

Oriel's chief treasure in old plate was its founder's cup in silver gilt, nine feet in height, with six lips and the letter E, for King Edward II. (by whom the cup was presented in the fourteenth century), engraved in different compartments. Here would be a fine prize for the Philistines, with Hall Royal stripped of its crowning distinction. Perhaps Master Oliver, though he was said to have some regard for books, might confiscate it to serve for his own beaker.

Neither the provost nor the college

butler could venture to act in the matter; but they could connive at the desperate deed of Dr. Peter Dacre, who was going forth from England across the high seas, and would be beyond the reach of general or Parliament to call him to account for this night's proceeding.

When the college, with two exceptions, was sound asleep, as the depredators trusted, Kitty, trembling a little at the long shadows which all but swallowed up the little light of the lamp she held, stood by while her father, with

the butler's key, unlocked the college plate chest, abstracted what he wanted, and bore it to the Dacres' parlour. There behind a panel, loosened for the purpose, was hid the beautiful cup which was found after many days.

Kitty and Dr. Peter were not the only treasure-hiders in Oxford in those troublous times. Many a valued heirloom which had survived the King's requisitions, and a good deal of college property, were thus disposed of.

(To be concluded.)

OUR LITTLE CHILDREN.



we were asked to state the most impossible thing to happen in a civilised country, we should probably, without hesitation, say, cruelty to little children.

Cruelty to the little ones, who are of all creatures the most utterly helpless, who have no voice to complain, no strength to wield in their own defence, whose only refuge is in the parents' love and devotion—cruelty to these surely would be quite impossible.

Evidently this has been the firm belief of legislators in all parts of the world, for there is no law in existence for the punishment of such a crime. No one would believe that any members of the human family, however savage or uncontrolled, would be found wantonly to inflict torture upon their own babes.

It is for this favoured land, this highly civilised age, to prove the fallacy of such a belief, and to show, moreover, that a woman can forget her sucking child and be wanting in compassion to the son of her womb; and even beyond this, that parents exist who have cast out their fatherhood and motherhood, and supplied the place with fiendish ferocity.

The intense cruelty which some of our babes and little children have suffered of late years at the hands of the parents would have disgraced savages and even wild beasts; and but for the efforts of a small band of philanthropists, headed and directed by one who has an enthusiastic love and reverence for little children, this cruelty might have continued till it had stained England's escutcheon, and lowered her in the eyes of all civilised countries.

If some of these acts of cruelty could be related here, the first impulse of the tender-hearted reader would be to utterly disbelieve them, and the next, on being convinced, to hide the face and sob like a child that such things could be done in our midst.

When once our eyes are opened to the existence of these most sorrowful scenes, we dare not shut them again, for knowledge has made us responsible. If we take no step to prevent the maiming and torturing of these little ones, we tacitly give our sanction to it.

We dare not for a day be negligent, in the hope that things will right themselves; we would not if we could, for God has implanted in our hearts a tender love for the little ones among us, and we are rightly stern and indignant with those who wrong them.

Is it not past belief that a father would take an infant of fifteen months and twice in one night cane it because it cried with the pain of teething; or that the would in a fit of temper strike his little boy to the earth with a fist that would fell an ox, and because the child cried

with pain, thrust three of his huge fingers down its throat to stop it? Would any wild beast be so cruel to its young? Yet these are deeds done in the midst of Christian London, and by a civilised and educated people.

This is not the place to recapitulate the horrors brought to light by "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children." Everything can be learned by going to the shelter in Harpur Street, not only of the evil existing, but also of the beneficent work going on to counteract it.

There are certain people connected with this institution who guarantee its genuineness and philanthropy—viz., the Princess Christian, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Cardinal Manning, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Pym, and the Rev. B. Waugh, who is the life and mainspring of the whole.

It would take a volume to speak in detail of all this institution has done and is doing; indeed, this can only be realised when people's sympathies and interest are thoroughly roused. To those who would gladly learn about the shelter, yet have not the time to see it for themselves, let me tell what we saw at our visit there last week.

As we drove up to the building there was no mistaking its character, for a double row of gold letters across the front and a red lamp hanging over the door, also lettered, left no doubt possible as to its aim and object.

We were received in a set of bright, clean offices, painted light green, picked out with dark, and red blinds to the windows, which cast a cheerful light over all.

Here we were introduced to Mrs. Brooke, the matron, a kind, motherly woman, who has been at the work from its commencement, who prepared to pilot us over the building.

To start with, she told us that both this and the small adjoining house belonged to the society, one being devoted to ill-treated children only, and the other to bailed-out children, or the Queen's little prisoners, as they are called here.

The previous week forty-three children of both classes were in the building, this week only thirty, fourteen of whom are ill-treated, and are babes from a month old to children of sixteen. At present they have seven little creatures from a baby farm near Swindon, where the woman in charge had had large sums paid her for their maintenance, but which she appropriated to her own use, and systematically starved and ill-treated the poor little things.

First we entered the girls' dormitory, bright and cheerful with red and white quilts on the beds, pleasant pictures on the walls, and the windows all open, letting in fresh air, light and warmth without stint. The playroom came next under our notice, supplied with toys and covered with pretty picture wall-paper, besides other pictures.

In this room were sights to make one's heart ache; a child of six years old hardly able to crawl; another wee thing with black bruises on her face and body, and her little finger nails torn off! A child, too, of a London physician was here, a handsome intelligent girl, who had taken refuge from the brutality of her father, incited thereto by his new young wife. There were half a dozen more in this room, each with its own painful history, each with a look of suffering on its face which seemed habitual to it. A nursing gate before the door of this room locked automatically, thus preventing the possibility of any accident.

We now passed into the babies' room, which is next door to the matron's. She is always at hand, therefore, during the night in case of need.

Miss Brooke, a bright, pretty girl, is the baby superintendent, or, in other words, the "angel of the house." One must be there to see her tending the sick and spreading happiness about, before one can understand what she is to the baby inhabitants, who put out their tiny arms to her, calling "Nannie, Nannie."

When the babies are first brought in they frequently have to be fed with half a teaspoonful of arrowroot and brandy twice in the hour, so faint and emaciated are they.

What a paradise it must seem when they open their eyes in this sunny room, with pretty curtained cots or white beds, and with cheerful pictures and kind faces about them.

They have not so many babies just now, for one little French girl, with wrists no bigger than thumbs, has been taken to Broadstairs, another has gone to Norwich, and a third to Bath.

The boys' bedroom came next, with blue-and-white quilts, good blankets, unbleached sheets, and mattresses. The Lord's Prayer, in large type, hung on the wall, which was adorned with many pictures. Fresh air, cleanliness and cheerfulness pervaded this room, as all other parts of the house.

The babies' playroom next door was in possession of three little mites, and a girl in charge; they were plump, rosy, happy creatures, though when they entered, the matron said, they were perfect skeletons.

We were now admitted by a double door into the "bail-out-house," as it is called, where poor children sent out to beg, or children accused of any violation of the law, may be brought by the police instead of being taken to a lock-up.

These children are called the Queen's little prisoners. They are bailed out at £2 a head, and taken care of here, while the cause and circumstances of their offence are being inquired into.

These poor children often try to escape, therefore the windows have iron bars. One boy really did get away, but was brought

back, and when the matron asked him why he had done so, he answered, "If I'd seen you fust, mum, I wouldn't have cut and run; but I seed fust a bobby (the matron's husband in semi-official uniform), and then a parson (Mr. Waugh), and they was too much for me, so I says I'm off."

The boys' dormitory in this house also had blue-and-white quilts on the beds, pictures, and bright, flowery paper on the walls, and wire guards to the gas-jets. Mr. Waugh told us that the most remarkable thing about the children who come in here is their intense love of flowers; that if one offered them cowslips with one hand and buns with the other, the buns would have no chance.

Most of the cruelty seems to be incited by the hope of killing the children and getting the money for which they are insured. One boy, insured for £20, had forty or fifty wounds on his back inflicted by his mother, which gave rise to the remark from Mr. Waugh, that when an angel loses its nature it goes down to the utmost depths, and when a woman loses her womanhood she is utterly degraded.

Two isolated rooms are provided in case of ophthalmia or skin disease; but, wonderful to relate, although in the five years they have been working they have received upwards of four hundred children, they have never had an epidemic. This is a great cause of thankfulness to all who are engaged in the work; it seems as though the loving Father specially cared for these little ones whose lives have been so intensely sad.

The remarks of some of the boys are very touching. A lad of eight or nine climbed out of the window one morning, and, by means of the water-pipe, swung himself on to the roof. The matron, frightened at the danger he was in, called out, "Surely it is not Johnnie up there?" To which he sent answer back, "I shan't hurt, don't you cry." When at last he was safe, she said, "You have grieved me very much, and you have set a bad example to the other boys. I did not think you would have done it, and now, as a lesson to the others, you must go to bed." At this he exclaimed, "Well, I'm sorry I did it, for your face looks just like my mother's before she died, and I never felt so funny in my life." He was a bright, restless little fellow, and often came up to her with the request, "Please, matron, give me something to do, for if you don't I shall be doing something bad." He is in Canada now, getting on well.

Over each boy's bed is a picture of Christ

the Healer, and the usual question on first seeing it is, "What's up? Has the little 'un got measles or whooping cough?"

Many of these children are taught here for the first time to say their prayers. There is a spirit of love and gentleness and peace in these two houses which cannot fail to touch the hearts of those who have had no such experience in their lives before.

In an underground room, clean, light, and airy, we saw the bailed-out boys; two of them were sons of a man who used to preach on Islington Green, while his sons, in all sorts of weather, were out selling tracts and pencils. Should they return with any on their hands they were cruelly beaten and starved by this preaching father, who was at length taken in the act and sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

All the boys seemed impressionable, intelligent little fellows, and were eager to express what they would like to be in the future. One holding up a maimed hand said, "They won't take me for a soldier, mum, will they? 'cause father knocked off two of my fingers."

The sanitary arrangements are good throughout both houses, which perhaps accounts for the absence of sickness among the children. We were glad to hear that what has been done in London for these little ones by this institution will probably be extended throughout the country, making it a national rather than a London institution.

There are already branch institutions in Glasgow, Hull, and Liverpool, each of which acts simply for the children of its own city, leaving untouched the outlying lonely farm-houses, where deeds of cruelty may go on without let or hindrance, and this is one reason why Mr. Waugh wishes the work to be a national one, a work which will penetrate into the furthest corners of the kingdom—indeed, wherever there are little children to be cared for.

An instance of brutal cruelty has just been unearthed in a farm in Lancashire, two miles from any other house.

To carry out the plan of a national institution a good deal of help will be required. It takes £80 a year to maintain committee and officers, and as the city populations number 200,000, and the rural 120,000, it would be necessary to have a great many centres.

If the people in various parts of England will find money to maintain the officers, the society in London will find the money to carry on the prosecutions.

The world is gradually coming to an under-

standing of the work of this society and what it is doing to shield the children of our land from cruelty, which makes the heart bleed only to listen to.

A short time since two children were sent out to Canada by the creatures in charge of them as utterly destitute, while in reality they had £2,000 belonging to them. Such acts will soon be impossible, for Mr. Waugh intends making such children wards of the State.

Peaceful as this shelter seemed to us, and as it certainly must be to the dear little ones within its walls, it is yet a formidable weapon against the cruel parents and baby-farmers, whom it ceases not to harass with its far-seeing and effective working.

Until one actually goes to the shelter and sees with one's own eyes these victims of savagery, it is difficult to realise that the deeds done are possible in such a city as this. If we cannot put our own hands to the plough, we may strengthen the hands of those who do, in any way that presents itself to us. The workers want sympathy, money, clothing, one or the other of which it may be our privilege to supply.

There is no more Christ-like work in the world than that undertaken by this little band of workers; and no matter what our condition in life, what our sex, what our religious principles, if we have but hearts we can join in it, and give a helping hand. It is the one work in which Jews, Protestants, and Catholics have worked together without a shadow of discord; its chief aim and object is to put down and extirpate cruelty to children, and to redress the wrongs done to babes of only a few days old.

Go, if you can, to the shelter, 7, Harpur Street, Theobald's Road, W.C., and see with your own eyes and hear with your own ears the pathetic stories.

As many as forty children in six weeks are frequently fitted out from head to foot, so that clothing is greatly needed, most of all shoes, boots, and stockings.

Would it be out of place here to mention that many girls have leisure during the summer, and that those servants left behind in town with little or nothing to do during July, August, and September, might send stockings and socks, and make under-garments for the children of the shelter during this leisure time. I am sure it will make them happy to do this, and be an immense boon to the dear children of the shelter.

EMMA BREWER.

THE ROMANCE OF NATURE;

OR,

THE FOLKLORE OF ANIMALS, PLANTS, EARTH, AIR, SEA, AND SKY.

By JAMES MASON.

VI.—SUPERSTITIONS OF THE SEA.

THE sea is a fertile field for all who take an interest in old superstitions, and no wonder. There is an air of mystery about its limitless expanse, its wild winds, its rolling billows, and its unseen depths; whilst the finny race to which it affords a home look as if almost anything told of them might be true.

First of all, why is the sea salt? Of this there is an original explanation in a legend told by the Norse Skalds. The "bountiful Frodi," whose mythical reign was a golden age, possessed a quern, or handmill, which ground anything the persons chose in whose hands it happened to be. For a long time it ground nothing but gold and peace.

But in an evil day a sea rover came, slew Frodi, and carried off the quern and two giant maidens who had been kept in occupation

grinding it. When he got to the high seas he bade the maidens grind salt. They did as they were told, and at midnight asked if he had salt enough.

"No," said he; and ordered them to stick to their work.

So they ground and ground till the ship was full and went to the bottom—sea rover, maidens, quern, and all, and "that's why the sea is salt."

The evil spirit who of old was supposed to preside over the demons of the deep was known to seamen under the familiar name of Davy Jones. Jones is a corruption of Jonah, the prophet who was thrown into the sea, and Davy, it has been suggested, is a form of Duffy, a ghost or spirit among the West Indian negroes.

Davy Jones was often seen in various shapes

perching among the rigging on the eve of hurricanes, shipwrecks, and other disasters, to which a seafaring life is exposed, warning the devoted wretch of death and woe. His form was sometimes of gigantic height, he showed three rows of sharp teeth in his enormous mouth, he had eyes as big as saucers, and from his nostrils streamed blue flames.

A Davy Jones of a milder type was the stormy petrel, known to sailors as the Mother Carey's chicken, "and hated by them," says the Rev. J. G. Wood, "after a most illogical manner, because it foretells an approaching storm, and therefore by a curious process of reasoning is taken for its cause. A sailor once told me very frankly, after I had held a short argument with him, that 'they mostly takes things wrong side forrards,' and so it is with the stormy petrel."