

DR. BARNARDO AND THE GOSSAGE CASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir,—With your permission I should like to say a few words concerning the Gossage case, which you referred to in your local columns a short time ago, saying that *The Times* and other papers had condemned Dr. Barnardo. Harry Gossage was found by a policeman leaning against a lamp-post in Folskone in September, 1888, so hungry that he said he could not stand. The next morning, being brought before the Bench, he was sent to the workhouse at Elham. In his artless way, after his confidence had been gained, he proceeded to pour his own sad story of concentrated misery and prematurely-endured anxiety into the willing ears of his new friend, the master of Elham Union. By the intercession of the Rev. Ed. Husband he was received into Dr. Barnardo's home. After he had been in the home for some days, Dr. Barnardo, having heard that he had been telling some strange stories, called him into his office, and spoke to him kindly about the unlikely stories he had been telling, and the great advantage of the truth. While speaking, the boy's eyes filled with tears, and he said, "Indeed, sir, I only told the truth, I ain't told no lies." Dr. Barnardo then questioned him, and he said, "His father had been dead for some years; he had been in the workhouse several times with his mother; he had two brothers whom a kind gentleman in Leamington had sent to Canada, they were glad to go, and he would like to go too if he could get a chance; his mother had twice deserted him, taking him on tramp and leaving him at remote places." He declared that his mother had sold him to two organ-grinders, "furriners;" that they gave her money for him; he could not tell how much, but he "know'd it was some shillings;" that the mother, with the organ-grinders, and a woman, a friend of hers, and Harry himself, had gone together into a public-house; and that they had drink together, which the mother paid for out of the money she had received." Harry said his father was a Protestant, and he was like his father, but he thought his mother was a Catholic. His mother was written to from Dr. Barnardo's home, and this is a copy of her reply:—

"39 Stetchwell-street, Leamington.

"Dear Sir,—I shall be very pleased if you will keep my son, Harry Gossage, at Dr. Barnardo's home, as I cannot afford to keep him myself, &c.—I remain, yours obediently,

"The mark X of Mary Gossage."

This letter was written for her by the Rev. Walter H. Hesketh Biggs, curate of the parish. In November, 1888, Mrs. Gossage was requested to sign the agreement giving over to the home the lad Harry. Then Mr. Norton appeared on the scene, and he adopted the boy, and took him away to Canada to rear him as his own son. Dr. Barnardo being convinced by references produced, and by his demeanour generally, that—first, Mr. Norton was highly respectable; secondly, that he was a Christian, did not ask for his address, because he did not want to know, and would be able to say "I do not know his address," simply to save the poor lad. As late as November 10, 1889, Mrs. Gossage told Miss Harriet Hart, assistant matron of the Warwick Union Workhouse, that she intended to apply for the admission of her infant child to Dr. Barnardo's home. This is sworn to. The mother next claims her son Harry, and in a sworn affidavit says that "though the father of Harry Gossage was a Wesleyan, on his death-bed in the infirmary attached to the union he told me that I should have to bring up the said Harry Gossage and the other children; I could bring them up in my own religion if I liked. Shortly after my husband's death I took the said Harry Gossage and my two other boys to Southam and had them baptised in the Catholic Church." The affidavit of Mr. George Garnham, master

baptised in the Catholic Church." The affidavit of Mr. George Garnham, master of the workhouse, proves that he sent for Mary Ford, otherwise Gossage, before her husband's death, and at the time of her visit then she was in a state of intoxication. This we must suppose to be the time she received instructions concerning the children's faith. The question is simply, Why does Mary Gossage desire her child—the child she deserted twice, and sold once to "furriners"? What is at the back of all this? With regard to the monster meeting held in Exeter-hall on the 10th of December last, the chair was taken by Sir Arthur Blackwood, K.C.B., the secretary to the General Post-office, who said:—"It has already been stated by the leading Roman Catholic newspaper, the *Tablet*, that attacks will be made upon your chairman immediately the House of Commons meets for his indecent conduct in venturing to preside here to-night." The first resolution was—

"That this great meeting, representing all sections of the Christian church, desires to record its unqualified confidence in the management and work of Dr. Barnardo's homes, and its sympathy with the founder in his resistance to the efforts of those who would remove from his care, on the ground of religion, children who, having been neglected and uncared for until they were rescued by the institutions, are now being brought up in them in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord."

This was moved by Sir Robert Fowler, Bart., M.P., seconded by Mr. H. M. Matheson, and carried amidst tumultuous applause. The Rev. Arthur Murrell said—Dr. Barnardo, who is morally and in the sight of a higher Judge than any on earth in the right. The Rev. Canon Fleming, B.D., said—I am here to-night to say that I honour his motives (Dr. Barnardo's). "They are brave who dare to speak for the fallen and weak." The Rev. Canon Gurdlestone said—I thoroughly sympathise with all that has been said, and I wish Dr. Barnardo God speed in his work, and if another demonstration were needed, let us have over the 4,000 young emigrants he has placed out in Canada, and let them testify what is being done for them. The following telegram was received from Mentone:—"Barnardo, Exeter-hall, London.—Accept hearty sympathy and £5 towards expenses.—Sturson." The Duke of Sutherland, Earl of Suffolk, Viscount Pollington, Lord Robert Montagu, Sir Richard Temple, and many other noblemen and gentlemen expressed regret at being unable to attend, but sent sympathy and contributions.—

Yours, &c.,

CARTHUSIAN.

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