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As we look at the bundle of letters lying before us similar to those already cited, full of gratitude for help given, we can only thank God, and hope that the increased services, house-to-house visitations, and mission-rooms established by the help of the Society, resulting as they are described in largely increased interest in spiritual things—in the increase of the number of baptisms, candidates for Confirmation, and attendants at the Holy Communion — may be still further supplemented a hundred-fold.

In times of distress and depression such as our country is now enduring, discontent with all its fellow-evils is rife amongst us; and it is worthy the consideration of all thoughtful and patriotic persons what steps are most necessary to leaven the masses with moral and religious principles. But to those who believe that the only cure for all our national sin and unhappiness is the spread of the Gospel, the subject has a claim not only of duty but of love.

It cannot be right that cases such as those above mentioned should meet with the constant answer from this and kindred Societies, "We are most willing, but quite unable to help you;" and we venture to think that it is only necessary to make our fellow-Churchmen aware of this constant cry for help to secure a ready and liberal response.

W. F. A. Archibald.

Art. V.—CLERICAL REMINISCENCES.

No. VI.—Little Mike.

THE life of a London "Arab," before the introduction of Board Schools, presented features of degradation which, from their extreme deformity, almost surpassed the boundaries of belief. From the earliest moment in which his surroundings could afford him the least opportunity for reflection, sin in its most repulsive aspects presented itself to his opening mind. He seldom, if ever, went to school. All day he wandered about the streets, always in company with boys similarly circumstanced; and at night, when he did not return home, he managed to find a resting-place sometimes in a low lodging-house, sometimes, if in the summer, in a snug corner of one of the parks, or under an archway, and sometimes in the inside of a "four-wheeler," which was regarded as a great luxury in the way of "apartments." His clothes were scanty, his food precarious, and his life a scene of almost endless variety in

vice. Along the public thoroughfares, in Oxford Street and Holborn, these wild boys picked up some "coppers" by keeping up with the omnibuses and performing the gymnastic exercise of "turning a windmill," as they termed the sidelong somersault of head-over-heels, on the footpath. Thieving whenever they could, and generally with a nimble dexterity, was their main source of existence, and consequently it was not surprising to find that they were frequently introduced, without their consent, to the experiences of prison-life.

Talk of young Arabs of the desert! why, I have seen them in their native villages far more civilized in every respect than our home-bred Arabs. The latter were young savages of the shrewdest type of civilization, idle, wild, and vicious; their clothes so tattered and torn, that if once off their body, it would require all the ingenuity of their preternaturally sharpened wit to put them on again. They generally slept in their rags. As a matter of course they had no acquaintance with soap and water. Their hands and faces were black with the dirt which had been deposited on them after a long period of incrustation. Parasites of several species infested their bodies, and altogether these wild waifs of civilization were as forbidding, if not more so, in their native element, as any tribe of savages on the face of the earth. I have wandered week after week among the Red Indians in the Western States of America, and I have partaken of their hospitality in their rude wigwams. I have also had very good opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Arab tribes in North Africa; but, whether it be among the children of the forest and the prairie, or among the original Arabs of the desert, there are no worse specimens of moral and physical degradation than those presented by the once neglected hordes of children in the heart of the most civilized city in the world.

I have the photographs of little Mike and six or seven of his "pals." The pictures speak for themselves; and as "the apparatus tells no lies," we have here an exhibition of ragged life for which I do not hesitate to say a parallel could hardly be found anywhere. The lot of "the noble savage" in the forest or the prairie is superior in many respects to that of these "children of the gutter," cradled within the circle of civilization. The latter are, or were, extremely demoralized. In their appetites and passions, in their predatory habits and pursuits, in their acquired love of mischief, in the utter disregard of truth, in their ignorance of religion of any kind they could sink no lower. And when it is borne in mind that such degradation had arisen while these boys were still, many of them, under their "teens"—at ten, eleven, and twelve years old—and that even at such an early age they had been inmates

of prisons again and again, it is unnecessary to say that these juvenile specimens of the London heathen presented few, if any, traces of superiority over the wildest tribes in the most remote quarters of the world.

Mike, the boy who forms the subject of this sketch, was thirteen times in gaol before he was twelve years old—a fact which I did not accept upon his unsupported testimony, but by reference to the entries in the prison books. A large proportion of these waifs and strays were what was termed "Irish Cockneys"—that is, the children of Irish parents, born in London. They inherited the natural sharpness of their Celtic ancestors, but they acquired, with fatal facility, the bad qualities of their adopted countrymen. Their ready wit was exercised not ill-humouredly on the police, whom they instinctively regarded as their natural enemies, and, to do the latter full justice, they were not slow in acts of official reprisals. These boys did not look upon "Bobby," as they familiarly called him, with feelings of personal hostility. They were of course wise enough to know, in their own slang language, that "he who prigs what isn't his'n, when he's cotched must go to pris'n." They did not blame the policeman for doing his duty, and showed him no ill-will for it. The chief strategic point in this perpetual warfare between these Arab boys and the guardians of the law, was to keep as clear as possible of the "perlice," and to "bolt" whenever they saw any of them making their approach. Every one of these boys was known to the authorities, but their astute and ready resources, especially residing in their heels, enabled them to "move on" whenever a constable appeared upon the scene. "If you please, Mr. Perliceman, it wasn't I, but the other boy, that did it," was the ordinary form of excuse given by the least swift-footed of the gang.

"Little Mike" was born in 1842, of Irish parents, in London. His father was a tailor, who lived in Lisson Grove. There were four children—one boy, Mike, and three girls. I first made his acquaintance in the year 1854, when he was a little over twelve years of age, and under the following circumstances. One day when visiting in Portland Town, a part of the parish where I was then curate, close by the Regent's Park, my attention was attracted by four ragged boys scrambling and fighting for the possession of some carrots and turnips which had been put by a greengrocer in Henry Street outside his shop, in a basket containing refuse vegetables. Little Mike was one of these four boys, and though not the oldest or the biggest, he was unquestionably the most pugnacious. Their preoccupation over this "scrimmage" had prevented them from noticing a policeman, who came upon them unawares. Three of them managed to get away, but Mike was kept a prisoner. Watching

his opportunity, he slipped adroitly out of the hands of his captor, and made off, leaving his cap behind him.

"Who are those boys, constable?"

"They are four of the greatest young vagabonds in all this district, sir—a perfect pest to the neighbourhood. As for that young rascal to whom this cap belongs, he is a regular thief, and is well known to the police, and he has been I don't know how many times in almost every gaol in London."

A gentleman who was with me remarked: "What could you do with such a hopeless case as that?" I replied: "It seems hard, certainly; but suppose we try. Let us go to him and give him his cap." Seeing us approach, he got behind a wall, where we found him crouching down when we came up. I said, "Take your cap, my boy." But the lad replied, "Chuck it down," while he covered each ear with the back of his hands transversely—the right hand covering the left ear, and the left hand covering the right, the palms being outside. This was the usual position in which he prepared to receive any unlooked-for attack from a too powerful adversary.

"Won't you take your cap?"

"No; I don't want to. Throw it on the ground, guv'nor."

While this scene was being enacted, his companions, or "pals," as they called each other, joined him, and, on seeing himself thus reinforced by his mates, he took courage, and became somewhat personal in his remarks.

"I know who ye chaps are," he observed, looking sharply at my friend and me. "I knows your little game; but you don't go for me. Ye are in with the Bobbies. All right, 'Square-tops,' I knows ye. Have ye got a copper to give us?"

"No; I'll not give you money; but if you four boys will come up to my house to-morrow morning, at 8.30, I'll give you all a good breakfast."

I gave them my address, and told them who I was. Mike, addressing his companions, said: "Here's a lark! The guv'nor wants us to have a feed with him to-morrow! What a go! *Walker!*" I then turned away with my friend. After going a hundred yards or so we looked back, and observed the boys evidently engaged in council as to the course they should adopt.

Next morning, at the time appointed, they presented themselves at the hall door. Four more ragged little urchins it would have been hard to have found anywhere. The servant having informed me that some street boys were at the door, wanting to see me, I went out to them; and after a few friendly words in the hall, I ordered them to have their breakfast downstairs in the housekeeper's room or in the kitchen. I was reckoning, however, without my host, for the cook came

upstairs in a state of nervous agitation at the idea of allowing "such riff-raff" into the house. After hearing from me what I wanted her to do, as regarded their breakfast, she said:

"You are not aware of the kind of boys these are, sir. They are the terror of all respectable people in Portland Town; and it is unwise to let such young imps into the house at all—it is like bringing a den of thieves about the place—they'll steal the forks and spoons, and anything they can lay their hands upon! and besides, sir, they are so filthy and ragged."

Experience teaches that it is no part of wisdom to enter into argument with a woman if she is determined to have her way. Far better to yield at the beginning, and to do so graciously. There is generally a fair amount of good sense in a woman's judgment, though she may not be able to give her reasons for arriving at it. Right as to the result, but wrong as to the reasons, generally speaking, is what one notices on such occasions. Accordingly, I compromised matters by suggesting that four kitchen chairs should be placed in the hall, to act as so many tables for my four ungainly guests. Meanwhile they remained with me until a substantial breakfast made its appearance, each boy having his separate table and his own portion of food.

After my young guests had partaken of their breakfast, which they enjoyed with an unmistakable relish, I found them more disposed to enter into conversation. It appeared, assuming that they spoke truly, that each boy, except Mike, had a father and mother living in or about Lisson Grove, engaged in some small trade, too limited to do more than keep them from the workhouse. The boys had been allowed to go where they pleased, and to do what they liked, according to the bent of their own sweet will—anyhow, or anywhere. For such, London has many dangerous attractions. There is always a gang of young marauders who are ready to accept recruits into their ranks, if only they are of the stuff of which these incipient desperadoes are made. Accordingly these four belonged to a nest of thieves, with whom they co-operated from time to time in various ways in which such daring young spirits could assist them.

Of these four boys Mike had the largest experience in crime. Thirteen times in gaol seems incredible for a boy before he was twelve years old. Yet such was the fact. One time he was imprisoned for stealing a pair of boots, another time for stealing a loaf of bread, another time for robbing the "till" in a small shop, and so on. The petty larcenies in which he was found out bore no adequate proportion to those in which he was successful with impunity. He used to say that for once he was found out, he succeeded in carrying off the plunder at

least five times, so that the immunity from detection emboldened him to continue his career of vice so soon as he was liberated from prison. But although he had become an outcast, and almost an outlaw, still there was a soft spot in Mike's heart which his expression of countenance betokened. There was, in spite of all his devilment, a genial look about him. Judging from his open, boyish face, no one could ever have imagined that he could be such a young scapegrace. He had, at times, a look of simplicity, and an expression of genuine good-nature, notwithstanding all the associations of wickedness with which he had been so long conversant. As he stood before me in rags, and filth, and wretchedness, I could not help liking the little fellow. There was something or other which unconsciously conveyed the impression that down at the bottom of his heart there was some good-nature, if only it could be got at. I selected Mike out of the four, and I told him that if he wished to remain with me I should take care of him, send him to school, give him a trade, and make a man of him. He did not believe me. It seemed to him unreal—too good to be true; and, still suspecting "some dodge," as he called it, he went away, promising that he would call on me again to-morrow morning.

Mike had stated that he had not seen his father or mother for more than three years—he believed they were dead. They used to beat him unmercifully; and at last their treatment became so cruel that he ran away, after his father had almost killed him by striking him with the "board," such as tailors use in their trade. He had three sisters, all older than himself. The eldest fifteen, the second thirteen, and the third eleven, when he left home. The two eldest girls always joined with their parents in the severity which made Mike's life so miserable under his father's roof, but the youngest sister, Norah, always showed him great kindness, and was really fond of her brother.

At nine o'clock next morning a policeman called upon me, to say that "one of those boys, who was at your house yesterday, is now in the lock-up, at Marylebone Station, and will be brought before the magistrates at half-past ten this morning."

"Of what has he been guilty?"

"For being on the premises of a cab-proprietor during the night, without being able to give a good account of himself."

"But what has he done?"

"He was found asleep in the inside of a cab in the owner's yard, at three o'clock this morning. He is a suspicious character, and he could not account for his being in such a place at such a time."

"Why have you called on me?"

"The boy asked me to go to the gentleman and let him know that he could not come to him this morning as he had promised, and as I was going round to the station I thought you might like to know."

"What is your opinion of him, constable?"

"The most incorrigible young scamp in all Portland Town, sir. He is a regular thief—lives half his time in gaol—no sooner out than in again."

At a few minutes past ten I was at the Court House, and when the case of Mike was called on, I asked the magistrate if I might say a few words. Having got permission, I said:

"Your worship, it was only yesterday that I offered to take care of this boy, whom I found, accidentally, wandering about the streets. He promised to call on me this morning at nine o'clock, and having no home he got into a cab, standing at night in the proprietor's yard, and he was found fast asleep there by the constable on duty this morning at three o'clock, and he is now charged for trespassing on the premises."

Magistrate—"Is that the only charge you have against this boy, constable?"

Constable—"That is all, your worship."

Magistrate—"I think that under those circumstances, as this gentleman has promised to look after him, I may discharge the prisoner. Otherwise I should have sent him to gaol for a month."

I told the magistrate that I was afraid his companions were waiting outside the court, and if he were to go now, I might not see him again; that I wanted to get him some clothes at an outfitter's in Edgware Road, and as I could not be there before two o'clock, I should be glad if the boy were kept in the station till I could call for him. The magistrate replied that he would have the boy kept there till two, and that a constable should take him to meet me at the address in Edgware Road.

Accordingly, we met at the outfitter's shop—"Groves'." It would be impossible to convey anything like a true description of the figure Mike presented on entering the shop. Seeing the policeman, the boy, and me all coming in together, curiosity was excited, and indeed no wonder. We soon got into a quiet nook, and began to select the outfit. The first thing which struck me as somewhat amusing was the keen criticism which Mike passed on the various garments presented for our choice. Considering that he had nothing but a bundle of rags hanging in shreds all round him, and fastened by pieces of twine and pins, it was strange to notice how hard it was to please him as to style and pattern. Another thing also surprised me, and that was the complete change in his entire bearing from the moment that he realized his new position. He felt no longer

any suspicion about me or my motives, and suddenly casting aside all his reserve, he came out quite frankly, and in a natural and pleasant manner. When the outfit was complete, it was necessary, for obvious reasons, that Mike should not put on his clothes until he had passed through a careful process of soap and water. Accordingly I had all the outfit packed up, put into a cab, and off we drove to the public baths in Stingo Lane. When Mike was in his bath—the first, he told me, he had for years—I asked the attendant to take away the old rags, and if he were wise, to have them burned. In about half an hour, Mike sent me word that he was ready to dress. I had the clothes taken in, and he began to undergo the transformation scene. It was very pleasant to watch his altered manner. He examined every garment with wondering gaze, and as he put them on, he stood upon a table before a large looking-glass, with delight in his eyes and joy in his heart. One by one, his garments were being duly arranged, until at last he gave the finishing-touch to his necktie, and turning to me with a clean and shining face, he remarked:

"I think now, sir, the dogs won't know me." It was worth anything to watch the new sensation of delight and surprise which insensibly stole over Mike's features. With his new face, and his new clothes, he really looked quite another boy —and by no means an unprepossessing boy. "The Bobbies, sir, in Portland Town, won't know me now. What a go this is, sir! Will you walk with me through the streets on our way back, sir?"

"Certainly, Mike; by all means."

"Then we'll have fun, sir, I can tell you."

Home we returned, Mike becoming very communicative. Just as we were coming up to the door, he said: "I think Cooky won't mind my going into the kitchen now, sir."

True enough, when we got in I sent for her, and said that there was a young lad whom I wanted her to take care of, and get him something to eat. At first she did not recognise him, and addressing Mike kindly, asked him to go with her. After a few seconds, she exclaimed:

"Why, there, I do believe that this is the same boy who had his breakfast here the other morning! Well, now, surely he is the same lad, isn't he, sir?"

"Yes; the same, and yet not the same. You need have no fear now of the forks and spoons; take him, and look after him."

The cook was a kind woman, but cautious in her estimate of my young friend. Still, he looked so clean, so cheerful, and almost shy, that the cook overcame her scruples, and led him downstairs.

The changed demeanour of Mike was what struck me most of all. From being sullen and rude, he became open-hearted, truthful, and as polite and kindly-spoken as he possibly could be; and this, too, in the space of a few days. His shrewd powers of perception very soon convinced Mike that he was among friends, and, instantly laying aside his defensive tactics, he allowed the long-disused portion of his better nature to come to the surface, and be seen. From that day, Mike became very tenderly attached to me. He was ever on the look-out to show his gratitude by many little attentions, all the more pleasing because of the suddenness of their development. The servants, too, relaxed their pardonable suspicions, and even the cook herself was forced to admit that "she never saw a better-behaved boy, nor one who was so obliging in every way."

By day he attended the National School of the parish, and at night he lodged with the sexton and his wife. The spare hours when not at school he spent in my house. One day, I came upon him somewhat suddenly as he was sitting alone in the housekeeper's room, with his head and arms resting on the table. He had not heard me coming, and I was pained and surprised at seeing him look so sad, and as if he had been crying.

"Hallo! Mike, my boy, what's up now?"

"Oh, sir, I didn't know you was here. Nothing, sir; only I've been just a-thinking what a bad boy I've been all these years—and all the lies I have been telling—and all the times I have been in gaol; and I have been thinking how I have been deceiving you, and you don't know how wicked I am—and it's the kindness that makes me cry, sir."

"Come, come, Mike," I replied, "that won't do; you must cheer up—you must try and forget the past, Pray to God, and ask Him to make you good for the time to come."

He then told me about his companions, and their ways.

"I soon began to be as bad as they were. I used to steal things out of the shops; and after a while I would join them in robbing the 'tills.' I had to do it, sir, or the fellows would have beat me."

"How did you manage to get at the 'tills,' and people going in and out of the shops?"

"It was like this, sir. In Lisson Grove and thereabouts there are several shops kept by old ladies, and they do be sitting in the inside parlour of a winter's evening when it be's cold. The door is half of it like a window in the top part, and they do keep it shut, and they can see through into the shop when a customer comes in. These old ladies do be knitting or reading,

and we would have three or four boys on the watch, at the shop-doors in the street, to see if any of the old ladies would go to sleep over the book they was reading, and then the boy would give a whistle which we all knew. Then, as I was the smallest boy, I had to crawl in on my hands and feet and go round to the 'till' and rob it, or anything I could get hold of."

"But would not the noise wake up the woman?"

"No, sir; I used to put indian-rubber shoes on my feet, and I could walk just like a cat."

"Were you never found out?"

"Yes, sir; it was for trying to rob a 'till' this way that I first got into trouble with the police."

"How old were you when you first went to gaol?"

"I was about ten years old, sir. The other boys used to call me 'The Crawler,' because I could crawl into the shops so nicely without being heard—because I had on the indian-rubbers."

Having ascertained that Mike had parents living, and that it was more than three years since he had seen them, I proposed that we should go and call on them. He consented, and gave me their address. It was arranged that we should go the next day. Accordingly I called a cab, and off we went together. I told Mike to remain in the cab when we arrived at the house of his parents, and that I should go up first and speak to them. Having found the house—a very small one, in Exeter Street, Lisson Grove, as was indicated to me by Mike—I went up, and on the second-floor front I knocked at the door. It was opened by a woman who seemed to be about forty years old. I inquired if a man of the name of Thornton lived there; and having been answered in the affirmative, I asked if I might see him.

"There is Mr. Thornton, sir," said the woman, pointing to a man sitting tailor-fashion on a long table, engaged at his work. His wife had some cloth in her hand, and before I appeared she had been sewing. Apologizing for my sudden intrusion, I explained the object of my visit.

"I have called to know whether any such persons lived here or not, and the reason I will briefly state. Before doing so, may I be permitted to ask, How many children have you?"

"Three, sir," was the prompt reply. After a short pause the woman added: "We had four—but now there are only three. We had another—a little boy—and he went away from us more than three years ago, and I've heard that he is as good as dead."

"What do you mean by saying 'as good as dead'?"

"We were told that he was taken up by the police, and was put into prison; and we never heard anything of him these

three years. We couldn't manage him at all, at all; he wouldn't go to school, and he was always keeping bad company. One day his father gave him a beating, and he ran away from home, and we have never seen anything of him since."

"Would you know him, do you think, if you were to see him?"

"Oh! yes, sir; of course I would."

Before leaving the cab, I had arranged with Mike that he was not to stir till I whistled for him, and then he was to come up without delay. Accordingly I opened the window, and gave the signal, without saying a word to either the father or the mother. In a few seconds the door opened, and in walked Mike. He looked shy and indifferent, and said nothing. Looking at his mother, I said: "Is that your son?" At first his parents did not seem to recognise him, but after a while the mother said: "Sure enough that's Mike." She then went up to him and kissed him. The father got off his table, and in his turn approached his son, kissed him, and said: "Bedad, Mike, is it yourself that I see before me? And it is us that are glad to see you back again. Where have you been, and what have you been doing all this long while past, asthore?"

Mike said nothing yet. He fiddled with his cap, kept his eyes fixed on the ground, looked embarrassed and sheepish. Presently his eldest sister came into the room, a girl about eighteen years of age. She threw her arms round his neck, and uttered some words of welcome. It seemed strange to me that Mike was not impressed by any of these tokens of affection. I was surprised and disappointed at his stolid indifference. A few minutes later a younger sister came in, and when she saw her brother, she ran to him with her arms wide open, and, folding them wildly round his neck, kissed him again and again, sobbing and crying bitterly. Then she broke out, and said: "Oh! Mikey dear, my own Mikey! and have you come back to us?" This was too much for Mike. Down dropped his cap from his hands. He threw his arms round his sister's neck, and cried in real earnest. There they stood with their arms round each other's neck. Then the father and mother began to cry. We all cried a bit. I ended the scene by telling the parents that I had found their son by accident, and I was glad to be able to bring him home again. I then said to Mike that I should leave him there for the present, and I suggested that they should celebrate the young prodigal's return by a good dinner, and furnishing the needful supplies, I returned to the cab, and drove home.

Next day at half-past twelve o'clock Mike called, having been at school as usual at nine o'clock. He gave me a grand account of the evening at home—the first after a more than

three years' absence. It was a very happy meeting. To do his parents justice, they uttered no words of reproach. They were over-joyed to see their son, who had been lost and was found, and they made merry and were glad. He continued to sleep at home, and dined every day with me. This went on for a few months, when I began to think that perhaps Mike would be better if he were learning some trade and attending the night school in the evenings. I asked him what trade he liked best.

"A sailor, sir; I would like to go to sea."

He was now over thirteen years of age, and so I thought he would do well for a cabin-boy; but he was under-sized for his age, and looked unfit for sea-life. The following Saturday we went to the London Docks, and we applied to captain after captain, but to no purpose. One of them said with a grin:

"You had better send his mother with him to keep him in bread and milk."

We had to return home disappointed. A few days afterwards we started for the St. Katharine Docks, and though we boarded about twenty ships, there was no vacancy for a cabin-boy. And a second time we returned, having discovered nothing. I then applied to my friend Mr. Tebbs, of Highgate, told him my case, and what I wanted. Through his kindness I had a letter of introduction to a friend of his in Leadenhall Street, a ship-owner, and in a few days Mike and I started off to see him. I presented the letter, and I was soon ushered into the private room of the head of the firm. After some preliminary observations, he inquired if the boy had accompanied me. Mike was called in, and the gentleman said:

"Well, my lad, do you want to go to sea?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will have rough work, you know, and you are not very strong."

"I like work, sir, and I can work better than I looks."

"Well," said this gentleman, "I think there is a ship at Ipswich, the *Tam o' Shanter*, bound for Taganrog, in the Black Sea, and it is possible the captain may want a cabin-boy. I will inquire, and you shall hear from me in a few days."

So home we came again, this time with more hopeful anticipations than after our two former experiences. After the delay of a week, I received a letter in which the boy was ordered to go immediately to Ipswich, and to present himself to the captain of the ship already named. After breakfast we went to an outfitter's, and rigged up Master Mike in full sailor costume, everything included.

Next day, Mike took leave of his father and mother, who were glad and sorry at his departure. They knew that London

was no place for him, and that the life of a sailor would have the effect of getting rid of his former associations. The following morning, before starting, Mike looked very depressed—quite out of spirits; and after a little while he came to me and said:

"I hope, sir, you'll let me have your likeness, that I may take it away with me to sea."

"Certainly, Mike. We shall go at once, and you must have yours taken at the same time."

So off we went, had the photographs taken, and spent the remainder of the day going about and showing Mike some of the London sights. That evening, when he was in my study, the poor boy, with tears in his eyes, said: "I'll be lonesome enough, sir, on the big ocean; but I hope you'll often think of me. Oh! you don't know how sorry I am in my heart, going away from you."

Having given him some good advice, and exacted from him a promise to read every day some portion of his Bible, and to pray some of the little prayers I gave him, we knelt down together for the last time. It was getting late, and we were obliged to start very early next morning, so as to arrive in Ipswich by eleven o'clock. Before he went to bed, I had the following conversation with him:

"Mike, tell me, how was it that you were first led to pick ladies' pockets, as I understood you to say the other day?"

"Pick ladies' pockets, sir! Oh no, sir! I never was so bad as that. How could I be so wicked, sir?"

"Well, but you robbed the 'tills,' didn't you?"

"Oh yes, sir; but then I didn't rob them for myself. I had to do it, or the other chaps would beat me. I never went about to pick pockets, sir; that is what only the regular thieves do."

"But did you not steal boots and bread?"

"Yes, sir; I wanted the boots to put on my feet, for I had nothing to wear; and I wanted the bread to eat, for I used to be at times dying with hunger."

"Then you never were with any gang of burglars, or other men of that kind?"

"Oh no, sir! I only went about with a lot of more boys older than myself, and we used to go about the shops and places when we had a chance. Most of the time I was in gaol was for stealing small things out of the boxes outside the shops. There used to be constables in plain clothes dodging about and watching us, and whenever I bolted off the constable would give chase and pin me before I went very far."

It was curious to notice the delicate shades of distinction which Mike drew between the different forms of robbery. Yet, he really felt distressed at the idea of being suspected of

engaging in such a low pursuit as that of picking pockets—an occupation, in his notion of things, belonging only to the worst class of thieves.

Next morning we left home. On the way to the station Mike cried bitterly, and nothing that I could say to him seemed to pacify him. I confess that I was astonished to witness so much affection in a boy whose life never had any sunshine, and to whom "home" and "father" and "mother" were unknown experiences, at least so far as the emotions of the heart were concerned. Everyone who became acquainted with Mike after his coming under my notice was greatly pleased with him. The ladies in the parish used to have him now and then to spend the evening with the servants, whom he greatly amused with his Irish drollery and humour. He was a very affectionate boy, and, what is not very common, most grateful for what had been done for him.

We arrived in due time at Ipswich. We soon found our way to the ship, and introduced ourselves to the captain, a kind-hearted man, bluff and sailor-like. After a few minutes' conversation he asked me to "go below with the boy" before I left. When we were alone poor Mike fairly broke down, and wept like a child—for indeed he had the heart of one, in spite of all the hardening experiences of his life. He kept crying, till I had to remind him that if any of the sailors were to see him, they would never give him any rest on the voyage, laughing at him and so forth,

"I can't help it, sir; it's the kindness that makes me cry—and who will be kind to me any more?"

Poor boy! my own heart was full when parting from him, and it would have been more than full had I then known that I was never to see him again on earth. The *Tam o'Shanter* sailed to Taganrog, where it arrived in safety. After discharging her cargo, she took another of grain, I think, and sailed to Galway, on the west coast of Ireland.

Now, if this narrative were to appear in a novel, no one would believe it possible that a wild, ragged boy, accidentally picked up in the streets of London, should *par la force des circonstances*, first go away to the very East of Europe, and then go back to the very West of Europe—to the very town where my own friends, dearest and most loved, were living—and that this boy should die, carefully tended up to his last hours by the loving attention of the wife of the Warden of Galway—the Very Rev. James Daly. Yet such is the fact—stranger than any fiction. When I heard that the *Tam O'Shanter* was bound for the port of Galway, I wrote to Mrs. Daly, and asked her to allow Mike to call on her. She knew his history from me previously. Accordingly, when the

ship arrived, about Christmas, Mike soon found that he had friends on shore, who asked leave from his captain to allow him to spend an evening now and then with the servants. Mike danced hornpipes for them, told them yarns, and kept them in good-humour by his funny stories. All was very pleasant, and everything seemed just what one would like to be. However, there is nothing more certain than the unexpected. A few days after he had been at the Warden's house, Mike was engaged one day in helping to unlade the ship. He was very tired, and as the ship lay in the docks, he went on to the quay, and walked about. Being quite done up, he soon fell asleep, and when he awoke he felt ill and unable hardly to get back to the ship. Next day he had to go to the fever hospital, where he was visited by my wife's aunt—Mrs. Daly—and, in spite of all that kindness and skill could do, poor Mike, after all his wanderings and chequered experience, breathed his last in a hospital in a port in the far west of Ireland.

The moral of the whole case is plain enough. There are children among the poor, who from neglect and harsh treatment are driven from home, and from sheer force of sympathy join with others of the "criminal" class, who soon educate them in the ways of vice. If only they could be adopted by some one who might be able to surround them with "home" influences, their lives might be made happy, and their career in guilt cut short. But it must be personal and individual sympathy. It will not do so much good to send such a boy to a reformatory, though of course that is excellent in its way, and I should be sorry to say a single word against such places for recovery. Still, it is not the best plan for all cases. There are training ships at Liverpool and on the Thames, and several reformatories. In these a lad has every facility for recovering lost ground. I should be sorry to leave my readers under the impression that I disparage these admirable organizations. They are good, and very good, but the softening charms of home-life are not—and from the very nature of the case cannot be—brought to bear upon these young outcasts in any public institution, no matter how well conducted it may be. Unless the waif and stray feels something of the instincts of home and its loving associations, the better part of his nature is not called forth. The heart-culture does not go on to the same extent as when the boy feels the warm grasp of a loving hand, and the kind and cheery influences of fellow-feeling. The electrical influence of heart and face and voice tell their own tale, and unconsciously exercise their power on those who come within their reach. "I was a stranger, and you took me in." The personal patronage of

these waifs and strays is apparently superior to any system of reformatory routine, however excellent, and even necessary under existing circumstances. All I contend for is simply this—the boy or girl who may become an outcast from home, from whatever cause, is more likely to be softened into gentleness and gratitude and love by being adopted into some family, and cared for as if he or she were part of the household, than if they were provided for under the strict discipline and barrack regulation of any public institution, however good. It is not that I like these refuges less, but that I like the former plan more.

G. W. WELDON.

ART. VI. — PRIVATE JUDGMENT: ITS SCOPE AND LIMITS.

THE right of Private Judgment in matters of belief is, to some extent, pretty generally admitted. It inheres in our moral constitution; it follows from that liberty of choice or free-will which distinguishes mankind from the lower orders of created life. Why should we be denied the exercise of our reason upon the worthiest and noblest of all subjects, religious truth? In the world of nature there is a perfect correspondence between our organs of vision and the light of the sun. Is there not as undoubted a correlation between reason, the eye of the soul, and the light of Divine truth?

The very existence of faculties whereby men reason upon that truth, proves the indefeasible right of exerting them, just as truly as to have been born with eyes, confers upon the individual the right to see. The eye has to be trained, and so become adjusted to objects about it. In many cases it is defective. We do not, therefore, bandage every man's eyes or put spectacles upon him because these are required by certain persons. The maxim *Abusus non tollit usum* obtains here. Persons have grievously abused their right of private judgment; it does not follow that they should be deprived of it. It would be safer to infer, that the faculty for forming such judgments imposes upon them the duty of using it. In the great day of account, the servant who wraps his talent in a napkin and buries it in the earth, will be found to fare no better than he who shall have appropriated or misused his Lord's goods.