



THE LATE JAMES BARLOW.

## The Story of the Children's Home.

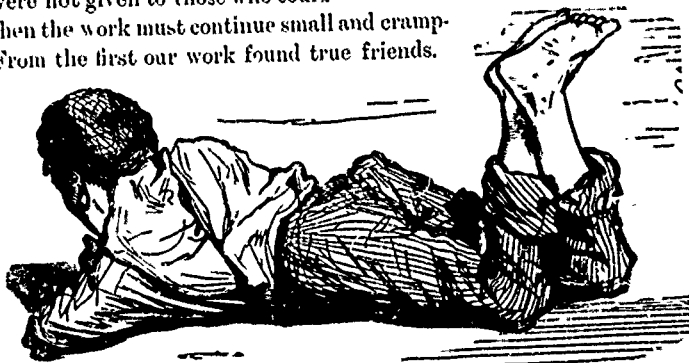
BY REV. T. BOWMAN STEPHENSON, LL.D.

### VI.

I HAVE occupied more space than, perhaps, fairly belongs to it, in describing the Home in London. But, in fact, the principles of our work are the same at all the Branches; and it is, perhaps, most easy and most appropriate to set them forth in connection with that one of our institutions which is the mother of all the rest.

Happily, though our work commenced in London, it did not stop there. I doubt if it could ever have become so influential and so variously useful if its entire development had taken place from one root. On the contrary, it had not only life in it, but that life showed itself after the mode of those trees whose branches become roots in their turn, and so establish with the earth new connections of vitality and power.

Of course, the question of extension resolved itself in one of means. If money were forthcoming, the work could advance; if the spirit of liberality were not given to those who could help, then the work must continue small and cramped. From the first our work found true friends.



STREET ARAB.

The gift of the Wheatsheaf Farm, by Mr. James Barlow, was the point from which we date the permanent enlargement and established position of our enterprise. From the moment at which a respected merchant "took stock" in the enterprise, by the gift

of one hundred acres of land, and five thousand pounds in cash, people began to think that this was not a small thing—not the toy of a little coterie of well-meaning people, but a serious and important work. The moral effect of that gift, not less than its money value, will always entitle the generous donor to be considered one of the founders, as he has proved one of the truest friends, of our enterprise.

The farm is to be found on the

breezy uplands, some seven miles from Bolton-le-Moors. When it came into our possession, one square and massive house stood alone upon it. It was a notorious public house, in which gambling and nameless debaucheries had been practised, and in reference to whose history dark tales were whispered beside the fires of the lonely farm-houses round about. It ceased to be a public-house as soon as Mr. Barlow bought it, and, in declining to continue the license, one good service at any rate was done to the neighbourhood.

But much more had yet to be done—a new purpose must claim the place—and many alterations, corresponding to its new purpose, must be made. One initial difficulty, however, presented itself. Who should take charge

of this new Branch? It was two hundred miles from London. Though he might retain the chief direction of its affairs, the Principal could not actually and personally govern it; and there was needed one who was in full sympathy with the work, who would be thoroughly loyal to the institution as a whole, and who could be trusted with a large measure of personal authority and considerable liberty of action. Here, happily, Providence gave us the right person.

When, with the first colony of boys, our friends took possession of the old public house, the aspect of things was very different from that which the farm now presents. Then, the square gray house and the still less comely barn were the only buildings on the site. Alterations—



GOVERNOR'S HOUSE.

internal and external, with the addition of wings right and left—have completely altered the appearance of the old Wheatsheaf; so that if the spirits of the revellers of former years ever revisit the scenes of former exploits, they must surely stare with their ghostly eyes in astonishment at the change, and must be puzzled to find their way about the building they formerly knew so well. In fact, that main building is very like the Irishman's knife, which had new blades and a new handle, but was the old knife still.

The central building now consists of Wheatsheaf House—so called in memory of its former estate; of Bolton House, which commemorates the generous gift of friends in that good town; of Woodville, a gift from South Africa; and of a wing situated on the extreme right, and which cannot be brought into the field of our illustration, but which commemorates the liberality of friends in South Australia during my recent visit to that colony.

The central building, however, forms only a small part of the hamlet, or, I might almost call it, village, which constitutes the Lancashire Children's



OLD WHEATSHEAF.



SCHOOL-HOUSE.