

WHOSE CHILDREN GO ASTRAY.

When one trained in a Christian home goes astray, commits crime, so much is said of it that the impression is sometimes left that those who are well trained are more likely to fall into sin than are others. Christian parents may get comfort and encouragement from the following statistics given in the Annual Report of the New York State Prison Reformatory, as given in the New York *Evangelist*:

"Here are interesting and suggestive facts concerning the influence of heredity and environment during childhood upon the development of character.

The law permits to be sent to the Elmira Reformatory young men between the ages of sixteen and thirty who have been convicted of a felony for the first time. Fifty-nine per cent. of the inmates of the institution, are under twenty years of age.

Here are youths, then, who in most cases may be said to have graduated from the home into the prison. No one can doubt the fact of original sin in the sense of hereditary moral taint and incompetency, who reads the story of the antecedents and moral condition of these young criminals. It is plain that blood and home make the man. In the cases of forty-nine per cent. of these youthful felons, certain or probable descent from drunken parents can be traced; fifty-eight per cent. had parents who were either entirely without education, or could simply read and write; eighty-two per cent. were the children of poor people. The character of the homes of fifty-two per cent. was "positively bad"; of only nine per cent. could it be called "good"; and sixty-three per cent. were at home up to the time of crime. The character of the associations which surrounded these youths before they fell into crime, was "good" in the cases of only two per cent.; "positively bad" for fifty-nine per cent. Of forty per cent. it could be said that when they entered the institution, they showed positively no susceptibility to moral impression; thirty-one per cent. showed "possibly some." Only seventeen per cent. of these youths just from home, gave upon examination evidence of possessing any "moral sense, filial affection, sense of shame, or sense of personal loss."

How many homes have we in our towns and cities which are graduating into society such characters as these—bodies

saturated from birth with the virus of evil appetite and tendency, souls poisoned by the atmosphere of vile and contagious association which they have always breathed, stunted and dwarfed, if not deformed, in all the higher qualities and attributes of humanity? Society and the Church can do more than they have yet done to heal the bitter fountains from which such poisonous streams of life flow. We must find a way to brighten and sweeten, purify and ennoble these homes."

THE SOLID ROCK.

A gentleman once wished to examine a deep coal mine. Coming to the mouth of the shaft, he noticed a rope by which he supposed the miners descended. Taking hold slowly he let himself down. When at last he came to the end of the rope, he found to his horror that he had not reached the bottom of the mine; he realized that he had made a fatal mistake. He could not re-ascend, and to let go his hold was to fall perhaps hundreds of feet, to the dark rocks below. All around was darkness. He called wildly for help, but there came no response. At last, giving up to his fate, he let go the rope and fell. He dropped about six inches and stood safe and sound upon the rock bottom of the mine. That rope was long enough for the tall miners, and the shortest of them had learned to have faith to let go without fear. They knew the firm rock would receive and hold them. Just so we may know that Christ will hold us, if we let go everything else and trust Him.

STRAYING FROM THE GOSPEL.

Preachers gradually get further and further from the Gospel, and its atoning sacrifice, in proportion as they delude themselves with the idea that, after all, sin is a small matter, and its punishment a questionable severity. Those also who look for a future opportunity for the impenitent may well consider it to be of small consequence whether men now believe in Jesus, or remain in unbelief. Such a taking of things easy cannot suggest itself to me, for I believe in everlasting punishment.—C. H. Spurgeon.

It is a great mercy to enjoy the gospel of peace, but a greater to enjoy the peace of the gospel.—Hannah Lee.