

## The Isle of Lepers.

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IN the Southern Atlantic, off the South African shores, lies a little island; often a desert of blowing sand, but now carpeted with flowers; the large white brown-eyed blossoms of a creeping hibiscus almost cover the green grass, and between every three or four of them rises the bright scarlet blossom of a little lily. Tall white arums grow gigantic just above the spray of the sea. That sea itself is as blue as heaven, and the heavens are blue indeed in South Africa. As you stand at sunset on the shore and see the Chapel Tower rising out of the gay green foliage, the flower spangled foreground, the sea shining and splashing around you, the great fortress of Table Mountain lowering in front of you, with the British lion couched at its feet, you feel that the world does not contain a sweeter sight. But turn round. What is that long range of buildings, one after the other, each complete in itself, going on until the last seems to stand on the farthest point of the island. After looking for a few minutes you realise you are on the Leper Island. The tea-bell rings, and from the sea shore and the fields around a sad little crowd assembles—a maimed crowd, with few hands and feet remaining amongst them; a distorted assembly with heads enlarged, with limbs wreathed and twisted into every possible malformation—a wounded crowd covered with sores—one hundred and eighty-five men, and eighty-nine women and children—some of the latter mere infants—and in a few months it is believed the law of compulsory segregation will double the number. Much, very much has been done. A pretty convenient Nurses' Home stands overlooking the sea. Large handsome airy wards with stone verandahs and wide flights of steps, schoolrooms, class rooms, wardrobe rooms, dispensaries, lavatories, have replaced the wretched old hovels of a few years ago. Scrubbers are employed; a tram line runs the whole length of the building; a large new kitchen, a liberal dietary, and, in the immediate future, a steam laundry, are amongst the many things liberally provided by the Government to make life less painful, and death less sad to these poor people. In a few months a Chapel is to be erected close to their Hospital by a devoted friend. But what, comparatively speaking, is the use of all this without earnest, devoted workers, willing and ready to do real *hard* work, to live a life more or less isolated, to give themselves up to the most miserable, the most wayward, the most afflicted of God's children. Some are doing it, notably an Englishman, who, for several years, has given himself up entirely to help-

ing the lepers in the most practical way, and several, too, of the vast army of English Nurses, who ceaselessly wage war against disease and death, and disorder, and unseemliness of all kinds. But more are wanted—eight more immediately, probably twenty, before many months are over. A good house, reasonable food and uniform, and a sufficient salary are offered. We hear of hundreds of applications for Wards in our great Hospitals, for the Matronships of our pretty little Cottage Hospitals. Many are willing and anxious to perform the pleasant interesting work required, with all the zest of London life around them, or at least near at hand—but the lonely island has few volunteers to do the *hard work that wants doing*. Perhaps some are willing to do it, and able to do it, who have not hitherto known the way; such persons should write to the Sister-in-Charge, The Hospital, Kimberley, South Africa, enclosing testimonials of character and health, and, if possible, of *some* Nursing work.

But no one should take up work amongst the Lepers lightly. This is a dying world; but the population of Robben Island stands face to face with death, stricken with an incurable and most awful malady. "They touched me" several lepers have said, with wonder at their new Nurses, to the Chaplain. "Dare you touch me," said another to his Nurse who was dressing his wounds, "No one dare touch me before." Alas! if any Nurse came out to them and forgot Who it was Who did not fear to touch a leper, and that He was her own Master. Love must be the spring for leper work, and "Love is a present for a Mighty King."

## A Vision of Life.

By A. C. V.

"On trouve au fond de tout, le vide et le néant."

I SAT me down in the shadow of the great palm-tree, for I was very weary. I thought, if it were possible, I would sleep! All around lay the burning sands of a desert, and nothing broke the monotony of a land aching with its own intensity. And my pulses began to throb, and the life-blood coursed passionately through my veins, but I closed my eyes and said: "I will rest."

Out of the shadow of the palm-tree there arose another, darker and greater, it was like unto the shadow of a man. And it came nearer and stood very close to me.

Then I spoke and said: "Who are you and what do you here?"

But he answered not, only gazed out steadfastly across the desert. Then I also turned and looked.

And lo! I saw the desert peopled with a great

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)