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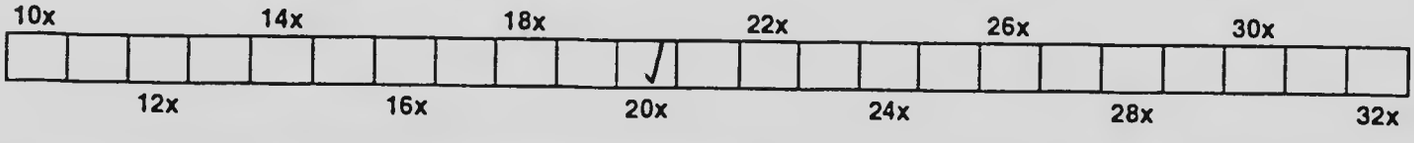

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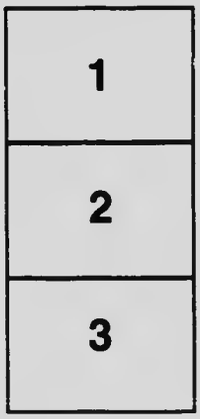

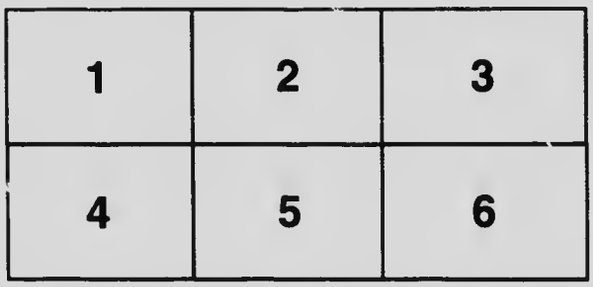

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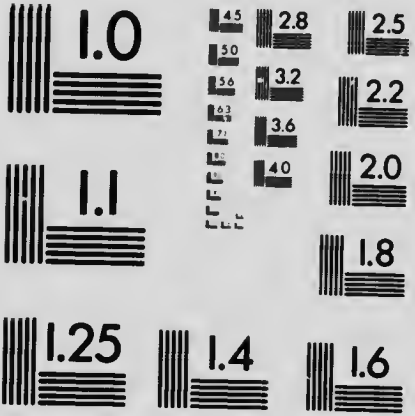

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THE BOY WHO DID GROW UP

THE BOY WHO DID GROW UP

By

NEWMAN FLOWER

With an Introductory Note by
Sir J. M. BARRIE

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To

FRED

The Boy in the Green Blazer

Contents

Note

THE author of this book has had the happy idea that it would be a good thing to make the world a better place. He proposes to begin with our own country, which is another happy idea. His outlook is that every child born into this island should have an equal chance; and before we have time to intrude the difficulties, he shows in these fascinating pages how it could be done. It is already being triumphantly done for a few thousand girls and boys in the Barnardo Homes, whose work every statesman should be compelled by law to familiarise himself with before he decides what would be the best memorial of the War.

J. M. BARRIE.

The Boy Who Did Grow Up

CHAPTER I

THE GARDEN OF YOUTH

"The mind of a child in each generation is like a blank page upon which good or evil training produces indelible results."—BENJAMIN KIDD.

§ 1

THE boy in the green blazer looked at me, and I looked at the boy in the green blazer. Then his face broke into a smile that seemed to suggest that we had known each other for years. But until we almost collided coming round the corner of the empty street we had never met before.

I hesitated and laughed.

"I've got an idea that I'm lost," I said.

"Lost?" he repeated. I do not think he quite believed me.

"Yes. I've never been this way before, and my bump of direction has let me down. I don't know whether I am walking towards the station or away from it."

He stood smiling up at me, both hands in his

blazer pockets. He had a strong, healthy face, and clear intelligent eyes with long lashes. He seemed to me then the most intensely happy lad I had ever seen, full of the joy of living, glad of the sunlight, fearless of the future. And the future to a boy like that is just some glorious thing that is going to happen. Two picotees were stuck jauntily in his buttonhole with a big brass pin, and his green knitted tie had broken loose from its moorings and showed a desire to climb towards his ears.

"You're not lost," he said. "Station's down there. Mile and a half or so, I think."

"Plenty of trains to London?" I inquired.

"Don't know, sir. I very seldom go in trains."

The remark struck me as peculiar. I thought all boys went in trains; that to boys trains were the essence of life. I studied his face carefully. I placed him at that uncertain age which hangs about thirteen, when childhood slips into boyhood unawares. And I should have named him for a public-school boy. The build of him, the full-budding vigour of youth and politeness of speech—these things and perhaps the green blazer, gave me a mental picture of him strolling towards the cricket pitch while the parent watched the scion of his house from the pavilion.

And yet he seldom went in trains!

"Trains aren't everything," I said agreeably.

His face glowed.

"Engines are, sir. I love engines, machinery, things that go on their own."

He went on talking and assured me that what he didn't know about engines——

"You odd youth!" I said. "And where do you live, anyway?"

He pointed up the road towards a large house that stood in among the trees. About it I could see the red tiles of villa roofs.

"Come and see," he suggested.

There are boys who instantly arrest one by some cause or accident of temperament which recalls memories of one's own youth. It may not be what they say or do, but perchance it is an influence which starts a piece of mental machinery that carries one back. This boy and his engines! *My* engines that had gone out to all sorts of impossible destinations in that wonderful year—thirteen! So I found myself walking by his side towards the house among the trees. Time and the railway station seemed now inconsequent. I wanted to see his home and his parents and know how he lived, and yet it did not occur to me that there should be anything different about his home that had made him suggest that I should see it.

A younger boy in a blue jersey was standing near the large gates as we went in, and he smiled recognition at my friend.

"Your brother?" I hazarded.

"One of our family," was the odd answer. "We live in the same house."

"And how many are there in your family?"

"Forty-five, sir."

Now there are families and families, but I have never heard of forty-five in a family yet, and I told this boy so. His reply was to the effect that the average family might contain any number; he knew nothing about that; but there were forty-five in his.

"And who looks after you all?" I asked.

"Mum. She bosses the whole forty-five of us."

Nothing would shake his loyalty to the number forty-five.

"Look here," I said, "what you are trying to tell me in the most roundabout way is that this is your school."

"Indeed it is not, sir," he protested. "This is my home. That's the house there. There is a stump in the front where they cut down a whopping big tree."

He pointed to a large, picturesque villa of red brick, the kind of house that commands a good rent in a high-class suburb. As I looked, a number of boys emerged from the open door with a tornado of yells like a crowd of scampering Indians; boys of all ages, who hurried after a leader carrying a cricket bat.

"That's my brother—that chap with the bat," said the boy in the green blazer. "Fine bowler he is."

"Then the others aren't your brothers, of course?"

"Oh, yes, sir. In a roundabout way. We're all the same family, and we have the same mother, and we all live in there. Forty-five of us."

"This is a mysterious sort of place. What's it called?"

The boy glanced up.

"Dr. Barnardo's Garden City, Woodford. I thought you knew, sir."

"Dr. Barnardo's——" I began, and stopped.

The name Barnardo was familiar to me as that of a child salvage system that had its being in the slums. And I vaguely remembered an advertisement which had upon it something about no destitute child being refused admission. I had always figured out Barnardo's as a place in some hidden recess of London where dirty, starved and beaten children were collected and washed and clothed and fed.

Somehow, whenever I thought about Barnardo's, my imagination never led me beyond a slum. I thought in my insular fashion that this creation of the slums, worthy though it undoubtedly was, must perforce remain in the slums. The name to me had suggested some building amidst squalor, and worthy people fighting the pain of children; all of them, the rescuers and the rescued, down in a big black hole of the East End. And sometimes a party of children going out into the country for a brief time—had I not met them in crowded trains?—and coming back to the big black hole again. Then the children growing up with just a cherished memory of a green field, and the people who had fought for them being very tired of the unending horror of slumdom, but sticking

bravely to it for the sake of some big ideal. You gave money to Barnardo's believing you were saving some helpless little urchin you had never seen, and never would see, from more pain, or bought him thereby a piece or two of memory of a green field with a real cow upon it. So I had thought.

What had been an idea had become a mentally created certainty. And it was all wrong. Hopelessly wrong. Just as wrong as the man who imagines Japan all kimonos and paper umbrellas and pagoda places in iris fields discovers himself to be when he walks down the main street of Tokio for the first time.

The boy in the green blazer glanced up at me as if he wondered why I had paused in what I was about to say. But the miracle of the thing, the fulfilment of the discovery was—himself. Slum children! Destitute children never refused admission! This boy seemed no slum child; he bore no hall mark of the slums. And I found it difficult to believe that he had ever been destitute.

We had walked some way in silence, and now I stopped and looked about me. We appeared to have emerged by some unobserved transition from the ordinary world, and to have discovered a new one. Behind the big, grey house were wide stretches of lawn, and beds ablaze with flowers in the borders. At one side a wide gravel path ran straight ahead, and dropped away among the trees. At intervals along the path, detached at equal dis-

tances, were many more red brick villas, creeper-covered some of them; villas with wide windows through which the sunlight splashed into large rooms. And behind these villas were ranks of great trees that enfolded this place in a circle of protection, so that all the rush and clamour of the outer world was unheard and far away.

Boys were everywhere. The villas spilled out boys like little shoals of minnows that emerged from the secret fastnesses of pigmy bays; boys who laughed and called and ran hither and thither on the inconsequent errands of youth. All the morning of life seemed concentrated for them here in this flame of summer sun.

I had almost forgotten the boy in the green blazer.

"You've brought me on a wonderful adventure," I told him presently.

"And p'raps you've missed your train!"

"I don't care if I've missed a dozen trains! I've discovered something."

My interest drew his confidence.

"You know," he said looking at me doubtfully, "I didn't think I should like it when I came here first."

"But you do now?"

His expression gave me the answer.

"And how long have you been here?"

He thought for a moment.

"A year and four months," he replied.

"Tell me about it," I said. I led the way to

a seat at the side of the lawn, and we sat down and talked for some time. I found that, whatever tragedy this boy's life concealed, and whatever his former suffering may have been—I discovered afterwards that he had suffered—there had come to him a new outlook, a great ambition. He had been given a new chance and nothing should keep him down. His feet were firm on the ladder, for the spirit of him had risen and spread itself to strength that should conquer difficulty. Always the bravest thing in life is the mind of a boy, for it imagines nothing save achievement in a world of difficulty.

We talked of endless things—machines and "things that go on their own," the sea, books, sport,—he assured me that he lived for sport—even pirates and ice creams. I asked him then what he was going to be when he grew up.

"I would like to be an electrical engineer. If—if only I could!"

He spoke of it as some cherished secret which he was almost jealous of sharing with another. He seemed to be looking down on a promised land which he feared would be barred against him.

"You *will* be!" I declared. "Remember that some day—the day you take your first money. Our sitting here. And what I told you. *You will be!*"

He smiled at that. The assurance seemed to clear something from his mind, and it was not an assurance idly given. I knew that he would reach any goal for which he strove. It was manifest upon his face. Something had planted it there. I did

not know then what it was, because I had not begun to understand Barnardoism. Nor did I know it for the science it is—a science as live and wonderful for humanity as the discoveries of Harvey or Lister.

"I've thought about it a lot," he said with fresh confidence after a pause. "My father—my real father, that is—was a schoolmaster, and he wanted me to grow up to be a schoolmaster. He was fond of sports, a runner and a cyclist, and he taught me to love all sports. The one thing he couldn't teach me to like was schoolmastering. I wanted something more active. Engineering. I wanted to become really great and invent something. I thought and thought. And it seemed to me that electricity would be the big thing after the War. They've only just begun to discover things about electricity."

"It will be a tremendous world to you boys—electricity," I said.

He nodded.

"Then you think I'm right?"

"Of course you're right. Go for it, old chap. You'll get there."

Then the boy in the green blazer suggested that, however many more trains I missed, I must see the swimming bath. It was his show place. He had the same pride in it as I might have had when, piloting a country yokel through London for the first time, I showed him St. Paul's.

It was a large building with wide open doors, and in it a bath extensive enough to hold limitless

humanity. A babel of shouting smote us with a blast of sound as we entered. Two or three hundred boys were standing four or five deep around the bath cheering the swimmers who were engaged in a race. Boys of all ages from three to thirteen; boys barefooted and boys with one stocking on and one stocking off; boys bareheaded and clad in any decent garb that was ever invented for boys.

There were no two boys alike. Some were chubby-faced and freckled; others thin and pinched, indicative still of the hell-pits from which they had been salved. Some faces carried ugly scars, the permanent remembrance of bestial parents. On some the shadow of sadness was slowly passing under a new influence, as if the coming day were fighting back the night. On others the sun of the morning had settled firmly, to flame into noontide with the years and the new chance. But in one respect all these different faces were alike—*they were all laughing*.

The race finished in a roar, and in the final scramble to the edge to see the winner grasp the railing a brave of three years old was pushed into the water by the sheer press of excited humanity behind him. Instantly a boy of nine, who could not swim, jumped to the rescue, although it was the deep end. It was a little bit of heroism, maybe the first blossoming of championship for something weaker.

After the double rescue a new race started. Then I felt someone pulling my sleeve. A round,

laughing face looked up at me—a face crowned with dazzling red hair.

"Sir, would you like to see our great swimmer swim under water with his eyes open?"

I assured the round face in its aureole of flame that nothing on earth would please me better, and a cat-call that would have pierced a storm at sea was the result. But in the force of the pandemonium no one heeded.

He of the round face pulled my sleeve again.

"The whole length of the bath 'e can go and back again, and pick up anything. That's 'im, the cross-eyed one."

My new friend had evidently discovered the most marvellous thing in his world. When the race was over I resolved to test this prodigy. I hurled a sixpence far into the centre of the bath.

"'Im—the-cross-eyed-one" had just scrambled out, but he saw the coin drop. He slithered in with the neatness of a seal off its favourite rock. A white figure turned heavily now and then in the deep water. Twice it came round in circles. The multitude beside the bath was silent; no one appeared to breathe. Then the waters broke and a hand holding aloft the sixpence came up.

"Marvellous," I said to the red coronet, and it was as pretty a piece of swimming as I had ever seen.

"Pick it up with 'is mouth, 'e can," the red gentleman assured me in a manner that suggested that I might test the statement.

"Well, Tommy——" I began.

"My name ain't Tommy, sir."

"What is it, then?"

"Brown, sir."

"And where do you come from, Tommy—I mean, Brown?"

"Devonshire, sir. My father's a mason near Newton Abbot. And I'm going to be an engineer, sir."

He was a filing cabinet of information which voluntarily opened itself.

"Can you swim, Tommy—Brown?"

"Good as a duck, sir."

"With your eyes open under water?"

"No, sir. But I'm learnin'." He was honest. Frank as the day.

Boyhood, inquisitive and searching, has before everything the strain of human kindness. Beaten and broken though it may be, it retains the first ethics of that human kindness—kindness towards kindred explorers in a world of trouble. Tommy Brown was a happening in adversity, unwanted, almost unacknowledged, as I afterwards discovered. He might have dropped out of the world and no one would have mourned. He might have been no more than an entry on the Births and Deaths register. But, given a chance, he pushed up his head and found his friendships. When he rooted as a definite thing in a world of life he began to feel, to appreciate and understand, then to go on again to a new stage, sure of himself, enjoying his day,

and beginning to help others to enjoy theirs. I found afterwards that he was a little obscure figure of subdued heroism; a small Stranger of the Third Floor Back type, about whom nobody knew very much save that he was a good sort.

§ 2

We discovered "Father" as we emerged from the swimming-bath.

"Hallo, Fred," he called to the boy in the green blazer. "What's going on now?"

"I'm a marauder," I explained. "I broke in here. Like a lost dog looking for another dog's kennel."

"You mean you want us to adopt you?" he laughed. "Come and have a look round, unless Fred has already shown you the sights. We're always glad when people come to see these boys. Ever seen such a family, eh?"

I assured him that I had never seen a happier.

"Seven hundred, remember. And no better family in England. No family squabbles! The bigger we grow the better we dovetail in. There are no undesirable members in this family."

"Nor as much happiness in fifty schools from what I can see of it," I suggested.

"But we aren't a school. That's where you people go wrong. We're a family. We don't marshal and discipline. That kills character, and chief of all our aim is to preserve it. We've no

hide-bound laws and regulations. No soul-killing business. We're out for expansion—mind expansion, freedom. We teach freedom and happiness. And don't forget that the most ecstatic happiness in the world is that of a boy. He'll make the lark singing in the heavens seem a sorry fellow." He pointed to a group of smiling boys who came out of the bath and saluted with a cheery "Good morning" as they passed. "Look at them. Aren't they *lads!*"

"Real youth," I said. "And how do you do it?"

"Look at that—out of the black holes of England! How do we do it? We don't do it. We let it do itself. There is no law for handling boyhood, because no two boys are alike. That's what you have to remember; that's what the average school cannot understand. In a boy the stuff is there; you only have to coax it out and let it grow as the fine thing it is. Then you watch and see what he's made of."

"And he isn't what you thought he was?"

"Probably just the opposite. That's the queer thing about human nature; it alters the pattern every time. And every little life must be treated differently. You cannot standardise Youth, nor make a full character out of a lop-sided system."

We had walked some way up the path, and when I looked round for the boy in the green blazer I found him disappearing into a group of boys who

were carrying boxing gloves. The conversation had ceased to interest him.

Influence working upon individuality makes the success of Barnardoism. No child is born without individuality, but many parents gamble with the individuality of the child. Especially is this so in the slums where such influence as is brought to bear on the young life is almost always decadent. Therefore, when ultimately the children reach the City of Youth, they are often warped in personality, their minds have shrunk, and their belief in humanity has been stilled. Such self-assertiveness as remains is either that for defence or evil.

But on arrival the new influence immediately begins to work. A child's mind is like a plant that has grown in the dark, and now finds itself plunged into broad sunshine to which it quickly responds. The boy discovers. Influence—the influence of other boys is the greatest teacher in the world. And youth is plastic.

The mind of a boy, any boy, tends naturally to fineness. If by constant attack evil has stolen in, it can be expelled as readily by better influence. Under this influence the boy's mind refines itself as does the sea from taint. Foul language, which may hitherto have been the common mode of speech, automatically disappears, so does the tendency to bad ideas. The boy casts off these things like an unclean coat.

It happens naturally. It is the result of the new

and better friendships. For boys always discover the best things in friendship, and to a boy a good friend is often his better self who talks to him and is esteemed as such.

The romance of some of these boys is unending, and a typical case was related to me as we walked up the street of the village. Some years ago an Italian nobleman fell in love with an Englishwoman of humble birth and married her. It was a love marriage, but the result of it was poverty. The man, who had sacrificed everything for his marriage, came down to being a *chef* in a hotel, and after his wife had borne him four children she died.

In due course the father also died and left the four children, practically destitute, and without relatives to help them. Ultimately three of them were taken under the sheltering arm of Barnardo's.

It is worth while following the career of the eldest boy. At the time when the man who told me this story came upon him, he had been marked "Not to be trusted." But from that moment he was trusted, and he never went back on the trust. With his two sisters he was sent out to Canada, and after a while entered a drug store in a certain town and worked his way up. With the money he saved he helped to educate his sisters, so that one became a gold medallist in the nursing profession.

Then the War came. The boy, with the future bright before him as a successful chemist, threw up his work and joined the Army. But before leav-

ing Canada he spoke to his sister about a certain friend of theirs who had come down in the world. "You know," he said, "what I have done for you. And what I did for you, you must do for her." And she acted on his word.

When he left, the proprietor of the store insisted on his taking the key, because he said that he would then know that the boy would return if he were not killed in the War. And he wanted him back, this boy who had been marked "Not to be trusted."

Romance is usually the negation of something that ought to happen. This boy should have been born to a coronet, but his heritage was destitution. Pressed down by poverty, he should have spun his days in the little, narrow existence to which he had been condemned. But Barnardoism gave him the key to the gate of his dreams. He climbed; he was born to climb when once the barrier had been removed. And now he is one of the best flying officers the War produced.

Not every boy's life is as loaded with romance, not every boy has the initiative and resource. But every one of these boys who is lifted out of the pit of darkness is loyal, dead loyal, to the power that has helped him.

"But heredity . . ." I suggest to the man at my side. "The thing that's in the blood. What can influence do against that? Isn't it the millstone that will keep any boy down when it's there?"

"Heredity! There's something stronger than heredity—environment. Leave the worst strain of heredity in the blood and environment will kill it in the young. I'll tell you a case, one of hundreds. We had two boys, Joe and Dick, who came from the very worst home in my experience. I am taking them as my instance because no home I have ever known or heard of was so unspeakably vile. I should think if the homes of Slumdom had been analysed at that period this one would have been found the most terrible in England for vice, so terrible that I could not give you, a man, some of the details. These two boys' parents were the uttermost limit. And the boys were born in this horror, brought up in it. Here were heredity and environment for evil working as co-partners. You'll grant me that is a pretty hard case to start on?"

"I should say that moral death was in those boys' eyes," I said.

"It was. The boys came to us, and the influence of the others began its silent work. They became fine lads, lads one could trust with anything in the world. It was steady progression. Not painful, weary work with many set-backs, but the gradual elimination of heredity by the new environment. Those boys grew up and went to Canada with one of our parties. Still, the progress went on. From helping on the farm they became owners of their own farms.

"Then one day Dick came to England, and

arrived here. He told me that, not only were they doing well as farmers, but they were saving money.

" ' Then what have you come home for? ' I asked.

" ' Well, sir,' he said, ' I have come home to get the old people out. What's happened to us can happen to them. It's not too late.'

"I hesitated a moment, for I remembered those parents.

" ' But do you think it is wise, Dick, now that you're doing well? ' I asked.

" ' Wise, sir! ' exclaimed Dick. ' Of course it's wise. They can't go wrong.'

"Dick saw farther than I. He was perfectly right. With two boys like that they could not go wrong. *And they didn't.* Dick took them out to Canada, and there they are, decent citizens, salved from the legion of the lost, by the very children they would have struck down. . . . That, my friend, is environment."

§ 3

And then I found that the boy in the green blazer was right about his family of forty-five.

The City of Youth contains sixteen houses, and in each house approximately forty-five boys live as one complete family. Each house has a "mother," who lives there as head of her family, and she manages that family in her own way, makes her own domestic rules, puts her boys to bed at what

hour she chooses, and gets them up at her own appointed hour. The elder boys help in the home, clean the boots, scrub the floors—and never were houses more spotlessly clean or floors whiter than these. Not the least part of their work is to look after the smaller members of the family. So that you met boys of ten and over going about in charge of a gang of toddlers, talking to them with the wisdom of the elder brother, and treating them with that old-world gallantry which a big brother will show to his younger kin. When the bugle is blown for meals each family files down to the great dining-hall, which is in a separate building, and there occupies its own table.

By this means does the domestic sense, the home interest, spring up and develop. A derelict from the streets—a boy who has endured that hideous loneliness of being alone in a world of strange faces—and there is no such loneliness as this—finds himself, when he reaches the City of Youth, received into a family life that it would seem had been specially created for him. When the first shyness wears off he discovers that he has a "mother" who thinks a tremendous amount of him, and probably no one ever thought very much of him before.

Not that every newcomer suffers from shyness. Some have endured solitude and blows so long that they are carried out of themselves by the discovery of sympathetic understanding They take their places in the family joyously as a small fish will

join up with the main shoal. To others the conditions are at first disturbing, since they represent luxury in comparison with those conditions life has offered them hitherto.

For instance, one boy of twelve who joined the City of Youth recently had never slept in a bed in all his twelve years, and the night he was put to bed for the first time he scarcely slept for fear he was going to fall out. It haunted him like a nightmare, this fear of falling out. Another little fellow remarked to his new-found "mother" as she was undressing him the first night, "Don't you ever have any fights down your street? Doesn't your father black your mother's eye every night? Mine does." A third was so terribly frightened at being put into his bath that he had to be taken out. Never in his memory had he been put in water before. And he was quite certain in his own mind that no good would come of it.

In this City of Youth the uttermost extremes of suffering boyhood meet and blend into ordered rational life. Just follow the change. A piece of flotsam of ten years old, accustomed since memory began to kicks and blows and starvation, intense cold, haunting fears that lurk round every corner, coarse sounds of drunkenness in the night, the cries of ill-treated women and children often younger than he—such a one finds himself in the police court charged with wandering. Or perhaps he is the salvage of a parent condemned to penal servitude for crime. No one has ever noticed him

before except to hurt him. And now he has come into the clutches of some austere power. So the mind, brought up to expect hurt, with pain as fellow journeyman most days of the year, looks now for greater hurt.

He does not understand the first thing they say about him; he is too frightened to understand. But he knows they are talking about him. Someone takes him away. Someone takes him to a place to which he has never been before. He does not know it is to the headquarters of this scheme devised for his resurrection. Someone feeds him, clothes him. Someone takes him to warmth and comfort. To his mind, caught up in a wave of perplexity, it is all very wonderful and unexplainable. His first initiative is to talk to other little wanderers whose feet, like his, have travelled far. Small friendships, which will grow to maturity, spring up. And then some days hence they go off again on another unknown journey and come to the City of Youth.

This atom of life, which the State treated as worthless, now stands as a definite unit in a British family. He will grow up, and with the years of understanding will return to the parent State for its good.

§ 4

No blow in the face ever convinced a boy of ten that he was going to be a failure.

In the depths of Slumdom the boy, fending for himself, assumes a Micawber-like disposition which convinces him that, even if he is starving to-day, something will turn up to-morrow. But I discovered that when he comes to the City of Youth with the future lying clear and certain at his feet, that self-assurance which is born in youth is assertive, clamorous. He does not slouch through his day. What he does is done with definite purpose. This is evident even in the smallest child.

We had reached the door of one of the houses when a small boy of about six came round the corner carrying a kettle.

"Hullo, Jimmy; what are you up to?" exclaimed "father."

The child stopped and smiled.

"Helping mother," he answered.

"All right, old chap. Carry on."

"We lost that boy once," "father" explained to me when both boy and kettle had disappeared into the house. "Couldn't find him anywhere. At last we discovered him hidden away in a secret corner, sitting on the ground cleaning a pair of boots for all he was worth. That he had been the cause of some anxiety did not appeal to him at all. All he worried about was the boots. One boot was dirty, the other he must have been brushing for an hour. It was not much of a job, but to him that boot was a beautiful thing. He held it up when the 'mother' found him, and exclaimed with pride: 'I know God hasn't got a better boot than that!'

It was his little best; he had reached his ideal."

Considered, it was an ideal, a seedling ideal which might expand with the years. These boys, so this man told me, play up to the new chance, to the sense of honour all through. They elect their own prefects and govern themselves. They strive. If it is on' in games, they strive. Each house is pitted against the other in sports with its captain, teams, and prizes for the victors. Or if it is in the development of their miniature gardens these boys strive.

Following this inception of purpose come the schooling years. A sum of twenty-five shillings per head is paid annually to the county authorities for the education of these boys. And what intellect would you expect from children reared in the slums? But destitution provokes a certain mental activity; it is necessary for self-preservation. Some boys, it is true, have endured such physical torment that the very power to think has been set back, and for years those boys will remain dull.

And yet even a dull boy has his special chance in the City of Youth. In an ordinary public school he would have been left behind. It is a fault of most, if not of all public schools, that the dull boy goes just as far as his wits will carry him and no farther. But here it is different. Dullness, being a product of slum conditions, is sought out, and the intellect of that boy gradually coaxed into flowering.

Into the City of Youth comes this mixture of mentality, to be sorted out, graded and helped. Seven hundred lives, for each of whom must be conceived a different plan for success that will fit the temperament of the boy. How well they do succeed, before they pass on to the adventure of the outer world, is evident from the fact that the boys from the City clear all the principal prizes at the County School examinations; not once but every time. Many of them become classical and modern scholars, others go on to commercial posts and rise high above those who have never known the pinch of adversity.

Nor must it be forgotten that the dynamic power that lies behind this great effort to bring new life to these little atoms of humanity is the Divine love. To each of these God has given the gift of life, and to any gift of God we owe our service.

§ 5

The architect who sat down to design the City of Youth went very carefully to work, and he took no chances. He knew that surroundings have an influence upon human life only to be compared to that of sunlight or shadow on an average hedgerow. So he built his city prodigal of space, in order that Youth might have room to move and expand.

As I moved from house to house I saw how carefully this fellow had schemed. The rooms

were large, with extensive window space; the corridors wide; there were no dust corners, for the floors rounded into the walls to avoid dust. I imagined this man sitting down to plan these houses and hearing from the slums the cry, "Give us light!" And, with the example of One who gave light to the world on the first day, he planned his houses so that the sunshine should bring its full strength to each ator of salved life that dwelt there.

I wondered no longer that the boy in the green blazer had spoken so frankly of home. Home is either a place where one lives or the resting-place of one's better self. To the boy it was the latter. It was a place that had offered him anchorage when, like some frail ship, he was drifting. He had spoken of it to me with an affection sincere and deep-rooted. From thence he would set out to the adventuring which later life would require of him, but he would ever remember this place of pride where he had built his resolves.

In one of the houses I perceived a tablet fixed to the wall of the hall. It announced that the house had been given by an anonymous donor in the hope that every boy who passed through would become a worthy member of the Empire. What a reminder to every one of those forty-five! A better message than any emanating from the pamphleteers who extol our national virtues and forget our failings.

A child of seven with long dark brown curls

came up to us with the ease of old acquaintance. He had a beautiful face, this boy, features clean cut and delicate, and wide, imaginative eyes. Had he been born in the purple he would have been much photographed and talked about. It so happens, as in this instance, that beauty is sometimes given to the slums, just as a chance seed produces a wonderful flower in a field of tares.

"That boy," said my friend when the boy abandoned us for a romping gang of comrades, "has two brothers just as beautiful as himself. You would hardly credit it when you look upon children like that, but they were abandoned in the streets by their mother. . . . Come upstairs. I want to show you something over that child's bed."

Desperation so overpowering as to kill in the mother all instincts towards these children which her pains have brought into the world cannot be understood by the normal mind. To abandon to the streets three children such as these is the action of one driven from mental stability. Whatever the cause, no judgment can serve. But in this case the mother's action was this child's salvation. And it happened like this:

A year before I discovered the City of Youth, a man and his wife lost their only son in Flanders. The extreme grief of the mother rapidly undermined her health. From merely ailing she began to go rapidly downhill. At length her husband accompanied her to the City of Youth, hoping that the sight of happy children would bring some

calm to the broken spirit. Then as she entered this house the boy in question went up to her as frankly as he had approached me, and, looking up at her, said: "Hullo, mother. Have you come to see me?"

The greeting, peculiar and startling, coming from a child she had never seen before, went home. Had it been more commonplace and typical of a shy child, it would have missed its point. The mother developed in a moment an intense love for that child; it had become as one different to all other children. It may be that something in the child's voice set singing in her one of those chords of memory for the boy lost in Flanders. But the miracle happened, as by providential decision it was intended to happen. She adopted the child — that is to say, she took him as a protégé, and her health steadily came back to normal in caring for this child. It would almost seem that a great love which had been cut down had been born again and taken growth anew.

We found the boy's bed among a number of other beds in a wide, lofty room—beds with blue counterpanes. At the foot of each of the beds the occupant's clean clothes for the Sabbath next day were neatly laid out. And nailed to the wall was a portrait of the young officer, and below it an inscription which told the great story of his passing. More than that, the child is endowed with a certain sum of money, so that on the birthday of the

man who gave up his life the entire forty-five of the family can have a splendid tea-party, presided over by the boy who was left to the fortune of the streets.

I learned then that it is common for those who have lost the flower of their families in the War to come to the City of Youth, as if led there by some mysterious attraction, to find an antidote for grief. Many boys have been adopted in this way. In other words, their support will be paid for, and later they will be sent on to good schools and started in careers by their foster parents.

Sometimes it happens that a boy will bear in his features a likeness to the one who is lost. Often it arises out of sheer need to fill a gap—a need for someone on whom the love which the War has wrecked can be poured out anew. And the world can offer no finer memorial to one who has died in battle than a new life strengthened and given the chance the world would have denied. Monuments in stone speak only in inscriptions, but bettered humanity is more eloquent than stone.

Verily the children of the slums are as star-dust which God strews broadcast to lend light to the hideous gloom-pits of man's creating. And here they were bringing light into hearts in which all life, all hope was dead.

The beds of the adopted boys carry their inscriptions. One in particular caught my eye. A brass plaque was fixed to the wall above the bed, and on it the name of Arthur Rimer, Private in the

Royal Fusiliers, killed in action. And following these words: "He trusted in God, held his head high and did his best." If Arthur Rimer were the human soldier he probably was, he could have desired to give no better message to the child who took his place in his family than that he had held his head high and done his best.

We wandered on from bedroom to bedroom, looking at things. Everywhere the same light and cleanliness. Spotless floors that reminded me of nothing so much as the deck of a battleship. Green paint, and towels hung in rows; hairbrush bags in rows, and toothbrushes in rows. Order. Studied clean order. And at the back of it all human understanding and love.

Nothing that could make a child happy had been forgotten, nothing that might shape its life to utility overlooked. In many the love of children is not born, but comes as some spontaneous happening. To these such happening is like walking out of a dark room into a garden of flowers.

As a result of the War the State is going to discover that the child of the slums has a soul. It may be as mean as the dingy sparrow in a wilderness of dirty roofs, but that which shall make a living piece of Empire is there, waiting for the doors of the prison house to be unlocked. Some pioneers there are who have discovered it already, and they built the City of Youth. But the work, vast and far-reaching as it is, is only the beginning. The home which the City of Youth offers

to destitute childhood is, as it might be, only a hut of shelter on the verge of the wastes where one day a mightier city will rise.

"This is only the fringe of it all," the man at my side was saying, and it seemed as if he divined my thoughts. "Altogether we're building up over seven thousand pieces of human life."

"Seven thousand?"

"Yes. In different places. Girls—armies of girls. And blind and deaf and dumb and cripples. Babies, little bits of babies. Brought in, hurled in by the great tidal wave of destitution and disaster. You don't know what's going on. People don't know. Go and see. And it's only the fringe of it all."

"I think," I said, "I should like to go and see."

He brightened at that.

"Let me map out a pilgrimage for you. You'll have to go all over England. You'll have to go into some queer places. But you'll see things. Things you'll remember."

So he took me into his study, the windows of which looked out to the panorama of child life beyond. Then, picking up a piece of paper, he mapped out my pilgrimage.

§ 6

The boy in the green blazer was waiting for me down at the gate.

"You've really missed the train by now," he grinned.

"Expect I have, sonny."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Same as you'll do about that electrical engineering," I answered.

He stared at me, then laughed.

"What's that?"

"Find the way there all right."

"I don't know," he argued.

"I do," I said.

"You really think—it might happen, after all?"

"Sure thing, sonny."

"If only I thought it *would* happen——"

"What would you do?"

"Why, I'd just live and wait for it."

"And fight for it when it came?"

"Yes. And fight for it. Not half!"

I saw him disappear among the trees as I turned the corner.

"Little Spartan!" I thought to myself, "the little fighting Spartan!"

CHAPTER II

THE SECOND CITY

"Into the twilight of the world are launched each year these millions of tiny ships. Under a sky of cloud and stars they grope out to the great waters and the great winds—little sloops of life, on whose voyaging the future hangs. Mothers and you who will be mothers and you who have missed motherhood, give them their chance."

—JOHN GALSWORTHY.

§ 1

"Boys!" exclaimed the man across the table. "They won't let you down. I've never seen a boy yet, picked up out of the worst slums—and I've seen the worst—whom I wouldn't trust. When he's grown to maturity—that's another question. But catch him young and you can mould him to anything. It is this way. Vice to a boy is not an inevitable happening, or even a habit that may cling to him. It is a giant, something outside himself, and the boy knows that in his heart rests the stone of David whereby he may slay it."

We had been talking about children—boys. Boys who come from nowhere, and yet may become anything. Boyhood let loose, a wild, brave thing that seeks ambition.

I looked at the man across the table. Our pipes were going, and he was leaning back in his chair, a hunched-up figure with very piercing eyes that seemed to look through me and discover something on the wall behind and fix there.

He told me then that he was a Listening Man.

"I've heard of Listening Men," I answered. "Out at the Front. I remember going down a mine tunnel once and seeing one crouching there on an inverted sugar-box. A Listening Man beside an instrument. He said he was listening for the Germans to start their games! In a way you remind me of him. I can almost fancy you on the sugar-box with the instrument, in a bad light and a most almighty silence. . . . But what are you listening for?"

"Children," he said, and pulled at his pipe.

"Children?"

"Yes. You're on some sort of pilgrimage, aren't you?"

I agreed.

"A boy in a green blazer——" I began.

"Yes; they told me all about it. That's how we came to meet."

"Did you ever see a play called 'A Message from Mars'?" I asked suddenly.

He thought for a moment.

"No. But I think I've heard of it."

"It is about some fellow from Mars who comes to earth and wanders round discovering things. It's a new earth to him. A place that wasn't quite

what he'd been brought up to. He learns poverty and suffering and all those things. . . . I feel very like that man. That boy in the green blazer began it—pushed me into it. . . . So you call it a pilgrimage?"

"Oh no," he answered; "an education. You see, since we were boys we've never known quite that complete happiness we found as children. We may have discovered all that contents us, but it is never the same. Sometimes we may do things that carry us back, but never quite *there*. Do you follow me?"

"Yes," I said. "I know it's so. I've often thought about it."

"The happiness we knew as boys we threw away with the years, in the hope of finding an ideal which possibly never existed. Now this education of yours is going to carry you back, probably right back. You're going to discover the soul of the child. I'd like to be coming with you all the way, but I've a lot of work to do here."

"Listening?" I suggested.

"Yes, listening."

"For what?"

"Children," he said again. Then: "They gave you a plan, didn't they?"

I pulled the paper out of my pocket which they had given me at the City of Youth, and handed it over to him.

"There," he said, pointing with the stem of his pipe. "'The Listening Men.' They are some

way down on your list. So maybe we shall meet again. I was told off now to explain to you where to go, and I see your next destination is another city—a City of Girls."

"Girls!" I exclaimed. "I have frequently heard of a Barnardo boy—it's a national term—but not of a Barnardo girl."

"But then you did not know very much about it, did you?"

I confessed that he was right.

"And if it had not been for the boy in the green blazer——"

"You would never have known. You owe that boy something. You'll tell him one day that he discovered your lost youth!" he laughed. "So it's Barkingside to-morrow for both of us."

"Where's Barkingside?"

"Essex. That's where the City is."

And so it was that we went to Barkingside and discovered the City of Girls.

§ 2

We seemed to have been walking for ages along a road beside a high hedge—a hedge that bore steadily round in a vast circle.

"The City is in there," the Listening Man said, indicating anywhere that might lie on the other side of the hedge, Lapland or Japan.

We trudged on in silence.

"We appear," I remarked at last, "to be mak-

ing a rather praiseworthy effort to walk round the globe. I suppose there *is* a city?"

He jerked his thumb towards the hedge again. "Yes; in there."

"I don't hear any sounds of life. This might be a million miles from anywhere. . . . What kind of girls?"

"All kinds. Fancy trying to make a city with only one kind! One type of girl with the same fads and foibles and bits of vanity. All of them wanting to be dressed in pink or blue or some decided colour. A standard child with a standard mind and a standard happiness! What an uninteresting place it would be! It's the *difference* in humanity that makes it so fascinating—when you begin to study it."

We had come unawares upon a big gate, and the Listening Man pushed it open. Just inside the gate was a fine stone building, and from it the governor of the city came out to meet us, a cheery person who welcomed us as some potentate might welcome a friendly stranger to his citadel.

The Listening Man handed me over. Then he said: "I think you're right—about that fellow from Mars. Wandering about looking for things. Did he go into London in the play?"

"Yes," I said. "I believe he did."

"And what did he think of it?"

"He thought it a very wonderful place."

"This is a more wonderful place than London," he said. "London uses up life, but they build it

here. And it's the building that counts." He turned away at that, and disappeared into the road again.

Now as I looked about me I appeared to all intents and purposes to be cut off from the world. Man-made cities have great open paths of entrance and exit by which all may pass—all that is good and all that is evil. On the common road there is no distinction. But to this city all passage was barred except to those who make for the progress of the community that lived within. In a sense a Utopia that had no poor laws or legislation which strove for the uplifting of a down-trodden section of its urban life. Because there were no social Hagars to legislate for. No one who did not share equally in the City's life.

The man who created this place must have had great knowledge of beauty. Youth is beauty, and as such demands it. Youth needs trees and beauty of verdure, and he had given it all, for there was a plenitude of trees—common trees, and rare and wonderful trees. Youth needs flowers, and flowers were everywhere. Youth demands beauty of habitation, and there is no greater beauty than simplicity. So tucked away amid the shadows of trees were cottages, not jerry-built cottages mimicking a rural spirit that had long since flown, but homes reflective of thought and comfort, with big rooms and good exteriors, and large doors that lay open so that the sun might pass in.

It was not so much a city as an English village,

unspoiled by the breaking in of those appendages of modern haste, such as motor-cars and tourists, and inquiring folk with hammers looking for bits of ancient walls which they might transport to a showcase in a modern hall. A village wherein all that marks progress, the discovery of light in modern building and progressive convenience and comfort, had been caught and centred and used to legitimate ends and well ordered life.

There was a church near the gate, the kind of church which speaks its search for God in its simplicity, a church given by one woman to the memory of her parents. Into this church thirteen hundred atoms of female life, salved from destitution and the slums, pour every Sunday to a simple service. There are no effigies of dead knights, but beautiful stained windows through which a weak sun came this morning, with the same sanctity and tenderness it sheds over the hallowed aisles of St. Paul's or Westminster. It had about it, this church, all the beauty of religion, not religion that has grown old between walls that have watched centuries of bended worshippers, but religion that has come as some undiscovered thing, some great simplicity to those caught up from the deeps, and rich in its own promise of new life.

With disciplined belief, I have never felt accord. At any rate for children. For it has seemed to me that a child first discovers God, not in his or her prayers, but in some ugly moment of loneliness when he—or it may be a girl

—becomes suddenly aware of some protecting comrade in loneliness. To take such a one to all the majesty of divine belief in a cathedral which, by centuries of worship, has most nearly reached the ideal of reverence, would be to spoil the tender faith. I imagined, then, a child brought out of the slums, where God waits on the eaves, but to Whom the door is closed, coming into this preparatory school to Belief, and finding something very simple which a mind with its first tendrils of thought could understand. A Presence that went home to the cottage under the trees, and remained there. Something that watched through the lone hours of darkness which frighten children, that never went away, and was a friend of the Sun when it came up, and joined hands with that Sun and built a happy day. No God with awe-inspiring ideas of might and power. But a Comrade—a very near Thing one could talk to. Some protecting presence in a dark room. . . .

§ 3

And now in this city as I wandered through it I found the most remarkable tribe of girls the thinking side of our civilisation has ever got together. Here was the gathering of the cast nets of Barnardoism, but how that gathering was done I did not discover till later.

Each of the cottages under the trees has its family of sixteen or twenty, and each cottage—as is the case of the larger villas in the other city—

is in the care of a "mother," who brings up her family in her own way, cooks for it, cleans up after it, dispatches it to school and receives it back, guards its health and its soul from trouble. They live their lives, these "mothers," in patient care of the family which this salving system has given into their hands. The families pass from childhood to the first blush of girlhood; a member of this family goes out of the home circle to some sphere of usefulness in the outer world, and another member comes in—a very small child, maybe, who has to be studied, its individuality discovered, and the whole creating process gone over again.

Families come, and the process of time dissolves them into other families; but the families as such remain, the "mothers" remain, and the recreating goes on unceasing. But given back to civilisation is a steady stream of fresh young womanhood, which would have been wasted or spoiled by the ugly hands of the world if it had never passed through the city to be ordered and perfected and trained to usefulness.

The rarest and most delicate thing to nurture in the universe is girlhood. A single blemish and the bloom is gone. It is one thing to re-make the boy who was set fair to ruin by his slum life, but quite another a girl. Many of these children are of very tender years; many have suffered much and still bear the marks of sufferings. But, as I watched a couple of hundred of them drilling in

the big hall, it was possible to see, by studying each face as it passed, how the taint of suffering and slum life is gradually disappearing, and, breaking through and eradicating it, the reflection of the new child, the new temperament, just as bright metal breaks through the rust by polish. Under this home life and nurture a child's face, which has become spoiled and soured, will completely change in a few months. It takes to itself a new expression; new life comes into the eyes, new vigour to the small limbs, new hope to the mind from which hope had disappeared in the daily expectancy of fresh hurt.

The children are well fed with plain food, each little family having its meals in the cottage dining-room with the cottage mother at the head of the table. For certain hours, morning and afternoon, the children gather in the big school situated in the centre of the village—a school with large, light class-rooms. There the children are carefully graded and brought up grade by grade from tender infancy to full girlhood, the teaching being the most progressive form of secondary education extant, embracing tuition in everything that shall evolve from each child a useful and sound woman for the home.

It is not sufficient to re-make a girl and then turn her back to the world. For the world was never kind to the girl without a stable anchorage. Before the War many of these girls—even those as young as eight or nine years—went out to

Canada, and were put in charge of good families on the land. They became more or less adopted children. Here they continued their education, at the same time being given certain work to do in that home. In due course they grew up and married, and inevitably married well.

If there is one thing necessary to the young farmer in Canada it is a wife who is in every sense domesticated. So in the process of time the miracle was made manifest, and this little waif of slumdom became a farmer's wife, and the mother of his children. Scattered over Canada to-day are hundreds of these women—hundreds more have given the sons they have borne to the War. And if they had not been caught up by the wave of Barnardoism they might have been numbered among those nameless women who haunt the shadows of our city streets. To these children, these girls, Barnardoism is moral resurrection.

Children who have been rescued from suffering seldom forget those to whom they owe their salvage. They have grown up in Canada and become a part of Canadian life, in which case forgetfulness of the early English days would not be surprising. But they do not forget. Many return to England and visit the city on the first occasion. One girl who had grown up and brought into the world her first child, recently took the infant to the "mother" who had brought her up, determined that this "mother" should be the first to take pride in her offspring.

Even with the merest children it is the same. Some time ago a lady from the city went out to Canada and arrived at a house where a girl of eleven years of age named Agnes was boarded. The child ran out, flung her arms about her neck, and exclaimed: "Oh, I am so glad to see you!"

"But," replied the lady, "you don't know me."

"Yes, you are the lady from home," the child replied, and as she spoke she put in the visitor's hand a 50c. piece and said: "I earned that berry picking. Take it for the Homes. There are lots of children in England yet, aren't there, who haven't enough to eat? When I earn wages I will help."

And when she became a wage-earner she kept her word.

To all these girls of the city there is a definite future clearly outlined, a safety which shall protect their girlhood. The War and the attendant dangers of the high seas closed down Canadian emigration for the time being. But for all girls there is some clear course of training. The majority are trained for domestic service, and it is quite easy to understand that there are twenty applicants waiting for each girl ready to go to service, because, being trained to every branch of domesticity, there is no better house servant. Certain sharper girls are trained to office duties, but it is impossible to carry out this work to any great extent since there is grave danger in letting the girl, when trained, go into the outer world. She

has no definite home, and it is essential that the girl when she leaves the city should have a home. Without a fixed home she is beset by temptation with no one to look after her, and Barnardoism leaves nothing to chance. Its first law is to baulk chance.

So here in this city thirteen hundred girls were having their futures re-planned and built, upon no set scheme, but according to the individuality of each. In one large room many were engaged in lace-making and the most delicate fancy work. The majority of these were physically or mentally defective, who would have stood no chance if they had been left to the outer world. Nothing could have preserved them, helpless as they are with their deformities to fend for themselves, from sinking to the lowest depths of destitution, with the workhouse at the end of it all. But here they were toiling happily on work that delighted them, and earning money for the cause that had lifted them up. There is no patience or willingness they do not offer. One of them, for instance, had spent three years learning a single intricate lace pattern, and now, proud in conquest, was turning out work which she knew could not be beaten in this country. A mere slip of a girl with crippled hands, to whom the world would have given no chance, but climbing here above the best brains and unblemished physique of others.

In the next building of this city girls innumerable were being trained in laundry work, so that

there might be no branch of domestic work with which they were not familiar.

It was the same everywhere in this city—babyhood passing into girlhood, and from that stage to womanhood trained and fit for the battle of life, girls educated, domesticated, their minds clean and whole, the future mothers of children who will help the race.

It seemed but a simple, organised process of passing on. But, behind it all, whole decades of thought, and, greater still, human understanding. It might have been as if some giant hand reached down to the slow pools of suffering in the underworld and groped for buried jewels, which it made beautiful and returned to the treasure house of the State.

§ 4

And yet, with all its organisation and care, the miracle only begins in this city; it may be fulfilled at the other side of the world or in some other part of Britain. The State has received back a fine citizen in return for a destitute slum child, for which it had no use and to which it paid as little heed.

To discover what the miracle really means, it is necessary to follow some of these girls out beyond the city and watch the shaping of their careers. To do so is to get at the romance of Barnardoism, and to realise what can be done for a waif when a proper system of understanding and sympathy is set in motion.

Here is a typical case. A child named Amy was picked out of the gutter by Barnardo's at the age of six. She was an illegitimate girl, and her mother was homeless, a confirmed drunkard, and a temporary inmate of the Barnardo free shelter. The putative father had drunk himself to the depths, and at last found himself in Whitechapel Infirmary.

What chance did the world or our social system offer to a child like that? Starved, ill-clad, left anywhere, a bit of wreckage on the great tidal wave of jostling humanity.

For a while the child was boarded out by Barnardo's in England, and then taken to this city for a period of training and preparation for Canada, and here she formed a great affection for the cottage mother. Then in due course she went to Canada with a party of girls from the city.

Ten years later the cottage mother chanced to be visiting the Dominion. One day, after a tour over the country in the sweltering heat of mid-summer, she reached the house at which she was to stay.

"Have you been to see Amy McDermid?" someone in the house inquired.

The cottage mother replied in the negative, and added that she did not recall the name. She thought for a moment.

"Possibly I forgot to make a note of it before I left England," she said. "Where does she live?"

"Three to four miles away."

The mother decided that she would make the

journey at once. It was twilight when she reached a farmhouse where she found two ladies sitting on the veranda, and apologising for the lateness of her visit inquired for Amy McDermid.

As she entered the house a beautiful girl of twenty-one came down the stairs. For a moment she and the cottage mother stood looking at each other. Then Amy burst into a cry of awakening recognition.

"Have we ever met before?" she said. "You seem to remind me of someone in a dream. Why, are you Miss ———?"

The cottage mother nodded.

"Yes," she said, "I am."

This girl, with her graceful figure and wealth of hair, might have come from one of the most cultured homes in England instead of the slums. Here was all the miracle of resurrection. In the city she had been—just Amy. She had gone to Canada and been adopted by these two ladies, and taken their surname. More than that, she had graduated at the conservatoire in an adjoining town in vocal and instrumental music with honours, and was the possessor of a wonderful contralto voice, by which she could earn her own living at any time.

A lovely voice mute in a City gutter, and a life that would never have come to flowering but for Barnardoism. But just a chapter, an ordinary chapter in the archives of this city of miracles.

It may have been that Amy McDermid was a

tractable girl, who saw the future clearly ahead when the chance came. To many destitute children the new chance, when it appears round the corner, is as a path that leads to fairyland. All children are not the same, of course, for it is largely a matter of temperament. But, like the boy in the green blazer, who saw the whole kingdom of life spread out before him in electrical engineering, this girl instinctively used her chance to reach her ideal. Others go by slower ways, halting sometimes, perhaps inclined by some freakish mood to turn back; but nevertheless environment, when that environment is right, holds them firm.

Another girl, whose only name was Sarah, for she was the child of a common prostitute, is a good instance of this. Here was a girl born with brains, sheer cleverness from early youth which is so often the case with unwanted children brought up in suffering. When Sarah and Barnardoism came face to face round one of those sudden corners in Sarah's life—she was then only nine—her mother was in prison for drunkenness, cruelty and neglect of her offspring. Sarah lived on garbage from the gutter, and pieces that people threw to her when something in her little pinched face appealed to them. Her life was a big discovery of suffering. But she possessed a natural cunning which made her precocious in the knowledge of evil. She was sent to the city, and at the age of fourteen and a half professed conversion. Environment had taken a long time to beat back heredity, but it was winning

as it always does win. At fifteen the child was baptised.

The mother of her cottage gave great care to cleaving her way to the heart of this child. The touch of devilment in Sarah and her quick brain made her an interesting case. And Sarah, during those early years, could be so good and look so good, that a stranger who knew little about her would quite easily believe in her thoroughly.

As it happened the cottage mother was very interested in missionary work, and especially in the need of the Chinese. It was her joy to inculcate the missionary spirit into her children, and they spent many hours, these little ones, in writing to the mother's missionary friends in China, and sending off parcels.

When Sarah was on the point of emerging from her teens she secured her first situation in a home, the inhabitants of which were interested in missionary work, and it seemed as if all traces of her early life had been obliterated. The girl's new mind was in an atmosphere to which it had since been cultivated, but the old roots lived still. She made friends with ladies engaged in Christian work, and declared that she was only cooking for a hobby, and ended by stealing some jewellery which she wore on her evenings out in order to keep up the deception and demonstrate to her friends that she was their social equal. It became a pitched battle between hereditary instinct and environment.

Had the latter failed the girl would have drifted.

But it did not. Under the Barnardo ægis she went out to a little town in Ohio for a course of training in missionary work, and is now, I believe, a missionary in China.

That sort of thing is not achieved by mere haphazard charity. It is steady, constructive building, just as one creates, only by understanding, a beautiful mansion on impossible ground. In a clever child heredity is hard to fight, because cleverness in a child absorbs and is influenced by those emotions and instincts attendant on the conditions from which the child has emerged. But the first man who reared a South American orchid in an English conservatory achieved his triumph by sheer painstaking nurture. And the woman who sent Sarah from the gutter to the Missionary battle in China had the same progressive understanding as that gentleman of the orchid.

It is a remarkable fact that some of the most beautiful singers often come from the lowest haunts of suffering. Especially is this the case with children. It may be that the simplicity which is in every child, whatever its surroundings, reaches in imagination the beautiful, and only finds expression under the chance of better environment. In the slums vice is a thing thrust upon a child, often a defence against suffering; but the soul of that child remains still a singing instrument.

A rather remarkable case, which I found in the archives of this city, was that of a child named Dorothy, admitted to the city in December, 1908,

at the age of twelve years. She was one of twelve children kept by a mother, who, by some sort of a miracle, just managed to fend starvation from the door. But in the endless battle for the very means to live, the children had more or less to look after themselves.

Dorothy began to form irregular companionships and came home at all hours of the night. In a few years' time there would be no protection whatever for her from grave moral danger. She was automatically faced with that promiscuous intimacy which lures girls from difficult homes to the streets.

She was in the city two years, and then she went to Canada and was placed as a little serving maid in a doctor's house at St. Mary's, Ontario, a small town in the western end of the province. And as she grew older she discovered that she could sing. All the girls in the city are trained in singing, and with the passage of years beauty crept into the girl's voice.

It so happened that on one Thanksgiving Day recently a visitor from the city at Barkingside happened to be in St. Mary's, and was asked by Dorothy to come to the service at the church. She went, and found a very large church packed to the doors for a special service.

The service proceeded, but there was no sign of Dorothy. As the worship paused, a hush fell over the building. The multitude waited for something, eager, expectant. Then a girl came forward

and faced the great throng. The organ burst into the opening bars of a great ... ous solo, and the girl began to sing. Never, they said, had such a voice been heard in the church before. It crept up on mighty wings of melody that carried a waiting people to the foot of the Cross. It put the sense of worship into stilled souls that lacked the knowledge of expression. It found God as beauty always finds God.

The solo ceased, and the girl stood there, a wisp of a figure, and on her face a rare enchantment. Maybe she knew what her gift had meant to those who listened.

But one woman in that multitude bent her head as if she had heard some great benediction. She was the visitor who had come out from the city at Barkingside; one of the "mothers" of these children, who remembered Dorothy when Barnardoism had caught her up, a girl "in moral danger." Dorothy, the fretful child who put a foul oath into nearly every sentence she uttered. And Dorothy here, with the voice divine, carrying some hundreds of people to the very foot of Calvary. . . .

§ 5

I turned over page after page of these archives in this City of Girls. And always the same miracle unfolded itself—the miracle which started here in these cottages, in these children. There was no end to it. It went on like a great expanding fan.

It involved hundreds of lives, re-made lives. A mighty thing that never stopped. . . .

Presently we went out into the open air again. Children were playing on the big lawns, the children who would make the future romances for the archives. But in one corner I found the grave of the man who had done this thing; who had achieved more for suffering children than any other since the Man he followed. It was a simple grave, this resting place of Dr. Barnardo, so unlike the gorgeous and overloaded sepulchres to great men in other cities. And above it was the beautiful Frampton memorial.

The Governor and I paused awhile as we passed. And it seemed to me that the man who had done so much was not dead. The laughing children who came crowding by appeared to carry his voice. The new awakening life in them might have been his life given back. One imagined him as someone listening and watching, this man who was able to think with the mind of a child, and who salved as treasure that which the world would have cast away.

CHAPTER III

ABOARD THE LUGGER

"He has left us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example, which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England: a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength."—SOUTHEY'S "LIFE OF NELSON."

§ 1

WE went aboard the lugger at ten o'clock in the morning. Four-bells was just striking.

Truth to tell, she—I carefully observed that everyone spoke of her as "she" or "her"—was not a ship at all. She was in reality a building, a tremendous building somewhere in Norfolk. But internally she was constructed precisely as the interior of a ship is constructed, with a quarter deck and a mess deck and an upper deck, ship's corridors and a captain's bridge. And she had as fine a crew of three hundred as any ship could wish for. Moreover, she even *smelt* like a ship, for there was an unmistakable tang of rope in the air.

Perhaps, on second thoughts, it is hardly fair to classify her as a lugger. She was something

greater than that. For she had a vast engine-room which no lugger possesses, and mighty engines working therein. The only thing she seemed to lack was the ubiquitous Scotch engineer prowling round among the driving machinery, and blustering to the engine-room hands: "Dinna let yer bearings get over-het, ye gowks, it's no worth." Also she lacked the sense of motion, or else her turbines were working uncommonly well. But for the rest, and saving her bricks and mortar, she verily was a ship planted here on dry land. One expected to look out of a door on to a great expanse of ocean instead of on to a sweep of Norfolk meadows and hills away to the horizon.

I do not know how they captured the spirit of the sea so completely and brought it here. It could only have been done by those who loved the sea and her ways, those who gave of their best to the sea and wished to train others to do the same. And I had come here to see how a boy from the City of Youth who loved the sea and wished to get to it and live there was transported from slumdom, a trained unit into the Navy, to fulfil the ambition of his life.

From the squalor of our seaboard cities boys go to sea in their own fashion, often enough to be banged and cuffed until by hard treatment they learn all it is necessary to know of ship life. Of suffering, both physical and mental, they get their fill, until the sea, instead of appearing as a giant they can master, sometimes becomes a giant it is a

misfortune to have met. Then it is that the weaklings and sensitive go under, or become mechanical.

But Barnardo's has put the sea at the feet of every destitute boy who has come within its organisation, and says to him: "You wish to go to sea? Good. You shall go there—trained. Trained so that you can beat the older ones who have had to learn the sea by hard knocks at their own game."

And they do beat those others at their own game. At Shotley, where boys for the Navy are finished off, they freely admit that those who come from the Barnardo lugger, better known as the Watts Naval Training School, are the finest boys they get from anywhere. When they pass into the Fleet these boys steadily climb.

Imagine the feelings of a boy born to all the brutality of slum life, then lifted out of it by Barnardoism into the City of Youth, where the seedling ambition to go to sea develops in him. He may never have seen the sea or have tasted the salt of it on his lips. But one day with a group of others he is taken away and comes aboard the lugger.

All he ever imagined of ship life is here for him to share. He is fed and put into naval dress. He becomes one of a ship's company in charge of a petty officer who is an older boy. He sees other boys, now to be his shipmates, heaving the lead, drilling with carbines, limbering their guns, semaphoring, Morse-coding with the sounder or flash-lamp, steering a ship at the wheel, learning flags and signals of the sea, handling ropes, pointing

and grafting, and making all the knots and splices that were ever invented, slinging casks aboard, rowing in the ship's boat, and carrying out all the duties of a Tar.

In one tremendous hour he sees all this going from. It is to be his work; from the destitution of the slums he has come to it. The whole wonder of sea life is waiting for him to explore—he is at the very gates of the great adventure of his dreams.

Something one of the crew of the lugger said to me explained what this transition means to a boy. He was a strapping lad of fourteen with fair hair, blue eyes and a fine healthy colour, the kind of boy whose mind is as clean as the sea he is going to sail. He had been on the lugger some years, and was about to go to Shotley as an advanced pupil for his examination. I asked him what had urged him to go to sea.

"I come from Portsmouth," he said, "and I used to watch at night from the attic window the warships Morsing from the masthead. The blinking light seemed to say, 'Come—along—come—along—along.' And it was rotten at home. I tried to run away once, but I was caught and banged, and that night I saw from the window the light going again: 'Come—along—come — along—along.' . . . Then father disappeared, and I was taken to Barnardo's and came here. The first time I was put in the signal room here with the class, and the room was darkened for flash-lamp signalling, there was the blinking light again. Same old

thing: 'Come—along—come—along—along.' It reminded me of Portsmouth, but I think I've nearly got to the Fleet now, sir. Bit different to those days when I used to watch it out of the window!"

"Yes, you're very near to it now," I said. "And what branch are you making for?"

"Oh, signalling, sir. Signalling all the time for me!"

The boy's talk set me wondering. I imagined others like him, the suppressed youth of our seaboard cities watching from the windows of dingy attics the winking eyes of the Fleet by night and reading the same message there: 'Come—along—come—along—along.' Suppressed youth waiting for opportunity. . . . Waiting to get aboard the lugger and make for the Fleet and the open sea. . . .

§ 2

Now the skipper of the lugger is the chaplain-superintendent, and there is probably not another skipper with a similar job in the country. It is one thing to take a ship past shoals into harbour, but quite another to bring each piece of humanity which had come from slumdom and composed the lugger's crew past the shoals which beset destitute youth to the Navy life. Such a man must not only have the sea spirit in him, but he has to possess a variety of qualities. He must be the close confidant of each of these boys, for many of them have not a relative in the world, the com-

panion of their games, janitor of their thoughts, the one responsible for the making of their careers, and at the same time the keeper of discipline. A little excessive zeal on the one side or the other, and the balance which is shaping each member of the crew to success would be lost.

They know, these boys, that he is the skipper who is aiding them to weather the storm, and few Tars at sea have been through such violent upheaval as these boys have experienced in their lives. And what he thought of his crew was reflected in his words to me: "They are my boys, and I'm proud of them."

He greeted me as I came aboard the lugger. We were on the quarter deck, and some of the crew were standing-by at their points of duty.

"What do you think of this for a ship?" he said. "Outside we appear as a handsome country mansion, and inside we're the nearest approach to a ship you'll find on dry land anywhere."

And so it seemed. At the fore end was the captain's corridor, and aft the St. Kitts corridor, where the kitchens were situated. The building was divided into five parts—the foc'sle, foretop, maintop, quarter deck, and mizzen-top. On the main deck were the dormitories, named after famous men of the sea—Nelson, Howard, Rodney, Hawke, Raleigh, and others.

Here was a building constructed internally so like a ship that when it was presented in 1901 to Barnardo's by Mr. Edmund Watts for the sea

training of boys, no alterations had to be made to complete the similitude except in the roof. Certainly the captain's bridge is aft instead of fore, but that is a pardonable detail which could not be changed without reconstructing the interior. For the rest, here is a ready-made ship on which these future seamen can be trained to the ways of the sea.

And it is no rope-end teaching. It is the steady transition of the young mind from the civil life to the life of the Navy. Every boy at some moment or other wishes to go to sea; especially is this so among boys who have come from cramped-up existence in the cities. It is as if the mind wants the great spaces of the sea in which to expand and thrive. So that among the Barnardo boys applications for the lugger are many, but two-thirds of the applicants fail on examination for sight or hearing. The Navy only wants the physically sound, and it is sheer waste of time and money to train boys who will be ploughed when they go up for their Admiralty examinations.

If the boy passes his physical test he comes aboard the lugger at about ten years of age; and will remain there till he is between fifteen and sixteen. He therefore receives five years at least of careful and exhaustive sea training. From ten till he is thirteen and a half he is given full elementary school teaching, and, in addition, a small amount of instruction in seamanship, signals and naval drill. At that age he passes on to the nautical section, wherein he is given sufficient school tuition

to satisfy the Board of Education, and intensive instruction in nautical work.

In this way he is keyed up gradually. He is getting all the education he would have received had he been the son of an artisan with good earning power in civil life, and at the same time the sea spirit in the boy is being brought out and built up. To nurture the seedling enthusiasm in a boy is often the making of his career. Innumerable boys who have some vague craving for the sea life will, by misguided parents from selfish or other motives, be jockeyed into city offices or made early wage-earners as errand boys. The desire for the career the boy chose naturally dies then automatically. He becomes a wage-earner, an unambitious person, working for so much money and nothing else. He never gets anywhere, he never wants to get anywhere.

But if someone had given him a little encouragement in those days of boyhood, or if he had been numbered among that crew of the lugger, they might have discovered that in his boy's heart there was the burning spirit of a Drake.

§ 3

Now that the boy has come aboard the lugger it is interesting to watch his gradual development. He is raw on arrival, just raw boyhood, possibly not long since salved from a wretched home in some back alley of a great city. The first few months he

has already spent in one of the Barnardo homes, or in the City of Youth, has brought to him a self-assurance he never knew before. He no longer goes in fear of blows. Good food and clothing have toned up his body. He is beginning to develop an individuality, to think and feel himself to be more than an unwanted atom of life in a haunt of suffering. And he has made up his mind to go to sea.

As soon as a fresh assortment of budding Tars comes aboard, the skipper takes each boy individually into his cabin for a confidential chat. His desire is to see what the boy is made of and how far he is likely to go, to make him at home, and assure him that the cabin door is open to him any day if he is in trouble or wants a word of advice. There are no harsh modes of the sea about this lugger, no driving skipperdom which regards each unit of the crew as something to be worked to its last ounce of strength. True, each of the crew is given a number and by his number he is known: this is in no sense that he shall lose his individuality, but for practical purposes. So large is the place that when a boy is wanted it would be difficult to get him by shouting his name, apart from the pandemonium that would be created by calling several boys at once. So the bugler sounds the boy's number by Morse on the bugle, and wherever that boy may be, even in the farthest reaches of the grounds, he will hear the call.

The day here is the sea day, divided into watches, and the day's work planned accordingly.

The crew is called by a naval officer at six in the morning to get up and make beds; at 5.30 the octaves "G" are sounded for a moment's silent prayer, after which the crew goes down to wash. Wash inspection follows, then the dormitories are tidied up, the decks brushed and polished till 7.30, the breakfast hour. At eight o'clock there is band parade on the quarter deck, the bugle sounds the "still," eight-bells is rung and "God save the King" played, a most impressive ceremony that would do credit to any battleship. Instruction follows till twelve, and after the dinner hour, from 12.30 till 1.30, the instruction is continued till five o'clock, after which the crew is free till "lights out" at 7.45.

The new members of the crew have been allotted to different companies. Each company is in charge of a chief petty officer, who has under him 2nd class petty officers. These officers are drawn from the boys who have earned their rating by length of service aboard the lugger and ability in their work. They receive a corresponding increase in pay, and are responsible to the skipper for everything appertaining to their companies. Also the chief petty officer has to be on duty at the table where his company messes, when, every Saturday morning, a complete inspection of the lugger from end to end is made by the skipper.

By this means a boy becomes accustomed to the Navy system of grading and discipline, and at the same time the petty officers gain experience in

handling supernumeraries. It gives a boy pride in his work, and the privileges of the petty officer are an incentive to him to get on. But, above all, it makes him used to the way of the sea.

The same object is attained in the posting of sentries. A boy in the Fleet must be used to being turned out of bed at all times, so aboard the lugger sentries are posted day and night. The elementary boys each have one hour a week sentry duty on the captain's bridge inside the building, and the nautical boys—that is to say, those over thirteen and a half who are now passing through the stage of intensive nautical instruction—have one hour sentry duty every five nights outside the building, so as to accustom them to night duty at sea.

It is the sea habit gradually learned by easy stages till it becomes second nature, not harshly, but steadily and carefully.

§ 4

Thus does the sea idea, the sea system, come to the boy who was being brought up to an aimless existence amid the fret and fuss of great cities, when he only dreamed of the sea as some vast adventure that must ever be beyond the boundaries of his future. But sheer destitution has proved that boy's salvation, since it is his passport through the Ever-Open Door of a Barnardo home to the decks of the lugger.

And now that he is here, how will he receive

technical education, practice in the ways of the sea? It is an easy matter to cram theory into a boy's head, but it may resolve itself into wasted energy unless those theories can be put into practice. Nevertheless, there are very few things to do with the handling of a ship which a boy cannot carry out here, and until recently they had at Yarmouth a schooner, the *G. L. Munro*, on which they could put theory into practice afloat, but the schooner was laid up at Norwich till the end of the War.

The classrooms are on the main deck, and a number of boys were collected haphazard and sent into the signal instruction room to show me what the average member of the lugger's crew could do in the way of signalling. In this room the Navy instructor teaches semaphoring, Morse signalling with flag waving, flash-lamp and sounder, flags and the meaning of naval flags and pennants and their use, lights, Fleet and international signals.

The class of a dozen boys or so looked at me, each eager to prove to me that there was not much about signalling he did not know.

"I'd like to test these boys," I said. "Send them a message."

The instructor handed me a writing-pad and a pencil, and I wrote upon it:

"A slab of chocolate for every boy in this room."

He took the paper, read the message and smiled, then started the sounder going.

Dot . . . dash. All Greek to me. Every boy's eyes were fixed on the instrument; not a movement on a single face. And not a sound in the room save the monotonous buzzer dotting and dashing the message into every one of those young brains. Presently the ghost of a smile crept up on this face and that. The sounder wandered on like an irritated bee flicking against the interior of a bottle. The smiles broadened and the buzzer ceased.

"Who's got it?" I asked

Every hand went up.

"You," I exclaimed, pointing to the nearest boy.

"A slab of chocolate for every boy in this room," he repeated. Not a boy had missed it.

"Come out here one of you," the instructor said. "We'll flag the gentleman the answer."

He wrote something on a piece of paper, gave it to a boy, who picked up a pair of signalling flags and rapidly signalled it to me.

"Well," I said as he dropped the flags at his sides, "can any boy tell me what it means, for I'm not a hardened salt like you are?"

Again every hand went up.

I pointed to a laughing face in the middle of the group.

"*You!*" I said.

"Best thanks to the gentleman for the chocolate," he said. The instructor handed me the paper. That was the message he had written upon it for the signaller.

"You couldn't floor them if you tried," he said.

Here was evidence enough that every one of these boys could go into the Navy to-morrow and equal the hardest salt in reading a nautical message.

In the adjoining room seamanship is taught. It would be impossible to find a finer collection of working models for teaching the rules of the sea, because most of these models have been invented by the instructors on the lugger specially for these boys. Here was an electrical contrivance which showed one after the other upon a model ship all the lights of the sea. Beside it a large model harbour; strewn with plaster rocks, with movable model boats to teach a boy how to bring his vessel into the most difficult harbour known. At one side of the room were large models of the bows of ships, with anchors to show how to clear a foul hawse. Another contrivance, invented on the lugger, was a machine which enabled a boy to master the mysteries of deep-sea sounding without ever going afloat.

But the gem of the collection was the large bridge with steering wheel worked by an electric motor. It is a simple matter to put a boy to the wheel with the compass before him, and give him instructions to put his ship so many points to port or starboard. The supposition is that the ship moves with the turn of the wheel, but this is precisely what does *not* happen at sea. After the wheel is turned the ship continues on the way she is making until the steering gear becomes master of

the pull of the water against the ship. This Browning steering apparatus, invented aboard the lugger, and, like several other inventions which have come into being at this place, since adopted by the Admiralty, is so contrived that, working by electricity, the ship continues on her way *after* the turn of the wheel, until the point corresponding to the water pressure on a real ship is passed, when she bears round in answer to the helm.

Imagine, then, what this means to a boy. Had he been trained with an ordinary wheel and compass he would have found when he steered a ship through the water for the first time, that a ship is a far more sensitive creature than he ever imagined, just as a man trained in motor theory in a garage finds, when he steers his car joyously down the road for the first time, that it has an overwhelming desire to explore the nearest ditch. But with this steering apparatus a boy becomes actually used to the *feel* of a ship without ever going on the water, and the first time he is actually at the wheel at sea not a movement of the vessel is strange to him.

In these two cabins on the lugger untold men in the Fleet to-day have been grounded in the knowledge of seamanship which has served them well afloat in days of peace, and been of incalculable value to them in battle.

§ 5

In the grounds the theories learned by the crew of the lugger are put into practice, and as we passed out the skipper called up a fine lad of fifteen and told him to prepare to heave the lead. Upon the open face of that lad was stamped the hallmark of the sea. You knew as you looked at him that he would be a sailor and nothing else.

"That boy," said the skipper, as the lad went to get the necessary apparatus, "is one of our advanced boys. The advanced boys go to Shotley in batches of thirty or so—we've got thirty just going now—and he will be in the batch. They have to pass a fairly stiff examination in arithmetic, dictation, swimming, seamanship, and gunnery, and, if they get through, the Admiralty allows us £15 per boy, out of which the boy gets £5, or, rather, the money is put into the Savings Bank in the joint names of the boy and myself, and he is allowed to draw it at the age of eighteen. He is then starting on his sea career, and the money is useful to him. As a matter of fact, just on £3,000 has been paid in these grants by the Admiralty to boys from here. Think of it! £3,000 for efficiency to youth that might have gone to waste! That boy B—— will get the £5; he can't help it. He takes to nautical training as a duck takes to water. Come and watch him heave the lead."

We climbed an upright ladder to a platform

fixed at the height of a ship's bridge from the water. The boy ran up after us, went to the port side of the bridge, fixed the apron at the end of it with a round turn and two half hitches, paid out some of the rope with the lead and began to swing. Round and round went the lead, cutting through the air with a swish, and then flew away like an arrow from a bow.

"Mark 15," he exclaimed, indicating the depth at 15 fathoms. A fine heave for the left hand.

He turned and repeated the process from the starboard chains, and reached 17 fathoms, which for a boy of his age was remarkable.

"I'm proud of that boy," the skipper said as he went hand over hand down the ladder. "He's literally come out of the depths. His father was a drunkard and deserted him, and, if it had not been for an aunt who did a little for him, he would have starved. At length she was threatened with dismissal from her situation unless she got rid of him, and so he came to us. He'll be a fine present from the slums to the Fleet. A real bit of Admiralty."

He walked across to a ship's boat fixed on a trestle.

"This," said the skipper, "is where we put some of our theories into practice. What the crew learns in the classrooms it carries out here." He pointed to a ship's mast standing some distance away. "That mast," he explained, "represents a battleship, or a shore station, or what you will, and from it the instructor signals to the boat's crew."

Without going into technical details it may be said that all signals as from ship to ship are flagged from the mast to the boat's crew, so that a boy could, if necessary, go straight to the Fleet, and would know the ordinary signals—not, of course, the secret codes—as they appeared at the mast-head of any ship around him or from a coastguard station.

"When we got this boat," the skipper went on, "I took fourteen boys to Yarmouth to bring it here. Not one of those boys had been on the water before, but they had, of course, learned rowing on dry land here. Well, we rowed that boat all the way to Norwich. The first night we slept in the hold of a barge, and the second on the floor of a teashop! But we got to Norwich without mishap and brought the boat by rail here. There's something queer about that boat. Go and look at her."

I discovered on inspection that thin steel hawsers, fitted with loops at intervals, ran the length of the boat on either side, and at each end passed over pulley wheels attached to weights.

"It's the most difficult thing on earth to teach a boat's crew to row—that is, as if they were afloat—without the resistance of water against the oars, so our instructor here invented this," the skipper said.

He called up a boat's crew, which climbed with the rapidity of monkeys into the boat and took up oars. The blade of each oar fitted into a loop in the hawser, and as the command was given each of the crew was able to pull his *full weight* on his oar.

The lead at the end of the hawser rose and fell with the strokes, giving the corresponding resistance of water against the blades. The result was as perfect rowing as you would have seen in the old days of the 'Varsity Boatrace.

It is not surprising that the Naval authorities have taken up the invention, but what is surprising is that here is a training system, brought about purely to convert the destitute child into a really useful unit of the Fleet, not only doing the work in such a way that the Admiralty says: "Send us more boys, for your boys are the best we get," but actually supplying ideas for the training of our future sailors generally.

We went aboard again, and entered the skipper's cabin. A queue of boys was waiting at the door.

"What's going to happen now?" I asked.

"Banking," said the skipper. "We've got our private bank. Watch them pay in and draw out."

He opened a big ledger and told the boy on duty to send in the first applicant.

A boy came and stood at attention at the desk.

"Number?" said the skipper.

"241, John White. Want to pay in 3½d., sir."

He opened page 241 and put 3½d. to the credit of John White, Number 241 on the lugger.

The boy gave a smart salute and went out. The next instant a freckled face was smiling beside the desk.

"Number?"

"293, George Brown, sir. Pay in a ½d., please."

Page 293 in the ledger revealed the fact that George Brown had not an account.

"So you're starting an account, 293?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good lad. It'll be a penny next time."

The next boy hurried up.

"136, sir; Eric Thomson. Want a bob, sir; I mean a shilling."

"136, you're always drawing out money. You and your brother—pair of young spendthrifts. What are you going to buy this time—a steam-yacht, or bull's-eyes?"

"Oranges, sir."

"All right, 136. Here's your shilling. But go slow."

"Yes, sir."

136 hurried away and was replaced by a stubby youth of ten, or thereabouts, with vivid red hair, snub nose, and a happy face.

"286, Frank Smith, sir. Want to pay in 2d., and please can I have it out at Christmas?"

Page 286 revealed the fact that Frank Smith was, like his colleague 293, starting a new account. And he seemed very anxious about Christmas.

"All right, 286. 3d. for you at Christmas. Try and make it 1s. by then. Christmas costs money, you know. Good lad. Get on with it; there's plenty of room on this page."

And so it went on. Paying in and drawing out. Youth all expectant and excited; little fighting bulldogs of To-morrow.

§ 6

The years pass and the crew of the lugger changes. Boys go out to that greater world to which the Navy will carry them. Those who fail in their examinations for the Fleet will go to the Merchant Service. But always they find the sea, these boys, for from here all roads lead to the sea. New boys come, new bits of salvage from the cities, with the same hopes and ambitions as those who have passed before them. Always making for the sea.

And what will become of them at sea? All this careful training and nurture—will it disappear in the Fleet like so much water poured into a hole in the ground? Can it be conceived that work like this makes a youth develop into a mere automaton? Surely not.

Seven years ago a boy named Fricker left the lugger and went to sea. The night before he left he said to the matron: "I'm not coming back till I have done something worthy of the school. If I never do anything which I consider worthy you will never see me again."

For seven years he was gone, and the lugger saw him no more. Then last July he walked aboard, not an A.B., but a fully-fledged commis-

sioned officer with a gold ring on his arm. In a short time he will be a Lieutenant. And that boy, pulled out of destitution, is only one year behind a boy from Osborne—a boy who may have come from a wealthy home and had unlimited money poured out upon him.

"They tell me," Fricker said, "that I am the first Watts boy to achieve this distinction, but you can take it from me that there are many others who will soon share it with me. I know of several well on the road."

The record of these old boys in the War alone would fill a volume. For instance, the other day a strapping sailor turned up from one of our latest submarines. His name is Sidney C———, and life was a very rough sea for him when in 1902 his case was brought to the notice of Barnardo's by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. He was then nine years old, and his father was serving his third term of imprisonment. Barnardo's took him over, put him aboard the lugger, and in due course Sidney wound his way safe to sea.

At the outbreak of war he was a seaman on board S.S. *Southport,* and the ship was taking in copra at one of the Caroline Islands when a German cruiser came on the scene, and informed them that war had broken out between England and Germany. The cruiser then purloined 200 tons of coal from the *Southport,* disabled her machinery, and told the crew that they must remain prisoners

on board till the cruiser returned in fourteen days' time from a visit to one of the neighbouring islands. As soon as the cruiser had disappeared, however, the crew fitted up some sort of a sail, and were able to take the *Southport* out to sea, where they got help in turning her from a Norwegian barque, the steering machinery having been disabled. The Norwegian also gave them three sacks of rice, and so the *Southport*, a cripple on the face of the waters, started on her long voyage of eleven and a half days to Brisbane.

Since then Sidney has been in the thick of it, and has been presented to royalty as one of the sea heroes the War produced. And now the man who, as a child in 1902, would, but for Barnardoism, probably have perished of starvation, is one of the specially trained crew of the latest type of British submarine.

That is the kind of material that comes from derelict youth salved by Barnardoism. An equally remarkable case was that of a boy who, in 1907, walked up to the Chief Offices of Barnardo's and asked to be taken in. The statement he made proved to be fictitious; in fact, this lad was a very rough diamond. Certainly the surroundings in which he had been brought up were bad in the extreme, both his parents having drifted from the paths of morality. Small wonder, then, that the boy had the kink of evil in him, and was lazy and impudent; so much so that his mother urged that

he should be sent to Canada, or anywhere else in the world to get him out of the way.

The boy would certainly have drifted. But at this stage the new chance came to him in the shape of Barnardoism, and under the better environment he completely changed. He passed from Barnardo's into the Merchant Service, ultimately joining the Royal Naval Reserve, to be called up at the outbreak of the War. He took part in the Jutland battle aboard the *Invincible*, and was picked up two hours after the ship was sunk. He then served on board a light cruiser until volunteers were required for the Zeebrugge exploit, when he was one of the first to offer himself. To Zeebrugge he went, a member of the crew of the *Dryad*. Early in the battle the ship was beached to draw the enemy's fire, and once again this old Barnardo boy found himself swimming in the water. But his day's work was not over. He was picked up, and was one of the landing party to get on to the Mole.

Three other Barnardo boys scrambled on to the Mole beside him. Telling of the adventure afterwards when he returned, a bad shell-shock case, he said: "I was a bit nervous when I found myself on the Mole, but when it became a cat-and-dog fight I thought no more about it, but just carried on."

During the next few moments his escapes were marvellous. Death swept about him like a great tidal wave, yet passed him by. For the God who

looks after the sparrows remembered this piece of Britain's strength who had once been a city waif, and bade him keep his life.

§ 7

Of such is the spirit of the sea. Of such is the great humanity which Barnardoism salves from the swirls of suffering, from the deeps of slumdom and poverty, where hope is dead even in the very young, to give it back, strengthened and whole, to the treasure house of the State.

The Barnardo system has trained and passed nearly four thousand boys into the Navy or Mercantile Marine. Of these, great numbers got their "sea legs" aboard the lugger. Small wonder that they never forget what they owe to the organisation that gave them their chance; that they often come back to see those who first opened their eyes to the meaning of life.

Such an incident happened immediately after the battle of Jutland. Among the ships engaged was the *Dublin*, which afterwards put in at a northern port, and the crew given ten days' leave. One seaman, Bob S———, was an old Barnardo boy, and the captain called him up.

"Let's see, S———, you won't want leave because you have no home to go to," he said.

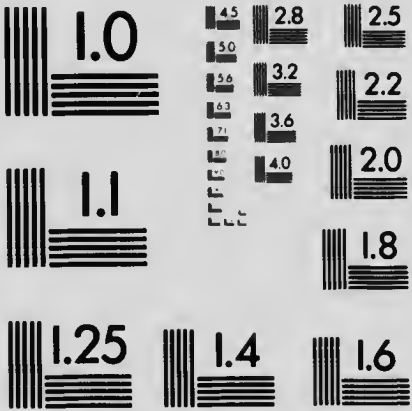
"Oh, yes, I have, sir," replied S———.

"You have? That's news to me. Where is it?"

"Barnardo's, sir."

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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His papers were made out at once, and Bob S———, without even waiting to wash himself, and with the grime of battle still on his face, got straight into the train and arrived at the City of Youth on Sunday afternoon—for a quiet cup of tea, as he expressed it.

It is not surprising that efforts are being made to raise funds to create a second training centre, this one solely for the Mercantile Marine. As a matter of fact, four Liverpool ladies gave £20,000 by way of a start. The needs of the Mercantile Marine now that the War is over will be enormous to make good the wastage; the demand for trained Youth, such as that given by the lugger, will never have been so great, and, with a second school, more can be done to meet that demand.

And Youth is waiting. In all the darkest places of the towns and cities Youth is waiting. What its value is to the nation is best demonstrated by the fact that on practically every fighting ship afloat there is an old Barnardo boy; in every sea battle fought in the War old Barnardo boys have taken part. They have come back with their colours flying or gone down with their ships. In the Mercantile Marine they have helped to protect this country from starvation. They have never failed. They never will fail. Because the life on the lugger taught them before all things the understanding of that message above the endowed [illegible] in the City of Youth—to put their trust in God, hold their heads high, and do their duty.

§ 8

As I write there is before me an open window through which I glance now and then over a great stretch of sea. The sun has dropped, and the dusk is creeping over the water. Four cruisers are stealing at long intervals out into the gathering dark. Away to the right a bank of black smoke hangs above the chimneys of a huge industrial town like a sounding-board above a cathedral pulpit.

The ships disappear, the night has swallowed them. A few screened spots of light poke up through the dark where the town lies. I get up to close the window and fetch the lamp.

As I do so a light like a star adrift appears far out over the water. Once, twice, then sustained, disappearing and breaking in again. The cruisers are talking to each other in the happy companionship of the sea.

It reminds me of the boy aboard the lugger. Probably down in the town another urchin is watching this light from an attic window. To me it comes as evidence of the silent strength that lies beyond the shores of Britain. But to him it may be as the lamp at the gate of adventure, spelling out its message to him:

Come—along—come—along—along.

CHAPTER IV

BROKEN WINGS

"We must not wait for the deaf to ask for speech, or for the submerged of humanity to rise up and demand their liberties. We who see, we who hear, we who understand must help them, must give them the bread of knowledge, must teach them what their human inheritance is."
—HELEN KELLER.

§ 1

WHEN I returned from the lugger I met the Listening Man again.

"Enjoyed yourself?" he asked.

"Yes," I declared.

"Aren't they grand, those lads!"

"There are two things—two characteristics—which impressed me very strongly about these boys," I replied; "their happiness and their health. I've never seen a healthier lot of boys anywhere."

"Remember," he said, "that they are physically the best boys we get. But there are others. You haven't seen our birds with broken wings."

He saw that he had puzzled me.

"It often happens that the suffering of the

slums produces permanent hurt," he explained. "Bad housing, bad feeding, cruelty, develop in children infantile diseases, some curable, it is true, after years of labour; some, alas! that can never be cured. They all come crowding to us, these injured ones, the blind, the deaf and dumb, children with rickets, children with paralysis. Birds with broken wings, that's what they are. They've never had the ghost of a chance till now. . . . Then there are our difficult girls."

"Difficult girls?" I repeated. "I saw none such as these in the City of Girls."

"Of course you didn't," he answered. "You saw nothing but sweetness. An army of little heroines. But they are not all like that. Think a minute. Supposing you had been born and brought up in some filthy dark alley. . . . Would you be tractable?"

"Not exactly an angel!" I replied.

He nodded.

"The human temperament is like that; it is a delicate piece of mechanism that becomes jarred. So if the slums do not leave actual physical hurt, they spoil the sweetness of the child. But the defect is only temporary. Under the new conditions a girl's nature quickly recovers its normal state. It's like that with those girls."

"What have you done with them?" I asked him.

"We've given them the country. For a long time we had a special centre for them in London.

Then somebody said: 'Why London? Put them into the heart of the country. Pour sunlight and clean air on to those whose temperaments have become warped.' . . . How do you suppose we set about it?"

"Boarded them out somewhere, miles from anywhere. Given them silence and woods and things?"

"Not a bit of it," he replied. "That would only make for depression. We've bought them a farm. A farm and cows. Imagine the mind of a girl of this type, shrunk like a pea-nut, broadening out under the freedom of the open-air life. London is no good for that girl's mind. You cannot grow beauty in a cramped mentality as easily as you would grow a radish. You've got to give it special nurture, air and light and room. Natural interest. London is too artificial. All this rasping noise and clamour beating down on minds the cities have spoiled. Just change the scene and put that girl who has been herded in dirt and suffering out on an Essex farm. Give her the scent of wet woods and meadows in place of the garbaged odours of the gutter and filthy homes; the colours of Nature instead of the drab of the slums. Her life begins to change. You can watch it change."

There seemed to be nothing these people had not thought out in their study of humanity. But I was anxious to know more about the children he had referred to as birds with broken wings. And when I told him what was in my mind he sug-

gested that we should go off to Hackney there and then and see some of them.

We started out and climbed aboard a train. Then he said:

"I can tell you a piece of real romance about one of those birds with broken wings. Some people might think that there is not much use in a crippled slum child. I have even heard one or two who do not understand say that there is nothing gained by saving life that is broken and impoverished. That it does not add to the national strength. Doesn't it! This boy did."

"Where did you find him?" I asked.

"In the streets of Bootle some years ago. He was a boy of five, named Tommy Roberts, and he had been abandoned before he was picked up. He had rickets badly. And he was charged before the stipendiary with wandering. Altogether he was in a bad way, that little chap, and he was taken to the Royal Southern Hospital in Liverpool, where his legs were broken and re-set five times each leg. Then he was put into a State home, until at last he was certified as useless for industrial training, and was virtually handed over to Barnardo's to die. He was one of the worst cases of a bird with a broken wing it would be possible to find, nevertheless, attention and nurture brought that child round."

"It is not the best testimonial for the State as a children's doctor, all this," I said.

"Hardly. Well, Tommy Roberts went to

Canada with a party of our boys before he reached his teens. By that time he could walk and run. And the most amazing thing was that on the boat going over he met his brother, who was not, by the way, connected with our party. It was just one of those chance meetings that happen. Tommy's joy can be imagined, but unhappily it was short-lived. The brother fell off the boat on the way across and was drowned. Tommy went on. He grew to manhood, became a farmer's hand, and then a farmer on his own account, and then went to France to fight, as strong and lusty a soldier of the Dominion as ever crossed the water. . . . I wonder if anyone could say it wasn't worth while after that!" he concluded.

"Human effort which will achieve so much is always worth while."

"But wait till you see some of these blind children we are going in search of," he exclaimed. "Merry little chaps. You can't patch them up and send them adventuring over the world. But you can bring them the greatest treasure of childhood—happiness. And some knowledge of things. You won't need much imagination to understand what it means to a blind child to come here after adventuring in the slums *in the dark!*

We found the house at last—a large house standing back from the road. And what struck me forcibly about it when we entered was its silence. It was terribly silent. One missed the happy jargon of child life. Yet a multitude of

children lived here, but—they could not talk. Or if they could talk, they were blind, and the blind talk but little.

It seemed to me like a house of little ghosts.

§ 2

If our eyes were blind what would we know of the day? The things which serve to make the world God's chosen habitation are lost in the dark. To the blind child there is nothing in the dark save voices. What it learns of the world, of God, comes through the dark. And given that eternal dark in the slums what does life mean? Fear. Fear of every sound. A spirit of defence against every sound. Listening. All the time listening for the approach of some new hurt.

There is no soul in the slums, and little humanity. It is a struggle for existence which entails the weaker being trampled under foot. The child blind or deaf is a nuisance, a hindrance. It cannot help to make the family existence easier; it cannot even fend for itself. It is a drag on the wheel.

The child blind or dumb in the average slum home is, as it were, the odd piece of furniture in the house. To begin with, the child born blind has no sense of proportion. It imagines a cow to be no bigger than a man, or a dog to be as big as an elephant. Simply because, lacking an hour of sight, it has never gained the sense of proper proportion.

What chance has that child in the slum world?

But there are some people—and I found them in this house that sheltered those birds with broken wings—who have realised what the loss of these powers means to a child. And they have lent their sight, their hearing, to these children that they may learn second-hand—since there is no other way—all that is best in the world, and may even grow up to a certain usefulness.

They came rushing up from the tea-room, these children. Happy enough, but silent. Those that could see looked smilingly at one with the expression of welcome to a visitor. But there was no sound. One spoke to them unthinking, indicating this child or that, but there was no sound. And yet the children understood, for they could read the expression of the face, or the movement of the lips, and knew what was being said.

Now, when the deaf children come out of the slums they have no means of acquiring intelligence. The movement of a person's lips conveys nothing. And the child born deaf is in consequence dumb because it has no sense of sound. Left in the slums it would grow to maturity, and remain helpless, even if kept by someone, or it would more probably succumb to ill-usage and neglect.

This house, I discovered, does not exist solely to succour these children. Not only does it afford them shelter. For here they set to work to convey intelligence to the child mind; to get beyond the

barrier which has warped the brain. And the first thing is to establish a means of communication. The most primitive and simplest means of communication is the dumb and deaf alphabet, and all these little sufferers could converse rapidly by this method.

But that is only the first stage. By extreme patience it is possible to make many of these children speak a few words. It will take years sometimes to teach them to pronounce one word, and even then only inadequately. But if that word comes, others may follow, very slowly and laboriously, and at best the vocabulary will be confined to the smallest limits. Often children can never be taught to utter a sound.

The science of communication with the deaf is one of the greatest problems. But what Braille is to the blind, lip-reading is to those who cannot hear. And now I found myself in a room of happy children, few of whom could answer me, and the only sound was the scuffling of their feet on the floor. The superintendent proved to me, however, that she could communicate with most of them more rapidly than by using the dumb and deaf alphabet. She sent a child to the far end of the room and made a movement of her lips, without sound, but indicating the clear pronunciation of the words. Instantly the child understood.

It is not surprising that children thus afflicted are slow in their affections. They are timid in making friendships, and still more shy of any out-

ward show of affection. It is as if they were conscious of the terrible handicap that is upon them, and sensitiveness so common in affliction asserts itself. Moreover, their afflictions have frequently caused so much lack of love and understanding in their former slum life that they instinctively turn away from all new-comers. But behind the apparent indifference of these little sufferers there is a wealth of love that pays for the seeking. To those who look after them, and who spare themselves nothing to make their little tormented lives happier, they turn with a new understanding. It would almost seem as if there is pent up in them the affection which the normal person scatters broadcast upon relatives and good friends. It is as a great flood stemmed back. Then there slowly creeps into the crippled mind the knowledge that this woman or that is the defence against the outer world, against all the added hurt that otherwise might come, and affection, deeper and stronger, far stronger than that of the ordinary child, pours out towards those who have found that child's heart. Just as a plant on stony ground may be late in flowering, only to give to God a sweeter perfume in its own little season.

It is difficult enough to teach a child endowed with all the physical gifts, but how much more difficult when intelligence has to be conveyed across a barrier! Yet these children are all schooled as they grow up. They are sent to schools which teach only the deaf and dumb or the blind.

Slow and laborious as the process of teaching them may be, it happens, nevertheless, that many physically afflicted in this manner have been given a keener intelligence. The Divine favours may seem ill-distributed in such children, but the balance is always the same. Intelligence in a direction unknown in ordinary children, a quickness of the fingers which other children do not possess, help to make up for that sense which has been destroyed.

This is particularly so in the case of the blind. A few blind girls in this house turned out six hundred pairs of socks and stockings last year. They work at the knitting machines with a speed not surpassed by those who have the gift of sight. Their fingers do not grope, but are possessed of the powers which their blind eyes lack. And yet such children left in the slums would have done nothing, would have learned nothing. But now these knitting girls almost earn their own living.

Can all the organised systems of civilisation point to a greater triumph than this? Or is any victory more supreme than that of bringing happiness and content to one doomed to the eternal dark? Sir Arthur Pearson, that strong man among the blind, welcomed a blinded officer to St. Dunstan's with these words: "Take cheer. You and I have seen all that is best in the world." It was a great message. But the man to whom he spoke retains the memory of what he has seen to

stay with him till the end of his days. Those born to blindness, those children have no such memory. The world to them is no more than the ground they feel beneath their feet, or the trees they grope past with their fingers. The glory of the sun conveys nothing more than the presence of a fire in a room. Colour, the working of Nature, starlight and the sea are as things that have never been. That curiosity about things and happenings which sight brings to a child, and which sight eventually ripens to maturity, is killed at the root. That insistent curiosity. Like little Paul Dombey sitting on the stairs and watching the clockmaker poking the candle into the mechanism of the clock and wondering what made the clock strike. Curiosity and learning born of sight. . . .

Standing in the room as we passed was a fine girl of eighteen. She was robust and strong, with all the freshness of dawning womanhood on her face—a face set with deep brown eyes. The Listening Man put out his hand to her, but she looked at him and made no movement. No one would have dreamed that she was blind.

The Superintendent drew us aside.

"Twelve years ago," she said, "that girl's father came home in a drunken fit and kicked her on the forehead, thereby destroying the sight of both eyes. For twelve years she has been in the dark. And she will always be in the dark!"

Always in the dark!

We parents, parents of children who see! We

who have known their sudden fears in dark rooms, and understood them because we once knew those fears ourselves; their nightmares in the dark and craving for light! Only we can understand what the dark means to a child.

So God grant that we may light some dim lamp of compassion for a child born to a gloom that can never end.

§ 3

Never does Christianity attain a higher level than in its application to suffering. And here was a veritable house of achievement. Yet—so the Listening Man proved to me—only one of many.

Other houses there are, scattered over the country, engaged in the same mission of calling back from the depths of the slums afflicted lives that they may make them new again. The thousands of men and women who pass these houses in the hustle of their daily lives do not know them for what they are. The board in the garden which announces that they are branches of the Barnardo Homes is almost unnoticed. Life is too strenuous, the errand of the day too urgent, for those who pass to pause awhile and examine the miracle that is here in the making. How many could imagine happiness—real happiness—in a blind or dumb child, or a child that is both? Yet here it is for all the world to see if it wishes.

But not only in the lack of speech and sight

does the tragedy of the slums manifest itself. There is tragedy more gaunt, and, it might almost be thought, more hopeless, which these people have set about with a garment of happiness. There are the children whose legacy from the slums is scarcely a fighting chance; children who can never or rarely be cured of the terrible maladies which the slums have given them.

In many cases it is the old law of the sins of the fathers beating down upon the children, and is there to be no mercy for such as these? Does the God we have taught to our children ride high in His Heaven and declare that those children who bear the burden of their parents' sin shall have no help from the good Samaritans along Life's highway? If belief in God means anything, it is that a fighting chance shall be given to a helpless child.

So from the house at Hackney which sheltered the deaf and the blind, the Listening Man took me to the north where the herded humanity of commerce creates and re-creates its little armies of broken children. We have yet to place the conditions of our children's lives in the industrial cities in line with the industrial progress of those cities. Year by year ill-housing, ill-feeding, and neglect are bringing to lives that might be made useful to the State, disease and pain and death. The giant machines of commerce roll on, grinding out life. And underneath, unseen and often unheard, are the child victims of the Juggernaut.

Yet to such as it can Barnardoism throws out its sheltering arms. On the edge of the Stray at Harrogate, that wide space where God's clean air comes up like balm from the moors, I found the house that shielded the children who had been salved from the depths with scarcely a fighting chance. The horrors of slum life in the industrial cities have bred in them incurable disease: tuberculosis, advanced stages of rickets, paralysis and Pott's disease—the latter a withering and curvature of the spine, till the child droops, bow-shaped, as does a flower that is denied air and water.

Those children, and there were thirty-eight there the morning I saw them, would have died deaths of extreme agony if they had been left in the slums. And many of those who looked up at me happy and smiling were as assuredly doomed to death as the man who receives his death sentence in any court of law.

Some people may declare: What is the use of salving a child in the full knowledge that it must die? The answer is this. Many of them have a fighting chance. And so long as there is a fighting chance for a life given by God, the battle should go on. It is the first law of humanity. Moreover, and this is an even greater argument, if those children had been left they would have died only at the end of months of extreme suffering. If they die here it will be with attention and love and care up to the last moment that the spark of life is burning. They will slip out into the arms of God

who gave them life as easily as they might pass into a childish dream.

This wonderful place, where they help the children who have scarcely a fighting chance left, was the outcome of a tragedy. There was a small boy named Jack Roberts, aged eleven, who used to spend much of his time in helping the Barnardo children. But a few years ago he was drowned at a seaside town, and as a memorial to him who, a child himself and a wealthy child, had always helped other children, his parents gave this splendid home for the incurable waifs of the cities.

Everything that could help the fighting chance is here. Big rooms. Mighty windows. So that on this morning those rooms were drenched with sunlight, and lying around in their beds were the children of the fighting chance. Many of those would never get up from their beds. Others lived in expectation of the day when they would. And to a child expectation of normal health is the promise of entrance to the Garden of Eden. Some few, the older ones, had, as they merged into maturity, come by the knowledge that they were incurable, and bore that knowledge with sublime endurance.

In one corner of a bright dormitory was a girl of twenty-six. She had been gathered in from Whitby when she was six, and had lain on her back for twenty years. During that time she had become a marvellous needlewoman. The work she undertook was splendid in its imagination and

production. It would seem as if the paralysis that gripped her had caused the cleverness of her brain and fingers to be accentuated. But on this morning she had put aside a piece of work finished and said: "That is the last piece of work I shall ever do, and I know it." Paralysis was creeping to the heart, and now the truth had come.

But for this place that girl would never have known many of those twenty years. Neglect had started this disease in her, and for twenty years these people had fought it and given her twenty years of happiness. Who shall say that the fighting chance was not worth while?

Another small child, a girl with a little wizened face, was literally bent double with Pott's disease. She lived on her knees day and night. In a near bed a little boy of eight was lying on one side, from which posture he was unable to move owing to paralysis. And in a separate room was a girl of eight who had been rescued from a haunt of suffering in a Lancashire mining centre. As a baby she had been fed on pork when she was given any food at all. Now, a frail piece of humanity, she lay helpless on her side, her face white, her eyes in sunken pits. The early treatment she had received developed a great cavity in her lung, and she was just hovering on brink of death. Month after month a doctor and special nurse had tended her, fighting for her life, the prospect of victory as remote as the stars, but never giving in.

I entered a room where ten children were playing. They were all dressed and able to get about. The room was full of toys, and the little ones were engaged in all the happy pursuits of childhood. They ran up as I entered, some climbed upon the table, up to my shoulders. At a casual glance I should have said that they were normally healthy children; in many cases their cheeks bore the colour of health, their voices were vibrant with life and happiness. But the Sister whispered quietly to me that only two of those ten children would live to maturity. There was a possible chance for a third, but it was very remote.

Amidst all the splendour of sunshine and joy of youth in this room there lurked the waiting shadow of death. To me, to me alone, the room suddenly seemed to become a condemned cell. Yet to those children it was the playground of happiness; had they been able to understand they would have said that they left the condemned cell behind them when a fathering hand lifted them out of the slums. Jimmy was busy with his painting-box, and Tommy with his paper castle; the sun was warm in the room, and they told me they were going to have cake for tea because one of them had a birthday, and a child loves birthdays because in the expectancy it lives all the wonderful things that seldom happen.

This is what the slums produce. Smashed life. Only slowly are we beginning to understand. Only slowly and laboriously is the first knowledge

of childhood coming to Mankind. The conditions which create this thing must pass, the herding and irresponsible parentage. This maiming and casting away of life through lack of understanding.

Now that the Death winds have passed, and we are setting out to the new attainment, well may we pause and consider. So long as national conditions exist which largely produce these birds with broken wings we are nationally imperfect. The old laws which would exterminate the weak perish with the understanding of humanity and democracy. There is only one common value to any life. God puts that value upon life at birth, and no valuation of Man will make it a baser or a better thing.

All this we shall learn. In our new epoch which is dawning we shall discover it. Then shall we open the slum cages so that the birds with broken wings shall find their way to the sun, and Barnardoism, which has done so much for these sufferers, shall become our national creed.

CHAPTER V

A CASTLE OF BABIES

"Infancy is the perpetual Messiah which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to Paradise."—EMERSON.

§ 1

FOR hours we seemed to have been travelling through Kentish hop-fields; then changing at places, getting into other trains and going on. From the hustling suburbs of South London we had come to glorious uplands, to the rich pastures and orchards of the garden of England.

The Listening Man had been very silent throughout the journey. But suddenly he turned to me and said:

"What would you do if you found a real live baby on your doorstep on a winter's night? Not a fine healthy baby, mark you, but one that had just a flicker of life in it and nothing more."

I confessed that I did not know, and reminded him that people did not leave babies about in that promiscuous fashion, and therefore the problem did not arise.

"But it does arise," he remonstrated. "This

sort of thing is happening all the time. Maybe not actually on my doorstep or yours are these babies left, but on the national doorstep, and that is really our doorstep—yours and mine. And if the world can break a strong man, what, think you, will it do to a baby that is just hanging on to the edge of life? . . . You've seen what is done for our birds with broken wings, now you are going to see our baby show."

I took from my pocket the plan of my pilgrimage, and reminded my friend that we were going to "The Castle."

"We are," he said. "A Castle of Babies. This is not a fancy name; it's a real castle. . . . But to revert to the babies. You've seen derelict boys and girls, but no derelict babies, and there are hundreds of them up and down the country. The mother dies, leaving no one to look after the atom of life she has brought into the world. Or they are the unwanted babies of fallen mothers who desert or ill-treat them. Oh, there are a hundred ways in which a baby will become destitute. And it hasn't much of a fighting chance—a derelict baby."

"What do you do with them?" I asked.

"Collect them. Bits of treasure, that's what they are. . . . What do you think the Father of all children would have done for a derelict baby? Failed to take it in? So, as far as we are able, we try to carry out the Divine decree as regards these little sparrows. Would that we could do more.

But during the past eleven years we have collected 2,150 children of under two years of age. Of these an average of 8.2 per 1,000 have died, and fifty per cent. of these deaths were due to disease present in the child when it came to us. That is a fine average."

The train drew up at the little station of Hawkhurst. The Listening Man climbed out and waited for me.

"We're near the Castle now," he said; "it hasn't a moat or a portcullis, but it has more gallantry inside it than all the old castles of romance. . . . Yes," he went on as we started down the road, "this baby problem is going to be one of the most vital questions for the new Britain after the War. Consider. A hundred thousand babies die every year in this country, and at least half those could be saved. The babies we collect are those with the worst chance of all, and that is what makes our average of 8.2 so good. A derelict baby isn't exactly what you'd bank on for a life policy. But I'd take the risk on most of those that get to the Castle."

"You mean you collect them from the slums and send them here?"

"Not haphazard. We sort them out. The healthier ones we board somewhere in the country; near the sea if they require sea air. But there are the weaklings—the babies just waiting to slip through the door of death. They were Dr. Barnardo's greatest problem. And he solved it

in this way. He bought an old country house here and beside it he built his Castle. For suffering infancy he created a splendid place, all air and light and warmth. So into the Castle come the most frail bits of life, and they usually leave it fine healthy children. Henceforward we'll want any life, however frail. The weakest have got to survive. It must be our national ideal, this rebuilding of helpless children. For children are the national bank. Money won't yield the interest a nation will gain from its children."

§ 2

Then we came upon the Castle. It stood back in well-wooded grounds, its red battl[illegible]its showing through the trees. It was a castle [illegible] windows at which the faces of children were pressed against the glass at our approach. Verily it was a place of beauty.

"It might be a home of the aristocracy," I told the Listening Man.

"It *is* a home of the aristocracy," he answered as he pulled the bell. "Don't you know that babies are the aristocrats of the slums? Wait till you get inside and look at some of them. See how they'll sum you up, and decide in their own minds as to whether you are a person worth smiling at or not.

"Is anyone more particular in the choice of friends than a baby? Sir Percy de Vere Jones

of Camberwell, or Lady Guinevere Smith of Back Street, Birmingham, are wise people. They have their own select society, and if you do not understand the social circle of babydom they will have none of you."

"But I'm quite sure that Sir Percy and Lady Guinevere are making a most terrible row just now," I exclaimed, as a violent chorus of wailing smote the countryside. "Hark at them!"

"Isn't it lovely!" answered the Listening Man. "It shows they're getting on. Lungs and strength that will let them yell—that's health. Sir Percy could not have done that when he first came in here, I know. It's fine!"

"I'll take your word for that," I said. "But I couldn't live with it. Sir Percy may be, and no doubt is, a very excellent fellow, but——"

The door opened and we went into the morning room to wait for the matron-superintendent. Here from the window I caught my first glimpse of the inhabitants of the Castle. They were there in rows, basking in the sunshine, in perambulators, in cots; the whole *élite* of the Castle's aristocracy. Jabbering to each other. Some standing up in their cots delivering perorations on a matter of supreme importance to babydom, while those addressed uttered sighs of boredom or turned slightly and went to sleep again. Sir Percy—I imagined he might be Sir Percy, for the tears were still wet upon his cheeks—was making a desperate offensive upon the neighbouring perambulator, the occupant

of which, a young Sir Galahad of two, flaunted a banana skin at him in mockery.

Our arrival in their midst a few moments later, accompanied by the matron, was received with a frigid silence. Sir Percy gave me a stare which said more plainly than words: "Who let this fellow in?" Lady Rowena, who had a head of glorious Titian red curls, with big black eyes like pits in a white face, screwed up her mouth and seemed perilously near crying. Lady Rowena, I discovered afterwards, hailed from Bethnal Green. She had been deserted by her mother, who left her in charge of a neighbour and disappeared. Here was a child of less than two, practically thrown on the world to fend for herself, and when in due course she joined the Society of the Castle she weighed exactly six pounds. But now Lady Rowena was putting on weight under the ceaseless care of her retainers, who plied her with milk, and moved her pram from place to place to get the full strength of the sun for her, and watched beside the cot night after night for months on end, as if hers was the most precious life in all Britain. Soon the tardy rose would flush in her cheeks, and the pits disappear from about her eyes, and young life stir in her limbs.

In a cot near by was a wisp of a child with dark hair and wonderful eyes. He reminded me of something I once read by Jerome K. Jerome which, if I remember, ran like this: "I saw a little mite sitting on a doorstep in a Soho slum one night, and

I shall never forget the look that the gas-lamps showed me on its wizened face—a look of dull despair, as if, from the squalid court, the vista of its own squalid life had risen, ghost-like, and struck its heart dead with horror."

Now Maurice—or Count Maurice, as we will call him, for he had those delicate features of aristocracy which appear often on slum children and fade with the years—had been, and was still, a difficult case. His face bore evidence of the squalor from which he had come. And he weighed exactly *four pounds!* He had come in from a northern slum a lonely fragment of life just slipping out to the infinite. At the Castle he lay still for weeks and scarcely had the power to cry. Now he looked at me, a little old man he seemed to be, hurt in the fray, but an aristocrat still. His wrists were no bigger round than a school ruler, his fingers so minute and white that one feared to touch them.

What would one do with derelict life like that? By the law of survival of the fittest he would have passed long since to the earth, but now Count Maurice was picking up every day. Here in the Castle women watched him like some treasured jewel. He was somebody's baby; beyond his name he belonged no more to the outside world than that. But he was life, and here life is riches. Often enough a nurse had walked the dormitory throughout the night with Count Maurice in her arms. Although he was only somebody's baby, he

might make a strapping man if she could pull him through.

That is the motive behind it all. These women who spare themselves nothing for children picked up from nowhere, who dress the most horrible diseases—for the slums have brought disease to most of these children which only months of labour can eliminate—are guided by some far vision to which the eyes of ordinary mortals are blind. At the Castle I found no woman who nursed a child because it was a duty. She seemed to see ahead, to see that child growing up, to know *now* what her triumph would mean *then*.

In the ordinary way sick children are difficult enough, but the slum life, the privation and emaciation, often destroy the nerves of some of those who ultimately reach the Castle. They are difficult in the extreme. One child, for instance, when admitted some time ago was more or less a wild animal. Although only two years old, it was so accustomed to blows that it screamed with fear when anyone approached its bed, and scratched and fought when touched. It had the face of an aged woman, this child, and before anything could be done these instincts had to be lived down. But patiently day by day the nurse stuck to her task and transformed that child into one of the most lovable children that ever came into the Castle, and built up her health until the child went away to be boarded out, a fine specimen of coming girlhood.

There are some women like these who almost appear to have touched the garment of God, and thereby gained the supreme gift of Motherhood. They may never have been mothers, but they are the chosen mothers. At the Castle I saw several such mothers, each with her little family of twenty—twenty children suffering from some physical defect as the result of destitution or neglect. Mothers who waged an unceasing battle against death and pain, mothers who never came into the limelight, but carried on with a song in their hearts, saving somebody's baby for no other reward than the joy of victory.

§ 3

Many of those little knights and ladies are in a deplorable condition when they arrive. There is nothing of the aristocrat about them then. Emaciation and disease are stifling the faint flame of life. The eyes of a baby can speak long before its lips can frame words, and in them is the story of suffering. And probably the most cruel thing in the world is the suffering of necessity to a child. Nor can the child understand why its parents are so useless and impotent as to permit it to happen.

For the first three weeks after arrival the baby is kept isolated, because, coming from the worst slums as so many of them do, they may be laden with the germs of infection. Each baby is at once bathed and weighed, and is weighed weekly until

it reaches normal health, and afterwards every three months. In the case of new admissions who may be in a very bad condition it is often only by weighing that any change for the better can be detected. Many lie prostrate in a state of utter weakness, and unable to move. But the diet of milk and fattening foods without stint presently begins to tell, till at length a great event occurs —the baby which has been the cause of so much anxiety for weeks on end has put on an ounce or two. The tide is beginning to turn. It is still an uphill fight which, in the case of some children, may go on for two or three years, but it is the first sign of promise.

The nurseries are all arranged in the front of the Castle so as to catch the sun, for the sun, the matron assured me, is the best possible doctor for these little sufferers. Sun and air are life to them. I saw one baby a few months old being taken out for its first sun-bath, a baby which, ever since admission to the Castle, had been wrapped up in cod-liver oil. For weeks the nurse who carried it had fought for its life, and now, after many set-backs when the battle seemed lost, she was winning out.

The elder babies were having dinner as we re-entered the Castle, fifty or more sitting at long low tables eating, as only healthy children can eat, big helpings of minced meat and vegetable food with unlimited gravy, followed by bowls of rice pudding. All these children had passed through the valley of shadow, although it seemed difficult to

believe as much from the appearance of them now. Each family of twenty had its own table, and was waited upon by the nurse who had permanent charge of it. Then when the meal was over all the children were washed, the small ones put to bed for an hour or so, while the stronger and healthier children were sent to school in the classroom attached to the Castle.

Oh, those old fellows with their dogmas about the survival of the fittest! What did they know about humanity? They ought to have seen the Castle and watched the development of these little pieces of human flotsam. It would have made them think. Nay, it might have made some of them change their doctrine.

§ 4

We returned to the Garden walk again. Feeding-time was over and the perambulators were full once more. They stood in rows like carriages at the Castle gate. Maybe it was because of the meal the little aristocrats had had, or because of the sun, or because of some magic message concerning my credentials which they had spread among themselves, but they appeared more sociable. I felt that I was getting on. Lady Rowena put out a friendly hand as I passed, and the Lady Grace from Liverpool offered me the leg she had pulled off her woollen monkey. Only the Lady Sarah, aged four, wept, and when I asked her the cause of her trouble

she informed me that "the boys have taken my nose-rag!"

What a cluster of happiness! You bits of life waiting out in the sun for maturity. At the morning of everything. Looking up at nothing, with the clouds for toys you would grab at. It's a funny old world, isn't it? Lying here in a pram! Wait till they give you the whole world to grapple with. . . . Tied up in rugs and things when you want to get loose. . . . What miracles you've thought about whilst you watched the clouds slip over the edge of the perambulator hood. Wait till they let you out. You'll fly with the birds and sail out in a golden boat in the track of the sun. You've thought it over from A to Z and you know the way. And *what* a "beano" you'll make of the whole business! . . . Yes, you explorers of the stars, we need you to help build our destinies of to-morrow. . . .

At the end of the line one little fellow stood up and waved his arms excitedly. He may have been four years old or so, and had a head of glorious bright gold hair. I noticed that other children who could walk came up to him and played with him or brought him things. When he dropped anything they picked it up for him. He seemed a king among these little aristocrats, the veritable king of the Castle.

Not till I approached did I understand. He had a beautiful face but—he was blind! A blind child, that had once been derelict in the world—what a start in life! It was not his beauty, for physical

beauty has no special appeal to small children, but it was his terrible handicap which had made him the best beloved of his tiny comrades, and liege of them all.

As we left the Castle and climbed the hill again I remembered some words Jerome K. Jerome had once written about babies. They seemed to fit the little people of the Castle so well that I told them to the Listening Man. And here they are:

"Poor little feet just commencing the stony journey! We, old travellers, far down the road, can only pause to wave a hand to you. You come out of the dark mist, and we, looking back, see you, so tiny in the distance, standing on the brow of the hill, your arm outstretched towards us. God speed you!"

CHAPTER VI

THE LISTENING MEN

"He who wants to do good knocks at the gate; he who loves finds the gate open."—RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

§ 1

I HAD so far seen the Barnardo system from only one point of view. I had looked upon all this salved humanity, its re-creation and building-up under ordered method and a clear application of all the ethics of humanity. It was not a mechanical process; every case that came in was a separate campaign. And there was nothing distant or speculative about the business; no seed-sowing for a harvest that might or might not mature with the years. No searching for an impossible ideal. From the moment of starting it was achievement one could watch as it formed.

Although I had often pondered on the matter, and mentioned it more than once to the Listening Man, I failed to understand how these many children were discovered.

Barnardo's, I knew, accepted no children who had relatives to support them, unless those children

were in moral danger. But no destitute child was refused admission. What, then, was the procedure by which a destitute child was discovered?

I pinned the Listening Man down on this point.

"They reach us from all sources," he told me. "Many people write and send details of suffering children who have come within their own purview. The National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children in the course of its work brings many cases to our notice. The police—and the average city constable is a fine champion of the destitute and ill-treated child, or even the child that has come upon evil ways—do wonderful work. The police will never prosecute a child if they can help it. They know what it means. I often wonder why so many children are afraid of policemen."

"It's the uniform which represents the Law," I suggested.

"It may be that," he said. "I don't know. But the policeman, the *human* policeman has the heart of a child. Perhaps, like you and I, he remembers his own childhood. I know a policeman who once told me that he always lived his youth again when wandering about on a lonely beat at night. He then became the urchin, and stalking along behind him was the greater figure of the law of which he stood in fear. I suppose that was why he was always so kind to the children—and he was kind, that man. . . . Then, of course, there are the Listening Men. . . ."

"Yes, it's those Listening Men I want to know about," I said.

"We are listening all the time for the cry of the children," he answered me. "It may not be of necessity an actual cry, but a little S.O.S. signal from some spot in the depths. A slum child has not the initiative, even if the thought occurs to it, to appeal for help. Moreover, it would be afraid to appeal. Therefore, we must find that child.

"In all our great cities we have our Ever-Open Doors which may be said to be the depots for our system. Here the children who have been salved are kept for a time, then sent in batches to London, from whence they are drafted out to the City of Youth, the Girls' City, the Watts School, or some other centre. The Ever-Open Doors are, so to speak, our Outposts of Empire. And the Listening Men are the agents sent out from the Ever-Open Doors. You will find them wherever children are suffering, in the worst haunts of slumdom, in the police courts when a child case is being heard. That is where Barnardo's comes in. It never fails a destitute child, and it will sponsor destitute children anywhere. The Listening Men are the sleuth-hounds who find them."

He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a letter.

"Here's an S.O.S. signal," he said. "Read it."

I took the letter. It was written in pencil from an address well in the country. The handwriting

was jerky and the words ill-spelled. This is what it said:

"DERE SIR,—My husband is in France and I can't keep my child no longer. Unless something is done quick I shall leave it.

"N—— P——."

"Where did you get this from?" I asked.

"It came in this afternoon. There is something suspicious about it." He turned the letter over in his hands as I handed it back. "It's a clear case for the Listening Man, and I shall go there to-morrow." He looked up quickly. "Be a Listening Man for a day and come and see," he suggested.

"Done!" I exclaimed.

And so for a day I became a Listening Man, and this is what we found.

§ 2

It was a dirty, ugly little colliery village, with stunted grey stone houses pushed together in an untidy and irregular line in the main street. It had that monotonous sameness so typical of the average colliery village. And beyond the houses, in a sheltered cleft beneath the hill, the great shafts and wheels at the pitheads made ugliness more ugly.

Dust was everywhere, the black dust which a colliery seems to shake out as if it dropped from the sky. It lay over everything, on the window-sills, and little eddies of it had congested in the porches

of the doors and under the walls. There was no sign of any amusement for the inhabitants of this place—here where of all places amusement was needed, since there was not another village for miles. One imagined the emptiness that must creep into the lives of these people, the sameness of the recurring days, the gliding of one season into another that brought only the same monotone of life. And the two public-houses crowded by night-time, because existence here had nothing else to offer.

We followed the numbers of the houses down, but the house we sought had no number. Nevertheless, as this could be the only house indicated in the address, we went up and knocked at the door. There was no answer, but we could distinctly hear a child crying, and presently the dirty curtain at the window was pulled aside, and the black tear-grimed face of a little girl of eight or thereabouts appeared and stared at us.

But no attempt was made to open the door.

We therefore knocked at the door of the adjoining house, and here again was no response. Save for a group of dirty children, who were playing with a broken cart-wheel on some grass at the side of the road, it might have been a village of the dead.

The Listening Man said nothing, but went to the third house, and before he had reached the porch a frowsy woman had opened the door to him, and stood on the step watching him, and wiping

her dirty hands the while on the filthiest apron I had ever seen on mortal being.

"What d'you want?" she asked gruffly. "My man sent the money if you've come from Ashleys."

"I'm not collecting any money," responded my friend, "but I am looking for Mrs. P——."

"Two doors up. Ain. she in? S'pose not."

A note of suspicion had crept into her voice.

"Wot d'yer want with 'er?" she asked cautiously.

"I wish to see her about her child. Where can I find her?"

"Oh, the brat—she's in the 'ouse. When Mrs. P—— is out I looks arter the place. If I knew wot yer wanted I might take yer in."

"Well, she evidently is out. I'd like very much to see the child. Nevertheless, I must find Mrs. P—— somehow. I've come a long way," the Listening Man insisted.

The woman said nothing, but came out into the road and went in before us to Mrs. P——'s porch, produced a key from her pocket and unlocked the door. We followed her into the small hall, and a horrible stench was driven up at us by the incoming draught from without.

When the door was closed behind us the hall was almost in darkness. But when my eyes became accustomed to the gloom I saw a heap of filthy clothing at the foot of the stairs as if it had been there for months. Then we entered the only room on the ground floor, the door of which had

been locked from the hall side, so that the child, the solitary occupant of the room, could not escape.

The room was a picture of misery. The floor boards were bare of any carpet and slimy with filth, and the odour almost unbearable. There was a broken cane chair, a deal table to which stale pieces of food, dry with age, still clung, and underneath it some nibbled crusts of bread hard as iron as one trod on them.

As we entered the child drew back into a corner, obviously afraid, and began to whimper. The Listening Man went up to her and tried to put her at her ease, but she shrank away from him. About her middle was a piece of broken string, and the other end of the string had been fastened round the leg of the table, showing that the child had been tied up before the mother's departure, but had broken free.

The Listening Man gave me a significant glance, and began to question the woman as to how long Mrs. P—— had been absent, but she declared that she had no idea. Then he turned to the child and put the same question. For a moment or two the little mite glanced in frightened fashion from one face to the other; once or twice she appeared anxious to say something, but fear held her back.

At last the Listening Man sat down on the broken chair and took her on his knee. He began to talk to her kindly about endless inconsequent things. Some men possess a mesmerism for children. In some way—and it is not in what they say

—they inspire trust, and are able to get beyond the barriers which the child mind throws out for its own defence.

They were a striking contrast, these two. The man strong, with a bronzed happy face, and the child, clad in the foulest shreds of clothing imaginable, looking up at him, whi' as death, with two hectic spots of colour driven by excitement into her cheeks.

"When did your mother go out?" he asked suddenly, and without hesitation the answer came:

"Yesterday."

"And you've been alone ever since?"

The child nodded. A question as to whether she was hungry produced another nod. As a matter of fact, the child was starving.

Something had to be done. On inquiry from the woman the Listening Man drew the information that there was a small baker's shop at the end of the street. He told the child that he was coming back, and went to the door. Then he turned.

"Are you in charge of this child while Mrs. P—— is away?" he asked.

"Well, I keeps an eye on 'er when I ain't busy, which I am these days."

"And your way of doing it is to let her starve? That child is starving. Do you hear that—starving!"

The woman bridled at once.

"I ain't responsible for everybody's children. You forget there's a War on, Mr. Inquisitive."

We went to the baker's shop, where the Listening Man bought a small loaf of bread and a piece of cheese, which was all the sustenance the village seemed to have for sale. Then he returned to the house, while the woman watched him sheepishly from the road.

When he had cut up the bread and cheese with his penknife and filled an enamelled mug with water from the back kitchen, he went out to the woman, who had now sought the shelter of her own porch.

"You must have some idea where Mrs. P—— is to be found," he said.

The woman shook her head sullenly. She declared again that she had not the faintest notion, and added the reminder that she was not Mrs. P——'s keeper.

We searched the village for Mrs. P——, but we did not find her. The tenants of the two public-houses said that they knew her well, in both cases they had seen her within the past twenty-four hours, but they had no knowledge as to her whereabouts, or her method of getting a living.

At last the Listening Man turned to me.

"We must go back now," he said. "There's no later train. But I shall come again to-morrow and the next day and the next again till I find that woman. And we must feed that little kid. I've got my own suspicions about this case, very good suspicions."

"It's pretty horrible," I said. We turned towards the station. "You remind me of a sort of Sherlock Holmes hunting down clues."

"You've got to be when you're dealing with women like that," he answered. "The hidden criminals who just skate round the law. You've got to be. And how many thousands of pounds' worth of riches come out of this place every year in the shape of stuff dug from the earth, think you? And look at it! That's the sort of thing that is going on all over the country. Helped by the War, some of it. This case is helped by the War, unless my theory is all wrong. We'll find out when we get within arm's length of Mrs. P——."

Some days later I received a wire from the Listening Man urging me to go to the Ever-Open Door at once, as he wanted to see me. The telegram added that I was to bring my things for the night, and I did so.

He met me at the door when I arrived.

"I've got something to show you," he said.

Presently he took me into the sitting-room, and there was a small child sitting in a low chair in front of the fire.

"What do you think of Amy now?" he inquired.

Amy, the little heroine of the empty house, sat there, a veritable queen of independence, holding in her hand a piece of toffee which one of the other children had given her. She looked serenely happy, and the toffee and the fire made her reluctant to

leave her chair and greet me. She was clad in brand new clothing, with a smart pair of patent shoes which she preened coquettishly on the bar of the fender. She was delightfully clean, and her long brown hair had been carefully combed and tied with a piece of blue ribbon.

I turned to the Listening Man.

"What's the story?" I asked.

"The oldest trade in the world," he replied.

"I guessed as much, but you knew it."

He nodded.

"It took me four days to find the woman, and several more to get the story. In a nutshell it's this. Her husband is in France, and, as far as I can gather, there was not a more respectable family in the country than the three of them till the War began. I've seen some of his letters to this wife of his; he believes now that she is the wonderful woman in his home she used to be, and his child the best cared for in the village. Thank God, he'll never see, or, if we can avoid it, know, the tragedy we saw. She's a common prostitute. That and drink. All sorts of men in the house. The hideous tragedies that little kid has looked upon, and, thank Heaven, never understood!"

"Moral danger. And you've got her away?"

"For keeps," he said. "I'll tell you all about the case another time. It's not pretty." He held out his hand to Amy, who still clung to her lump of toffee like a piece of treasure. "Bedtime, old girl," he said.

§ 3

We sat late into the night over our pipes, and he told me many adventures of the Listening Men. He spoke to me of life such as I had never imagined, of tragedy, sometimes with a little edging of comedy, and often of wonderful romance. He took me stage by stage through the great search for the lost children of our cities. No melodrama laid upon any stage had the fascination of these stories from the man who crouched there by the fire. We searched for the lost children in all the lone spots of the great hives of industry. And Romance! Neither the golden sands of Africa nor the jewel mines of Burmah could yield a tithe of it.

"I want to tell you of something that happened in the Midlands," he said at last. He tapped out his pipe, and began to fill it slowly. "It will show you what our Listening Men can do for a woman at the most critical hour in all her life—that hour when the helping hand will come down to her and lift her up, and but for which she would join the ignoble gang of harpies on our streets."

The woman he described to me was a sempstress in a factory, and had a wage of ten shillings a week. She gave birth to an illegitimate child. The child was several weeks old before any knowledge of the case reached the Listening Men at the Ever-Open Door. Meanwhile the girl—she was no more than a girl—had been thrown out of her employment. She sought other work, but in every direc-

tion she was refused it. Gradually she began to drop down that ladder which leads to the underworld, to the haphazard life of the morally lost. She fought and struggled for decent existence like a drowning woman. And she was a drowning woman.

A rumour of the case reached the Listening Man, and he went one night to the grim and dirty attic in which the girl now lived. When he opened the door a heavy wave of heat and tobacco smoke struck him in the face. There was a cluster of men and women of the lowest type sitting around on broken chairs and boxes, smoking and drinking. Dirty liquor was running off the boxes into little puddles on to the floor. The women were all of the prostitute type, and the men the low scoundrels who infest our cities and live on the immoral earnings of the other sex.

There was no sign whatever of the girl whom the Listening Man had come to see. He stood there in the room, blinking his eyes in the smoke, a dozen aggressive faces staring at him.

In a corner was an orange-box, and in the box the baby of the girl he had sought. The baby was dying; a casual glance gave him the truth. These people, drunk, jesting, made merry while the baby breathed its life away in the corner with little whimpers of pain. The girl, it appeared, had gone out to try and get money somehow to save the piece of life that was slowly passing from this living hell.

The Listening Man hurriedly left the attic, and came back a little later with a doctor. A brief examination and the doctor declared that nothing on earth could save the child's life, but he urged its instant removal, and it was taken, well wrapped up, to the Ever-Open Door.

The child died. But the death of that child in decent hands saved its mother. When she came to the Ever-Open Door she told her story in these words:

"For days and days I walked the streets with my child seeking a job, but everyone was against me. I had no food; I had no means whereby to provide food. I meant to keep straight. As I walked I kept saying, 'God keep me straight.' I thought that God had been shut out of the whole world.

"Just one chance and I would have rushed at it. That's what I wanted; something to let me live. They would not let me live. Because I had had that child I was to be pushed down. I would have sold myself for a second chance."

But she got her second chance. She had drifted down to the lowest dregs of humanity. The last hope was the garret, and she bought an orange-box and used it as a cradle for the child. And then the Listening Man walked in. After the death of her child that girl would have gone on the streets. There was no chance whatever for her but to go back to the streets, and it was, moreover, the line of least resistance. The great temptation. But

through the Listening Man she secured employment, and ultimately decided to devote her life to rescue work.

Since that day this girl has become one of the most respected women in the town. Moreover, she has found many who, like herself, had come to that dead-end when everything in life is gone, those to whom there remains only the streets.

There are women like that. These Marys at the Crucified Feet, to whom a second chance is greater than riches as the world knows riches. We see these women through the eyes of respectability. Sometimes smug respectability. And miss the Shadow behind them.

Yet often behind a fallen woman the Shadow remains clear long after the recollection of the woman is forgotten.

§ 4

The Listening Man assured me that much of the suffering caused to the children of the poor was due to their being left alone for long stretches on end, as had been the case with Amy when we had discovered her in the lonely house. In one instance the Listening Man had discovered a crippled child at Smethwick who was strapped on her back to a board for thirteen hours a day during the absence of her mother at work.

At any time of the day or night some piece of information may come to the Ever-Open Door re-

garding a child in jeopardy, and instantly the Listening Man is on the trail. He related to me an episode which had just occurred at Plymouth. In this case it was the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children which had put him on the trail. The Listening Man went off at once to the slums at the back of the town. He hurried out of the main streets down a long, filthy alley, and up a narrow stone staircase, which was slippery with slime and dirt. At the top he had to make his way along a dark passage, so narrow that he could almost touch the opposite walls at the same time by stretching out his hands.

He found the house, and knocked at the door, but there was no answer. When he tried the handle the door was locked, but he could distinctly hear the smothered cry of some form of life within—a cry that might have been that of a sick child or an animal in pain.

Whilst he was waiting and searching for some means of ingress, a woman put her head out of a neighbouring window and called down that she had the key of the garret.

In a few moments the Listening Man was standing in the room. And it was a veritable room of horror. The floor boards were slippery with filth, the room was almost in darkness, and the stench beyond description. At first it seemed as if the room were empty, but, groping around, he saw two small children lying on the floor, one of them moaning pitifully. They were obviously at the last extremity

of hunger and general emaciation. When he looked at them he saw that the elder child was covered with scabies.

These two children, it transpired, were the illegitimate offspring of a sempstress who worked the week through for seven shillings, and this at a time when the War had caused an upward tendency in wages. Out of these seven shillings she paid half-a-crown a week to the woman with the key for minding the children, and three shillings a week for the rent of the room. She was therefore left with eighteenpence a week on which to keep herself and the two children! In a fortnight these two children would probably have been buried at the expense of the parish; but the errand of the Listening Man resulted in their now being perfectly sound and healthy in a Barnardo home.

The State, by its lack of proper machinery, has left the destitute child to be exploited by anyone who comes along. In most respects our child laws are sadly deficient. To show what can be done with a destitute child even in these enlightened days, it is worth recording an experience of the Listening Man in Staffordshire. A man and woman had been seen wandering about the neighbourhood for some days, and with them was a small child. There was nothing that could be proved against them, but one day the Listening Man heard that they had been begging, and had pleaded the child as the necessity. This aroused his suspicions at once, and he set off on the trail. For days he hunted the dis-

trict, but the couple had apparently disappeared, taking the child with them.

At length he discovered all three of them under a hedge at night. The man and woman were lying in the grass asleep, but the child was sitting up and whimpering with the cold. A few sharp questions from the Listening Man and he got the truth. They had bought the child for eighteenpence, and had dragged it up and down the country, and lived on the money they derived from those who took pity on the emaciated face of the little sufferer. If the Listening Man had not set out like a sleuth-hound that child would still be dragging its way with weary feet about the land, or, more likely, have perished long since of its sufferings.

§ 5

For hours the Listening Man had talked in this fashion, and no case he mentioned bore any close resemblance to another. It was obvious from what he said that, for subterfuge, those who ill-treat children will generally equal the most hardened criminals. Sometimes days and weeks will elapse before the children can be discovered and brought through the Ever-Open Door.

"I want," he concluded, "to tell you of a very peculiar case. The salvation of the child in question—a girl of thirteen, named Ruth A———, was due entirely to a man looking out of his office window. This happened in Newcastle, and the man

who looked out of the window was the Councillor who afterwards became Mayor of the city."

In brief, the facts were these. In the course of his work this man would frequently glance up and look out upon the street, and when so doing it struck him as peculiar that a young girl should continually be passing in the company of suspicious people.

The neighbourhood was very low—a criminal slum, infested by public women and depraved characters. The instinct of humanity in him made him go to the Barnardo Ever-Open Door in the city and interview the Listening Man, to whom he narrated what he had seen. What he had looked upon was the descent of a girl to the nether world, and only just in time did he send the Listening Man to the rescue.

After a long search the latter found that the girl was illegitimate, and that her mother had recently drunk herself into insanity and death. Her putative father was a miner. The girl would have stood a poor chance with such a mother to look after her, but, now that even this care had gone from her she was drifting, and had been taken over by a woman of questionable character. No one in the world cared a bit about her, even such relatives as she was supposed to have repudiated her.

Ruth was going to certain moral death. She had become a vagrant with little sense of decency, and yet she was a fine girl in build and physique.

The Listening Man took her to the Ever-Open

Door, and then believed that there need be no further anxiety about her future. But the first thing Ruth did was to clamber over a ten-foot wall and get away. Again the Listening Man went in search of her, found her, and brought her back, and she was sent to London to the Girls' Home at Ilford.

But even now the salvation of Ruth was not complete. She escaped again, the lure of the street life on her still. On the way out of London she met a servant girl, whom she persuaded to give her the money for her fare by steamer from London to Leith. From Leith she tramped to Haddington, from which place information as to her movements reached the Homes, and once more the Listening Man was dispatched to find her. He did find her, brought her back to Ilford, and she was sent out to Canada.

Canada was the making of Ruth. A wild, uncaged creature of the streets, a gamin who would have sunk to those hideous depths which yawn at the feet of weak women, she changed utterly.

The Listening Man tapped out his pipe, and got up to light the bedroom candles that waited on the table. He glanced at the clock.

"Isn't it worth while being a Listening Man?" he said with a smile. "There's no salvage like that of human life. All this treasure scattered over the earth that we read about! When the greatest El Dorado of all is here—here in the slums. You just

go and listen for it, and discover it for the priceless thing it is."

"Like Ruth," I said.

"What do you think she did in the end?" he asked. "She wrote to the Listening Man from Canada, and in the letter she said, 'You were the best and only friend I had in the world. I didn't realise it then, but I do now. I hope I shall be a credit to you who have been so good to me.'"

"Fine!" I exclaimed.

The Listening Man smiled and lit the candles.

"Yes," he said, "I have the letter now."

CHAPTER VII

THE HAUNTS OF THE CHILDREN

"Still, all day, the iron wheels go round,
Grinding life down from its mark;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark."

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

§ 1

"A SLUM," a man told me recently, "is a place where the poor live." He knew no more than that.

"But why," I retorted, "should the poor live in a slum?"

"I don't know. But they do."

Exactly. He did not know. And as far as that goes, there is a very small section of middle-class Britain that really knows what a slum is. There is something in the average human being born to certain ease of life, which shrinks from slum conditions, or from approaching the slums on any pretext, since the noisome surroundings create a sense of irritation which amounts to a mild form of pain. I sought the slums, not in any mood of heroism which urged me to explore squalor, but to satisfy an insistent curiosity as to the haunts from which Barnardoism obtained its children.

To me the slums, now that I know them, are places where nothing grows; the very weeds that adventure into being at odd spots there seem to shrivel as if the task of survival were too much for them. Such light as comes into the hovels seems to be borrowed, for the houses jostle each other so recklessly, and the streets are so narrow, that between the forest of chimneys and roofs there is very little chance for light.

Sheffield has the worst slums of England. I have seen slums in many cities, but never anything to compare with those which lie in and about the region of West Bar, Sheffield. In London I know of a slum where eight thousand people live on six and a half acres of ground, where humanity is so clustered and herded that men, women, and children pay a few pence a night to sleep on the stairs for a couple of hours, at the end of which time they are roused up to make way for those who have paid a few pence more. In certain sections of the East End five thousand people live on one acre of ground. Five thousand cramped and wilted lives, breathing stale air, jostling through life. Always that—jostling through life. . . .

I know a house—a thin shell of brickwork divided up by matchwood partitions into domiciles—and within those four walls thirty-five families live. In the centre of this building there is a fountain from which they draw their water, and for three weeks during a recent winter it was frozen up so that not a member of those thirty-five families had

the water with which to wash, and what they had to drink they begged.

Think of children brought up like that, with a Board school dumped down in the middle of it all, trying to teach them what their own homes and lives deny.

Think of children penned up in a room watching the agonies of maternity, and that happens regularly. All that is private and sacred in family life, all that one guards from one's children with such care, is here revealed to the child.

But what, it may be asked, are the inspectors doing? In this particular district of London there are sixteen inspectors to 250,000 inhabitants. And the greatest enemy of all they have to fight is underground. They never think of looking there. In the next street there was a rubbish heap filled with refuse. The builders put the hose upon it, then erected dwellings on the mud. Presently diphtheria broke out, and someone with colossal wisdom pulled up the drains and found that not one of them had clay joints. What can inspectors do against that?

Into this hideous crowded area God drops a new life. In this kingdom of bricks and mortar this life grows like a plant that is cramped. Conditions such as these create brutality—low intelligence—dirt; herding produces brutality as its first flower. When humanity is driven out Force alone rules. Starvation comes first to the weakest—the child. Pain comes first to the weakest—the child. Evil

living brings the first blows to the weakest—the child.

The child pays. *The child pays all the time.* Whatever an effete social system has failed to do, whatever parents who have not the first grain of humanity in them have failed to do, runs up a bill which is footed all the time by the child.

And under those conditions are our future citizens reared. A wonderful providence watches London so that environment does not make all these children criminals.

Providence has been very kind to London.

Or dip for a moment into a Houndsditch slum. Here is a room which four persons occupy. It was a partitioned piece of kitchen, and the portion occupied by these four was eight feet by nine, so that when the four occupants were in it they literally touched each other. The room contained a broken bed, made up of sides of boxes to admit of sleeping accommodation for four, a mother, a girl of nine, a boy of 3½ and an infant. At the head of the bed was a broken kitchen chair, a fire-guard, and the grate fireless. There was no mantelshelf, and no furniture whatever except an old soap-box with an enamel wash-up bowl. No table; no cupboard, but a superfluity of dirt. Six square panes of window looked out against the flat wall of an opposite building. At the brightest hour of the day the room was of necessity almost dark, because of the adjacence of the next building.

§ 2

That is London. And Sheffield is worse. Come down into the streets off West Bar.

Here the streets are cobbled and narrow; the houses have pushed each other with age into strange leaning shapes. They are grimed and decrepit, old creatures that have seen their day. But they still have their doors and their back alleys, and they one and all exude children, and a large percentage of these children bear upon their faces the mark of disease through dirt. They climb in and out of doorways, they play about the soap-box on wheels which they rattle up and down the cobbles. A woman intoxicated sits on her doorstep singing hilariously, and when her child of three or thereabouts approaches her it receives a sharp cuff on the head. As I went up one of these streets the dirty alleys, where torn clothing hung on lines from wall to wall, spewed out further children, unwashed, ragged and disease-marked. Down the street was a solitary shop, the window of which was filled with old boots for sale with holes in the soles. Men and women and children ate scraps of fried fish out of pieces of newspaper, and one big parent who stood at the street corner devoured the fish and tossed to his youngster a morsel of potato now and then when the clamour of the child for food broke into his comfort.

Another child I saw emerge from a fried fish shop with a cheap china bowl containing the fish

for which it had been sent. An older boy of ten or thereabouts chanced to be passing, and, seeing the fish, pounced upon it, dashed the bowl to the pavement, and darted round a corner with the plunder, leaving the screaming victim to explain the tragedy if it could to a waiting household.

The houses in these streets are in the main backed, that is to say, a family lives in three rooms in the front, and a second family in three rooms at the back. Many of them are almost lacking in furniture. One I saw contained a broken table, a single chair, and a canary in a cage. Another, two chairs, and a soap-box for a table, and a mangle. A third contained a chair, no table, and, most incongruous of all, a cheap blue china bowl. And in this room a woman and five children lived.

§ 3

It might be thought that under conditions such as these no family could survive for long. Families move, the reek of dirt and discomfort drives them out. But other families are waiting in shoals to go in, indeed so great is the competition for shelter that each hovel as vacated is taken by another family. The landlord does nothing; there are too many tenants waiting to take the places of those who leave. One family enters through the door as the other passes out. Indeed the conditions in Sheffield are such that better-class families of the artisan type frequently offer ten pounds reward to

anyone who will discover for them a decent place of habitation.

The landlords who are responsible for this squalor have their own burden of conscience to bear, but no individual responsibility ever helped the State. In the midst of this horror life is born and brought up. Under these conditions children are manufactured with the same lack of humanity as tinned meat is manufactured in Chicago. It is a process inevitable. And even as environment shapes the children, so must such environment only be decadent.

But amidst all this child suffering, this endless wail of pain that never ceases, there is someone waiting who listens. The moan of the destitute child does not fall on deaf ears. A system, born of one man and perfected by many minds, is ready to catch up the sufferer and lift it from the hell-pool.

Often and often in the dusk of evening and the dark of night the Barnardo Listening Man walks these streets. They do not heed him as he passes. He is a mystery man whom they do not understand. Frequently his mission is useless, but sometimes the cry of a child brings another piece of human salvage to the Ever-Open Door.

It has been all in the day's work. Hours and hours spent in listening. But at the end of it all there is another decent citizen for the State's to-morrow.

§ 4

Childhood is a garment fine and spotless, and it is environment that puts the first blemishes upon it or keeps it unstained.

In those streets of West Bar childhood was being spoiled, the bloom stolen from the perfect fruit ere it had ripened. A great city, rich in merchandise, casting her greater riches to the winds. The roar of giant engines was all that seemed to count; the dense smoke clouds the wrappings of a wealth unstemmed. The children who fought for the leavings of fried potato in a piece of newspaper where it had been cast aside by the parent at the corner of the street, seemed like the sparrows who crowded round a piece of stale bread I had thrown from my window.

At the end of the street I stopped and looked about me. A hush was falling over the city. Somewhere wheels rumbled and engines shrieked, and, nearer at hand, hidden among walls, machinery ground out its commercial soulless life. A black cloud of smoke, that might have been a funeral cloth, hung over the tops of the houses as if it had been suspended by strings from the sky.

Figures slithered into the murk of back streets and out again — ambling figures whose feet stumbled, figures that left an odour of strong spirits as they passed. A mob of black humanity forced its way out of a public-house door. Somewhere at hand there sounded above the clatter of

metalled boots on the cobbles the cry of a child, and farther away a chorus of drunken laughter.

Does this, then, represent progress, what we are making for? Life cramped down and herded in, barred by the unbreakable barriers of poverty. Life that has its cause to be in that those engines may grind the faster. Is it for this that we have survived centuries, and progressed in our puny fashion? For this that we have remembered the Calvary . . . .

The sun in a blaze of gold dropped down at the back of the city, picking out the chimneys as black ogres, the towers and church spires as distorted creatures in a crowd of ogres. But one shaft of light splayed over the uplifted, gilded cross at the summit of a building, and lit it as with fire. It stood alive above the sombre tones beneath, suggestive in its remembrance of another Cross that flung wide arms amidst the dark in full promise of the Morning. . . .

CHAPTER VIII

RESURRECTION

"Urchin and sprat of the city that roars like a sea,
Surging around him in hunger and splendour and shame,
Cruelty, luxury, madness, he leaps in his glee
Out of the mazes of mist and the vistas of Flame."

—ALFRED NOYES.

§ 1

A CHILD lives for the hour. What that child has been, what it has endured can, by one of those happy gifts of childhood, be forgotten or smothered under when a better influence comes into its life.

To a child when it comes under the Barnardo system, the future appears as some gigantic query. This transformation is only another happening in a life that has been all chance happening. And youth is so adaptable that the child shakes down quickly into the new groove. Character and individuality begin to assert themselves, and the sufferings and bestial episodes of the past fade in the memory.

But the greatest miracle of the child mentality is the power of forgiveness. Children who have suffered pain unspeakable and unending misery from wretched mothers—mothers from whom they go in continual dread—forget their fears under the new environment, forget what they have endured, and begin to cherish a great love for these mothers, as if something had re-occurred in their hearts which had been driven out. Many children cease to remember that they have starved. They cease to remember brutality too vile to be recorded; first they forgive and then forget it.

To me this suggests only one thing. That at the Crucifixion a beaten child crept close to the foot of the Cross and heard the great Forgiveness, and then told all the other beaten children about it through centuries of suffering childhood.

Only direct influence—not that of screed or teaching, but actual heritage—by the Divine forgiveness could make a child, wilting and stricken from slum abuse, turn a second thought to a parent who had been little better than an inquisitor.

There was one boy who went into the City of Youth, rescued from the most unspeakably brutal mother it could be possible to imagine. He had lived ten years of ceaseless dread of that mother; he bore the scars of her blows. But after a while, as happiness came into his life, he began to think that this mother was not so bad after all. He wanted to see her again. That she still cared nothing for him did not affect him in the least. In his

eyes she became a splendid woman. He grew up believing that, and whatever he achieved was shaped with the idea that she would have wished him to do it. Not that this mother changed, but under the new influence the boy's outlook changed. What had gone before became a closed chapter. His imagination credited her with qualities she did not possess, would never possess, until she appeared to him to represent all the fineness of perfect motherhood. In a sense, this boy's resurrection gave him his mother as she might have been.

Forgiveness that will go so far would seem almost unnatural. It is unnatural except to children. But the majority of the children who come in will in the process of time forgive as readily, and later they very often help their defaulting parents towards reformation.

Except in cases of low mentality the child who has lived a life of defence in the slums has very frequently greater resource than a child brought up in comfort from whom no initiative has been required. The mind of the slum child of ten or over has been sharpened by the need of that child to fend for itself.

A short while since a boy of eleven who had been salved from utter destitution was questioned on admission as to how he had managed to live.

"By pinching," he replied.

"What did you 'pinch'?"

"Chestnuts, mostly."

"What is the use of stealing?" he was asked.

"Oh, I 'ad to pinch to live. If I didn't pinch I should starve, so I pinched everything I could. Mind you, it ain't done me no 'arm, pinching. I mean, no real 'arm. You see, it showed I'd got pluck to do it!"

Now from the day that boy was admitted and his moral resurrection began he never "pinched" anything again. Stealing had been an actual necessity, but a vice as readily dropped when the need for it disappeared. Had he been left in the streets he would have gone on stealing, and certainly have ultimately become a criminal menace to social order. When he said that thieving had done him no real harm he was perfectly right, for his mind was not naturally inclined to vice. And the pluck which had served him in the pursuit of evil was as ready to help him to what he is becoming—a fine lad of resource, fearless and sure of himself.

It is flashes of philosophy like the above which go to show what a boy is made of, and unless you get at the heart of the boy—the real understanding which frequently requires weeks or months of patient study—you set out blindfolded on the campaign of rebuilding him. A school, well ordered and conducted, will often fail lamentably for no more tangible reason than that those in control never get below the surface of the boys they handle. And what is important in a school is of far greater importance in a work of reformation. Were it not that Barnardo's studies individually every child

that comes in, I believe that Barnardoism would long since have proved a failure. Its achievements, these thousands of boys and girls who have grown to successful maturity and not faded out semi-failures, are the result of complete understanding before all things.

This resurrection, as I have endeavoured to show in other chapters, does not cease with the physically whole. I was told of a boy, nicknamed "Crutchy," who came into Stepney. He had a remarkably fine head and face, but he was a cripple, and therefore privileged. "Crutchy's" legs were doubled under him in such a way that he always seemed to sit on his heels and perch on his toes whether busy or at rest. When he moved he hurled himself about at a tremendous pace with the aid of a couple of short crutches.

In those days at Stepney morning prayers followed breakfast in the dining-hall. The gentleman in charge arrived on the morning in question before the boys had assembled, and stood at the desk looking out the Scripture for the day. Then he became aware of "Crutchy" prowling among the tables already laid for breakfast. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" asked the gentleman jovially. And in a flash came the reply from "Crutchy": "The ravens haven't brought me my food!"

One day the same gentleman asked "Crutchy" if he had been born a cripple, or if it was the result of an accident.

"It was my father 'ove that did it," the cripple

replied. It revealed an unexpected vein in the boy. "You see, sir," he went on, "I was in hospital with fever. My father thought I wasn't properly looked after, so he fetched me away huddled in a blanket, and my legs have never stretched out since. Yes, it was my father's love."

That boy had a bright intelligence, and a heart of gold. He learned tailoring in the tailoring shops at the Homes, and in due course went out to earn his living.

But not long since he came back. He no longer walked on crutches, and seemed to stand two feet taller. The doctors, he said, had successfully operated upon and straightened one leg, but the other was beyond human aid, and was supported by a long iron patten. And "Crutchy" was doing well. He had started a jobbing tailor's business, which was thriving. Moreover, he had married, and now had two children.

An institution that can take over a crippled child like "Crutchy," almost a useless child some might suppose, and turn him out so that he is able to make his way in the world, has earned its place in the sun.

§ 2

It is difficult to imagine what would happen to a child with an impressionable mind if under the new conditions it were haunted with memories of the life it has left. Progress, complete resurrec-

tion, under such circumstances, would be almost impossible. But the first thing Barnardoism does is to drop the curtain on the past. "No matter what you have been," it suggests, "we start with a fresh sheet here, now." It reminds the child of nothing; it diligently puts aside from the child's knowledge anything that might serve to awaken old memories when those memories are ugly. The past may be ever so hideous, but it is a secret book more carefully cherished than any banker's record.

It is therefore not a new phase on which the child embarks, but an entirely new life. Children, all children, are like flowers that turn to the sun, and under the warmth of the new sympathy they reach the full splendour of youth.

"What d'you think," one little urchin, who had been rescued from an immoral home, said with an air of confidence to those about him; " I've got a new father. That's the fifth I've had!"

There was no chance for this boy in such a home with its atmosphere of flagrant immorality. He was in every sense an unwanted child, uncared for—a child from whom nothing was hidden.

And with the others it is the same. Many come in shrinking with fear when approached by those who will work out their salvation. They say nothing, they just draw aside defensively, and watch as if expectant of hurt. For many of them have lived a daily life of hurt—hurt and harshness through every hour of the day, till sleep brings a

merciful release. And in reality sleep is the slum child's umbrella put up by God to keep off the rain of suffering for a while.

Pitiable little urchins! They stand there on the threshold of the new life, brothers and sisters holding each other's hands. Timidly waiting. A little family trying to fight the world. And usually the big brother—he may be no more than seven or eight—is the champion, the spokesman for them all. Sometimes the small sister, with feminine temerity, takes the duty upon herself. And their answers to the questions put to them are very direct and terse. Often they are unconsciously humorous. For instance, a little boy on admission was asked how he had managed to pick up a living, for he had no relatives.

"Please, sir," he replied, "chopping wood with another lady."

Another small fellow who, soon after his admission, had begun to learn Scripture, wrote to his mother: "Our Director has been ill. God has laid upon him the iniquity of us all."

A life that has lacked proper childhood is like a year that has never known a summer. And very few of these children brought from the grim streets of the slums have ever known that treasure of every life—real childhood. They come to happiness—these children—through the Ever-Open Door, much as little explorers enter a new country that should always have been theirs. And a happy child looks forward, for every crowded

hour of its life is full of promise of something better.

It was always that way. Children long to grow older in order that they may attain what they believe to be the ideal happiness. And we elder travellers on life's road who have passed to maturity sigh for youth again that we could search for the ideal happiness we left behind as children.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHILD AND THE WAR

"*God hangs the greatest weight on the smallest wires.*"
—BACON.

§ 1

SOME months ago there arrived upon the doorstep of the Barnardo headquarters in Stepney a soldier fresh home from the trenches. He still had plenty of the mud of Flanders attached to him, and he was loaded with all the impedimenta of War, his rifle, "tin hat," and so forth. More important still, he had with him six children.

He carried a couple of children in his arms. The eldest of the family—a boy of fourteen—carried another, and the other small toddlers hung on to his straps, or anything they could catch hold of, whilst the little party wended its way through the East End.

The father was a clean-living man, a home-lover to the backbone, and a fine soldier. He had done well in the War, but his one ambition was to get home again to the wife and family, who represented all that he thought was best in life.

At length there came to him the "spot" of leave

to which he was entitled. He reached London early one morning and went straight home, only to find that another man had taken his place in the house. The home which had been his world had smashed at his feet.

For awhile he waited in the small sitting-room thinking over things. The sudden tragedy would have destroyed some men, but it proved this man to be bigger than most. He took mental stock of his position, and, maybe, was given some power to peer into the future, and to take the road which the eyes of his mind found for him.

If he had killed the usurper—and he was still in the house—a just jury would probably have spared him the hangman's rope. Instead, the soldier began to sort out values. His wife in one moment had become worthless to him. But there remained some treasure still amid the wreckage—the six children. And in place of a passionate fury, there flamed up in him an all-powerful love for these children, the children who had been degraded as he had been.

He struck no blow and he asked for no explanation. He went to his children and one by one he carefully washed them. He talked to them the while, cheerfully enough, as if no shadow had crossed the doorstep. And he never mentioned his wife. He even went to the trouble of getting a fresh ribbon for the girl's hair. Then he dressed the children in their coats and hats.

The eldest boy began to get curious.

"Where are we going?" he inquired.

"Just goin' to have a walk round," the man replied.

As a matter of fact he did not know where they were going; the only idea in his mind was to get away with his salvage from this place of horror.

They went out of the door and down the street. Along street after street they trudged in silent, aimless fashion. Then the soldier saw a policeman at the corner, and, going up to him, told him the story.

"What am I to do with 'em?" he asked, indicating the children. "I've only got a few days, and I cannot go back and leave 'em to *that*."

"Take 'em to Barnardo's," suggested the policeman.

"But they won't take in the whole packet?"

"You try 'em and see."

So the party went on till it reached Stepney, and here the soldier told his story afresh, and asked what he should do.

"Bring in the children," someone told him.

"Wot, blimey! All the lot?"

"Yes, all of them. They're safe for you here, old chap."

And then for the first time the soldier discovered that, although he had washed the children, he had forgotten to wash himself—that the trench mud was caked on him still.

Some months later, when he obtained his next leave, he returned to see his children at the Homes.

"Wot beats me," he declared, "is that the mother who's got charge of my kids here writes me a letter every week to say how they're getting on. And it's worth looking forward to out there —that letter. The missus never wrote me a bloomin' word the whole time I bin out. Didn't understan' I wanted to hear about the kids. Thought I was too busy wiv Willy, I guess. Queer people, some women."

In this ugly fashion did the War come to one home in London, just as it has come to untold scores of others. But, unhappily, all the terrible havoc it has created has not been followed with the salvation of the children involved, as in this case. For war was always a vulture that followed in the wake of childhood and destroyed the weaker. Nor have the great fields of conflict produced any keener suffering than that of the hidden agony of the children of the cities.

§ 2

The child discovered the War from the change that came into its life. Some children, it is true, have been saved from destitution by the War, but others made destitute. Thousands of children who had a decent chance in life have been robbed of it by the upheaval of nations.

The State, at the outbreak of the War, sought, with admirable foresight, to make itself responsible for the dependents of its soldiers. In previous

campaigns the provision made for these dependents had been at best half measures. But the War in which we found ourselves involved was so gigantic, so demanding, that no partial responsibility by inadequate legislation would have served.

The State conceived the scheme of paying a certain sum per week to all mothers of all children. But it overlooked the weak woman. It did not imagine that the woman who had been the prop of the home in peace time could, with the absence of her husband at the War, degenerate into a weak and puling creature, unable, even with the State's help, to bear the burden of that home. She handled more money than she had ever handled before, and this, instead of proving the mainstay of those homes, became their ruin. Thus has it come about that in our cities there are cohorts of children who, through the War, have lost their leader—their home leader.

In the industrial cities especially, infidelity and drink have raged among the wives of soldiers at the Front. Vice, hitherto unimagined by these women, who, prior to the War were the keepers of good homes, has become wilful, a habit that clung. In one centre alone—Sheffield—out of seventy-four recent applications to the Barnardo Ever-Open Door, seventy of the mothers were in gaol. The majority of these mothers had before the War been partners in good homes. But when the holocaust fell upon the country and the State held out a helping hand, they abused the State's

help and mortgaged their homes and their children to their new-found pleasures.

That proper machinery should have been set up to deal with these weak women who were incapable of conducting their homes in the absence of their husbands, and aid given to the children who must suffer in consequence, is not a question for discussion now. Such machinery was not set up. And, in all domestic wrongdoing, it is the children who have to pay the penalty.

The following instance from Sheffield will serve to show how completely a woman can sell her home and children to the War. She was the mother of seven children; a woman of extreme cleanliness, who brought her children up as an example of what a woman can do when her soul is in her home. The War came, and her husband went to the Front. She received a sum of £3 os. 5d. per week in her husband's absence, and she had never handled so much money in all the days of her married life—a life which had been one of unbroken happiness.

The husband in Flanders was overjoyed with the knowledge that his wife and children were now protected from all harm by the intervention of a kindly State. His letters home were cheery and full of a great content. He hated the War, but someone had to see it through, and, after all, it was only a phase that must pass. And till that phase was ended the State had shown that it would see that his home fires were kept burning.

For a time things did go well. Then the

woman's absence from the home became more and more prolonged, and her letters to her husband less frequent. The children lost their neatness and cleanliness, and became dirty and untidy. Their clothes grew ragged. A winter passed, and they appeared half dressed in the streets.

The woman was drinking hard, although, until the War came, she had never touched alcohol. But now she drew her ring money every Monday morning, and promptly set to work to spend it in drink. Had it not been for the Inspector of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children who, seeing the children in such a deplorable condition, used to steal into the home at times and feed them with bread, those children would have perished from starvation, for no food whatever did the mother give them.

The end of the matter was that the mother was brought up by the Law for neglect. When the case came on the magistrate announced his intention of sending the whole seven of the children to the care of the State, when the individuality and character that was born in them would probably have been crushed out by an unimaginative system. The mother was given six months hard labour, but by good chance the Barnardo Listening Man happened to be in the court. When the sentence was given he jumped up and said he would take over the seven children on the spot.

And he did so. That night seven little fragments of life passed through the Sheffield Ever-

Open Door. And only a few days later the father was killed at the Front. But, from the wrecked home which the War had brought them, the children had come to another where they would be beyond the reach of want.

§ 3

It has not infrequently happened that news of the infidelity of the mother has reached the soldier whilst on service abroad. Anything more terrible to a man in such a position, held by duty to the trenches, and with many lonely night hours in which to consider and imagine endless things that might be going on at home, it is impossible to conceive. There is no victory, no incentive to victory, to the man who knows that his home is tumbling down in the land he has come out to fight for.

A north country case of this, with which I became familiar, will serve as an illustration. A soldier in the trenches in the Ypres sector received, a few hours before he was to go "over the top," an anonymous letter from his home district, in which the writer stated that the soldier's wife had begun to lead an immoral life.

The soldier's first impression was that the whole statement was a hideous lie, but the details given were such that he was powerless to disregard them. When he went "over the top" it was his intention never to return. He stated afterwards that *he meant to get killed.*

Few men remember the thoughts that come to them in the heat of battle. But this soldier was an exception. He stated when he returned to England that, at the very time he was attacking, a great desire came to him to get home to his children. No matter what happened, he felt he must reach those children again, for their danger was greater than his.

He came through the day's work without a wound, obtained special leave, and returned to the north of England. The details came to Barnardo's through one of the Listening Men, but, when investigated, the truth of the allegations made in the letter which the soldier had received could not be confirmed, and, therefore, the children could not be admitted to the Homes.

A little later, however, facts were brought to light which made it clear that the writer of the letter was correct in his statements. That there was a streak of cowardice in an anonymous epistle did not ease the hurt one jot. The fact remained that the mother was without question leading a secret life of immorality. The Barnardo Listening Man then sought out the father as he was on the point of returning to France, and said that the Homes would take the children at once.

At first the father hung back. He said nothing.

"But surely you are glad?" the Listening Man asked him. "It means no more worry about those kiddies of yours."

"Yes, I'm glad," the soldier replied lamely.

"But the truth is, sir, that the children have no clothes."

It was a fact; the children had not two articles of clothing between them. The mother had not only spent all her allowance, but also pawned every vestige of clothing she could lay her hands upon. She had stripped the children for the few pence their clothing would realise. Unclothed and unfed they might easily have perished. Moreover, the soldier very rightly declared that in their state he was afraid to bring them through the streets for fear of being molested.

Eventually the Listening Man got a taxi-cab, filled it with an abundance of clothing, and drove to the soldier's house. Here he set to work with the help of the father to dress the children, after which he brought them back as salvage to the Ever-Open Door.

Within a couple of hours the soldier was on his way back to France. He had lost his home; the War had robbed him of it. But his children were safe. With a new courage he went back to his place in the line.

§ 4

So has the hideous spectre of War driven its way to the lives of the children. And now that War's passion is ended, and a new hush has settled down upon a world that knew only the commotion of battle, there will be more than one hundred thousand children—derelict children—in

this land to be cared for by somebody. If no helping hand is extended to them they will pass—as the lonely, unthought-of children do pass—to the kingdom of the gutter, to exist as things of solitude on the edge of life, to watch a new age, a new activity in which they can bear no share.

From everywhere they will come, these children. Not so much from homes destroyed by bomb or gun-shot, but from homes wrecked by the more insidious destruction of War—the children of weak women, deserted children, bits of life left by those who have perished in the nation's need.

A great army of lonely children waiting for somebody.

In the latter days of the War a soldier came home from France on special leave. His wife was dying in childbirth. It had been a very happy home, but a childless one. Now the soldier reached it again just as two baby boys entered the world, and his wife passed out to the great cross-roads to meet the hands of God. One of the twins died, but the other hung on to life and thrived. What to do with it the soldier had no idea, for his leave was short, and he had no relatives.

In that hour of indecision the Listening Man came upon the scene and took charge of the infant, then only a few days old. "Jimmie," for such it had been named, was safely housed at the Ever-Open Door, and the soldier came to say farewell to all that remained of his family on the day he returned to France.

When he got to the gate again there were tears in his eyes.

"Queer thing," he said to the Listening Man, "anyone wanting to look after Jimmie. I didn't think Jimmie mattered much to anyone except to me." He hesitated. "If there's one thing I might ask, sir——"

"What's that?" the other inquired.

"When he's big enough to stand it, have him photographed, and send me out the picture. I didn't think there was much to look at in babies before. But Jimmie's got style, as babies go. I know he has a cast in his eye—pretty bad by the look at it—but I don't think Jimmie's going to lose the War!"

The cities are full of Jimmies. Many born of the War, many more made derelict by it. Jimmies waiting for salvage. Jimmies waiting to grow up.

CHAPTER X

THE UNWANTED CHILD

"If you shut your door to all errors truth will be shut out." —RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

§ 1

CIVILISATION has no pity; it is a machine, supremely correct, which moves within strictly defined limits. So has it come about that centuries of law-building and social experiment have failed to produce a national spirit which shall grapple adequately and temperately with the unwanted child. We have never judged all life at its equal value; we have been too prone to consider first if it were legitimate life.

One of the great lessons of Calvary was, "Be good to women." And if we had probed a little deeper we should have reached the message, "Be good to the children of unhappy women." But with the passage of the ages we have not evolved a general means of proving to the unwanted child that there remained a mission for it in our national welfare.

In the years prior to the War the legitimate

child had the world before it; the unwanted child started life with a handicap. But the War has demonstrated that it is not the means of birth but life itself that counts. No man-made law will ever stem human passion. So there will always be unwanted children, and as long as there are such children, so long will they claim a sympathetic scheme which shall make them useful to the nation, and not distribute their lives to the buffetings of intolerance.

Many difficulties have crowded the way, social difficulties, religious difficulties. But now we are face to face with the fact that since 1913 the number of unwanted children has been heavily on the increase. Nor has it been easy to help the mother of the unwanted child without giving assistance to immorality. But there is a means to this end, and Barnardoism has found it. It is defensive in its attitude towards further offence, and sincere in its aid to moral rectitude.

The majority of the mothers of unwanted children are among the working classes, factory girls and domestic servants. And the conditions under which these girls work are largely responsible. With enlightenment as the result of the War these conditions will change, slowly perhaps, for they are deeply rooted. But they must change.

Drop into an industrial city and study for a moment the drab circumstances which surround the lives of the factory girls. A hooter brings them to work in the morning, to toil at high

pressure till the night hooter dismisses them. Then they pour out into the streets in their hundreds, and what have the streets to offer them, or, in the cases of many, their own homes?

All that matters to their employers is that they come with the hooter and go with the hooter. What happens between the night hooter and that of the following morning does not concern the employers in the least. It is doubtful if many ever pause to consider the question, much less to ameliorate it.

So this stream of feminine humanity pours into the streets at evening, and housing conditions—especially in Midland industrial centres such as Coventry—are so utterly impossible, that there is nothing for a girl to do but haunt the streets, finding promiscuous friendships, or anything that will provide a patch of colour after a colourless day. Thus does it happen that the hours following the hooter are the most treacherous in the life of the attractive girl engaged in industrial occupations. All the strength ever born in a woman is required to stave off the inclination, the assertiveness of sex, which automatically occur.

In these conditions, in this soulless cycle of commercialism, is found the origin of the unwanted child. It is not surprising in the least that the unwanted child comes into the world. But its arrival is a hindrance in the path of decency. The mother is ostracised and the child becomes an Ishmael.

The effect of the new responsibility is immediately felt by the mother. Unless she is earning a good wage she cannot provide for the child and herself. She probably loses her employment. With her child a dead weight upon her, employment may be shut against her, not because the employer may be in any way concerned at this moral sliding, but because, in order to look after the child, she cannot fulfil the long hours of factory work.

A woman in this position has probably two courses, and only two, open to her. She must either continue in immorality to provide for the child and herself, or seek outside help. The more likely course is that she will continue in immorality, for to these frail women friendship and help are often denied except by those of their kind.

And at this breaking point, the hour which means her moral salvation or irredeemable loss, Barnardoism steps in.

As an illustration of what this intervention can bring about the following will serve. A girl of good birth and upbringing, and the daughter of highly respectable parents, gave birth to an unwanted child in a Midland city. She lost her employment, but the principal burden which fell upon her was that she was thrown out of her home. Her father utterly refused to have her within his doors, but he took a wise step. He had the courage to go to Barnardo's and tell them what he had done. More than that, he offered to take the Barnardo man to the top floor tenement where the girl had

sought sanctuary, an offer which was accepted, and the two men arrived in the room when the girl was in bed with her baby.

But for this incident the girl, when she was able to get about again, would have had a desperate struggle for the means to live, for she had no money and therefore would perforce have had to take the baby with her. But the Barnardo man granted her a small sum to enable her to maintain the child. It was the second chance that gave her the means to earn her living. With this money she was able to get the assistance of a respectable foster-mother whilst her work kept her away from home, and so secured good employment.

§ 2

To help the mother of the unwanted child one cannot put a premium upon recklessness. That is only an invitation to further recklessness. To remove the responsibility likewise serves the same end. The uttermost that can be done is to help the mother to bear the burden, and that only so long as she does not leave the path of rectitude again. It is not an easy problem, it is one fraught with infinite difficulty, much care and limitless sympathy.

But Barnardo's have achieved it in this way. They have built up an auxiliary boarding-out system, and by this scheme the mother obtains her second chance. As soon as an application is made

on behalf of a child, the first and only child of an unmarried mother who is really desirous of living a better life, the utmost pains are taken to make inquiries as to whether, if help is given, it will attain the desired result. If the result is satisfactory, and it is impossible to get the father to contribute more than the statutory allowance towards the child's maintenance, the mother is then authorised to seek out some respectable woman who will be a foster-mother to the infant. At the same time the Barnardo authorities put themselves into communication with a lady who is willing to give the girl employment if she can be relieved of the burden of the child.

By this means the mother secures employment and the baby a home. The mother undertakes to pay not less than five shillings a week from whatever sum she earns towards the latter's maintenance. But before the sum to be paid is decided upon the mother's state of health is also considered, her stock of clothing, and she is financially assisted to the extent of several shillings a week according to what her new position may be. It is this financial aid which makes all the difference in the world.

This contribution, be it said, is not paid to the girl herself, nor to the foster-mother, but to the lady who has given the girl employment, and is only paid so long as a monthly report is forthcoming to the effect that the girl is still in service and living respectably. By this means the employer is charged with the responsibility for the

good conduct of the girl who is fighting her way back to a decent life. If, however, the girl relapses into a vicious life the payments cease.

At the crucial moment in all her suffering, therefore, does the hand of Barnardo's come out to this girl who in an unguarded moment has drifted. Unaided she would probably continue to sink into that sad army of the streets. Instead, if the girl makes good, the help will be maintained until the child is about fourteen years of age, when it can in some measure help to provide for itself. This means more to a woman than a mere record of facts would suggest. It does not only mean that there will be a home for this unwanted child which she has brought into the world. Or that it means a home for herself. Its meaning is deeper than appears on the surface.

For weeks before the birth of this child the girl has been in the grip of mental desperation. She knows what her offspring will entail for her. And all that great sentiment which the other mothers know—the secret happiness—is not hers. The putting away of little articles of clothing into drawers with the certain knowledge that it is with pride that they will be taken out, the great companionship—mental companionship—which the coming child brings to these other mothers, the joy of another presence which seems to linger in the room with her when she is alone and makes her never alone, the sound of a fancied voice that comes to her in the loneliest places

of solitude—none of these things does this girl know. To her only is the certain shame, the gradual closing night. To her, humanity becomes as nothing; too often the vision of a protecting God fades till it is utterly obscured. Mentally she conceives herself to be a lone thing in a great crushing system of universal existence.

And sometimes—one might say, very often—the child is hated before ever it is born. But because somebody does care for her distress, and gives her aid, it is like meeting a fellow traveller in a desert waste who points a road to safety. One cannot mitigate the offence, nor should such be possible. But by this aid one gives power to the baby life to lead its mother back to respectability. To God.

The record of these girls who have been helped by the auxiliary boarding-out system is a record of achievement. In the main, they go speedily forward and never look back. Many of them marry, others become successful in employment or rise by their efforts to independence. For instance, the girl to whom I referred earlier in this chapter as having been turned out of her home became the manageress of a big millinery establishment.

Another case I recollect is that of a girl named Crissie. She was a very charming and pretty girl. She gave birth to an unwanted boy and was faced with ruin. There seemed no hope from anywhere, nor the possibility of getting a bare living. But for over four years the Barnardo system helped to

maintain her child while she was in service. At the end of that time she married, and married well. The patron who had employed the girl wrote: "Crissie kept back nothing from the man she was engaged to marry. She told him everything. And now this boy of hers has grown into an attractive little fellow, and his stepfather has become very attached to him already."

In another instance a girl of twenty was directly responsible for bringing her mother back to the straight path. When her mother became a widow she sought promiscuous friendships and embarked upon a life of secret immorality. Her daughter was a maid in a doctor's house, and, when she had a suspicion of what was going on, she sought her out and implored her to change her mode of life.

The mother did not change, but the girl never lost hope. She continued to write to her in the same terms of entreaty, for a long time without result. But eventually, at the end of a heart-breaking talk between them, the mother burst into tears, made a new resolve, and kept it. Whatever this girl may achieve in later life—and she has already risen to a splendid position in connection with a certain branch of nursing—this triumph is the greatest she can ever know.

§ 3

The cry "I must live" goes up from thousands of these girls. These mothers of unwanted children. Sometimes they will struggle on for four or five years, almost dying by inches, denying themselves everything to keep the child they have brought into the world, but determined that, though a return to vicious ease might bring some relief to suffering, they will never go back. Amidst this multitude of mothers of unwanted children they are the great heroines, hiding themselves often in tenement and garret, and fighting lonely battles.

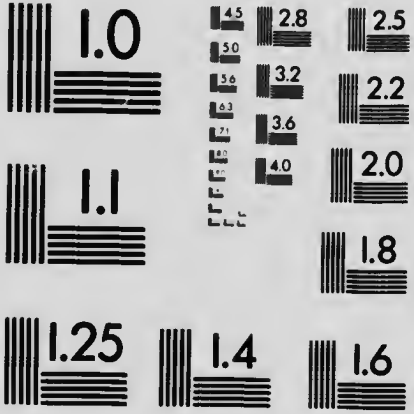
Down the paths of the world are scattered these frail women. Women who carry in their arms new life more frail than they, but which is the heaviest burden the whole tribulation of suffering can bring. Sometimes they look back as if they would tread the path anew. But a knowledge of things tells them that they can never go back, that the same obstruction and ostracism lie unending through the years. And they go forward wearily, stumbling, broken and afraid.

But there must be a road back. In this Barnardo system there lies the road back. Humanity without sympathy is without stable foundation, humanity that admits no fault lacks the very quality that should be its substance.

The woman who has erred has brought into

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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the world life which is beautiful, because all new life is beautiful. If by understanding—real understanding—she can be brought to see the ugliness of the sin she has committed, and yet how, in spite of that sin, God has enriched her with treasure, then will she discover the pitying mercy of God. The gift of forgiveness is God's privilege, and that of the second chance is Man's.

For in one of the great moments of the world the Man of Calvary, forgetting self-pity, remembered the Magdalen. Therefore humanity at least can help what He forgave.

CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT ENDURANCE

"War is a curtain of dense black fabric across all the hopes and kindliness of mankind. Yet always it has let through some gleams of light, and now—I am not dreaming—it grows threadbare, and here and there and at a thousand points the light is breaking through. We owe it all to these dear youths. . . ."—H. G. WELLS.

§ 1

THE War came as the great test to Barnardoism.

Forty-eight years had elapsed since Dr. Barnardo salved his first street arab, Jim Jarvis, down in the little East End stable which he had turned into a mission room. Forty-eight years, save a few weeks, when the first shots were fired in Belgium.

Always since that foggy November night when the Doctor found the boy coiled up beside the dead embers of the fire—the boy who took him out and showed him eleven small urchins like himself sleeping on a neighbouring roof—there had been one ideal, and only one ideal, in the great human heart of this man—to rescue the destitute and the uncared-for of the great cities and give them back re-made and bettered humanity to the State.

And these boys that he made grew up and created a belt round the earth. They became men who took their places in the national endeavour, when, but for the Doctor, they might have been hangers-on to the edge of things, driftwood on the great current of life.

Not till Dr. Barnardo had gone down into the Great Silence was the crowning proof of what he had done to become manifest. He had given back to the State in his lifetime tens of thousands of re-made youths. He had built up a vast re-creative institution which had become one of the most valuable assets for good the State had ever known. And how would this great tide of humanity, which was truly his, answer the call when danger hammered at the nation's gates?

The answer is here. More than ten thousand old Barnardo boys went into the Great War, and nearly five hundred of them have yielded up their lives.

Whatever ideals Dr. Barnardo had for his boys, and they were ideals more nearly attained than those of most men, this army of ten thousand surely sets the seal on his life-work. Well might he have prided himself in them—he who loved every child he salved as if it were his own, who never forgot one of them, even after that boy had, like a son of the family, wandered from the family hearth to labour afar.

From all parts of the earth have these ten thousand come; from the cities and from the land, from

the Colonies and the far Outposts of Empire. And not the least remarkable fact about the achievement of these old Barnardo boys is that more than six thousand of them have come from Canada alone.

Consider for a moment what this means. Six thousand, salved as children from the slums, and sent to Canada where they rooted anew. They have found freedom, such freedom as never comes, except with the aid of a helping hand, to the denizens of the slums.

It was not that they owed much to England. Outside Barnardo's, no one cared for them in the main. But directly the call sounded they came sailing back like Greek gods to fight for the country wherein they almost went under. Verily was the spirit of the man who had first inculcated in them the seedling sense of duty alive in them still.

Until the submarine menace temporarily put an end to juvenile emigration Canada had been receiving the pick of the Barnardo boys for years. They had helped to build up her agriculture; in their thousands you would find them in her industries and big merchant houses generally. Vast numbers had steadily climbed till they farmed their own land; hundreds more were on the same highroads of progress. But they came streaming back in the hour of danger.

It would require many volumes to record what those old Barnardo's have achieved in the War, their heroism and their suffering. Moreover, one cannot pick heroes out of an army of heroes.

But by good chance I have come across some of them within sound of the guns, and in the seclusion of hospitals at home where they were nursing their wounds. And it is worth while examining the experiences of these—since they are typical of the others—for thereby one gains an insight into the spirit which Barnardoism brings out in a man.

There was, for instance, Hickey, an old Barnardo boy who was recommended for the Victoria Cross. And Hickey came out of a Deptford slum! But in the soul of this child was the superb heroism which will be remembered long after the slum which gave him to the world has been swept away. His mother was a street flower-seller, and, as she could only earn a shilling a day selling flowers, she and her children drifted into a common lodging-house in Spitalfields. Even then she could not support the children, and the eldest boy was taken into Barnardo's, and ultimately sent to Canada.

When the War broke out Hickey joined up at Valcartier, and in due time came over with the 36th Peel Regiment, and found himself in the region of Ypres. From the start he was a soldier of fine initiative. In that sector he was through some of the toughest fighting of the War, and one day he volunteered to go out and salve a couple of trench mortars which belonged to the battalion, and had been abandoned when the pressure of the enemy forced these Canadians back. He salved those two mortars, and in so doing discovered a

safe route by which men could be brought from the reserve trenches to the firing line. All the while he was under the heaviest fire himself.

From there he went on to Pilkem Ridge, that death-trap in the Ypres battles. One morning he crawled out into No Man's Land under heavy fire and sat down in the open and calmly dressed the wounds of five men who were lying there. Then he proceeded to bring them into safety one by one.

The enemy, be it said, were only a few hundred yards away, and they sprayed him with machine-gun fire the whole time, although well aware he was on an errand of mercy. But he got his five back into the trench untouched. Shortly afterwards, however, a spent bullet struck him in the neck and gave him his death wound.

To Barnardo boys in the days to come Hickey will stand for that supreme courage of youth which characterised Jack Cornwell. He had no fear. They spoke of him as one who had in him, dominant above all else, an exalted sense of his place in the War. In fact he was a piece of splendid life which, if left in the Deptford slums, might have deteriorated and never risen to achievement.

I have found ever present in these old boys who have been through the War the certainty that Barnardo's had been to them a parent and a school in one. They spoke of the Homes with the same pride a man will have for his old public school, as something rich in his youth which he has left

behind. They have gone back when they could to Stepney to find some familiar face there, or to the old playing-fields of the City of Youth to talk to the boys who stood now, as they had once stood, on the threshold of the new life.

For the romance of Barnardoism in the War it would be difficult to discover a better case than that of George H. Thirty-one years ago he came to Stepney, a youth of eighteen, on the fringe of active life, and joined the Youth's Labour House. A couple of years later he was sent to sea. This was before the days when the Barnardo boys were sent aboard the lugger, and so prepared for the sea life. There was no lugger, and so this boy had to learn the ways of the sea by the harder life afloat. To-day he is an officer holding the Distinguished Service Medal and a decoration from the Belgian Government for bravery at Antwerp.

The episode which brought him his honours happened in those terrible hours which marked the British retreat from the Belgian city. Private George H. was in the Royal Marine Brigade, and his company was stationed in a trench on the River Nethe at Lierre, a few miles from Antwerp, and under a perfect tornado of German fire. The British reply was weak, because ammunition had been almost expended, and it seemed as if the line would have to be rapidly evacuated or every man wiped out. The officer then called for a volunteer to go for ammunition to maintain the defence.

This entailed journeying across the open ground, which was swept by the German fire, and back again, but the old Barnardo boy volunteered for the task.

He went out quite calmly, and made his way through the concentrated fire towards the ammunition depôt. To those who watched, it seemed impossible that he would get through. But he did get through, and at the depôt fetched a hand-cart, loaded it up, and pushed it back across the shell-swept ground. Once he had to get the cart through a hole in the side of a house. But he brought up the ammunition untouched.

If Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, then of a truth it may be said that some of the greatest episodes of this War have been won on the playing-fields of Barnardo's. And Hickey and George H. were only two of the many who were true to the spirit of Barnardo's when the test came.

§ 2

One must meet men in War to know what War means to the human temperament. I believe that the coolness which is characteristic of so many is not so much bravery or callousness to danger, as the essence of the real man emerging—the man whose richer qualities have been kept dormant in times of peace.

It was by one of those everyday happenings

which War provides that I saw an old Barnardo boy on the fringe of battle. I owe some thanks to the German fire which drove me into his dug-out, otherwise I should never have known him for the man he was, or have discovered his later story. And it happened like this.

We were making for Vimy Ridge. Lens was still a German city, a far off crippled thing almost surrounded by a ring of fire. We had left the car under a bank and come on down through the dead jetsam of the village of Ablain St. Nazaire. Of this village nothing remained but the rubble heaps of houses, and the skeleton of a church, the stone of which had been skinned white by the constant hail of flying metal.

We reached the foot of Vimy and began to climb up. Here, someone told me, corn once grew, but now it was sodden chalk, pasted and mixed as if by some giant mixing machine with the scattered weapons of War. Broken trenches—what had been the German front line—in places remained and extended a few yards, only to disappear into the rubble where the tide had swept over them.

We dropped into pits and groped out of them again, pasted with the whiteness of the chalk. From somewhere behind us a howitzer threw heavy shells over our heads—shells that came on and passed with the rush of a train pitching itself recklessly out of control. We listened to the clamour as it went on, a couple of miles or so,

separating itself from the ill-assortment of snarling and smashing and breaking and grunting that rose from the battlefield.

The guns had seemed to be muffled, as if they were firing from some hidden point in the earth, till we got beyond the shelter of the hill of Notre Dame de Lorette, where the French and Germans in the early days of the War lost one hundred thousand dead between them. Then we suddenly appeared to tumble into a welter of sound. And the higher we climbed Vimy the louder the tumult became.

Now it seemed as if we had been suddenly pushed into the centre of the battle. The air was full of strange harsh noises, and crackings and cries. And the earth before us had become alive with subdued flame flashes and growing bushes of smoke. Five miles away Lens, its church spires adrift in eddies of smoke, appeared very conscious of it all.

Here then was the panorama of battle. Not a man in sight, but the entire earth goaded by some vast invisible force. Clots of smoke of varying colours arrived from nowhere, died away, or were smudged out by other clots. A big black pall of smoke hung like a wrapping about Givenchy. A little farther away the village of Angres seemed pallisaded with points of flame. Away to the right the long straight road from Lens to Arras showed clear and strong without a speck of life upon it.

No life anywhere, no human thing moving. But once a few brown things lobbed out into the open and dropped, then moved and dropped. Little ants, these men seemed, bits of ants shuffling in the earth. And they were taking, even as I looked, more than a thousand yards of trenches. And back along a bird—where it seemed as out of place as an elephant taking a stroll—tried to fill the vast desolation with a burst of song, and then, as if realising the futility of it all, stopped suddenly. . . .

Then, without warning, there sounded a whistle, growing louder with a vicious crescendo, and a shell passed over and burst a hundred yards or so down the ground, followed, as the fragments went on, by a tearing noise like a hundred people ripping pieces of calico at the same moment. "High explosive shrapnel," said an officer, stopping to look at the elongated shadow of smoke in the air. Then more whining and screaming. . . . A second. . . . Nearer. Then another. . . . And another. The air was vibrating with quaint little tearing things, spiteful, malignant.

We pitched over shell-holes half filled with water, down the Ridge, and sought the friendly shelter of some dug-outs.

A man was lolling against the lintel of the first dug-out we came to. A man laughing at our discomfiture.

"You asked for it!" he exclaimed. "By Heaven, you did! Standing there on the sky-

line. . . . Funny trick to play on the Boche. . . . Woke him up a bit."

Thus it was that I happened on the old Barnardo boy. Standing there in the doorway looking at shells. Looking at death and the havoc that precedes death. Afraid of nothing, although the next piece of hate that came along might place his number on the casualty list.

We followed him inside. A group of his comrades were seated around smoking cigarettes and playing cards on an overturned box. That we had sought to wander about and look at war afforded them some amusement. Someone assured us that one could see enough war down that sector in a day to satisfy the average man for a lifetime, and it was not a pretty thing to look at.

I noticed then that our host who had given us shelter was a slimly built young man with gentle eyes and pink cheeks and a soft voice. He seemed the last man one would associate with war, and yet he had been through some of the worst fighting on the Western Front at Neuve Chapelle and Arras.

We started talking about endless things, the War, the possibilities of peace, the position of the old German line on the Ridge, and one of the card-players who consistently let his partner down. Then by a chance remark I discovered that he was an old Barnardo boy, that his name was Rifleman C.

"Yes," he said, "I went to the Barnardo Homes when I was seven or eight, I forget which. First

of all I went to Shepherd House in Grove Road, and from there was sent to a Home in Swansea, where there were about thirty other boys. I was there for three years to pick me up, and then I came to town again and went to Leopold House."

"What sort of a time did you have?" I asked him.

He threw away the stub of a cigarette and lit another.

"Top-hole," he said. "They were good days. I learned to play the handbells and the mandoline, and went touring round the country with the musical boys. I went to Scotland and Ireland. It was a fine way of learning geography. What struck me about the place—and this means a lot to a chap when he has to earn his living afterwards—is the way in which a boy is allowed to choose what he wants to be, and is given every help to carry out his ambition. It's assumed that you're going to do all right. They don't imagine for a moment that you could turn out a failure. So you've just got to go ahead and win out; there's nothing else to it. You can't let the old shop down."

He went on talking, but I was not heeding what he said. For my imagination had set me thinking. I was wondering what Dr. Barnardo would have thought if he had stood in my place in that dug-out. I could picture him in my mind's eye, the pride of him, the man who had been a father to this boy, who had helped him up from destitution

and set his feet on the certain road. And finding him here, a boy cheery, with the flood of youth in his heart, and afraid of nothing, happy as youth always finds happiness in difficulty and danger.

And then we fell to talking of sport.

"I played for the Aberdeen dormitory," the boy told me, "and was captain of the football team and the cricket eleven, and for the last fifteen or sixteen months I was in the Home I was a sergeant. You get popular, you know, playing games."

"But it's a bigger game you play out here," I said.

"So the old Boche thinks. . . . Say, he didn't like the look of you, did he?" He grinned. "Fair asking for it, you were. . . ."

It was many months later that I was able to discover Rifleman C. again. And this time I tumbled into his dug-out—his home dug-out—as unceremoniously as before. And now, instead of khaki, he was dressed in the blue dress of a casualty.

But a lot of things had happened to him since that afternoon on Vimy. He had lost an arm and his legs had been badly injured, and he had been into Germany and out again. And now he was back in England.

"Bit quieter than Vimy," I suggested. "And you've been seeing life since then. Where did you get this lot?" I asked, indicating his empty sleeve.

"Same old place: Vimy sector. Had a bit of a dust-up down there with a German patrol. Three of us and a corporal, and we bumped right into 'em. When you are out on patrol you are not supposed to put up a fight—there is nothing wrong in clearing off—but our corporal was rather a dashing young chap, and decided to wake the Germans up. And then they came at us. As a matter of fact, we did not know it, but I have heard since that we took three of the dozen prisoners, and the corporal got the D.C.M. for it. I very soon got knocked out: a hand grenade took off my arm and scrapped my legs. Well, I woke up in a German dug-out, and I was taken to a hospital at Douai, eight or nine kilos behind the lines, where I remained for five weeks."

"Go on," I said; "tell me about it."

"Queer time I had. I was the only Englishman in the ward, and it wasn't a very bright sort of place. I can't say that the German patients made themselves unpleasant, nor were they over pleasant; they just ignored me. What did matter very much, and made things a great deal better than they would have been, was the fact that the sister of the ward had lived in England for fifteen years. In a lot of ways she was more English than German. It was here that my arm was amputated. And that sister—well, she was pretty decent on the whole."

"Did you stay there long?"

"No such luck. I was moved on to Aix-la-

Chapelle, where I had my wound dressed once a week on an average, and they used only paper bandages. The hospital was very badly staffed, and the food was soup—always the same soup, though they called it by different names. When we complained to the doctor about the food he would say: 'England betray Germany; you no food. England release blockade; you plenty food.'"

"The same old Hun," I said. "Piling it on to the prisoner!"

"But the mines," he exclaimed. "They were the worst. From Aix-la-Chapelle men were sent to work in the mines, and would come back to die of exhaustion. It was useless for them to complain of illness. They were sent on until they dropped. I remember one day fifteen or sixteen men came in, and twelve of them died. Then I was transferred to Giessen Camp, and that was a bit of a joke. Three of us went together. The first was on crutches, and the second had lost an eye and was partly paralysed. I hobbled along and had only one arm. Yet we were guarded by three armed sentries. 'What's the idea of you three?' we asked. 'Oh, we've got to look after you, else you'd escape,' they replied. A lot of escape there was about us!"

"England's a bit strange after all that, eh?"

"And very comfy! I got exchanged, and here I am. With only one flipper my trade as a compositor is gone, so I shall take to clerking when

I'm fit again." He broke off. "Remember our talking about Barnardo's that day at Vimy?"

I nodded.

"Yes. And the football team."

"There's one thing I'm keen on about that place," he said, speaking earnestly. "Why don't they establish an Old Barnardo Boys' Hostel? Get them to do it. A place where those of us who have been in the War can meet and talk. A man gets very fond of his pals when they've looked at death together. There's something binding about it."

"I understand. It's bigger than the firm friendship with the first friend you ever made. When you hadn't another friend in the world."

"Yes," he answered me. "It's bigger than that. Those old Barnardo boys have got to get together. They'll want to. I want to. For there are plenty of them who, like myself, are just Barnardo boys still. You don't shed the Barnardo feeling when you grow up; you let it get old with you. And you're glad it's there. It's always been that way with me."

In those latter words he revealed himself. Whatever life had given him—the rough and the smooth—the Barnardo spirit was strong in him still. It had crept into his bones, and would never lose its hold.

§ 3

And he was only one of a type. I have noticed on nearly every occasion when I have come in touch with the old Barnardo boys who have passed through the War that they accept the Homes much as any boy accepts *his* home. And they would no more think of trying to emphasise their happiness during the years they were in the Homes than they would their honesty. But they are proud of the place, just as the son of an Earl might be proud of his mediæval castle.

I recall another old Barnardo boy, Private Horace L., who was a good instance of the lonely boy who comes under the shelter of Barnardoism. I discovered him in a London hospital. He remembered nothing of his father or mother, and, as far as he knew, he had not a relative in the world. But he had a home. He assured me of that. And his home is the City of Youth.

Private Horace L., No. 1 Lewis Gunner, well built and nearly six feet in height, was probably good-looking—certainly nice-looking—when the Army held a beckoning forefinger towards him; it is very likely he will be nice-looking again when the Army has done with him. But, when I introduced myself at the 2nd London General Hospital, one-half of his head was swathed in bandages, and the visible side of his nose was decorated with a piece of adhesive plaster.

Horace was not an easy person to find. The hospital which held him was in King's Road, Chelsea, and it was a large and straggling hospital with long and twisting corridors, and when I found his ward he was not in it.

"I expect 'e's across the road," said one of the patients. "I'll soon find 'im for yer." And he hobbled across the corridor to the ward opposite.

The ward opposite was on a lower level than the corridor—to enter it one had to descend two or three steps, and standing at the top of them, just inside the door, I had an excellent view of the whole room. The view was not the one commonly associated with hospitals. There were plenty of beds and plenty of patients, either in the beds or on them, but there were no sad-faced nurses quietly tip-toeing from cot to cot. Instead there was noise and laughter and tobacco-smoke, and in a corner a gramophone was blaring away with all its might.

My companion stared down at the scene for a moment and then let go. "'Orace!" he yelled. "'O-r-a-c-e! (Ah, there 'e is; 'e's just turned round. See? That's 'im.) Come on, 'Orace; 'ere's a visitor for yer. ('Elpin' nurse, 'e is.)"

And up the steps came 'Orace, a beaming smile on the visible side of his face.

"You looked busy—down there," I said, as we strolled to a seat on the sunlit grass outside.

"Just 'elping to hand the cigarettes round," he answered. "That was the blind ward, you know."

The blind ward! And, later on, I discovered that it was in that ward of laughter and cheery, noisy gramophones that Private Horace L. had spent the happiest day in all his life. For three weeks of blackest night he had lain there, and little scraps of talk he managed to pick up from the doctors helped to confirm his fear that utter darkness would be his portion for the rest of his life. And then one morning when his wounds were being dressed he found a little loophole in the night.

"I saw a streak of white like a cat's eye," he said. "And then I saw a very faint white square; the nurse told me it was a window."

That was the happiest day of Horace's life; it was a day which stood out against a background of horror, and from that moment Horace began slowly to recover his sight.

All that he remembers about his early days is that he was born in Birmingham and went to the Homes when he was about five. For a time he was in Leopold House, and then he went on to the City of Youth, where he lived at Ackworth Cottage with forty-two other boys of whom he was the head. His special business in life at the City was to assist in the grocery stores, and the training he received there enabled him when he left—between two and three years ago—to take a responsible position in a city grocery warehouse, to which berth he assured me he would return when he got his discharge.

"I went out to the Front in January, 1918," he

explained, "and was sent straight up to the Ypres sector, the loveliest place they could have shoved me into for a start. Then I was moved down to the Somme, just after the Germans started their rush in March. Three times I went over the top, and the last time I got my wound."

"Bullet?" I suggested.

He shook his head.

"I got hit in the back of the neck soon after I got over the top. Don't know what it was, but I felt a bit stunned, and dropped my Lewis gun. Presently the stretcher-bearers came along, but they said I'd only got a bit of a lump at the back of my neck, and, as I was feeling better by then, I went on and found my pals and my gun again."

It was after this that Horace got hit in the eye with shrapnel; his left eye was removed altogether, the bridge of his nose was pierced, and his right eye was slightly injured.

"We went over the top in waves," said Horace, "and what troubled me was that I was in the first, and there were seven more to come through before I could hope to be picked up. I was afraid I might get walked on or hit by a shell. I hadn't much pain, but I couldn't see a bit, and it seemed ages before I was picked up, but I knew it was still daytime because I felt the sun burning me. Once somebody picked me up and then dropped me again —I suppose I looked a pretty awful sight. Then I really did think I was done for. But I was carried off by the stretcher-bearers after a time, and,

although I was lying out there only an hour and a half, it seemed years."

I began to picture this young man, with no relations that he was aware of, disconsolately wandering round looking for someone with whom he could compare notes. I saw him sitting solitary and apart when the postman arrived.

"And parcels," I said. "I suppose you did not get many?"

"I didn't do so bad," he responded. "Dad and Ma sent me some jolly fine ones. Cakes and candles. . . ."

He was proceeding to explain how he got a hot dinner by cutting the candles in half and wrapping them round with sand-bagging, when he saw that he had puzzled me and offered an explanation.

"Of course," he said, "they're not my father and mother really, but they're Dad and Ma all right. I always call them Dad and Ma. Dad is head of the grocery stores." (This I discovered was at the City of Youth.) "He taught me my job. And they've been a father and mother to me all right . . . always go and see them when I can . . . jolly fine parcels they sent me. . . ."

He was an intensely happy person. Solitary in many ways, yet he had found a great content. Home life, as the average individual knows it, had never been his, but as a little Birmingham waif Barnardo's had found him, given him all the tenderness of parentage, and sent him out strong

to the battle of life and to the greater battle of the conflict of nations. Moreover, he had found in the City of Youth those two he called Dad and Ma, who drew from him all the devotion of a son.

The most lonely people are often the least solitary. He was one of them. And it was all summed up in his remark:

"Barnardo's *is* my home!"

CHAPTER XII

WITH BARNARDO'S IN YPRES AND ARRAS

"Count, are we feeble or few? Hear, is our speech so rude?
Look, are we poor in the land? Judge, are we men of the Blood?"
—RUDYARD KIPLING.

§ 1

IN the history of all war, Ypres will pr ly stand out as the most famous city of battles. and without doubt it will occupy the same position in the records of Barnardo's. For my investigations lead me to believe that more old Barnardo boys have fought in the Ypres sector than in any other, although Arras, with its adjacent Somme battlefields, runs it very close.

Barnardo boys have figured on every battlefield of the War, but Ypres seems to have been something of a magnet that drew whole groups of them towards it. Gather all the old Barnardo's together who have marched up through that main street past the Cloth Hall, and on through the Menin gate, and they would form a regiment. Many have passed through that gate, and too few have come back.

Ypres on the morning when I last saw it was a queer place. It was grey and broken and ugly in the bright light of a spring day. The Boche had just finished his morning strafe as we came up the road from Poperinghe. The death-reaper had been busy in the streets of Ypres during those early hours. The Germans had been throwing over "heavies" and shrapnel and gas shells in a perfect tornado of hate. But now they had tired somewhat, and were contenting themselves with taking pot-shots at the captive balloons which had risen to gain the advantage of visibility.

He was in a highly strung condition was the Boche. He was expecting attack, and was, moreover, working himself into the pitch of frenzy which culminated in his great descent of March 21st. So presently he ceased his balloon practice and began pounding the neighbouring village of Dickebusch with gigantic explosives. Then, tiring of that occupation, he turned his guns on to the cemetery by the Menin gate, as if he expected British Tommies to be lurking among the broken gravestones. The sentry on duty at the cross-roads told us that Jerry was "fair weeding the place."

Dead horses were lying about the street, and, so they told us, they had not seen dead horses in Ypres for weeks, and when we penetrated into an underground casualty station for shelter we found forty-two broken pieces of humanity who had been brought in during the past two hours.

For hours the nideous thing went on. When later we emerged from the casualty station into what had been a back alley, and now was no more than a path between bits of broken wall, a shell burst in the adjoining street, and sent a horse's head flying past like a monster football. Three horses and two men the Boche claimed by that shot.

But the flying death, that came with a shriek and a crash and a vast upheaval of earth and stones, did not stem the steady tide of men that passed up the street to the British positions beyond. Men spick and span after a brief spell in rest billets, singing most of them, some laughing at the black clots of smoke that hung in the still air where the German gunners were trying their luck again with ill success at the sausage balloons. They passed on; infantry and engineers, transport and a gun or two. And among those men was Sapper S.

As it happens, Sapper S. was probably the oldest Barnardo boy in the War. He joined up when he was fifty years of age, but that was in Ontario, Canada, in 1915.

"They did not care how old I was," he told me afterwards. "I was as fit as anybody, and that was all that mattered." So Sapper S. tumbled into the War, and at the beginning of 1916 was sent out to Ypres to get his three wounds.

Sapper S. was not a "conscript" Barnardo, but a volunteer. That is to say, he went to Stepney

and asked them to take him. This happened in 1888. In those days he was serving beer over the counter at a little inn in East Greenwich. He was nineteen years of age—the age when youth begins to ask questions of the future.

And the future looked very blank to this boy. He scarcely knew what to make of it. It offered no prospects, no chance of anything. He might go on at this sort of work all his life, and the spirit of adventure had begun to stir in him. He wanted to go out and see the world, to fight a man's battle. So he went down to Barnardo's, and was given employment in the Youths' Labour House, and afterwards sent out to Canada.

Canada gave him the breath of life. He saw his chance and he made for it. For a while he worked on a farm.

"Farming's all right," he told me, "but what you want is a bit of money in your pocket. It's no good being a labourer all your life. You want to buy a farm of your own, and, as I couldn't see the chance of that, I chucked it, and went to work on the railway. That was the time when they were building the Grand Trunk, a wonderful piece of work that took five years to do, and I stuck it till it was finished. Then I went on to the Lakes."

And on the Lakes he worked till 1915, and he is going back to the Lakes at the close of the War. He has fought his way up to a fine position as a Marine Engineer. But as recruits were not coming in as fast as they were required in those early days

of the War, he threw up his work, forgot his age, and went out to fight for Canada. The spirit of adventure of the old Greenwich days was strong in him still. And he was all through the darkest days of the Ypres fighting.

"I wasn't exactly in the thick of it then," he said to me, "but some of the Pioneers got it hot, and the Princess Patricia's got it, too. In those days you had to fight with your pick, and thanked God you had a pick. I remember the Princess Pat's going for the Germans with their naked fists. What they did was to make a rush at the enemy, grab hold of his bayonet—never mind about getting your hand cut—fetch him one under the jaw with your other fist, and then stick him! That was all there was to do."

When I mentioned Barnardo's to him his eyes brightened.

"I reckon," he said, "that if a boy has any desire to get on at all, Barnardo's will help him. Some there are who don't want to get on, and wouldn't, if they could, do anything, however much they are helped. But I guess there aren't many such when they've been through Barnardo's. And well do I remember the Doctor—a little man, all smiles. That was the Doctor as I always picture him—a little man, all smiles!"

§ 2

From Ypres, too, comes the man who claims, and probably rightly, to be the first old Barnardo boy to join up when the War began. Private C. enlisted on the 5th August, 1914, just a few hours after the outbreak of hostilities, and at the end of nearly four years in the War he lost an arm from a German explosive bullet.

He was quite a little chap when he joined Barnardo's, and I got him to tell me about it. When he was eight years old his father died, leaving nothing behind him but a young family impressed with a sense of desolation and disaster. Private C. was an intelligent youngster, and, although a child of eight has little sense of independence, yet he was old enough to feel that it was "up to him."

So it was this feeling which prompted him—a very forlorn and sickly boy—to wander out into the streets of his native Liverpool, with a vague, undefined hope that something would turn up. Something did. He was stopped by a gentleman—a stranger—who held out for his consideration a rather pleasing prospect—a prospect which he felt was well worth following up.

"He took me," Private C. explained, "to the Ever-Open Door. I have never seen that gentleman since that day, but I very much wish I could see him and thank him. I don't altogether remember what he was like, but at the back of my

mind I have a picture of an elderly, grey-bearded gentleman, who beamed benignly upon me through gold-rimmed spectacles. Then as soon as my mother gave her consent I went to Stepney and rose to be a sergeant-major, till at the age of seventeen and a half I pushed out into the world 'on my own.' And then came the War!"

Private C. is only about twenty-two to-day, and, with all the courage of youth, he has never taken long to make up his mind. It did not take him five minutes to settle what he was going to do when Germany flung disaster upon the world in those August days of 1914.

A month later he was in France.

"What!" I exclaimed. "A month after you joined up?"

"Yes," he smiled. "You see, I knew my drill all right—everything except the rifle. We were drilled at the Home by an ex-sergeant-major of the Army. I joined the Army Ordnance Corps as a wheeler—that's the Army name for a wheelwright."

For a long time Private C. worked at Merville, that benighted little town at the back of Ypres in which, since the day when Private C. and I talked together, there has taken place some of the fiercest fighting of the War. And he got his corporal's stripe, only to lose it again when, in 1917, he was transferred to the infantry, and was switched away to Poligne Wood in the Ypres salient. And Poligne Wood was never a health spot, not an ideal place to fetch up at for a rest cure. But

Private C. passed through all the fighting without a scratch, and at the end of 1917 he was sent down to St. Quentin.

He will never forget those St. Quentin days, and few men who endured what he endured would forget them. He has a nightmarish recollection of spending four days without sleep when the Germans made their advance in the spring of 1918, four days of dogged watchful withdrawal.

"At one time," he told me, "we were fourteen hours withdrawing six hundred yards. It was in this retreat"—(he stopped abruptly and corrected himself)—"German advance, that eight of us were detailed on a little post to fight a rearguard action. Farther down the line we were being outflanked, and our men had to withdraw. It was everyone for himself by the time they all got by. The seven men I was with were all killed, and the Germans were only about forty or fifty yards from me. It was a narrow squeak, and I only escaped by rolling down a railway embankment; and the Lewis gun rolled with me."

Then Private C. told me how the remnants of the Fifth Army formed up at Clery in front of Peronne.

"A hundred of us formed a fresh line. Of these only about forty got through, and they were all that were left of the battalion. You could fire and fire your machine gun at the Germans, but still they came on. I had dug myself in, and it was pretty poor protection. As a matter of fact, I was

in an advanced post sniping at Jerry, and Jerry was sniping at me; we were only between twenty-five and thirty yards apart. Exactly as I pulled my trigger I was hit—caught by an explosive bullet in the forearm and thigh. It was certainly an advanced post—not 'alf!"

"I suppose you thought your number was up all right," I said.

He nodded.

"I did for a bit," he said. "'Danny, wrap me up,' I said to my pal, and crawled out to find a dressing station. I had two and a half kilos to go, which entailed walking through a hail of shell fire. But when you're wounded you think of Blighty and never give in, for once you go down you know you're not likely to get up again. When I found an aid post where some infantry were doing first aid work, they gave me water—shell-hole water—and did what they could. After that I was taken down on a stretcher to a small station twelve kilos from Amiens. I don't remember the name of it, but it had no roof, and was a sort of little halt. And there with a lot of others we waited for three nights for the hospital train."

The old Barnardo boy told his story in concise and rapid language, as if every moment through which he had passed was a poignant memory to him.

"Those three nights were awful," he went on. "I couldn't move so much as a hand; the weather was very cold, and there was a drizzling rain. We

had ground sheets over us to keep us as dry as possible, and everything that could be done for us was done. But it was horrible lying there among the poor chaps yelling with pain, and to know that Jerry was getting nearer and nearer all the time. You see, Amiens was being bombed badly, and the rails got torn up, and so the hospital trains could not get through. But they came through at intervals, and when I left—it must have been by the last train—Jerry was reported to be only four hundred yards away.

"There was one thing I saw whilst lying at that station which I shall never forget. A party of wounded men who were able to walk was collected, and then it was discovered that there was a band somewhere about. Well, we rounded up that band, and put it at the head of the party to help it along, and away they marched, singing and laughing as happy as children. What did the band play? Oh, it played 'The Long Trail.'"

One can picture the scene; these wounded lying about in the rain, waiting fearfully for the result of the race between the hospital train and the oncoming enemy, the accumulated sounds of conflict growing louder as the hours passed, and then the band breaking through with the strains of 'The Long Trail,' that most human song of the War's bringing. And the boy who, at the age of eight, had set out on some great adventure of childhood to do something for his stricken family—the boy, helped up by Barnardoism to splendid manhood—

out here doing much, not only for his family, but for the country in her gravest hour.

But just a unit of the great ten thousand—probably the first of them to join up when the tocsin sounded—who have gone down from Barnardo's into the Battle of Nations.

§ 3

Long after the great hush has settled over the Western battlefields, the city of Arras will remain a scar of memory on the heart of France. Possibly she will stand thus through the centuries, a broken, beautiful thing on the verge of the Somme wastes which stretch out like undulating flats and low downlands to the southern town of Bapaume.

Ypres is a heap of stones; Arras a city of broken houses. Houses of which but half remain, houses that lean forward like bent old men who have been pushed by some violent blow from behind; houses with their fronts shorn cleanly away by shell bursts, so that out of the open floors hang bedsteads and wardrobes, and bedraggled wet and dirty curtains flap disconsolately to and fro in the air. And all the sacred family treasures of these houses have slipped down into the streets, to be swept away in heaps or trodden underfoot; children's toys, pictures, and endless knick-knacks. The Cathedral, a mere shell of a building, remains as the supreme reminder of the savagery of the enemy, its interior a heap of fallen masonry, its sacristies

destroyed, its statues—save for a solitary figure of St. Peter—strewn in heaps of rubble.

Out of this city which had been one of the most beautiful in northern France, the inhabitants flung themselves before the encroaching tide of War. Only a few remained to face the storm. One old man I saw, who sat in a broken window on the ground floor and sold oranges and bootlaces and Sunlight soap, while the entire building above his head had been destroyed and lay open to the sky, and was moss-grown with many rains. And in another broken house opposite the Cathedral a lady of middle age lived in the only room that afforded shelter—lived alone, for all her relatives had been destroyed in the wreckage of the house, and were buried in the garden. Yet not quite alone, for she had a parrot, a ginger cat, and a woolly dog, and she assured me that not until the Germans came and carried her out did she intend to move.

In this city of brokenness there have been old Barnardo boys almost since the War began. One of those I discovered was Rifleman Leonard A., a little round-faced fellow with keen blue eyes. He looks nearer forty than thirty years of age, but is actually only twenty-eight. That is what the War has done for him—that and the slight limp caused by a bullet which lodged in his leg, and has persistently refused to come out.

Rifleman A. was one of the most interesting old Barnardo's to talk to I have come across, and is full of memories of his days in the Homes. He

started at Leopold House, where he became a musical boy, and used to tour the country; indeed, he took pains to impress upon me that he was still no mean player on the cornet. Moreover, he was keen on all forms of sport.

"We used to play some good elevens," he told me. "Played Harrow School, we did, and beat them once! And the football team! Why, the people round Stepney Causeway used to wait for us when we came out on Saturday afternoons, quite a crowd of them, and it didn't matter how far we were going or how poor they were, they'd follow us anywhere. The same with the band when it went out, they'd always go round with it."

A fact of which Rifleman A. is extremely proud is that he was one of the first two Barnardo boys to go aboard the lugger, the Watts Naval Training School, although he admits he was pretty miserable at the idea at first. Norfolk seemed such a long way off—like another country—in those days.

"But I'd got a brother in the Homes, a good deal bigger than I was, and he put some sense into me," he confessed. "He told me it was the chance of a lifetime, and he was right. Well, when we got to the Training School we found there was no one there but three ladies! It was a great big place, and we used to wander round and get lost. Then we'd yell out, and one of the ladies would come and show us the way back! But very soon afterwards a party of boys came from Jersey, and then the School got going properly. I was there

for three years, and became chief petty officer, but as I had changed my mind about going into the Navy, they brought me back to Stepney and taught me harness-making."

Rifleman A. joined up in 1916, and had his first taste of battle in Delville Wood, or Devil's Wood as he called it, and from thence he pressed on with the advance on Flers, where he had the good luck to see the first tanks ever brought into battle.

"These tanks had been kept wonderfully secret," he said. "The first we heard of them was just before we were going into action before Flers at five minutes to six on the morning of the 15th September. Our captain came up and said: 'A tank is going over each end of the line.' None of us knew what he meant, whether he meant water-tanks or what! It seemed a queer business altogether, but we soon found out—and so did the Hun. We got to the enemy's first line, and the Germans then came out and had a go at the tanks, aiming bombs at them! It was like throwing eggs at a traction-engine! The tanks had their effect all right; scared the Germans out of their wits, so that we did what we liked with them."

At Christmas Private A. found himself in Arras, and it was in the neighbourhood of the city that he was to get his wound.

"What sort of a Christmas was it?" I asked him.

"Just like a holiday," he laughed. "The queerest Christmas I've ever spent. We used to

sing to the Germans, and they would sing to us. A Jerry would call out: 'Sing "Lead, Kindly Light," Tommy,' and we would give them 'Lead, Kindly Light.' Then we were put into the Arras caves that ran right under the German lines. Wonderful caves they were, fitted up with electric light and railways and all."

It was in the battle of Arras that he received a dose of shrapnel in the shoulder and ankle, and a bullet in the leg pretty much about the same time, and some German prisoners who were acting as stretcher-bearers carried him down to the casualty clearing station.

"There are Germans *and* Germans," Rifleman A. assured me, "and these were four of the better sort. They carried me properly, they did, shoulder high. And every time they rested they all shook hands with me before starting again, and tried to tell me that I was all right, that there was nothing to worry about, and that I was going back to England."

I asked him then if he remembered Doctor Barnardo.

"Remember him!" he repeated. "I shall always remember him. He was a real father to us, just as he professed to be. He always lived for children. He used to have a talk to us before he took the evening service, and tell us how he started the Homes, and how a little girl once gave him a bag containing seventeen farthings, and how they had grown to thousands. Oh, yes; I remember

him well enough. And I'll tell you a little anecdote about him. One evening we were all kneeling down, and he was taking the evening prayer. Suddenly he heard a boy talking, and he came down quickly and gave the boy a jolly good hiding! Then he went back and finished the prayer. He was the most . able man I ever met, but he knew the meaning of discipline. And it's discipline that makes a man."

§ 4

And one other Arras lad I remember. He was named Sergeant George T., a fine, clean-featured fellow, who walked painfully with a piece of shell in his thigh which could not be extracted. We had sat long over our lunch one day, Sergeant George and I, and through the cigarette smoke compared notes about the battle-ground over which he had fought. His piece of the War had been situated on that blood-stained ground that lies between Arras and Monchy—Monchy, the village of many thousand dead, which changed hands nine times, and which will go down to history as one of the most terrible spots on the West Front.

Sergeant George had gone into Barnardo's when he was quite a little chap of four and a half, for his mother was a widow and could not afford to maintain both her children. So George had to go. For many years he was boarded out. Later on, when he grew into his teens, he became a page

boy, then a footman, and with his employer travelled over the greater part of Europe. Eventually, when the War came, he wrote to his brother and said that one of them would have to do something in the matter of this War, and he thought he was the one to do it. So very quickly George was swallowed up in the Middlesex Regiment, and after a good spell in England out he went, strong in his youth, to Arras and Monchy.

It was taking up wire at night that made George exchange khaki for hospital blue. There had been some hot days at Monchy—days when our men got a few yards of trench after bitter fighting, when they hung on by the skin of their teeth, pounded, always pounded, by the ceaseless German fire.

One of these shells put Sergeant George out of the War. With several fragments of steel in his flesh he crawled into a dug-out which was full of wounded. They were packed like sardines in a box, men in the throes of death, men with lighter wounds, blood and agony and death, no water and no help.

Sergeant George knew that he must get out of this hole of torment somehow. A gorgeous morning broke after a night of incessant battle. Then an officer appeared on the scene and suggested to George that he should try his luck and get across the open ground, for there was no prospect of help for a long time. So, stiffly and painfully, George picked himself up, and crawled out into the open.

The German fire had ceased, but he knew he

was in full sight of the German trenches. But he forgot the Germans, forgot even the direction in which he was making, for he saw something that struck him as peculiar. In the middle of this ground, unsheltered and solitary amid the welter of destruction caused by a myriad shells, there stood a French farm cart und naged. He could not take his eyes off this cart. It was something that had come through the battle unscathed. At the moment when he felt like dropping from sheer weakness it seemed to him a symbol—something that had come through unscathed.

He stumbled on, found a partly demolished cart track, and followed it. Then the sun came up and watched him.

For hours he seemed to be walking, expecting, as the minutes passed, that the German fire would break out again. At last an Army lorry hove into view and stopped. He lurched up to it and hung on to the sides with weak fingers.

"Give me a lift!" he implored.

"Hit, sonny?" Someone dragged him in.

And lying on his back in a semi-stupor Sergeant George rattled into Arras.

We walked down the street side by side.

"I'd like to see the old Barnardo's get together," he said. "It was the best thing that ever happened to me—Barnardo's. One gets older and takes to other things, then this War coming and

rattling us up, but the mind goes straying back there. I suppose there's some sort of parentage about that place that never lets you leave go."

'And the Doctor," I said. "You remember the Doctor?"

He nodded.

"One night," he went on, "we were giving a sing-song, a sort of send-off business to a party of boys going to Canada the next day. I used to sing, and I sang a song called 'Dear Mother England,' which had a chorus that began 'Rally round the Flag, boys.' It went down well, that song. And soon after I had finished the Doctor came in. 'Boys,' he said, 'what is the best song you've had to-night?' And the fellows voted for mine. 'Now then, George, we've got to have it again,' he said. And patting me on the back he pushed me towards the platform. So we let the Doctor have it hot and strong, 'Rally round the Flag, boys'!"

It was prophetic. But the man who had been a father to these boys did not know how prophetic. The thin War clouds had not crept over the horizon —the clouds that were to make these boys rally round the flag.

§ 5

These boys who did grow up!

They pass—these great ten thousand—in an unflinching army. . . .

§ 6

I remember standing one evening on the battlefield of Warlencourt near Bapaume. On every side the Somme fields stretched away sullen and silent to the horizon—fields on which many Barnardo boys had yielded their lives for the country which would not have given them a second chance but for the man who sought them in the haunts of suffering. A clothing of long rank grass had grown over the smitten earth and clung about the things that lay there, the broken impedimenta of war—smashed rifles and frayed wire, unexploded hand grenades, and cartridges and shells, and a crippled tank, lone and ugly, amidst the havoc.

And now these fields seemed as a place of whispers, as if sounds were passing in the air—sounds such as the wind makes in the trees. But there were no trees, save those shell-severed at the boles. In such a place, hallowed every yard of it by given life, the sound carried in it the note of triumph, of something achieved.

Whatever Barnardoism stands for, whatever the ideals for which it has striven, surely here was its great sacrifice. These children it had saved and nurtured, treasure of the darker world which it brought to flowering manhood. Always it had sought to save life, but the lives it had salved so carefully had been given up to free this land.

Almost it seemed as if Nature realised the great

sacrifice, for she had thrown abroad on these fields a cloak of colour—a cloak of red and gold where poppies and wild mustard flowered in wild profusion. Verily they were the flowers that spoke of life—new life—which not all the passionate upheaval of half a world could stamp out or destroy.

CHAPTER XIII

TO-MORROW

"Oh you blind leaders who seek to convert the world by laboured disputations! Step out of the way or the world must fling you aside. Give us the Young. Give us the young and we will create a new mind and a new earth in a single generation."—BENJAMIN KIDD.

§ 1

IN these, the words of one of the greatest social thinkers of our epoch, is summed up the whole future of Britain's civilisation.

Give us the Young!

It is the strident call to a nation that has suffered much. It is the first demand of the builder who would lay upon the tested foundation stone that material which shall build the house anew.

The War has passed like some winter tempest across an ancient structure, shattering its weakest points, while always that which was sound remained secure. But much that was decrepit about the house has fallen down; in that which remains many a menace is revealed to the eye for the first time.

Give us the Young, for only through the young shall we achieve our new being. What we were

in 1913 we no longer are. Our aims have changed by circumstance, our general outlook has changed, ourselves—every fibre of ourselves—has changed. Through these Young who perished to give birth to a peace of freedom we have discovered our faults; through these Young who remain shall those faults become our qualities. And now, as H. G. Wells remarks: "Whatever we see of the Promised Land we must see through the eyes of the young."

Centuries of children have passed through this great creation which is our civilisation. And what have we done for them? What have we done for them nationally? The children's Magna Charta was the first decisive step the State ever took towards preserving that life which it needed most. And at best it was little more than a half measure.

Nor is the reason far to seek. The State is really only a mature creation for mature minds. It is so difficult for a man once grown to become a child again, and so few are mentally able to achieve the feat that it is not remarkable that our legislators have been unable to legislate with measured understanding for the years of childhood. Men who have risen remember mainly how they achieved this thing, and, if they have constructive ability, wish to legislate for the period of achievement, forgetful always of the earlier stage when they may have leapt the barriers of convention and State ignorance that possibly hedged them about.

Of a truth, we have been a grown people ordering our house to the requirements of the matured

intelligence. It is a house that has lacked its nursery. Children have come and passed like miniature flowers in a field of waving grass—flowers that never find the sun of a day. And the strength we have missed! The future Empire-builders who have drifted out before they had reached the years of the builder! In our conception of childhood we have shown a bludgeoned intelligence, often primeval in brutality, mechanical, unsympathetic. Utterly unsympathetic.

A nation that cannot recognise riches in its children is like a man who has a thousand-pound cheque in his pocket and cannot read. But it may be that whilst the death winds have swept unstemmed through our land, destroying that which we treasured most, we have been discovering a new miracle. Setting a new value on our children.

Setting the right value on our children.

The old manner of social government is as a coat which the War has proved to be full of holes. Creative activity, *based on thought alone*, will produce a better. The pioneers of to-morrow's Britain are those who realise that before all else, all empirical plans and schemes, exterior development and power, all comfort and luxury, all striving for free living, comes the need for preserving any human life. For life is promise and expectancy of To-morrow.

In this new age of ours there must be no handicap; all children must set out fair and square at the starting tape in the great race for progress. This

entails not only better housing, feeding, and education, not only the elimination of the ban upon the illegitimate, but putting a premium upon all motherhood.

And more than that. The bird throws its weaklings out of the nest, and the State must save what the poor parent regards as weaklings. It must organise help for those who bear more children than they can afford, solely because the children are State units and must survive. It is a national as much as an individual responsibility that they should survive. Life is so precious a thing, so needful to our national existence, that it must be nursed to maturity.

The War has killed existence for luxury; luxury is now and will be the reward of national utility. The farmed cradle, the pushing off of responsibility for pleasure, must be penalised, whilst the makers of our national strength are guaranteed. For by our children alone shall we nationally achieve, and in our children lies our future world power.

Men who can think with the mind of a child are rare. And no amount of thought that cannot attune itself to the actual needs of the child will avail. Legislation for children has more often failed because it has been lop-sided legislation—that is to say, legislation designed to benefit the child by primarily benefiting its parents or guardians.

Nor shall we achieve material result until we set

up a Ministry for childhood, whose operations shall centre about childhood alone, and which shall co-ordinate with those who are responsible for housing and education and all matters which bear on childhood. A sympathetic Ministry, a Ministry of understanding for all children of all mothers.

Then, with so much attained, "give us the Young and we will create a new mind and a new earth in a single generation."

§ 2

Before our To-morrow can produce a better conception of child welfare, before we can make full use of the great gift of Youth, we must take a broader outlook upon motherhood. Motherhood must cease to be regarded as a means merely of re-population, or as a periodical phase in a well-ordered home, and be recognised as the greatest and highest calling to which any human being can aspire.

It is not right, indeed by all the laws of humanity it is wrong, that we should permit fifty thousand mothers in this country alone to endure the pangs of maternity every year for no avail. But this is the number of preventable deaths among children which are occurring annually. This high rate of mortality is due to a number of causes, practically each of which can be modified if not eliminated.

Bad nourishment, which is the greatest enemy

of infancy, is largely due to the appalling ignorance prevalent among the industrial classes more than to wilful neglect. To thousands of young mothers the first child is something of a great experiment. In all probability these mothers know nothing about infancy; they may have had no means of acquiring any practical knowledge, and there has been no national attempt to equip them for their great mission in life by giving them that knowledge. The infant comes into the home, therefore, much as a rare plant comes into an amateur's greenhouse, and, however ardent that amateur may be to rear the plant, actual lack of knowledge may effect its loss.

With this side of the problem of motherhood the Child Ministry we require must deal if the present rising wastage of young life is to be stemmed. These mothers are largely those engaged in industry, and the long hours they must give to their work make it impossible for them to guarantee proper nutriment to their infants. If you take them away from the mills you will involve many of them—the young War widows, the mothers of unwanted children and others—in a hardship so great that what is gained on the one hand may be lost on the other. But that the mothers must return from the mills to look after their children now that the War is over is certain, unless the War is to leave as its legacy a great destructive force that shall spread through the ranks of childhood for years.

To meet this need, to help these mothers and their children, it is essential that a national system of pensions for mothers should be established. This is a great experiment. Of course it is a great experiment. But it is also a grave necessity if there is to be an adequate salvage system for youth. If the State requires Youth it must guarantee against actual privation those who have given it Youth.

It can be done. It is, in fact, being done. In West Ham, for example, there is a local pension system for mothers which, at the moment of writing, is enabling nearly two thousand women to stay at home and look after their children.

The highest rate of mortality is among the unwanted children. Not only has the unmarried mother all the difficulties which beset the legitimate mother, but endless trials that hinder and make for infant mortality. In all women there is a high sense of maternity, and there are not many unmarried mothers who will fail to stand loyally by the child if the opportunity offers itself. Moreover, most of them will far rather go and work for the child than enter any form of rescue home. But the difficulty has been—a difficulty which the War has rendered more acute—to find an adequate number of foster-mothers.

Under the Barnardo system crêches have been established whereby these unmarried mothers are enabled to leave their babies during the daytime in proper care, well aware that they will be thoroughly looked after during their absence. To

the unmarried mother this comes as the chance she desires to return to a proper mode of life. It is, in fact, the act of tolerance which, if generally followed throughout the country, would be the means of saving from the streets thousands of young women every year.

Let it be remembered that no fewer than fifty thousand illegitimate children are born in this country annually. With the scant help which is offered to the unmarried mother, apart from the work of charitable institutions, is it surprising that a high rate of mortality among these helpless infants should prevail? All this young life has more or less to struggle up for itself, stunted and weakened, or die out, for few unwanted children get the real chance which all childhood demands.

It is very desirable that the mother should be kept with her child at least till it is weaned. To this end the State must create a wide and tolerant system which shall not penalise the mother and threaten the child for the sin of the former. It should establish hostels in all the cities and towns where the unmarried mothers can live with their infants; where such as are able may go out and work, while the nursing mothers look after the babies. A community of motherhood—no home under the ban of respectability—to which a girl would creep back ashamed, but a place where all that is best in motherhood would be brought out in her. Where the fact that she is making good in her second chance will put her in line again with

her sister women who have not yielded to the great temptation.

It is urged also that local authorities should go even further by the establishment of blocks of single-roomed flats for these unmarried mothers, who, if they can trust their babies in good care, can earn a living in industry. In each block of flats there would be a large nursery in charge of a foster-mother, who would be responsible for the children during the daytime.

Establishments of this nature are not for experiment by local authorities, but if they are to achieve anything at all in bringing the great message of motherhood to the countless women who carry young life in their arms, they must be part of a State scheme nationally applied. Too long have we shut our eyes to the whole question of unmarried motherhood, and only now has there arisen out of the War any spirit of toleration. That the State recognised the inadequacy of a supine attitude was demonstrated when the first allowances were given to the mothers of unwanted children whose fathers were engaged in the War. It was the beginning of what may be a far-reaching system of reformation which will save to the nation tens of thousands of young lives in the immediate years.

§ 3

This is only one direction in which the unmarried mother must be assisted. Still further the State must go—it must amend the law for her.

The legitimacy laws in this country are a scandal to any nation which is proud of its civilisation, and are far behind those of most other countries. The National Council for the unmarried mother and her child is strongly urging legal reform which cannot, I think, be too clearly understood by those who have any thought for the drifting infant life of this land.

Among the recommendations put forward by this Council are the following: That the law of affiliation be amended so that additional facilities be offered to expectant mothers to enable them to take paternity proceedings. That payment for the weekly amount awarded be made from the date of the child's birth in all cases. Failing enforcement of payment by fathers, provision shall be made by the State for the children of such necessitous mothers. That the present limit of five shillings a week under an affiliation order be abolished, and the amount granted be in proportion to the circumstances of both parents. That the subsequent marriage of the mother and the father of an illegitimate child shall legitimise it.

The present affiliation payment of five shillings a week is, on the face of it, ridiculous; it puts practically all the burden on to the back of the mother. Moreover, it is a direct menace to the future of the child, since it is the cause of that child being denied proper support, and subjected to a casual existence. Such a prospect is only avoided if the mother has the good fortune to secure an

income by her own efforts, and, as we have seen, this is by no means easy when the child in infancy is a restriction upon her.

In no other progressive country is illegitimacy treated in the same unsympathetic attitude as it is here. Indeed, in many the State assumes, as the State should assume, the guardianship of this vagrant life, and makes itself responsible, wholly or partially, for the child's maintenance for a certain number of years. And until our State adopts the same attitude, as under the pressure of a properly constructed Ministry for child welfare it would doubtless do, we shall achieve little towards reducing the high rate of mortality amongst illegitimate children—a rate which is exactly twice as high as it is among the legitimate. To-morrow the State will require these children of the slums as it never required them before, to re-build the national structure as the War has proved we must re-build it. To this end all slum children—and be it hoped that the day is dawning when there will be no slum children—must be saved. For a nation's treatment of its children is the key to its greatness, and only a decadent nation sees no future in a slum child.

Finally, adoption with proper legal standards must be instituted. There is no law of adoption, and at no time in our history have we been so much in need of one. For there are endless parents who have lost only sons in this War who would willingly adopt a destitute child if the law gave them the necessary powers. In the case of an insti-

tution like Barnardo's there are endless applications from people known to the directors of the Homes to be in every way desirable as foster-parents—people who would gladly take these little waifs into their home life and give them the best chance possible in the world.

But all these offers have to be refused because there is no legal standing for the adopted child. In the case of undesirable foster-parents, the child could be set adrift at any moment without any redress. Neither is there any protection for the foster-parents; they have no legal claim over the child, even after having nourished it for years. An unsatisfactory person, who may happen to be the legal guardian, may come along and claim the child at any moment. Under such circumstances an institution like Barnardo's, which before all things runs no risk as to a child's future when once it has taken over its guardianship, must refuse to let the child pass out of its jurisdiction.

How many homes there are scattered about the country which would gladly welcome one of these children, how many homes into which the tragedy of war has come which would become bright again with the introduction of this new life! So that now it becomes imperative that the State shall delay no longer in creating a law which, whilst helping the children, would likewise equally benefit those who would adopt them.

In all these matters which concern the child the State must act quickly if the next generation is to

be secure. Too long have we lived with stale ideas about child welfare, with stale systems mechanically applied. Too long have we tolerated laws which barely grappled with the question, and during those years tens of thousands have drifted out through our national apathy.

But now, as people who have come out of the gloom, we stand in the light of the new day, with all our faults, our idle neglect, our half-hearted legislation, made clear to us. We are the builders who, with these children, must create a new world. And if those who have made the great sacrifice in the War had achieved nothing more than our awakening to the needs of our children, then they will have brought a triumph which shall go down through the centuries.

§ 4

Judge Neil has rightly declared that the greatest of all problems of a war is how to preserve the following generation from the evil effects of war's waste on manhood.

The War has hurled a giant blow at the generation of To-morrow. It has come into young lives just emerging into the teens and stemmed all progress. It has brought about a great stoppage of education, and made impossible that widening of knowledge to thousands of boys and girls at the very age when they are most impressionable.

For instance, six hundred thousand children

have had their education curtailed so that they might help in the War by assisting in the fields, in the mines, in the factories. Over a quarter of a million have been employed by the Ministry of Munitions alone.

What is to be done with these six hundred thousand children? It is impossible and unjust to expect to divert them as suddenly back into the common life of childhood as they were snatched from it. It must also be borne in mind that the withdrawal of the separation allowance at a time when the earning power of these children under the State ceases, will inflict a double burden upon them. Political reformation may be ever so zealous, but it cannot achieve everything in a day. So that during the period of transformation the children who have helped in the War may, without State help, be flung into an impossible plight, for the swing back of the pendulum is bound to bring a wave of destitution, accentuated by the withdrawal of separation alowances.

The problem can only be adequately solved in one way. Every one of those six hundred thousand children should be registered, and the State should make itself responsible for giving them a proper send-off in life, not by pushing them into any blind alley occupations, but by assisting in their education and maintenance. In due season it should provide them, as far as possible, with employment under the State, or train them for the most useful branches of industry. This, be it said,

would be no innovation, for it was the policy adopted by the Government after the Crimean War, when the boys who had worked at the Arsenal during the campaign were provided for until the tension of unemployment had passed.

But this is only a section of the boyhood that crowds our cities, and the State must put a common value on all boyhood. Happily, as regards education, we are already at the breaking of the new day. The system of very early apprenticeship is dying, soon under the new process of reconstruction it will cease to be. It has been a curse upon industrial youth, and a blight upon an industrial nation. And, like all deep-rooted abuses which affect large masses, it has taken a lot of killing. Employers were glad enough of cheap labour, and so in the main supported apprenticeship. Parents —parents who had, in the days before the War, a struggle to keep a large family of children going— were glad also to have the prospect of members of that family bringing some grist to the family mill at an early age. Everybody benefited by early apprenticeship except the boy, who was the individual mainly concerned.

The longer a boy is kept at school, the greater is his ultimate wage-earning power. This is no myth of the idealists; it has been proved in those humanitarian centres where it has been tried; it has been proved by the Moseley Commission. Let us suppose that a boy starts work at fourteen and another boy at nineteen; that is to say, the

latter boy has five years longer education than the former. In ten years the boy who starts work at nineteen will have passed in salary the boy who started five years earlier. Not because he has greater brains, not because his industrial training has been better than the boy who started at fourteen. But because the extra five years of schooling broadened and opened his mind, so that technical education when it came found him a fitter instrument to receive it, and ultimately put him out into the world a better workman.

The forcing of these children into the great factories in the early teens has been a vast scheme of waste which has endured for years. In no industry was it economical; it never could be economical. For between the ages of fourteen and eighteen the mind of a boy is most receptive, and to compel it to technical training in these years is like sowing seed on an untilled field and expecting to reap an abundant harvest.

No longer shall this spoiling of youth, of future manhood, continue. A boy when he starts his technical training will be able to proceed simultaneously with his education, for the greatest houses of industry will have schools attached to them, in order that a boy can be at his bench during certain hours of the day and at his desk during others.

This means the emancipation of boyhood; opening the gates to the herded boyhood of the cities. It will give a better Youth to Britain—a

Youth the intellect of which has not been cramped till the tendrils of thought have become sterile. A Youth free to make and discover.

It has taken us long to arrive at this understanding, to get these boys out of the kind of mental doldrums to which we had condemned them. It has been a weary process, accompanied with much rummaging among systems which might be set up, only to find that they conflicted with private interests.

But the War has carried us far. It has caused us to strike at the heart of the question, that we may preserve all that is best in our Youth.

§ 5

It is not enough that the minds of these children should be studied; if their bodies are not healthy their minds must ever remain imperfect. It is not enough to take a child out of the slum and expect a new education to make a perfect man of him rather than an automaton.

The slums must go.

Eight years ago Mr. Lloyd George said that, given the necessary powers, he would sweep every slum out of England in twenty years. The War, and the demands which the War has created, may and should result in every slum being cleaned out of the cities in half that time for the plague-spot it is. No mentality can live in a slum, no useful mentality can be expected of children reared in

slums. And so long as slums endure you bar from the children reared in them any chance in life, and condemn them to the gutter and the roving, casual existence which the gutter provides.

These slums must go. In London, in Sheffield, in Liverpool and Barrow and Manchester, and all the great cities that have harboured them, they must be wiped out to the last back alley before the tragedy of these slum children is ended. They linger still as secret hell-pits in the greatest hives of industry, throwing out disease and death, stifling happiness, and beating down, always beating down upon the soul of the child.

In the first year following the War three hundred thousand new houses for the working classes will be required in this land, and their creation will absorb half the building power which the country can put out. Another hundred thousand houses per annum will be required during the immediate years which follow the first.

It is a colossal task, but it must be faced. Why should five thousand people live to an acre in some parts of London, or more than fifty thousand people live two in a single room in Manchester, when in planning Salonica, and other towns involved in the War, arrangements are being made for a hundred people to an acre? A jostled humanity is an effete community sapped of half its strength.

Nor must it be forgotten that the houses that are built will reflect upon the lives of those who

live in them. Rows of attached houses will force monotony into the souls of the inhabitants. Fourteen houses to the acre is the utmost that should be sought for. These children of To-morrow require space and air; let the State give it to them. Let the ground which will be absorbed to provide these houses, and which will be secured from those who, in many cases, were unworthy of its stewardship, be so planned as to provide ample playing-space for the children, and allotments within easy reach to counteract the inducement, caused by lack of recreation, which the public-houses offer to the parents.

Such homes as these, besides giving the child the chance in life, will sweep aside much of the wretchedness of which foul habitation and surroundings are the main cause. But something more must be taken into consideration. Without war there will always be a certain amount of destitution, and, strive as it may, the State can never provide against want as the circumstances of industry and national prosperity fluctuate.

In looking ahead, therefore, we must be prepared to combat that destitution when it falls unavoidably, through lack of employment, upon a man who may be the parent of several children. Even farther must we go, and make it easier for a working man to marry and bring up a family, for many men there are who do not marry because of the fluctuating condition of their employment.

Probably the only way in which the children can

be ensured against want, consequent upon the unemployment of the parent, is by fixing the minimum wage of the parent according to the number of children dependent upon him, with a grant during unemployment to the mother, sufficient to lend aid in maintaining these children. In addition, insurance against unemployment should be made compulsory to every working man who may be the parent of children.

Such a scheme may be beset with difficulty. But until the State realises that it is the guardian of every child born within the realm, and, whatever may happen to the parent, that child is part of the State's treasure chest, then the hideous night which enshrouds so much of our child life will remain unbroken.

§ 6

In conclusion, how shall we set about carrying out this enlightenment which is coming upon us in regard to child welfare? Plan as we may and strive we ever so hard, achievement will be beyond our grasp unless our motives are shaped and carried out by those who can think with the mind of a child. Better housing, better wages, better education are reformations with assured boundaries without the spirit of understanding, of sympathy to back them.

For this reason I again urge the creation of a Ministry of child welfare. No recording department based on governmental procedure, making leisured inquiry, issuing reports, a rather nebulous

concern in a reconstructive whole. But an active Ministry. A Ministry of men and women who think and can think as a child may think, which shall govern all children, not as an austere body, but as a parent, tender and understanding.

For to govern the childhood of To-morrow by the prescribed means of legislation is to place a child in a system and shape it according to that system. To-morrow it is the children who must shape the system. Consider how seldom in the past has a child been the principal figure in the commune of the House of Commons. Children have never had the legislation proportionate to their numerical share of the population.

But now those who would stem that vast havoc that stalks unhindered among the children of our cities carry in their hands all the national progress of To-morrow. They will only reach success by understanding the child. For years these destitute children have been buffeted about like derelicts on the sea of humanity, many of them to drift into the calm harbourage of Barnardoism. For years Barnardoism has stood to the slum child for what emancipation stood for to the American slaves. And I believe, I earnestly believe, that if Barnardoism were adopted and expanded as our national creed in dealing with the waifs of this huge social system which is Britain—if the ideals of Dr. Barnardo, the spirit and soul of this man, were carried far to the lowest corners of our cities, and the laws which he laid down, the great sympathy

which sprang from his heart, brought by the power of the nation to all the haunts of suffering childhood, then should we re-make our Youth in a generation. Let the State decide that Dr. Barnardo was one of the greatest pioneers in child welfare in the whole history of humanity; let it take to itself the full spirit of Barnardoism, and it will achieve.

Old State, you have been like a slothful giant that has slept. You have allowed those children which are your treasure, your substance, to slip through your fingers like water whilst you slept. The ceaseless cry of these children, this welter of suffering, have been to you no more than a petty irritation on the fringe of your day. A wisp of nightmare that passed while still you dreamed. And then something came prodding at you, stirring you, lazy fellow that you were, till you opened heavy eyes and found these children dying for you. You knew yourself then for the poor parent you had been. This Youth grown to maturity for which you had no care. And then something stirred in your old limbs, and the brain which had been slow and torpid took to itself a new activity, and you looked and saw your children of To-morrow herded and broken. Go down on your knees, old State, and thank the God who watched while you slept that the children for whom you had no thought were not found wanting. And make amends. Their children remain. And the chance is yours. The chance to let them grow up.

CHAPTER XIV

EPILOGUE

"We are all things that make and pass, striving upon some hidden mission out to the open sea."—H. G. WELLS.

So at the end of the trail I went back for the boy in the green blazer.

He appeared to stand out in my mind amidst all this welter of young life, this gradual development under the suns of the new chance. For, after all, he was the boy who had led me into the Garden of Youth, and further again to the discovery of the great miracle which those who knew and understood that most complex thing of God's imagining —the mind of a child—were bringing about.

The things I had seen, the ceaseless striving, the salving of young life in the lowest deeps of humanity, the whole fruition of a great system, bore me always back to his words: "I want to be an electrical engineer. . . . If only I could!"

Ambition is the romance of life; take it away and life is a mechanical going on. And the boy in the green blazer was worthy of his ambition.

* * * * * *

It was some time after this. The boy in the green blazer was sitting beside me at the roadside. We had finished our sandwiches, and he had just started on a green apple. His boots were white with

dust, and dust hung heavily in the folds of his blazer.

"Fred," I said, "do you remember the day we butted into each other at the turn of the road?"

He nodded and became busy with his apple.

"Remember what we said about engines?"

"Yes. I remember the engines."

"And 'things that went on their own'?"

He laughed at that.

"Fancy your remembering that! I'd forgotten it. But I'd seen it that way once. In a big factory. I told you about it. Great wheels going round and only sparks seeming to do it. I thought about it a lot."

"Hidden power," I said. "And it had caught you."

"I suppose it was that," he answered. He punished the apple badly. "I don't know. But I thought about it a lot."

I said no more for a while. He seemed to me so much like those wild untamable things he had imagined that "went on their own." The whole force of boyhood—a hidden power waiting to be tapped and used and turned to mighty ends. A force emerging from anywhere, lying dormant and waiting—waiting for wizard fingers that would turn it to move the great machine of State. A force that might have escaped uncaptured and spent itself in lethargy and idleness. And myriads more like him—waiting. Little human dynamos. All the great drifting driving-power that ought to be

massed and relegated, brought to its centre of utility, forcing, making things, passing on knowledge. . . .

"Wasting Youth. That's what we're doing. Wasting Youth!" I said aloud, as I followed the line of my thoughts.

He pitched the core of his apple across the road. Then he looked up at me.

"You talked jolly well about pirates," he said. "And Drake and *his* crew!"

"Mere plunderers!" I exclaimed. "We aren't plunderers."

He was thoughtful for a moment. He picked up a bit of stick from the hedge and began to push the ledge of dust from the welts of his boots.

"I don't know," he said. "I don't mean ships and exploring. Not that way. But digging into things—things here. I can't explain exactly. But I've thought sometimes that if we hadn't anything except electricity what we'd do with it—no horses, no steam, no coal or petrol or things we pick out of the earth. . . . Electricity always seemed to me a big adventure."

"It's everything to you boys," I answered. "It's the beginning of your earth. Drake and *his* crew—just fellows who waited for wind. And you're not going to wait for anything. You're on the verge of the great discovery, at the beginning of a new epoch they'll chalk up on the history slate as something tremendous. . . . You boys have got this new England in your hands. Like an egg.

And you'll crack it and find the meat when the old beggars we thought so much about, the O.M.s and degree-ed people, and high and mighty persons, would skate round the shell. You boys—it's all there waiting for you."

"I think so," he said. "And I want it to be like that. You gave me the chance. I told you I'd live and wait for it."

"'Not half!' you said. And I asked you to remember what we had talked about that day. Sitting there at Woodford. . . . And about getting your money after your first week's work."

"Which I got on Friday!"

"About my telling you that it *would* be electrical engineering."

"And I did remember it."

"Now you know. You're just starting. A bit of a boat setting out on the high seas of discovery. Since my generation was young the world has changed its skin. It's a funny old thing that has wobbled and is getting steady again. We're old men, my tribe; we're antediluvians. Stragglers who have missed the pace. But you are the pioneers of a fresh age, you boys. You're just going to wrap us up in your pockets and find us a new earth."

We got up then and plodded along the road, followed by a cloud of dust.

"Well, it's a great game!" said the boy in the green blazer.

"Life was always a great game," I answered.

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