because she wouldn't let her have a larger allowance of wine than the doctor had ordered.

As soon as I left the hospital—and I didn't leave it as strong a woman as I entered it—I joined one of the charitable institutions for nurses, of which there are about a dozen in London, and from which I was sent out to all sorts of cases, rich an' poor, returning for fresh orders as soon as I'd finished with each case.

I've been nursing for that institution for six years now. I've been paid £20 a year; an' I've had six months less one week's holidays out of all that time. One of those months I was an invalid myself in a convalescent home belonging to the society, recovering from an infectious fever caught from the patient I'd been nursing.

Yes, ma'am, those institutions are well managed, and presided over by pious, charitable ladies and gentlemen, who take great care of 'em, select the nurses with judgment, and provide a comfortable, quiet home for 'em when they're off duty. The only drawbacks (and they're great an' grave ones) are these. A nurse has no power of choice herself where she'll go, or what she feels best up to. She must go where she's sent. Also a nurse must *live* in the home, whether she likes it or not, if it's to support her, an' whether she's got mother, or sisters, or children whom she'd like to be with, when she's out of work, for a little; for it's clear she can't support herself, an' lay by anything for a rainy day, out of the pay given.

An' then, m'm, all these homes an' institutes (except one in Bond Street, and one other) have a rule which I don't think it's fair at all. No matter what people are willing to pay for a nurse—an' some give as much as two or more guineas a-week for a good one—the nurse she never sees it, an' only gets at most the half, an' often only a less part, from the institute which pays her, so that she's bound in a way to stick to it for the rest of her life, for she can't never hope to lay by enough to retire on.

Yes, m'm, they do say it's all fair, for they keep us in regular employment, give us a nice home an' every comfort when we aren't nursin', an' in some homes a small pension to retire on arter twenty years' good service. But when *aren't* we nursin', m'm? You see how many my holidays have been; an' any doctor'll tell you there are not nigh enough nurses to tend one-third o' the sick in London only. The institutions know perfectly well how many they're each likely to want on an average, an' they don't get one over it; so that a clever, reliable nurse (an' they're very particular about most o' theirs) is hardly done with one case afore she's sent to another, an' so on through the year; an' as to the pension, who's to guarantee your living twenty years in a profession which takes so much, mind an' body, out of a woman as nursing? Besides, it isn't difficult for even a good nurse to give offence to the committee now and again, an' what becomes of her good service pension then?

At the association in Bond Street the nurses are allowed to be with their relations between their engagements. They are given whatever they earn, be it much or little, an' the superintendent keeps them supplied with better and more regular places than they could find of theirselves. I wish there were more like it; an' I'm going to join it at the end of the year, for I do think it's fairer that what we nurses work for so hard we should have as it is given, an' not only such part as a committee of rich people think good for us.

Ay, ma'am, there are few women have more trials than a nurse; an' yet for sure it's a happy an' a blessed life, if one can only keep in mind that it's all spent in doin' real homely good to those who can't do it for theirselves, or their dear ones.

DRAWN FROM THE LIFE.

I.—THE UNEMPLOYED.

YOU may see him, and the wretched class which he represents, any day that you please to take your walks abroad.

His sudden and spasmodic simulation of alertness and activity when he sees you looking at him, and thinks it possible that you may be able to give him a job; the way in which he takes his foul stumpy pipe out of his mouth—furtively slips it into his pocket, and rubs his hands down the sides of his shiny threadbare trousers; the pace at which he shuffles out of the corner whence he has been blankly watching the drizzle of the rain—the half-reluctant manner of his parting with the post, against which he has leaned till it has seemed to grow shabby and rusty from the contact; the abjectly wistful expression with which he touches his greasy hat—partly as a token of subserviency, and partly for the purpose of pulling it on more firmly before running to do your bidding—are illustrations of his condition.

It is a condition of hopeless, helpless poverty; and yet beneath that deprecatory, anxious, hungry look you may often trace something of defiance, of suspicion, of resentment, of indifference, which seems to say, "Things can't always go on like this. It doesn't matter much whether you give me a job or not. Nobody ought to starve, and I'd better eat in gaol, where they are bound to give me victuals, than die for want of a meal, that the likes of you would never miss,

because you've had a hearty breakfast, and are going home to a good dinner, and I've only had a penn'orth of gin, and begged a bit of bacca, to keep down the hunger."

Perhaps the most really dangerous class in all London is to be found amongst those who may be called the unemployed, for it is from them that the casual thief and the truculent ruffianly element, which may soon go over to the criminal ranks, are chiefly derived. They are the raw recruits of the great recognised body known as the "criminal class." The very fact that to go beyond being merely "the associate of thieves," and "known to the police," and to become known also to police magistrates and chief warders of prisons, as "habitual criminals," is to receive direct attention from the State, and to assume at once a position of importance, is doubtless an inducement to pass the narrow boundary between doubtful honesty and direct, if not avowed, antagonism to society. Perhaps it is the knowledge of this perpetual source of danger which keeps the administration of our laws for the protection of property far more stingent than that which punishes for injury to life and limb. Not a week passes but we have to note how robbery from the person without violence is practically regarded as an offence nearly as heinous as robbery with assault. The chances of the infliction of a heavier penalty for the latter are so few, that the desperate ruffian need scarcely take them into account if his victim should offer any resistance, and to the determined thief the "garotte" is scarcely a more dangerous method of robbery than the mere snatching of a watch or a lady's reticule.

It is not to the occasional criminal that I have to point now, however, as representing the unemployed; nor can I suggest an immediate remedy by which the Government of the country (frequently spoken of erroneously as "the State") can deal with the prevention of crime, by recognising and mitigating the poverty of those whose misfortune it is to be without regular labour.

The experiment of National Workshops was tried in France, and it hastened a national calamity so unendurable, that the first announcement of relief from social chaos was the declaration that they had been abolished. It was easier to cope with a partial insurrection than to sustain a bankrupt exchequer.

Any attempt successfully to solve the awful problem, how to diminish the number of criminals by finding employment for the destitute, must begin with the children of the streets—the orphans of society who are to be seen at almost every corner—beaten, starved, homeless, and even yet comparatively uncared for by the Government, which is but the executive of the State. The School Board beadle has no power to deal with these. Of reformatories to which they may be sent there are so few, that the wretched urchin "whose head scarcely reaches to the top of the dock"—and who has at last called attention to his condition by the simple expedient of stealing something to allay his hunger, and so becoming a member of the "criminal class," which can always command notice—is a puzzle alike to magistrate and City missionary. Nothing can be done for him but to put into operation the vast machinery which has been constructed for the punishment of offences against property, and he is sent to gaol to matriculate in the school where we may find him taking future degrees, as the number of his convictions increases, and he attains at last to the important sentence of "penal servitude," the highest degree short of hanging which it is in the power of a legislature to bestow, in the interests of a society which confounds deterrence with prevention.

I am not at all sure that the spectacle of the vast mass of the unemployed who have committed no offences which bring them within the criminal class, is not more terrible than that afforded by a visit to any prison in England, because it represents the perpetuation of evils by which society is even now sometimes appalled.

Whether this be so or not, there can be no doubt that a very large number, even of the unemployed, represent honest poverty, engaged in an arduous struggle to keep itself above the dead level of actual pauperism. As messengers and outside porters at railway stations, and near public offices, where, after some probation, they are at length recognised by time-keepers and official porters as "chaps that you can trust to take a message for you;"—on the outskirts of markets, where they pick up a job of portering or basket-minding, or are left by more fortunate costers to give an eye to the barrow and donkey;—about omnibus stations, and places of amusement, whence they will run off to bring up a "four-wheeler" or a "an-*sum*," shield you from the muddy wheel as you embark, and run for a street's length in the mire, at the imminent risk of their lives, for the tardy two-pence that is to go towards the threepenny lodging, or the stale loaf and dripping that is to be breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper for a hungry brood of children on the morrow—we are familiar enough with them at these places, and at street-corners in the vicinity of public offices, manufactories, or large taverns, where they supplement the official duties of the commissionnaires, and live on the crumbs left by that active and intelligent body.

Perhaps it would not be too much to say that they are to be seen also as street-hawkers, when having come into possession of a shilling, not instantly required to buy a meal, they are advised by some experienced acquaintance to invest the twelvepence in a stock of the latest mechanical toy, the newest song-book, or the cheapest "useful article" that may be sold for a penny and leave a margin of profit. A good many of them fail in this for want of one or two necessary qualifications. A dealer in catchpenny-worths must either have a brisk manner and a glib utterance—which mean an unabashed demeanour, not often to be found among the unemployed who have seen better days—or a steady, stolid manner of looking into the faces of passers-by, and in a subdued but earnest voice calling serious attention to his wares. On the whole I am inclined to think the latter is the

best qualification, since it doesn't lead to the collection of a crowd, and the intervention of the police. There are men who are really making a very fair living in the City by their ready adoption of the latest novelty in the way of toys, tools, or bran-new gimcracks—some of which they sell at as high a price as sixpence each; but they are comparatively speaking capitalists who can invest in two-foot rules, mechanical toys, pocket-books, or bag and portmanteau straps—whichever may be in demand at the moment. They know the turns of the market to a sixpence, and when any of these fancy goods "rule heavy," come out with their usual stock of shirt-studs, sleeve-links, button-hooks, key-rings, and miscellaneous articles. It must be noted, too, that these men rise from the ranks of the unemployed—have their regular stand or "walk" upon one particular line of curbstone, and sometimes rise to the dignity of an undisputed corner by some large building, where they set up a stall, and are as dignified as shopkeepers in their confidential gossips with the policeman, and their remarks upon society and the conduct of street-boys. It is needless to say that they are not to be identified with the shilling capitalists who invest in a quarter-gross of "flying pigeons" or "spring-heeled Jacks," and invest a part of the day's profits in "fifth edi-*shuns*" of the evening papers. In fact they no longer belong to the "unemployed," and have no connection whatever with the "dangerous classes." Just as they have risen out of mere catchpenny casual efforts to get an honest living, so the poorer shilling capitalists are struggling to keep away from the criminal class with which they are in such constant danger of being confounded. The loud-voiced, swift-footed news-vendor, who will chase you to the farthest cabstand, shouting, "Yah, sir," and intercept you when you have both hands full of luggage, and your railway ticket between your teeth, to sell you a halfpenny *Echo*, and rejoice in the profit thereof, must have some intention to keep "on the square." It would be well for us to reflect that there are hundreds like him, and even rougher and more truculent than he, in London, who are not unemployed because they will not work, but because they cannot find work to do, on the wages of which they can live even in the miserable manner to which they are accustomed. They are not dangerous to-day, but every morrow which shall see them growing more desperate for lack of bread will store up accumulated dangers for the future, when the only message which civilisation and professed philanthropy—subtle statecraft and vast national boasting—has to give them is "Steal or starve."

Not that the temptation to steal is very great after all. The life of the casual thief is a wretched one at best. The slouching, artful-faced, slangy youth who lounges at street-corners, "looking out for a job," or ready to "pinch something" if he has the chance, lives a life alternating between semi-starvation and anxiety. He has joined the dangerous classes, and knows it. You can see the qualm that moves him even under the impudent stare and defiant grin with which he meets the professional glance of the passing policeman. Amidst the foul badinage and horse-play in which he indulges with some of his rough companions, you may note the melancholy, furtive, watchful eye, the haggard look, the air of assumed indifference. He is already "known to the police," and even some of his fellow-lodgers—say in Fulwood's Rents, or in one or other of the threepenny establishments in Westminster or Spitalfields—will keep a little aloof from him when he goes jauntily into the kitchen, and begins to cook his bloater at the common fire, while it is possible that some rough specimen who has not yet "took to thieving" will desire him in unmistakable terms to keep his conversation to himself.

These kitchens of common lodging-houses are not lively places. With one or two exceptions, which I may refer to in a future paper, there are no "dens," or "kens," or "cellars" in London now, where thieves, mendicants, and criminals meet in common to spend their ill-gotten gains in low debauch and drunken revelry. Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's descriptions are a dead letter now, and under the Common Lodging-house Act all places must be licensed, and are open to the surveillance of the police. At all events, the police know of all such places in London, and as I once had the opportunity of spending a night in one of the so-called "thieves' kitchens," which was at that time characterised (not quite truly) as a "desperate" place, and "one of the worst," I can certify that, so far from having about it any element of wicked jollity or depraved roystering, it was and is one of the most melancholy places, and resorted to by the most depressed and ill-conditioned company that I ever witnessed; the only approach to amusement amongst whom was a game with a dirty pack of cards, played by two lodgers, who (as there was no table in the place) sat at either end of one of the few deal forms which, with a frying-pan, two or three cracked plates and mugs, a tin saucepan, and some odd knives and forks, formed the entire furniture, if I except the printed copy of the rules and regulations ordained by Act of Parliament, which occupied a place against the wall.

But it is not in these lodging-houses alone that the unemployed are to be found, even if they have already passed into the dangerous class. There are some of them who go night after night in succession to one or other of such places, but yet they regard it as only a temporary necessity—a part of casual misfortune, to be remedied as soon as they can get a regular lodging somewhere. Do you want to know where their regular lodgings are? You must look in the slums of Westminster, in the neighbourhood of Old Pye Street, and the remnants of a locality once as infamous in its way as Field Lane, and the vicinity of the Blood Bowl House at Smithfield. You must pay a visit to that vicinity lying off what was once Smithfield, and in the spot where people without a slight acquaintance with the City think the march of improvement has made a clean sweep. You must turn out of Barbican and Long Lane, and steer towards Saint Luke's, and lose yourself in that dreadful acreage of poverty and crime known as "The Chequers." You must go eastward to Old Nichols Street, Shoreditch, and Friar's

Mount, and the interminable streets around Agar Town, and so along Bethnal Green, and as far as what was once the Dog Row, and to Twig Folly. You must have a turn down Whitechapel way, and bask in Bluegate Fields, or stroll about Wentworth Street and the congeries of wretched tenements that straggle on both sides towards Mile End. You must penetrate the borough of Southwark, and get within the scent of fellmongers' yards, and setting out with the visitor who represents the missionary work of Carter's Kitchen and Night Refuge for the Destitute, thread the foul intricacies of that quarter, one of the central or key places in which was, and probably still is, "Little Hell." You must of course take a walk about Drury Lane, and thence as best you may go northward, and along the Gray's Inn Road, quite in close proximity to the House of Correction, and around the arches of railways, and all the great landmarks of modern progress and civilisation, which have "run through a low neighbourhood," with the result of hiding what remains of it, and huddling its denizens all the closer. North, east, west, and south, the unemployed congregate in crazy, rotting tenements, where rooms are portioned out as though each apartment were a house in itself; in foul hovels built on the back yards of other houses—mere fœtid human stys—into the dark entrances of which you plunge down, instead of stumbling up; in cellars where the occupant must choose between cold without fire, or warmth that draws the damp out of the reeking walls; in attics where there is neither fire nor food; in houses where whole colonies of people live whose occupation changes from day to day—from a casual job at the docks, or porterage at a riverside wharf, to basket-minding at Billingsgate, or a day's labour in a timber-yard. I am speaking now of the unemployed who have wives and children—wives who also work when they can find work to do: children who watch eagerly for the workhouse loaf, and who are often sent out to swell the terrible army of the neglected and untaught little ones, of whom there are thousands still in our streets.

THE STREET-CORNER MAN.

But it is that class into which so many of these children grow which is the most dangerous. Taught no trade, sent out as soon as they are old enough to use hands and feet, to do such casual work as that at which children of the poor may earn a few pence to add to the family stock, what becomes of them when they grow beyond matchbox-making, or doing errand work, or drawing a truck for some small tradesman, or the score of hard-working duties to which even young children are set almost before they have learned to distinguish good from evil?

Some of them keep to the plan of working at such poor callings as they can learn without much teaching, and swell the great ranks of the "underpaid." The rest are among the still more dangerous battalion of the unemployed. Of the girls I do not design now to speak, but of the boys. You may see them anywhere in London, either looking out for a job, or performing some temporary work, or hanging about the street-corners, the doors of taverns, and the windows of cook-shops. Such of them as can read have a literature specially provided for them—a literature of robbery and murder, assault and battery, with thieves or libertines for its heroes, and defiance or evasion of the law for its sensational interest. It is astonishing, and perhaps due to that solid—say stolid if you like—but at any rate to that common-sense which seems to be a part of the English character, that these vile publications do no more harm.

Coupled with the *fact* that the great hulking fellow who is left comparatively unnoticed to hunger and poverty, cold and nakedness, has only to commit a crime to secure immediate relief for his physical needs—has only to do something desperate, to become notorious, and to have the penal machinery of the country put into exercise, to feed him, clothe him, and even to teach him; that what the magistrate says to him, and his own clever retort, will appear in the paper, and be commented on by society—these pestilential halfpenny numbers of criminal fiction really do wonderfully little harm. Think of this, and of the real danger that must be always latent in the great mass of unemployed big boys, and three-parts-grown men, who may be seen every Sunday morning lounging out towards the suburbs—think of it as you see to what poor shifts of living they are subject—to the bread and dripping, the penny bloater, the slab of greasy, clammy pudding, the plate of rancid cuttings of ham and beef, the faint yet peppery saveloy, the hot, reeking faggot made of the offal of the pig, the blood-puddings, the twopennyworth of pease-soup, and, in best and most prosperous times, the leg-of-beef stew or the slice of cold meat, and the hot coffee and thick bread and butter of Billingsgate or the meat and vegetable markets—think of it as you note them lying, with tilted hat upon their upturned faces, or with their arms for a pillow, in the fields of Hackney Marshes,

IN THE DOCK.

the greenswards of the parks, or the outlying country places, where they were wont to go out on Sunday mornings to jangle for robins or to peg chaffinches, till the Wild Birds' Act passed, and put an end to the threatened extirpation of our feathered songsters.

Speaking of tilted hats, it must have struck every observer of the unemployed, how constant the adoption of the black felt hat of the shape known as "deer-stalker" has become among them. The once-cherished fur or rough woollen cap with ear-lappets, and even the peaked cap worn at the back of the head or over the ear, has almost disappeared. It is astonishing, too, how much alike twenty people look if they wear round-topped, stiff-brimmed, black felt hats, more or less greasy and unmistakably dirty. This bar to ready identification may be one of the unacknowledged reasons for the deer-stalker becoming fashionable in English society, from marquis to mendicant, or from prince to pedlar; at all events, it may be a reason for its adoption by the dangerous classes.

As we watch the throng of pedestrians going outward from all quarters of London, those of them who have not already slept (and in summer weather slept more wholesomely) in the parks, or under the lee of some barn or haystack, or in the recess of a hedge, or in a market wagon, or on a tombstone of some suburban churchyard (like that of Old Hackney, for instance)—as we watch them, and the variety and yet sameness of their poor shabby garments, we may wonder how they get clothes to their backs at all. It is a thing to wonder at, even when we remember that they may sometimes have an old coat given to them by one of the working class above them, or even by somebody for whom they have once run an errand, and on whom their persistent entreaties for a job afterwards has had the ill effect of extracting a present of a half-worn suit, for the purpose of "getting rid of them." There are wonderful shops in "low neighbourhoods," however, shops where even the oldest cloth clothes are rendered useful by being cut up to make into caps, or to patch other clothes—and where, for a little money and something "in exchange," a good deal may be done in the way of another, if not a new, "rig out."

GOING IN.

Of course, to the initiated, the most extraordinary emporium for this kind of barter is the great clothes exchange by Cutler Street, Houndsditch. Here on a Sunday morning have I stood quietly observant, and noted the arrival of a slouching, shambling youth, his limp, floppy, battered felt hat hanging low down on his brows; his colourless coat ragged and askew; his shirtless neck enveloped in a crimson cotton rag of handkerchief; his sole-shedding boots all bemired with country clay, which extended to the knees of his frayed and jagged corduroys. In less than fifteen minutes after his entering the magic portals of this place, which is resonant with the sounds of Jewry, I noted the emergence of a jauntily-stepping young man, attired in a rather creasy, but still glossy, and (considering the short space for experiment) not unfittable coat, clean mixture trousers, with that tightness at the knee and exuberance over the boot which is the cherished fashion of the flash youth of this town; a stiff and irreproachable deer-stalker; boots originally made for somebody else, but still lambent with black-

"THE LATEST NOVELTY!"

ing polish; a nearly-clean starched shirt-front, and a blue and crimson satin tie. To the above articles was added a light walking-cane, which my young friend swung with an air as he passed cheerfully down the flight of dirty stone steps, and so away by Aldgate, and thence on the "knifeboard" of an omnibus to some chosen destination.

The metamorphosis was complete, but I knew him for all that, and he formed a tough subject for my Sunday meditations. Would he go back and resume his old tattered habiliments on Monday morning, taking half the money that he had paid for his Sunday plumes? Was he one of the unemployed, who had been out where he had obtained regular work, and had saved and saved until he could startle the eyes of his brothers and sisters by his splendid appearance? Had he picked up a sovereign or a purse? Had he come suddenly into luck from the gift of some generous benefactor, who had given him the money to make a better appearance before finding him employment? It was vain to speculate, and he had disappeared, even if I could have made up my mind to ask him.

COMING OUT.