

Signor Bernatto, who taught these little ragged urchins the simplest truths of the Gospel, taught them also the efficacy of prayer by leading them to ask for what they really wished ; and among other things for a suitable, permanent home. This prayer has eventually been answered. In the winter of 1887 the present home was secured after two changes of residence, and on March 10th thirty-six boys celebrated their sixth anniversary in the new, appropriate quarters.

These boys are all Italian, though not all Venetian. Several come from distant parts of Italy, being recommended by the evangelical minister of the place in which they live. But the majority have been brought to the home by their widowed mothers, who, being left with several children, have applied for help in vain to the priests and the congregation of charity.

Now and then the priests, or some relation, have taken a boy away from the Protestant influence of the Instituto Evangelico, but as a general rule those placed within the shelter of the home remain there until they are able to earn their own livelihood. And formerly, if a boy chose a professional career, he was enabled to enter the Marco Polo College ; but that plan, fraught with various disadvantages, has recently been abandoned, and a professor engaged at the home itself expressly for the student boys.

This new teacher is a converted priest, who, at much personal sacrifice, has lately come out from the Church of Rome, and whose sincere desire is to prepare the boys to become ministers of the Gospel. As he held a high office in the Romish Church, and was also a professor in a Roman Catholic seminary, he is very well fitted for his new work ; and the boys themselves are delighted with the arrangement. It secures for them as good instruction and more individual attention than they formerly received at the Marco Polo Ginnasio, and the state educational regulations allow them to go up at the end of the scholastic year for the college examinations.

One of the very first boys who came to that small, dark room, and who was rescued from the very worst surroundings, is now an officer in the custom house. Another of those very early pupils who "took to the use of the saw and plane" is at present employed in one of the first shops of Venice, and has lately "developed a decided talent for sculpturing." Still others are earning good livings as printers, which trade was started not long after the carpenter work was begun. Surely, the little seed, planted in faith and watered by prayer, has taken root and sprouted and grown.

In the eleventh report, just issued, Mrs. Hammond states that there are now fifty-eight boys in the home ; and she closes her account of the past year's work in these words :

"After eleven years' experience, my conviction is deeply rooted that the boys' home in Venice is the *Lord's work* ; that it was He who planted it, and who has thus far maintained it. And, therefore, notwithstanding financial discouragement, I desire to 'cast all my care on Him,' in the confident hope that He will in some way supply the need for its continuance and progress according to His good pleasure."