



IN LIQUOR ALLEY.

The Story of the Children's Home.

BY REV. T. BOWMAN STEPHENSON, LL.D.

VII.

THE employment of our boys in farm work is, therefore, a very valuable element in their training; but it does not interfere with their receiving a sound primary education. The school-house is a prominent feature in our hamlet, and the periodical visits

of Her Majesty's Inspector have always resulted in warm commendations of the general appearance of the children, and of their success in school work.

The accompanying cut is a faithful representation of the condition of a lad who was received at Edgworth not many weeks ago. He had become familiar with every phase of neglect, wretchedness, hunger, and nakedness; and mentally and morally his condition was as deplorable as it was physically. Another lad, received about the same time, was ordinarily known in the town in which we found him, as "The dog"—this name having clung to him from the fact that, whilst in the power of a vagabond master, he had performed the part of a dog in low music-halls and singing-saloons, enveloped in the skin of one of those animals. And so we might go on multiplying facts which are only too terribly like each other, but which surely teach us this lesson: That our work at Edgworth is needed, and that the money and pains bestowed upon it are far from lost.

Whilst in a few obstinate and perverse cases our hopes have not been fully met, in all—except a very small percentage—we have

had the joy of seeing the children develop into usefulness and respectability. Two, who were formerly boys with us, are now public school teachers; and several others are skilled workmen, of reputable character. One of our lads is now a respectable cab-proprietor, in a large English town; and others are earning a respectable livelihood in skilled employments.

Of the girls, some now occupy first class situations as domestic servants: whilst several are respectably and happily married.

I have often been reminded in the past few years of two lines in a hymn composed by one of the Wesleys more than a hundred years ago:

"Wild as the untaught Indian's brood
The Christian savages remain."

The past century has witnessed a real improvement in the condition of the English people. I have no faith whatever in the pessimist cry that the country is getting worse year by year. On the contrary, I believe that any one who will compare the state of things now with what prevailed a hundred years ago, and will take a large and wide view of the condition of things, must admit that there is a great and substantial improvement. Still there remain large classes of the people to whom Wesley's sad words are only too applicable. There are thousands in England who, if they are to be called Christian, must certainly be called "Christian savages." And, be it remembered, that, terrible as is the condition of such persons, it is their children who suffer most from it—children who are not responsible for it, and who are helpless to get away from it.

If any one were disposed to doubt the truth of these statements, the following group of facts, taken recently from a daily newspaper, and gathered from the lips of the children



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who are driven by the law into our public schools, will surely convince them:—

M. L.—Father drunk; struck mother and hurt her skull. Mother went raving mad, and has been in a lunatic asylum ever since. Father slipped off a barge when he was drunk, and was drowned. Poor old grandmother has to keep the children.

R. S.—Father gets drunk and beats mother. Is in prison now for assaulting her. Children dread his coming back, he is so cruel to them when he is drunk.

S. H.—Has a fearful black eye. Mother and father both drunk, and hurl things at each other. Missiles often bruise and injure the children.

C. S.—Mother drinks "awful." Dropped baby on the pavement; baby so injured, it died. This is the second baby she has killed accidentally.

M. A. H.—Came to school with arm broken. "Father didn't mean no harm, but he was tight."

Now it is evident, in the case of such children, first, that they need help; second, that they have a claim



AFTER.



EDGWORTH.