

LIFE IN A WORKHOUSE.

WE are indebted to our excellent contemporary, the *Quiver*, for the following interesting account.

"We get up at half-past six, breakfast at seven," says the old man. "Half-past seven we come out of the dining-hall. Our breakfast consists of tea, and five ounces of bread and butter. We have dinner at twelve. About eleven I generally feel very hungry, so I eat a bit of bread and butter which I save from my breakfast allowance. You are not supposed to take away anything you can't eat, but the officials kindly wink at the action of us old men.

"Dinner is a pint of soup and bread. Of course we get tired of having the same regulation diet. I very rarely take all my soup. We get a bit of meat on Tuesday. It is steamed. We often get a great deal of bone, for it weighs in. The potatoes are nice. On Wednesday we have soup again. On Thursday Irish stew, which is still soup, with a little potatoes and meat added. On Friday we have meat again, and on Saturday one pound of suet pudding, with treacle, but no soup or meat. On Sunday we have bacon and greens and potatoes." The old man's eyes glistened as he spoke of the added delicacy of the cabbage.

"We have tea at five, with bread and butter. The men who are in for a short time get skilly instead of tea, which is only for the regulars. The short-timers have their skilly with salt in another hall.

"We have to pick oakum, and if we don't do our right amount we are put on bread and water. Between breakfast and dinner some go into the oakum shed, others go to tailoring or boot repairing. The place in which we dwell is really a beautiful mansion, but I cannot be happy there. One not only thinks of his past losses, but has to be too jealous about one's comrades. Some are very greedy, and we have to "come the old soldier," and hide things. I used to go to church, but some would sneer and say, "Here comes one of the chaplain's pupils!" The regular chaplain comes round and speaks kindly to us all, but some don't seem to appreciate his kindness as they should.

"I sleep in a Ward with about forty men. Some of them snore terribly. When they do so, the next-door neighbour will catch hold of their clothes and pull them off, and at this there will be some hard words muttered. You can go to bed directly after tea. Those wake up the earliest who go soonest to bed, but they are not allowed to leave the Ward. At five they will be seated on the edge of their beds, ready for a leap, and will rush like a lot of wild race-horses downstairs directly the signal is given. Officers try to stop

us from being aroused. If any attempt is made to go down before time, they have their cards taken away for a month, or perhaps three. If it is taken away, it takes three months to get another. We go to bed at eight o'clock, and some get tired at bed. The officers come round at half-past eight, and turn the gas low. They keep it burning all night.

"Very few persons have been ill since we have been at the new place. Most of them are aged men. They are not too affable. If in the grounds you take the seat of one of them, he takes you by the collar of your coat, and out you come in no time. Places to which they have been accustomed they regard as their own. "Why I have had that seat nineteen years, and you have only just come into the house; how dare you take it?" said one of my fellows to a new comer to old St. Pancras one day in my hearing.

"The persons who complain of the Workhouse authorities are persons who are most undeserving. The master, over the wall, said to me one day, "Here's some plums: some of my own growing." I took them, but it soon went over the whole building. I gave one each to the men as far as they would go, and then the mean grumblers only said, "Can't you get any more?" Jealousy is our great brother."

WE MUST EXPECT TRIALS.—We are not to expect to go on smoothly in this life without ever meeting anything that will disturb us. On the contrary, our Lord would have us clearly understand that we are to be tried on every side, for His words are, "and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side."

HOW TO BREAK OFF BAD HABITS.—Understand the reason, and all the reasons, why the habit is injurious. Study the subject until there is no lingering doubt in your mind. Avoid the places, the persons, and the thoughts that lead to the temptation. Frequent the places, associate with the persons, indulge the thoughts that lead away from temptation. Keep busy; idleness is the strength of bad habits. Do not give up the struggle when you have broken your resolution once, twice, or a thousand times. That only shows how much need there is for you to strive. When you have broken your resolution, just think the matter over, and endeavour to understand why it was you failed, so that you may be on your guard against a recurrence of the same circumstances. Do not think it an easy thing that you have undertaken. It is folly to expect to break off a habit in a day which may have been gathering strength in you for years.

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