

The Dr. then entered into details, picking out at random cases of children who had been saved from vice and wretchedness in Edinburgh, by means of Ragged Schools. After giving statistics he said: "To this table may be applied the words of the Prophet, 'Written within and without with lamentation, mourning, and woe!' These children are the germs of our criminals. Had it not been for our schools, 250 out of the 300 whom we have at present would have been in prison. These children are taught by their parents to steal, and if they do not bring home enough, they are beaten. They are not the guilty party. When the child is brought before the court, the crime is there, but not the criminal. In Scotland we have a happy way of pronouncing a verdict. In England you have guilty, or not guilty; in Scotland we have, as a variation, *not proven*. Here is a boy at the bar; he has never seen a court of justice before; he stares about him like a wild beast; he sees before him three fat men in black gowns, or red, with horsehair on their heads, and often more outside than in, who never in all their lives knew what it is to be hungry. The boy has been caught in the act of stealing; the evidence is there, but I say the verdict *ought to be proven, but not guilty*. Who, then, is the guilty party? Judgment shall begin at the house of God. This is the law, Sir. That child is condemned by law, but not by justice. It reminds me of the answer of a justice's servant, who was asked by some one who wished to see her master, 'Is the justice in?' 'No, Sir, but the *law* is.' Who, then, is the guilty party? 'Judgment must begin at the house of God.' The ministers of the Gospel are guilty—I and my brethren, who did not stretch out our hand to pluck that child as a brand from the burning. The judges are guilty. The ladies and gentlemen who went to church or chapel to pray with their Prayer-book or Bible, and passed those perishing little ones, saying 'What a plague those children are!' are guilty; and I truly believe, Sir, when God sits in His judgment-seat, He will tell the angels to take away that child, and bring to the bar the ministers, the judges, the ladies and gentlemen who passed by on the other side. 'For where no law is, there is no transgression.' These children furnished materials to fill our prisons. They begged in swarms through the streets of Edinburgh. Talk of the mosquitoes of Venice, they are nothing to those we had in Edinburgh. But we have cleared the streets of them. Now we have neither begging children nor begging friars in Edinburgh. Begging is next door to thieving. Before ragged schools were commenced, some fourteen years ago, five out of every 100 prisoners were under fourteen years of age. Walk along the corridor of a prison, put your eye to the grating, and see there, between four cold walls, a little boy, pale and solitary, who should have been on the busy school-bench, or playing in the fresh open air, or at his mother's fireside. I saw a little fair-headed, blue-eyed girl sitting there. Pity seized me. But as we pass in a moment from one feeling to another, my soul was filled with indignation. 'Who on earth put