

CITY WAIFS.

ONE of the best articles on the city waif problem written about this time came from the pen of Mr. J. S. Willison, now so well known as managing editor of the *Evening News*. It appeared in the *Globe* of October 19, 1888, under the title "Observations":

THE CHILDREN.

In the speech made by Mr. W. H. Howland at the meeting at which he was first put forward as a candidate for the Mayoralty of Toronto, he spoke of the "wild children of the city." The phrase was an apt characterisation of the poor, wretched, desolate waifs who are thrown upon the streets from homes of vice and drunkenness; the offspring of weakness and wickedness; the progeny of the sisterhood of shame; the children of parents whom misfortune dogs all down through their hard, sad careers. For not all of these children come out from the haunts of vice. Many of them are thrust upon the streets from homes where gaunt want holds empire, and parents are smitten by disease and affliction or struggle hopelessly to gather the bread of life for the little ones God has committed to their keeping. We are a prosperous, self-satisfied community, and apt to think that these distressing pictures of youthful crime and misery and vagrancy that glare out from the literature of the slums are all laid in remote centres of population, in the great cities of the United States or of the Old Land, and that we have no duty pressing on us to concern ourselves with those problems or to seek and save the wild children, for we know not that they are at our very elbows and are being fashioned into hardened criminals by the methods of treatment which prevail even in this young and liberal and advanced community.