

It is to the wretched homes, and to the more wretched parents' hearts that we must chiefly ascribe juvenile delinquency. Its hiding-places may be fixed, in greater or less degrees, in all our great cities,—for this vice is almost wholly confined to those centres of population and commerce. A living picture will, better than words, describe the evils consequent to these localities. The following is part of a report recently made on juvenile crime, by several of the magistrates and most influential gentlemen of Newcastle, and Gateshead, and their neighbourhood :—

"We think it right in stating a few cases to show the actual circumstances under which many children become criminal, and to enable persons to form their own judgment on the propriety of punishing such children by whipping or imprisonment, and on the possibility of reformation under our present system.

"In M.—'s Entry there are 45 families; of these 45 mothers, 40 are more or less addicted to drink; in some houses, six or eight persons may be found sleeping in one room, without any separation or distinction of sex or age; the language is most obscene—the place is the picture of misery.

"In D.—'s Court, there is a woman with her two sons, one 19 years of age, a miserable, sickly boy; the other 10 years of age. They live in a room 10 feet by 5; it is nearly dark, and contains no furniture. The mother is an habitual drunkard, and the children, without food and nearly naked, are driven upon the streets, where they exist by begging.

"A. B.—lost her mother when she was fourteen; her father, a drunken profligate, sold every article of furniture, and turned her on the streets. At seventeen, she was found in a dark, damp cellar in G.—Street, where she had lain down to die—and in fact she died shortly after.

"Mr. and Mrs. E., in B.—, can earn 28s a-week; they are frequently drunk for a week together; they have two little girls, seven and nine years of age, who are utterly neglected, and, associated with all the worst children of the street, are being trained for a life of vice and misery.

"Two sisters, S.—, their mother died when they were ten and thirteen years of age. Their father left them to starve, and occasionally locked them out at night. They were encouraged by other girls and by an old woman to steal from shop doors, and the articles stolen were disposed of at night. Their father eventually married again, and turned them on the streets."

Thus it is, that thoroughly to eradicate juvenile crime we must wage fierce war with all its prevalent inciting causes:—the over-crowding of families, with its unavoidable result, the intermixture of both sexes and all ages; parental neglect and vice, utter ignorance, unbridled licentiousness, brutal intemperance, destitution, filth, corruption and misery. Preventive or reformatory schools, like fever or cholera hospitals, are, from their very nature, merely temporary institutions. We must repress, and not merely provide for the ravages of this great moral epidemic. Common sense would teach this; and glad we are to find the veterans in the cause supporting this view of the question. One witness most forcibly draws attention to the great need of primary education; sanitary reform found also most warm advocates. Some would deal with the lodging-houses; others, the licensing system; and another would suppress the

beer-houses. These may indicate the further line of inquiry into this dark social problem. For, why disguise it? we have yet only reached the surface of the malady. Nor, need we grow weary or disheartened. When we have traced these cancerous roots of the malady as they extend and ramify to the very vitals of our social state,—when we have laid bare all this dread anatomy, then, and not till then, may we conquer the disease. And, with a christian, large, unprejudiced spirit, this may soon and speedily be done. Another commission of inquiry would mightily help this; but so, too, would a larger and more liberal extension and support of those counteractive agencies already in use,—the social and sanitary reform movements, improved dwellings, model lodging-houses, and the other seeds of good, already so widely scattered throughout the land. With a more thorough and concentrated action of the religious, educational, social and sanitary forces,—there might soon be no need of ragged schools.

But this can never be,—nay, all our efforts will be vain and fruitless,—a very rolling of the stone of Sisyphus, unless we cast out from amongst us that agent which has made those fathers so brutal, those mothers so sunken and depraved.

The Signal Star.

BY FANNY FORRESTER.

"Come back, come back my Childhood,"—L. E. L.

I'd not recall my childhood:
With all its sweet delight,
Its simple, bird-like gladness,
It was not always bright.
Even morning had her tear-drops,
And spring her cloudy sky,
And on the fairest cradle
I've seen the shadows lie.

I'd not recall my childhood,
Though tender memories throng
Around its rosy portals,
Prelude to life's song;
The full voice living chorus
Is swelling round me now,
And a rosier light is resting
Upon my maiden brow.

I have made a changeful journey
Up the hill of life since morn,
I have gathered flowers and blossoms,
I've been pierced by many a thorn.
But from out the core of sorrow,
I have plucked a jewel rare,
The strength which mortals gather
In their ceaseless strife with care.

Now I grasp life's burning beaker.
And howe'er the bubbles glow,
I'll pause not 'till I've tasted
The deepest wave below:
Though bitter dregs may mingle,
The crimson tide shall roll,
In full and fearless currents,
Through the fountains of my soul.

No! I'd go not back to childhood,
From the radiant flush of noon,
And when evening closes round me,
I crave only one boon;
Amid the valley's darkness,
Its dangers and its dread,
The signal star of Judah
To shine above my head.