the spokes of the wheel, and was endeavouring to get them out with his teeth For two hours that little child, with no other tools than those Nature had given him, his little hands and his tiny teeth had been working steadily and successfully to get the mail cart to pieces. He was dreadfully sorry for what he had done, when "Tappy" explained to him that now the babies could have no more nice rides, for he had not meant any mischief, and he was greatly relieved when the cart was at last put together again by the carpenter.

There were dark incidents connected with Louise's work, which vividly impressed her, perhaps the most tragic is the following :

One afternoon she was told some one wanted to see her, she went out and saw sitting in the hall, a young woman, so gloriously beautiful, that, to Louise, she seemed scarcely human, with a tiny infant in her arms. She was very ill and too unstrung even to speak. In a case like that, Louise, having the fullest confidence of the committee, acted on her own responsibility, and took the poor girl in at once, putting her to bed, and having her tenderly looked after. Later in

the evening Louise sat for a long time by her side, and tried to elicit something of her story. The girl was quite silent, she refused to say a word about her past, or her future, sh refused even to give her correct name : "you may *call* m Mrs. Jones ! " she said, Louise knew that could not be right, for alas ! there was no wedding ring on her slender finger. Louise tried to interest her in her baby, a little girl, and asked what she should be called, but the mother showed as little interest in her child's future as in her own, she seemed to be in a state of apathetic despair. Early next morning, whilst Louise was dressing, she saw from her bedroom, the tall figure of the young mother, in her long white night dress, pass her window, in the direction of a deep well, which was in a far corner of the grounds. Quick as lightning Louise hurried after her, for why that early morning flight ? what terrible purpose might not be in her mind ? The poor girl said nothing, when Louise led her gently back and had her put to bed again, and Louise told one of the nurses to watch her carefully. Later on in the morning she seemed so restless that Louise allowed her to get up, and wrapped in some light dressing gown to sit out for an hour or two on the balcony with the other convalescent mothers, again Louise gave instructions that she was to be carefully watched. Half an hour afterwards Louise heard piercing screams, she seemed to know by instinct what had happened, and snatching up a heavy rug she rushed out, she met, close to her door, a sight which she never forgot, her beautiful patient, like a pillar of

fire, one mass of flames from head to foot was staggering down the passage towards her. In a moment Louise had flung her to the ground and was wrapping her round in the rug, she soon extinguished the flames, and then she carried the poor burnt creature to her own bed, but the case was hopeless from the first, the girl died in great agony that same evening, and her life's story died with her. She was the most beautiful woman Louise ever met, and even the coroner at the inquest, when he removed the sheet to view the body, mutilated as it was, exclaimed involuntarily :

"Good God ! what a woman ! "

Louise tried for the child's sake, to find out if she had any relations, but she failed. The girl had come to Sydney about six months before from Scotland, and had taken lodgings and tried to do a little teaching, she had probably been a governess formerly. By degrees she had sold every-one of her possessions, and she had cut up all her clothes to make them into little garments for the expected baby. She had calculated her expenses to a nicety, and had just managed to struggle on till the baby was born, no doubt hoping to die in her confinement. Louise always had a specially large share of love for the child of this unhappy victim, little Jean she called her, but even in her babyhood she shewed signs of inheriting her mother's passionate nature, and she was as jealous as she was passionate, she was very lovely too, and Louise's heart used to ache when she thought of the dangers

and difficulties which must lie before a girl with such a fatal inheritance of beauty and of passion.

Another queer story Louise used to tell, was as follows:

One day a fashionably dressed gentleman and lady came to the Home and stated that they wanted to adopt a baby boy, they were more particular that the infant should be only a day or two old, than they were about its parentage but this aroused no suspicions in Louise's mind, as they gave excellent references in England, and were unquestionably gentlefolk, and well off. Louise was very glad to be able in a few weeks time, to hand over to them a new born baby, whose parents were both dead. About a fortnight afterwards Louise happened one afternoon to be in the distant suburb of Sydney where Mr. and Mrs. ——— were living, and her motherly heart yearning towards all her babies, she determined to call at the house to see how the little one was getting on, it was quite by chance that she paid this visit She rang at the door which was opened by a trim maid servant.

"Is Mrs —— at home?"

"Ye-s" said the girl doubtfully: "but you can't see her!"

"I am sorry for that" said Louise: "if she is engaged I should not detain her more than a moment."

"She is not engaged" said the maid: "but don't you know, she has recently had a bady and nurse won't let her see anyone till next week."

Louise tried to conceal her surprise as she enquired "when the baby had been born"?

The maid thought a minute and then said:

"On the fifteenth."

It was the very same day of course, on which Mrs. ——'s nurse had fetched the baby from the Home, and the whole truth about the deception which was being carried out under her very eyes, flashed upon Louise as she stood on the doorstep.

Not wishing however to make more scandal than was necessary, Louise went back to the Home that day and wrote to Mrs. —— accusing her of attempting to pass off the Home baby as her very own, and stating that, as she could not possibly connive at such a fraud, she must ask that the infant be at once given back to her, or she should put the whole matter in the hands of the police, she added that she should come herself the next day to fetch the baby. When after crossing one of the numerous bays of Sydney Harbour, Louise arrived at Mrs. ——s suburb, on the wharf she met the baby in charge of the nurse, and still desirous of avoiding a scene Louise then and there took over the baby from the maid, who seemed not unprepared for such an event,

and so ended Louise's share in what was evidently a very deeply planned scheme: Louise never heard whether they succeeded somewhere else in carrying out this fraud, they immediately left the neighbourhood of Sydney.

Another strange tale, more immediately concerned Louise:

In the year 1892 a foundling was discovered in the grounds of Ashfield. Having reason to know that the child could only have been placed there a few moments before, Louise hurried down the lane in search of the deserting parents, and a quarter of a mile away came across a suspicious looking couple, a very dark fierce Italian man and a young woman, Louise followed them into the village and had them arrested and a few days later she had to appear against them in court, they were found guilty of child desertion and sentenced to some months imprisonment. Louise's sitting room, as before mentioned, and bedroom were on the ground floor, the sitting room opened out by long French windows into the verandah, and the room also opened by a door which Louise never locked, into the bedroom.

One night, shortly after the Italians were let out of prison, Louise, sleeping the sleep of the utterly wearied, was, roused by hearing Dimple, whose cot was by her bedside screaming in terror:

"Tappy! Tappy! look! look!"

She started up and distinctly saw the terrible face of the Italian peering in at her bedroom window, the glittering blade of a dagger gleaming in the moonlight. Quick as lightning, Louise had darted out of bed, and rushing to the door which led into the sitting room, she bolted it, for the villain had nothing to do but to step into the sitting room by the French window and thence into her room. Louise always said and believed that she would have been murdered in her sleep that night, but for the timely call of little Dimple. Even her iron nerves were somewhat disturbed by this incident, and it was a distinct relief to her to hear shortly afterwards that the Italian had been sentenced to two months imprisonment for theft, and before that time had expired that he had been sent off for five years penal servitude for attempting to murder his jailor.

Five years is a long while, and at their expiration the incident had almost faded from Louise's memory, when one afternoon she was asked to go into the Hall to see some one She found two pedlar men, quite strangers to her, anxious to sell her some cottons and tapes, but more anxious still to enter into conversation with her.

"Are you the matron of this Home?" they asked.

"Yes"

"Are you the same matron who was here five years ago?"

"Yes."

"Are you quite sure?"

"Yes," but Louise thought these questions were becoming rude and she cut the pedlars short and sent them about their business. As they turned to go, it flashed across her that their visit had been a very strange one, and, surely there was something strange about their manner, something un-English? She followed then out into the road to try and see them once more, and settle what was the reason for the indefinable anxiety which their visit seemed to cause her. Outside the gates of Ashfield they met a third man, and though Louise only caught a glimpse of his back as they all hurried down the road, it explained everything to her, for in him, she had recognized her old enemy the Italian!

Feeling quite sure now that mischief was intended and that she was to be the victim, she immediately telephoned to the Superintendent of Police in Sydney, a personal friend, explaining the situation. He telephoned back to her promising to see to her safety, but telling her that she must on no account leave her rooms that night. Surely most women would have sent for a friend to be with them under such circumstances, but Louise preferred to be alone. She locked her bedroom and her sitting room windows, and she sat down for a long evening's writing, the only thing she felt she could *not* do, was, go to bed!

About mid-night she heard the welcome sound of the telephone, and the Superintendent's voice saying "its all right, Miss Taplin, you can go to bed now, the three men are in my custody."

Louise *did* go to bed, and to sleep.

The next morning she heard that the Superintendent had sent out a body of police to Ashfield, who, hidden amongst the tress had watched the three desperadoes likewise hiding till all was quiet. In the dead of the night, the Italians, well armed, crept up towards the window of Louise's rooms, but on their first attempt to break them open, the police had overpowered them, so great was their surprise, without a struggle. They were accused of house breaking with intent to murder, and being also 'wanted' for some other crime, I forget what, they were sentenced to a long period of penal servitude, and before it has expired, alas! their would be victim no longer needs protection from their revenge.

All these incidents give no impression of Louise's peculiar powers, her daily life alone was its own witness, and no words can convey to those who did not know her, her unwearying efforts to do good, to relieve pain, to cheer, to enable to guide the young lives under her care, and above all to make them happy: this not of course at a sacrifice of judicious training, but by judicious training. She was a very special pleader whenever the question of a child's

happiness was concerned : "The circumstances of their after life you cannot control" ; she used to say : "or shield them from the sorrows which must fall upon them as years go by, you, who have the care of your own children or of other people's, *can* make their childhood so entirely happy if you will but take the trouble, and it takes so little trouble to make a little child happy ! "

Louise's influence over the Home children was so extraordinary, that more than once, wealthy parents, who wanted to leave Australia for a time have *begged* Louise to take their babies into her Home during their absence to "care for them" as they said : "like the Home babies," but Louise always had to answer that "there was no room for them" welcome as the money paid for them would have been to the Home funds.

One more incident I can recall :

Louise returned one night from a concert in Sydney and learnt that a baby had been found in the grounds during her absence.

"It was quite dead," the night nurse said, and they had carried the body to the mortuary.

Louise after going the round of the wards, went to her own room and partly undressed, but when she was in her dressing gown, one of those impulses which she never tried to resist, impelled her to go and see the little dead baby

before she went to sleep. So, taking a candle, she went softly down to the tiny mortuary which she had had built at one end of the Home. The baby, waxen and cold, lay there on a table, but as Louise bent over it and tenderly kissed the little blue lips which had had so scant a share of love during their short life, the thought occurred to her, that the baby was *not* dead, but was only in a state of collapse from being drugged and then exposed to the night air. So she gathered the tiny form up in her arms and carried it to the Infant's ward, where it being winter time a fire burnt in the grate, and, in spite of the remonstrances of the night nurse, Louise put the baby into a hot bath by the nursery fire and rubbed it with hot flannels and tried to force some hot milk down its throat, but it showed no signs of life. After endeavouring for two hours to restore animation, Louise wrapped the little thing in cotton wool and flannels, and laid it in a low cradle quite close to the fire :

"We can do nothing more now nurse," she said.

"Let the poor little thing lie there till morning, if there is any life in it, the warmth will revive it."

But at this the nurse's indignation was fairly roused, and she refused to have what she persisted in calling a "dead baby" lying all night amongst her living charges.

"Very well", said Louise: "then I must take the baby to bed with me. He is *not* dead now, but he will certainly be dead before morning, without great warmth."

At this, the nurse relented, and the little foundling lay, for the remaining hours of the night, by her fire. In the morning, even nurse had to admit that the child was alive though still unconscious and apparently dying, Louise telephoned to the Home doctor telling him about the case and asking him to come at once. He telephoned back that a most critical operation prevented his coming immediately but that Louise had already done all he could possibly have done, and more, and he added: "If anyone can save the child's life, it is you, not I!"

The baby recovered and is now several years old, and healthy and strong.

Louise had two holidays of about eight months each during the eleven years she was matron of the Home, also one holiday to the Blue mountains, and one to New Zealand to recruit after a severe attack of peritonitis.

Her first holiday was in 1895, when she visited Europe, and England. She was then overflowing with vitality and activity, and in every way her life in Australia seemed to me to have rounded and completed, as well as broadened her character. There was more strength, more love, more charity, than even I remembered. But I grieved to notice even then, that the strain of her work was telling on her physical powers, she was suffering from sleeplessness and acute neuralgia. She returned to the Home in November much rested and invigorated, and with happy memories of

her numerous friends, many of whom had married during her absence, and whose children she immediately loved, as she loved their parents. She promised she would take things more easely in the future, and I trust she did try to give herself more holidays, but *in* the Home there could be no rest for her.

Towards the end of 1899 Louise had a most severe attack of peritonitis, during which she very nearly died. Speaking to me of this illness, she said : "The nurses thought I was unconscious and I heard them say : 'She cannot rally !' or I thought I did. Then I said to myself in my semi delirium, that I *must* get well, because the sub matron was away and it would never do for me to die at any rate until she came home, I *must* get better ! and from that hour I *did* rally, and I *did* recover with God's help and my own earnest endeavours."

These words of Louise's made me feel sure that in her last illness, not only the doctors and nurses, but she herself must have struggled hard for her life, but it was not to be given back to her a second time.

She unquestionably never regained her full strength after having peritonites and she came to Europe in the Spring of 1900. On the voyage home she stayed with an old friend in Ceylon and also with Madame D—— in Athens for some weeks. But as during her visit to Madame D—— in 1895, her hostess had lost her father, and during her visit in 1900,

her brother in law died, Louise said on leaving for the last time :

"Do you know, I don't think I will come to you in Athens again, I have become rather superstitious about it we must meet somewhere else ! "

"And so we shall," added Madame D—— in writing of this to me : "but not as she meant it ! "

Louise spent the whole of June 1900 with me in Devonshire, keenly enjoying the beauties of an English spring.

"I suppose its because you see it every year," she said again and again : "that you seem to take it as a matter of course ; but *oh* ! the beauty of it all ! the absolutely perfect beauty ! "

There was nothing to spoil the happiness of this, our last holiday together, no premonitions that it was to be the last, and when we parted one dull rainy morning, Louise would not believe that it was good bye, even till her next visit to England : "I am sure I shall see you in London or somewhere before I start for Sydney ! " she said. But we could not manage another meeting, and so, smiling through our tears, we said good bye for the last time.

Louise reached Sydney at the end of November. The rest is soon told.

Mrs. Thring, one of Louise's greatest friends in Sydney wrote to me on May 25th telling me of her death. She says :

"Louise was taken suddenly ill with what proved to be pneumonia on May 12th." My husband, Dr. Thring was

called in to see her on that day and thought very seriously of her condition. In spite of everything we could do she passed away from us on the 21st at 10.30 p.m. I was with her a few minutes before she died, but she was not conscious, though on the evening of the 20th she was able to speak a little, and still thought she would get well. Her friend Mrs. Carter and I were there every day and she had two nurses, and Dr. Thring, and Dr. Harold Browne, who lives next to the Home went to see her three or four times a day. It is impossible to realize that her great heart lies still with its immense power of love and sympathy, there are many of us who would have given our lives for Louise! There is no end to the good she has done, and her friends here will never cease to mourn her. We have done everything as we think she would have wished it. Two days before Louise was taken ill she had been very much upset by the news of the death of a great friend, Mrs. Adams of Bombay, whom she was expecting to see in Sydney, and she was not in a good condition to withstand an illness."

Another friend writes me from Sydney;

"I was up at Ashfield to tea with several others on the Friday before Louise was taken ill, she was much worried about the loss of a friend's dog which was left in her charge, and deeply distressed at the death of her friend in India, who used to be a nurse at the Home. I thought her looking older and more strained, but she said nothing about feeling ill.

I went up to Ashfield again yesterday (the 23rd) with some flowers for her funeral. The front door was open, all was sunny and just the same, when I opened the door and went into her sitting room I was past speaking, it only seemed a minute ago that she had been sitting in the little chair by the tea table, laughing and talking about the Home to us all, I could hear her voice and see her in every corner. If she knew she was dying she never said a word about it. Her funeral was on the 24th, at 11.30. She is mourned by high and low, no one can ever fill her place, but the many friends she has left will try, somehow, to keep the Home she gave her life for, going as she wished."

It may be a matter of wonder why so attractive and remarkable a woman as Louise Taplin, never married.

It was because she chose what seemed to her the "better part." Ordinarily good capable women make excellent wives and mothers, but it needs the exceptional talent and heart and love of a Lousie Taplin, to be the *real mother* she was, to all the waifs and strays who came to her Home.

She was an example of Ruskins words for truly she had been taught to understand that a woman's *highest* work is "for the multitude who have none to love them—for all who are desolate and oppressed."


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