

HOME & SCHOOL



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God's Ways Best.

God's ways are always best,
Though ofttimes they may lead
Through gloomy wilderness,
Where feet may tire and bleed;
'Neath scorching sands and burning sky,
No cooling streams or palm-trees nigh,
By hunger oft and thirst sore pressed,
And yet "God's ways are always best."

God's ways are always best,
If He but with us go,
No fear shall dare molest,
No care nor envious foe. [gush,
Clear streams shall from the hard rock
Sweet oases 'midst the hot sands blush,
Soft winds at eve shall soothe our rest,
And so "God's ways are always best."

God's ways are always best, [sea,
Even though through death's dark
Whose waters never rest,
The Father leadeth me.
His hand the rough waves shall divide,
Till we have reached the "other side,"
And safe within His sheltering breast,
And so "God's ways are always best."

Homes of the Poor.

HOMES! Strange sort of home that is where the wretched poor cower and huddle on the cold stones of filthy alleys, as shown in our picture. Yet that is the only home the thousands, yes, thousands of poor boys and girls, wretched men and women in London ever know. Mr. Stephenson tells about one of his midnight hunting expeditions after homeless boys. He found one in a pile of packing boxes, and asked if there were any more there. "Yes," said the boy, and with a little effort he turned out, I think the number was fifty-seven, homeless boys, who had taken refuge in the packing cases.

As the bull's-eye of the policeman's lantern flashes the light on the slumbering groups, it reveals a poor boy and his sister, lying in the London slums like the Bibles in the Wood, only even worse off in their surroundings than they. And this is the wretched result of drink.

Mr. Stephenson, the founder of the Children's Home, was brought as a minister from country duties to reside in the midst of London, and fourteen years ago or more found himself in Lambeth, in the neighbourhood of the notorious New Out. "I soon saw little children," he says, "in a condition that made my heart bleed. There they were, ragged, shoeless, filthy; their faces pinched with hunger, and premature wretchedness staring out of their too bright eyes; and I began to feel that now my time was come. Here were my poor little brothers and sisters, sold to hunger and the devil, and I could not be free of their blood if I did not at least try to

save some of them." Long before he had been brought to the conviction that "the religion which does not fathom the social deeps, and heal the social sores, cannot be Christ's religion."

A few friends were first consulted, and a beginning made, by way of "private venture." A house was taken that was little more than a cot-

rapidly grew upon them, and in like proportion the means came in, so that week by week all debts were paid. A small committee was formed; and a year had hardly passed when the adjoining house was taken, and the number of boys under care increased to thirty-seven. The more that was accomplished, the greater seemed the

pose, and gradually fitted to the still growing work.

The institution has since developed into a wider field; it has now a Certified Industrial School associated with it near Gravesend; it has a Farm Branch near Bolton, in Lancashire; and it has a Reception Home in Canada. Mr. Stephenson is widely known as a Wesleyan minister, and his special work, gradually demanding his almost exclusive attention, could not but be recognized with thankfulness by his brethren in the ministry. The Children's Home has, therefore, been adopted as a Methodist institution. Let Mr. Stephenson's account of one case serve as an illustration of one aspect of the work that he is doing:

"One night I had been out on a search-expedition; and after visiting several likely places, but without success, I was moving homeward about one o'clock in the morning, with feet very weary and heart rather heavy. I came at length to the Mansion House, and was just turning up Threadneedle street. . . . Just at the corner of the Bank of England stood a group of three boys, and a little farther on were two others. It was a strange and moving sight. There, of all places in the world, to meet five boys, as thoroughly heathen as any savages in Africa! . . . I went up to them, and got into conversation with them. They told me many lies, and some truth. But this was plain enough: that they needed a friend and a home—some one to tell them of God, and to teach them a trade. So I offered them a supper, and took them to one of the very few eating shops that were still open. There they had as much to eat as they liked; and then with one accord they came with me, through the silent streets and the now grey dawn, to the Children's Home. There they soon had a welcome; for at any hour of night or day, when God sends us a poor waif, we manage to open the door and spread a table for the famished and forlorn wanderer. The eldest of these boys, whom we will call 'Big Joe,' had been for a long time friendless, save for one brother, whom he saw occasionally. For months before I met Joe, he had been living by his wits—sleeping in low lodging-houses when he could get the money, and coiling himself in any temporary refuge when he had not the necessary pence at command for a bed. His face was sullen and forbidding, yet now and then it would brighten up with the gleam of a kindly heart on it. And we did not despair, for



HOMES OF THE POOR.

tags. "A stable at the back was made the dining room and lavatory. The loft above became a dormitory, and the only playground was a patch some four yards square, with a gateway, meant for the passage of a single cart. And this was workshop, too! But here they contrived to receive and shelter twenty poor lads. The work

need; the applications for admission were soon too numerous; children were being turned almost daily from the doors, and beyond them and around them was a great world of wretchedness all untouched. Another effort was made, and premises at length found on the site of the present buildings, which were adapted to the pur-