

[FOR OUR MISSION UNION.]

The Captive Sparrow.

By H. O'BRIEN.

THE spray from a lawn sprinkler was sparkling in the sunlight, and as I sat in my study and looked up from my work, I saw a sparrow bath-

ing in its cooling shower, and drinking from the drops glistening on the blades of grass. After a time I looked again, but the bird was gone. But by-and-by I saw something fluttering in a net that was stretched close by, where the children had been playing ball. I paid no attention at first, but I soon saw that my little visitor was caught in the meshes of the net. and I went out and relieved him. He was in a miserable plight. The water had continued to sprinkle him. He was wet to the skin; his feathers dragged and useless for flying, and worst of all the fine threads of the net were wound round and round him, and with every struggle his flesh was torn, and tighter were the coils. He had struggled hard for freedom, but after every effort he was more of a prisoner than before, and was now gasping for breath and ready to perish. Helpless and hopeless his plaintive cry was pitiful to hear. He had enjoyed his pleasant bath too long; either the water had spoiled the buoyancy of his flight that he had not been able to rise above the net or he had not seen its treacherous folds.

So tightly were the cords twisted round him that they had to be cut with a knife by the friendly hand of one able and willing to save him, before he could be freed.

So fast bound in misery and sin, captive sinners toil in vain for deliverance. Enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season; or may be only enjoying the lawful

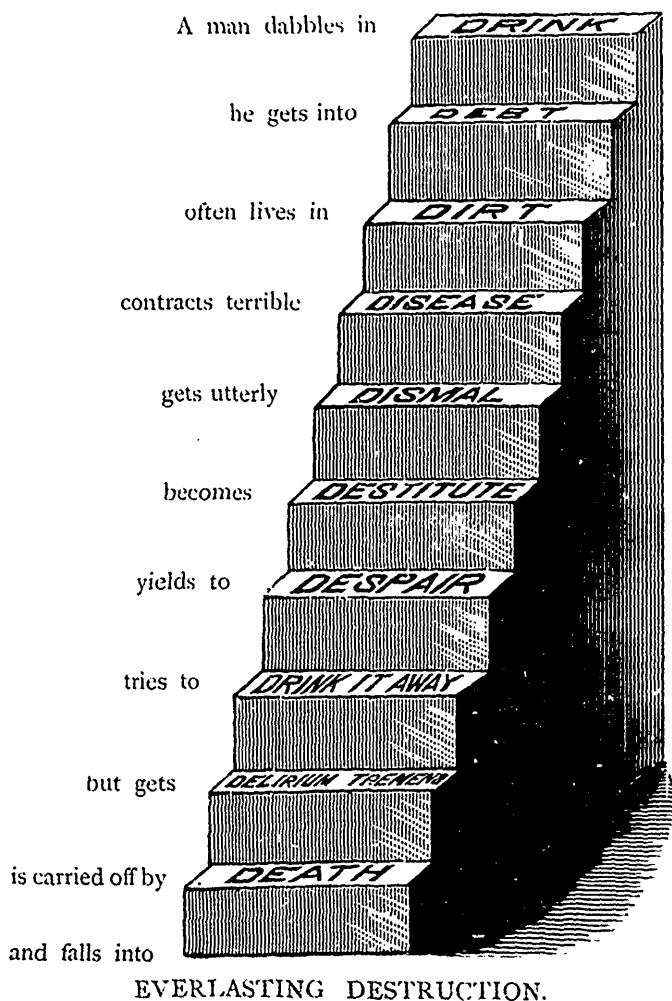
until it becomes by extravagance unlawful, abusing rather than using their liberty. Sinners seek safety in flight, but the slavery has begun though they know it not. They cannot rise; their sight is clouded by the mists of earth, and careless recklessness possesses them. Then a strong overmastering vice or passion seizes them. They struggle against it, but it is too late; they are in the toils. By degrees, though they struggle for freedom, making good resolutions, turning over a new leaf, seeking their own way of escape, their last state becomes worse than their first. Happy they are if at last they realize that all their struggles are useless. Happy the man who has come to the end of himself. "Unless Thou help me I must die." "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Ah! poor soul, there is but one

way of escape. God Himself breaks the chain of sin, and He will if the cry goes up for deliverance. "He saw there was no man, and wondered there was no intercessor, therefore His arm brought salvation." "When we were without strength, Christ died for the

DON'T GO DOWN THIS FLIGHT OF STEPS.

60,000 people annually go down it, though a good many go from top to bottom and don't touch all the steps.



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