



GROUP OF RESCUED ONES.

### The Story of the Children's Home.

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#### II.

STILL, it is not always the cruelty of the parents which brings the children into such straits. Sometimes it is merely the incompetence of the parents, who—though in character respectable—have no capacity at all for understanding and governing their children. Why some persons should be allowed to have children at all, is one of the mysteries of Providence which will never be explained in this world. One of the earliest comers amongst our boys is an illustration of this. His father was a decent man, but quite incapable of ruling his boy. I am afraid, too, that the step-mother's influence did not help the difficulty. At all events, the poor lad had been a wanderer in London for many months.



BEFORE.

During that period his most comfortable time was when, for a fortnight, he had been an inmate in one of Her Majesty's gaols, to which he had been committed for breaking a street lamp. When he was released he had again to know hunger, and cold, and weariness, and when he came to us he was the very picture of misery; for, to all the rest, was added the pain of a festering wound, where a piece of glass had cut the naked foot, which then, for want of proper bandaging, the filth of the streets had polluted and inflamed. Yet he was a fine lad, needing only reasonable treatment and common-sense control. How glad we are we took him when we did! For Charley was our first child in heaven. He caught the small-pox; and though he made a good recovery from that fell disease, he speedily sank into consumption—probably a legacy from those months of misery and exposure. The Good Shepherd called him to himself, to take care of him forever; and now, for twelve years, dear Charley has been in the better land, surely welcoming thither our children as, one after another, they have gone from our care to the Children's Home above.

In truth, the children who have died are not to be pitied—no, not even those who have died without knowing the shelter and comfort of such an institution as ours. To most of them death is better than life. Their existence is, in many cases, merely slow starvation. They are forced to work whilst their limbs are still flexible, and their frames can be distorted. They have no proper hours of rest, and no decent place of rest. Their ears recognise curses before they have learned to know words of affection, and their lips often lisp in blasphemies and filthiness. Each year of their life, so long as they are left in

the company into which they were born, is but a lengthened education in misery and sin; and each year their rescue for God and society becomes more difficult and less hopeful. It makes one's heart sick to know how multitudes of children suffer.

Look at the scene in the following cut. It is a group of children selected out of a hundred scarcely less needy, who were gathered for us recently in Liverpool, by the agents of the *Liverpool Mission*. We were wishful to get down to the very bottom of the social deep, believing that genius might be found there fit for the Redeemer's crown. I have not room here to describe that gathering. It must suffice to say, that a more singular spectacle of wretchedness, vice mingled with shrewdness, and even frolic, was never seen. After long and patient effort, we managed to get the story of their lives from many of them, and selected fifteen of the neediest for reception into the Home. When one of these was asked, "Where did you sleep last night?" he said, "In a cellar, in — street." "Who was with you?" "Only the rats," was his reply, uttered in a perfectly matter-of-fact tone, as though to sleep on the filthy pavement of a damp cellar, whilst the rats from the sewers made a playground of it, was an every night experience of English Christians.

There were three children—two little boys and a girl—who slept night after night upon the floor in a miserable attic, their own father lying on the floor beside them, and next to him a girl of sixteen, who is no relation to any of them. And in this tangle of

misery and sin there were other and darker elements, at which I dare not hint.

When fact after fact of this kind comes to be known to us—and such facts have been stated to us almost every day for more than fourteen years—do you wonder, kind reader, that one's heart burns within one, and that one wonders at times at the supineness, or ignorance, or hardness, which, in the midst of its own comforts and elegancies, does so little to remove such as these? Even as I write, a letter is brought to me from a remote English county. It pleads for a little girl. The mother is a vile woman. The grandmother, in extreme poverty, has been caring for the little child. Last Sunday the grandmother, eighty-one years of age, died; and she was found lying on a table—her only bedding an empty sack, which had contained some straw; but the

daughter had taken the straw from under her aged mother, and got a penny for it, which she had spent straightway in drink!

(To be continued.)

EX-GOVERNOR MERRIEL said that as a business man of forty years' experience he had found the Sunday-school boys the safest.

AN infidel said: "There is one thing that mars all the pleasure of my life." "Indeed," replied his friend, "what is that?" He answered, "I am afraid the Bible is true. If I could know for certain that death is an eternal sleep, I should be happy; my joy would be complete. But here is the thorn that stings me, this is the sword that pierces me—if the Bible is true I am lost forever."



AFTER.