

# Northern Messenger

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## The Police Orphanage.

( 'Sunday at Home.' )

All ready for night duty—helmet brushed, buttons bright, belt polished, but he cannot go without a good-night kiss to the bonnie bairns.

So the 'gude wife' brings the light and both look fondly in pride and thankfulness on the rosy cheeks and closed eye-lids, the curly locks and little dimpled hands straying about on the bed-clothes.

'God bless them!' and off he goes, out

one morning the house is darkened. The children, grown older now, but yet too young to comprehend their loss, wonder why mother weeps with the baby in her arms, and why father lies so still—asleep in a slumber that knows no carthly waking.

It may have been the burglar's hand, or a runaway horse, or a sudden chill in a frosty winter's night that acted as the Pilgrim's arrow (in Bunyon's dream) to call him home.

But whatever was the messenger, the home is left desolate, the bread-winner is gone,

arate police forces in Great Britain and Ireland, with a total 'strength' (to use a technical term); of 61,320. The numbers are roughly speaking, distributed as follows:—The Metropolitan force (including Middlesex, and parts of Surrey, Kent, and Herts, and H. M. dockyards, government works, etc.) has a strength of 15,213. The city of London has 928, the docks and markets, 343; Scotland, 5043; Ireland, 14,461; and the counties, cities and boroughs of England and Wales (outside London) give occupation to the remaining 25,332.

For many years there has existed near Twickenham a well-known and excellent orphanage for the benefit of the Metropolitan and city police forces; but until the Christian Police Association took up the cause of the provincial police orphans, no institution of the kind was to be found for those outside the Metropolitan area. In 1889, through its instrumentality, a small Orphan Home was established at Manchester for the benefit of the Manchester and Salford police forces only, and in 1890 a little home for children was opened at Hove, Brighton, simultaneously, with the Police Convalescent Home, which has since proved such a benefit to thousands of sick and injured policemen. The first means for this joint undertaking were supplied by a generous friend, who privately furnished sufficient to pay the rent and taxes for three years. Before the end of that time the little orphanage had developed into a separate institution requiring an establishment of its own.

Sad, indeed, were some of the cases brought before the committee. Here is a boy whose father had been called away through injuries received on duty; here are two little brothers left fatherless suddenly one bitterly cold Christmas Eve, the mother in her lonely cottage with eight children under thirteen years of age and a little infant born three weeks after the father had been laid to rest in the village churchyard. Here are two other little brothers whose widowed mother had worked for them till health and strength completely failed, and she was found lying in one room with the last remains of her furniture—penniless and dying of consumption. Glad, indeed, she was to see her little ones well housed and clothed before she 'fell asleep in Christ.' A sergeant dying from the effects of injuries received on duty, commended his little son and daughter to the Hon. Secretary, begging that they might be kept together and brought up in a Christian home. Some of the latest arrivals are two little ones of six and eight years of age, whose father, after twenty-two years' of good service in the force, was attacked one Saturday night by a crowd of roughs determined on the rescue of a prisoner, and so terribly kicked by them, within sight of his own home, that he was at last brought in to lie for a week in agony and then die. Many of the children are both fatherless and motherless. Among those received last year were three from one family whose parents died within a few weeks of each other.

In nearly all these cases the police forces have given donations to help with the first expenses of the children, and it is pleasant to see the interest taken by the men in the children of their late comrades. Many are the little gifts gladly sent by members of the forces, showing their kind remembrance of the children. A bag of potatoes or a parcel



THE GOOD-NIGHT KISS.

into the cold dark night, with a true loving heart beating beneath his uniform.

Presently coming across a lonely ragged little one wandering, lost in the deserted streets—left homeless and helpless through 'father,' and, alas! perhaps 'mother,' having spent their last for drink—the constable's heart burns as he thinks of the comfort and peace in his home which his own little ones enjoy, and he speaks a gentle word to the frightened child, and breathes a prayer that God may stay the plague of intemperance.

Shielded and kept through the long night hours, he returns to the hearty welcome, the warm breakfast, and the children's merry prattle.

But change the scene. A few years later,

and who shall now care for the little ones?

It is with thoughts of this kind in our mind and memory that we ask our readers to accompany us to the Provincial Police Orphanage at Gatton Point, Redhill. This, as its name indicates, is a home for the benefit of the orphan children of the police of all the provincial forces (county, city and borough) in England and Wales.

Perhaps few of our readers have more than a vague idea of the size and importance to the general well-being of our great Peace Army, the police forces of the United Kingdom. Some may, perchance, be surprised to hear that there are no less than 252 sep-