

YOUNG HOODLUMS.

A PAINFUL PHASE OF LIFE IN THE CITY.

The Stevenson-street Children Arrested on Wednesday Night in Prison and Before the Judge.

The lower portion of Stevenson street, which forms the northern boundary of that delectable precinct known as Tar Flat, is prolific of the worst examples of depravity that are discovered in the city. A number of revolting cases emanating in that locality have been brought before the Police Court during the past year, the most notable being that of a gang of young hoodlums who committed an outrage upon a woman, the details of which are too sickening for repetition. The leading culprits in that affair are now serving terms at San Quentin. The locality seems to be chiefly inhabited by people afflicted with chronic intemperance—fathers who appropriate the major part of their earnings to the support of the numerous gin shops of the vilest description that abound in the vicinity, and mothers who esteem the beer jug the most essential requisite of the domestic economy. The children—and all such neighborhoods, for some wise purpose in the inscrutable policy of Providence, are particularly prolific of children—are permitted to run wild, the only discipline to which they are subjected being punctuality in the conveyance of beer and whisky from the corner grocery. The remainder of

THEIR EDUCATION

is left to instinct and observation, and they early acquire the faculty of expert tailoring, and a precocity in vice almost incredible. On Wednesday night the police who patrol that quarter discovered a seance instituted by these abandoned juveniles in the loft of a blacksmith shop on Stevenson street, near First, and took the whole party to the City Prison. The young debauchees were Mary Sullivan, Mary Avery, Mary Bowen, James Hopkins, John O'Keefe and James McDonald, ranging in age from 11 to 13 years, with the exception of one overgrown hoodlum of 17. When they were brought into the prison by the officers they cried and grieved in such a manner that it was scarcely possible to believe that they were not the embodiment of that innocence which is attributed to childhood, and the reporters present looked upon them as greatly persecuted beings. After the girls had been separated from the boys and locked up in different cells, and the prison had become quiet, the

WICKEDNESS OF THE GIRLS' NATURE

Began to show itself. They indulged themselves in conversation in the unintelligible slang used by criminals, and in which they were adepts. Portions of this were interpreted by one of the "trusties," who said it was of the most ribald character. After the finding of the cigarettes, as detailed in yesterday's CHRONICLE, they engaged in dancing in their cell, and the patience of the prison keeper began to exhaust itself in his efforts to keep them quiet. Mary Avery, the ringleader, exhibited a knife to one of the trustees, which led to her being more thoroughly searched. It was found that she wore a petticoat of double thickness, and on the right and left sides, in the natural position for pockets, two slits had been made, thus converting the entire garment into one immense pocket. The only inference which could be drawn from this was that the girl was in the habit of

SHOP-LIFTING.

And used this receptacle as a means of concealing her plunder. They kept up their singing, laughing and loud, slangy conversation until nearly 3 o'clock, when Mary Avery—or "Jack," as she was familiarly termed by her companions—voice rang out through the prison in the hoodlum slang, which the "trusty" reported to the prison-keeper as being an indecent proposal addressed to one of the boys who were confined in a neighboring cell. She was immediately taken out and sent up in the dark cell, and the others were sternly admonished that such would be their fate if they did not keep quiet. This had the desired effect, and when the reporter left the prison they had reclined upon the blankets of their cell and appeared to be asleep.

BEFORE THE POLICE JUDGE.

Yesterday afternoon the interesting sextet was steered into the Court-room and the vicious juveniles ranged in a tearful circle around the judicial bench for examination. The overgrown boy Hopkins, whose poll was clipped suggestively short, had no father or mother "nor nobody" to represent him, but the remainder of the group were indifferently represented, the girls by their mothers and the boys by their male parents. The Judge in a side movement remarked, "I've seen the mothers frequently as well as the girls." Officer Marshall related with a fatherly air having found the company in a dismal loft over a blacksmith shop on Stevenson street, near First, the floor of which was littered with straw. They were lying in pairs on the straw, and one or two were asleep when the officers entered. The others were in a great fright and hid themselves under a stairway in the room. The three girls have been roaming around the streets at all hours of the night.

JOHNNY O'KEEFE

Was called forward. He ambled up the steps with one fist imbedded in an eye and the other deep in his breeches pocket. "I work, I do," said he, "an' the policeman knows it, he does." He worked in a blacksmith shop, he said, but he was no bigger than a sledge hammer. He had been through the same pathetic scene three times, and let off each time through the lachrymose efforts of mother and son. He was committed, and was led off howling: "I'll never be good, never; I'll run away an' go on the Trainin' Ship." Young McDonald was pushed forward by his father. Mr. McDonald explained that his wife was dead, and that he had three children in the Orphan Asylum now, and a little three-year-old at home, which the youngster under arrest was needed to watch. He promised to send the boy to San Rafael or New York if the Judge would only let him off this time. The Judge continued the case for a week to give the father an opportunity to fulfill the promise.

HOPKINS.

The oldest in the crowd, had no father or mother. He came to town on Saturday night last, and having no money was reduced to the necessity of bunking in a hay loft. He explained with gravity that he was the guest of Mr. O'Keefe, and while enjoying a snooze the ladies—referring to them with a graceful sweep of a grimy hand—the ladies stole into the apartment and obtruded their attentions upon him and his host. Hopkins admitted having fractured a heathen widow in the long ago, for which he received a judicial reprimand. He was too old to send to the Industrial School, and was not bad enough apparently to be committed to the County Jail, and the Judge allowed him to go on his promise to find immediate work.

Mary Bowen was flanked by a herculean and emotional mother, who pleaded hard in a hollow voice for her child's dismissal. A commission merchant, looking to the establishment of the child's honesty, related that she had brought him safely \$135.00 which her mother owed him for goods. It appeared that the Bowen girl had been quite temperate in her midnight jamborees, and she was dismissed, on the assurance of her mother that it would never again happen.

MARY AVERY.

The smallest, prettiest and most abandoned of the trio of girls, enjoyed the performance lugoly, and maintained a ripple of laughter throughout. Her mother, a corpulent and careless-looking woman, stood behind her and shook her sides with laughter at her daughter's cuteness. The girl had been a frequent visitor, and was promptly committed, evidently to her entire satisfaction. Mrs. Sullivan pleaded for her daughter Mary, aged 14 years. "She never staid out a night, Judge, as thrue as I stand here, after tin o'clock at night." Mary Avery distended her lips in an "O!" and assailed the trembling girl: "Oh! can't your ma lie? Why, you've been out more times 'n ever so much." Mrs. Sullivan pleaded in vain. Her daughter had been in a similar predicament once before, and had promised to be good. She was committed, and the vicious little Mary Avery clapped her hands and crowed with glee. When they were about to be marched down stairs, "Jack" manifested some tenderness by bidding adieu to her not deeply affected mother in a touching manner.