

LITTLE HARRY.

ONE dark and dreary morning in the winter of 1862, after settling her household affairs for the day, a lady left her own dear children and comfortable fireside, on an errand of mercy to a poor family, living in one of those wretched suburbs of the great city of London, where men and women go to hide themselves from the eyes of the world, thinking they may there indulge their vicious habits without being seen; though they forget "There is an eye which never sleeps," from which they cannot escape, and that their wicked doings will be brought against them on that great day when God shall judge the world, unless they flee for refuge to Him whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin. A cold drizzling rain was falling, but the lady, drawing her waterproof cloak closer around her, was resolved that nothing should prevent her from paying her promised visit. At the bottom of the hill she entered the narrow lane leading to the hamlet where the brickmakers and the pig-feeders lived. Making her way through the mud with some trouble, she passed the three beer-shops at the farther end (now crowded with ranting, swearing men, aye and women too, who could not work at making bricks on account of the wet), and turning down a side street she shortly reached a pile of old houses with hundreds of pigs in their styes all around them. The stench was almost more than she could bear, but the love of Christ and a longing desire to rescue poor souls from ruin urged her on. As she passed one of these wretched dwellings her steps were suddenly arrested by a sight which made her heart ache. Huddled together in the doorway lay about twenty ragged children, of from two to six or seven years of age, who had crept close for warmth and shelter from the rain. "Where is your mother?" said the lady kindly to one of them. "Mother's gone out," was the tearful reply; the same answer was received from most of these poor children, and father too said some of them. In all probability they were at the beer-shops just passed, and their poor little starving children would see nothing of them till they staggered home drunk in the evening, when they would run into any corner to hide for fear of a beating. Deeply grieved at this utter neglect of the poor little things, the lady gave them each a pic-nic biscuit (she used to

carry some of these in her pocket to quiet the babies at the mothers' meetings), and passed on to the house where she was going. On her way home the thought came into her mind, "O, could we but get a room in one of those old houses and make a decent schoolroom of it, what a blessing it would be to those poor little outcasts." With her to think was to resolve to act, and in the course of a few days a room was hired for the purpose, with permission to alter it in any way she pleased. Carpenters, plasterers, and others were soon set to work, and by a judicious expenditure of about £10, in about a fortnight's time the room was quite different from what it had been; it was now well painted and papered, with a window at each end, and a nice ventilator through the roof, and though it was somewhat difficult to get up the narrow staircase which led up to it, still it was clean. Little infants' forms and books, and a washing place with towel and soap, were also provided, and, best of all, one of our beloved city missionary's daughters, with an earnest, loving spirit and longing desire to "bring the little children to Jesus" that He might bless them, was engaged as their teacher. During the time spent in arranging all these things, the mothers around had been asked if they would send their children to school, they all said they would be very glad; however, the room would only hold forty, so forty were chosen out of the large number that were brought, and the school began. I shall pass over all about the trouble the teacher had in making them behave as they ought to do, then to teach them to read, and learn verses out of the Bible, and pretty hymns which she taught them to sing, and told them the meaning of, and tell you about one little boy who was one of the first who were chosen. His poor mother led a sad life, for her husband would take almost all his wages to the public-house, leaving her nearly starving at home with the younger children. He would often take little Harry, the eldest, with him to the public-house, stand him on the table and teach him to drink, and say wicked words in order to amuse himself and those who were drinking with him. His mother, however, told him he must go to school now. Harry, who was seven years old, did not like going to school, he had been so used to have his

own way and play about the streets, that he kicked and struggled when his mother brought him; fortunately she insisted on his staying there. He was very sullen when the teacher asked him any question, and with some of the naughty words he had learnt at the public-house said, "None o' that sort for me." For some days little else but this could be got from him, but the gentle, winning ways of his teacher, and the sweet voices of the little children round him as they sang "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," and Miss P. kindly telling them the meaning of all the words, of how God so loved the world that He gave His well-beloved Son to suffer and die for sinners, and of how the mothers brought their dear little children to Jesus, quite softened the heart of little Harry, creeping up to the teacher and gently taking hold of her dress, and looking up into her countenance (which was beaming with love towards her little flock), with wondering, tearful eyes, he said quietly, "Teacher, I does love you." She stooped down, and with a soft kiss sealed his affection, and from that happy moment little Harry was as tractable and as anxious to learn as she could possibly desire. After he became familiar with the other children, he was very fond of telling them what he would do when he "grow'd up to be a man." His teacher told him that he might not live to be a man. His reply was, "Ah, teacher, but I ain't a goin' to die yet, though." Harry was not very quick at learning, but the love he had for his kind teacher made him very attentive, and he very soon learned several hymns and verses out of the Bible. One little hymn he was very fond of, and when at home taught his little brothers and sisters to sing it; this was "I want to be an angel." He was also very fond of repeating two verses, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come," and "Enter ye in at

the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." From being the most unruly child in the school he became, in the course of six months, one of the best behaved and most attentive to the lessons. One day when he went home at dinner time his father said he would give him a treat and take him to the public-house, when Harry said, with great spirit, "No, father, I don't want to go there no more. Teacher told me those was wicked words I learnt there, and I've left off saying on 'em, and so I shan't say 'em no more, and shan't drink no more beer, and teacher says she'll take me to the Band of Hope." His father had sense enough left to admire the moral courage of his little boy, so he allowed him to go to school instead of taking him the road to ruin, and did not trouble him with another invitation. Although his father was earning good wages, little Harry would frequently have only a few dry crusts of bread to eat, which had been bought with the hard earnings of his poor mother from the pig-feeders who buy the wash and broken victuals at the houses of the great. He seemed, however, to be content with this hard fare, and would often stop and take care of the children who remained throughs out the day at the schoolroom. He was very kind to them, and would share his crust with those who had none. Twelve months rolled on, and so entirely changed was Harry, both in person and conduct, that no one who had known him before could have taken him to be the same child. He loved the Scripture lessons more than any others, and seemed quite to understand why Jesus came down from heaven to dwell amongst men. One day he said, "Ah, I means to get a new heart;" and being asked how he meant to get it, he replied, "Why, pray for it till I get it to be sure. Ah, that's it; I'll get a new heart."

(To be concluded in our next.)

HEYROD-STREET RAGGED SCHOOL REPORT, 1864.—A very large proportion of the cases of destitution coming under the notice of the committee were found to be caused, not by deficiency of income, but by drunkenness and imprudence.

The Rev. W. R. Keeling, Rector of Blackley, lately said, "I do not know a single case, during my ministry of nearly 27 years in this parish, where professing Christians, who at one time gave evidence of sincerity by their consistent, zealous working, but have fallen, and become apostates from the truth—where drink has not been the chief if not the sole cause of it."

R. Fowler, Esq., Stipendiary of Manchester, recently remarked that almost every case which came into that court had its origin in drink.