

people from village schools and sabbath services, but that there is a hardihood and ferocity in towns, which must be dealt with in another way, and against which all the artillery of the pulpit is feeble as infancy."

And may we not in the use of the same means look for the same blessed results that cheered the laborers at West Port? Yea, have not our eyes seen "*genuine*" *Five Pointers* "walking erect in newness of life?" Are there not a number even now striving to lead sober, righteous, godly lives? Can we not visit them in their cheerful, pleasant rooms in the Mission house, and find them with busy hands "plying their daily task," while their children are attending the Mission school? Do we not see a gradual improvement in the appearance and behavior of the children of the school, and whenever we enter the infant class-room with its sixty children, are they not uniformly quiet, cheerful and obedient?—the dull, heavy look of neglected childhood fading away before the coming ray of intelligence in their young faces. Our well attended evening meetings, drawing out many who blush in their deep poverty to meet the light of day—and the large and attentive congregations assembled in the chapel for the Sabbath services—the quietness and order reigning in the formerly tumultuous streets—all these are not

merely omens of good, but they are indications that God's blessing has already accompanied this truth. For we would express our firm conviction that while other instrumentalities may be good in their place, the religious element must be our main dependence in any comprehensive plans for the reformation of the degraded poor. Without this, relief may be afforded for a day, but the seat of all the evil remains untouched. "It is not always the dark place that hinders, but sometimes the dim eye"—and any efforts unaccompanied with the inspiring motives of Christianity must fail in accomplishing permanent results.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIVE POINTS.

"Life hath its contrasts, its realities,
Which make humanity itself aghast!"

A STRANGER, taking his position in Broadway, near the City Hospital, would find himself at one of the central points of the wealth, the fashion, and the commerce of the largest and most influential city of the

Union. The Hospital, of massive stone, surrounded by fine trees and spacious grassplots, which present a beautiful oasis amid the desert of brick and sand that encompasses its outer railing, tells loudly that active benevolence has here its sphere, and Christian charity its appropriate work. Elegant stores, crowded with merchandise of the most costly description; carts bending beneath the pressure of valuable loads; handsome carriages, containing fair occupants, whose rich attire bespeaks an utter disregard of the value of money; well-dressed hundreds, crowding the innumerable omnibuses, or passing with rapid steps through this great thoroughfare of fashion and of business; everything betokens progress, wealth, and happiness.

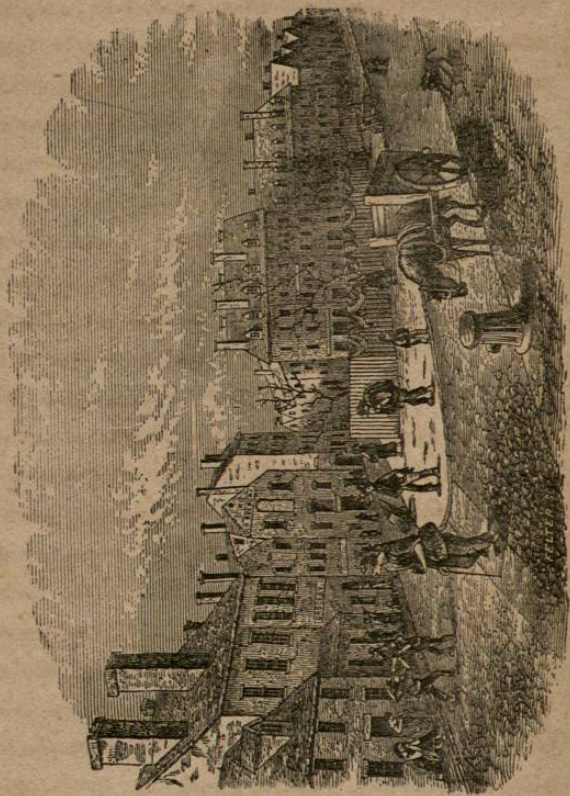
"But there is just behind a drearier scene;
The peopled haunts another aspect wear;
Midst wealth and splendor, wasted forms are seen,
Victims of ceaseless toil, and want, and care;
And there the sterner nature that will dare
To live, though life be bought with infamy;
There guilt's bold emissaries spread their snare,
Who law, or human or divine, defy,
And live but to perpetuate crime and misery."

One minute's walk from that Broadway-point of wealth, commerce, and enjoyment, will place him in another world of vision, thought, and feeling. Passing down Anthony-street but two squares, a scene will be

presented, forming so entire a contrast to that he has just left, that imagination would never have pictured, nor can language in its utmost strength successfully portray it. Standing at the lower end of Anthony-street, a large area, covering about an acre, will open before him. Into this, five streets, viz., Little-Water, Cross, Anthony, Orange, and Mulberry, enter, as rivers emptying themselves into a bay. In the center of this area is a small triangular space, known as "Paradise-square," surrounded by a wooden paling generally disfigured by old garments hung upon it to dry. Opposite this little park stands, or rather stood, the "Old Brewery," so famed in song and story. Miserable-looking buildings, liquor-stores innumerable, neglected children by scores, playing in rags and dirt, squalid-looking women, brutal men with black eyes and disfigured faces, proclaiming drunken brawls and fearful violence, complete the general picture.

Gaze on it mentally, fair reader, and realize, if you can, while sauntering down Broadway, rejoicing in all the refinements and luxuries of life, that *one minute's* walk would place you in a scene like this. Gaze on it, men of thought, when treading the steps of the City Hall or the Hall of Justice, where laws are framed, and our city's interests discussed and cared for—*one min-*

ute's walk would place you in this central point of misery and sin. Gaze on it, ye men of business and of wealth, and calculate anew the amount of taxation for police restraints and support, made necessary by the existence of a place like this. And gaze on it, Christian men, with tearful eyes—tears of regret and shame—that long ere now the Christian Church has not combined its moral influences, and tested their utmost strength to purge a place so foul; for this, reader, is the “Five Points!”—a name known throughout the Union, in England, and on the continent of Europe. The “Five Points!”—a name which has hitherto been banished from the vocabulary of the refined and sensitive, or whispered with a blush, because of its painful and degrading associations. The “Five Points!” What does that name import? It is the synonym for ignorance the most entire, for misery the most abject, for crime of the darkest dye, for degradation so deep that human nature cannot sink below it. We hear it, and visions of sorrow—of irremediable misery—flit before our mental vision. Infancy and childhood, without a mother's care or a father's protection: born in sin, nurtured in crime; the young mind sullied in its first bloom, the young heart crushed before its tiny call for affection has met one answering response



THE FIVE POINTS.

Girlhood is there ; not ingenuous, blushing, confiding youth, but reckless, hardened, shameless effrontery from which the spectator turns away to weep. Woman is there ; but she has forgotten how to blush, and she creates oblivion of her innocent childhood's home, and of the home of riper years, with its associations of fond parental love and paternal sympathies, by the incessant use of ardent spirits. Men are there—whose only occupation is thieving, and sensuality in every form, of every grade, and who know of no restraint, except the fear of the strong police, who hover continually about these precincts. And boys are there by scores, so fearfully mature in all that is vicious and degrading, that soon, O how soon, they will be fit only for the prison and the gallows.

This fearful spot—this concentration of moral evil—this heathendom without the full excuse of ignorance so entire as creates a hope for foreign lands—why do we portray it ? Why dwell for a moment upon scenes at which even a casual glance causes the warm blood to mantle the cheek, and sends it rushing through the heart, until it quivers and aches with intensest sorrow ? Why ? Because we believe the time for action, the most wise, the most earnest, the most vigorously sustained, is fully come. The voice of benevo-

lence has sounded there, and has been echoed, not faintly, not equivocally, but by a cry deep, agonized, impassioned. The wail of infancy, the moan of neglected childhood, the groan of mature years sick of sin, yet almost despairing of rescue, have united, and the cry has reached the ear of Christian kindness, and Christian hearts have responded to that call, and are now united to prove, as far as they may be enabled, the utmost power of redeeming grace to raise the fallen and to save the lost.

For several years the New-York Ladies' Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been anxious to include this point within the sphere of their operations. Their report of 1848 contains this language:—"We intend to make a new point in Centre or Elm-streets, in the vicinity of the Tombs. The deepest interest was manifested by the Board respecting this effort. Several ladies pledged their personal labors to the Sunday school, and all feel that this is emphatically '*mission ground*.' We plead for the children—for we commence with the Sabbath school—the children, because through them we hope to reach the parents—the children, because ere long they will hold the destiny of our city within their hands. We expect to employ a missionary there, *who will avail*

himself of every providential opening for usefulness." Urged by such feelings, the Board selected a committee of intelligent and judicious gentlemen, to survey the field and select a place for action. After a careful survey, the committee reported that a suitable room could not be found, and therefore the ladies must defer their hopes and plans. The point was sadly yielded, but never for a moment forgotten; and, before the Annual Conference of 1850, it was resolved "to apply for a missionary, in full faith that a way would be made plain for him to act efficiently and profitably." It was done, and most cheerfully responded to by the Bishops, and a missionary was appointed.

The ladies, feeling the difficulties that beset them in a field like this, and encouraged by the expressed interest of husbands, brothers, and friends, selected a number of gentlemen of the highest respectability and standing, who were formed into an "Advisory Committee" to the Board, and were empowered, in conjunction with the missionary, to find a suitable place and make all necessary arrangements for the opening of the Sabbath school. Obstacles seemed to vanish before them. A room was found, at the corner of Little-Water and Cross-streets, some twenty by forty feet, thoroughly cleaned and seated, and thus made capable of accom-

modating about two hundred persons. The first Sabbath it was filled. By whom? By what? A friend described it as "a more vivid representation of hell than she had ever imagined." Neglected childhood, hardened, reckless maturity, encased in filth and rags. But, through the power of grace, there were those there who had moral and physical nerve to bear the sight—the sound. They sang, and prayed, and exhorted, explained their motives and designs, and urged the importance of cleanliness upon their wretched listeners. The school opened with seventy scholars. The first few Sabbaths the children were rather unruly. The boys would throw somersets, and knock each other down, or follow any other inclination which arose. Indeed, the entire want of self-restraint was one of the most painful features of the scene, for who could repress the anxious question, "To what will all this lead?" But soon the school was perfectly organized, and each succeeding Sabbath witnessed its increase and improvement.

Immediately upon the establishment of the mission, the necessity of a day-school became apparent; it was found that weekly impressions were too evanescent to be of much benefit to children who, during the other six days, were exposed to influences which ever rest

upon those residing there. Preparations were made for its organization; donations of books, maps, and slates were received, a teacher selected with the approval of the entire Board, and the ladies were rejoicing in the prospect of the fulfillment of their most cherished plan, when, in its initiatory stage, adverse influences intervened, which, by placing the school in other hands, removed it entirely from the control of the society, and, of course, in a degree from the direct influences of the mission.

Intemperance prevailed so fearfully in this region that all immediately realized that nothing could be effected until this tide could be stayed. Preaching fell on besotted ears in vain; all moral truth was wasted; it was "casting pearls before swine." Temperance-meetings were instituted, and held almost weekly in the mission-room. The friends of the cause rallied there, sang temperance-songs, and made earnest speeches. In the first year one thousand had signed the pledge, including some of the very worst of the inhabitants. Since then there has been a steady increase, and the closest scrutiny reports that in the large majority of cases the pledge has been fully kept.

Next to intemperance, the missionary found the

greatest hindrance to consist in the want of steady employment for the surrounding poor. The majority were vicious, and unused to work; many were anxious for employment, but could not get it, because the large establishments which give slop-work to the poor would not trust their material in the Five Points; and yet they were obliged to remain there because of the cheapness of the rents. The missionary, by becoming responsible, found one house willing to co-operate in his design. After many experiments and many difficulties a regular establishment was formed in which fifty or sixty men and women found constant employment, and boarded in the house of the missionary. The inmates generally attended the religious services of the mission, the children came to the Sabbath school, and the Society regarded it as a valuable adjunct to their undertaking. At the end of the first year the same adverse influence which had already removed the day-school from the control of the Board also operated here; and although they have been successful in obtaining employment for numbers, yet the want of sufficient room has prevented their efforts in this line from being apparent to casual visitors.

The second conference year opened with the appointment of the Rev. Mr. Luckey (late chaplain to

the Sing-Sing State-prison) to that field of labor. His influence among the convicts of Sing-Sing, was a good preparation for the work which now devolved upon him. He and his devoted wife have penetrated its dark alleys, and have explored every avenue of Cow-Bay and the Old Brewery. The wretched inhabitants of cellars and garrets have had their word of counsel and their cheering aid; their utmost influence has been exerted to induce the children to attend a day-school supported by various benevolent individuals; they have visited the sick, and directed the dying to Him who could save to the uttermost; and through them, aided by ladies and gentlemen connected with the mission, a moral influence has been exerted which is felt throughout that entire community. Nor have they rested here; scores of men and women have through them been supplied with work; children have been placed in the "Home of the Friendless," or in responsible families; and they have spared neither time nor trouble to effect these objects.

During the year the mission-room became so crowded with children and adult listeners, who also flocked to the weekly means of grace, that the necessity of a larger place was painfully felt. While somewhat anxiously debating about ways and means to

accomplish this, a path entirely unexpected opened before the Board. Mr. Harding, lessee of Metropolitan Hall, (the largest and most beautiful place in the city for a public meeting,) offered it to the Society for one evening free of expense. The Hutchinsons and Alleghanians, being apprized of this, volunteered to sing gratuitously, and the Rev. Messrs. Beecher and Wakely consented to speak on the occasion. This association of circumstances induced the Board, with the approval of their Advisory Committee, to hold a public meeting and call upon all interested in the object to aid in the renovation of a spot which for years had been a by-word for all that was degraded in human character and extreme in human misery. The house was filled to overflowing; the interest manifested was great; and \$4,000 were contributed toward that mission. Thus encouraged, the ladies called upon their Advisory Committee to redeem a former promise, viz.: that if, after two years' trial, the success should warrant the outlay, they would aid them in obtaining a more commodious place. After a thorough survey they concluded that the "Old Brewery" was the most eligible point. This place, celebrated for years as the stronghold for crime in that dark region, whose avenues were familiarly known as "Murderer's Alley"

and the "Den of Thieves," was inhabited at the time by at least three hundred wretched immortal beings. No language can exaggerate its filth or the degradation of its inmates; and the cleansing of this alone we deem missionary work. Believing that the renovation of a place like this, in the very heart of our great city, would prove a general benefit, the Society called upon the public to aid them still further in the arduous work. Promptly and nobly was that call responded to; ere six months had passed \$13,000 were subscribed; and, although \$3,000 of the required sum was yet needed, the committee felt emboldened to make the purchase.