

CHAPTER VI.

THE REFORMED INEBRIATE.

" Strive to day, one effort more may prove that thou art free,
Here is faith and prayer, here is the Grace and the Atonement.
Here is the creature feeling for its God, the prodigal returning
to his Father." TOP: ER.

AMID the many evils which stood in formidable array to impede the efforts made by the Ladies' Home Missionary Society, to benefit the wretched inhabitants of the Five Points; that of intemperance was foremost and most gigantic. It seemed to be the root from which every other evil grew, and its universal prevalence was fearful in the extreme. How to meet and overcome it, was one of the earliest questions discussed. A Temperance Society was immediately formed—temperance meetings were held—interesting addresses made—popular songs were sung—and good results soon followed from these efforts. Many were induced to take the pledge, many kept it. But, alas! many relapsed and preached anew the lesson, that fallen man, unaided by the grace of God, is perfect weakness. Over some, we were called

to weep, after weeks, yea, months of amendment had given promise of permanent success—over others, we have been permitted to rejoice with an abiding joy.

We shall narrate some circumstances connected with the history of one of the latter class, as the test of a year and a half has made us rather confident in the reality of his amendment. The Missionary, the Rev. Mr. Luckey, was sitting in his office in the Old Brewery, (soon after its purchase by the Society, in May, 1852,) when a tall, dark-complexioned, and intelligent-looking, middle-aged man came staggering in; and in a wild incoherent manner, said:—"Sir—sir, you are a just and good man, and therefore, I come to beg you to go and help me get back my boots." Mr. Luckey asked him to take a seat, and *quietly* tell him his difficulty. He soon learned from him, that he had been engaged in a drunken frolic for some three weeks. (He had been accustomed for several years to have such sprees once in about three months, and had thus spent all his money.) He had that morning arisen from his bed, and searched around his miserable home for something which he could pawn, to satisfy the burning thirst within. The only thing that could be found, was a pair of new boots which he had purchased a few days before. Taking them in his hands,

he, with confused and trembling steps, turned towards the pawn-broker's shop.

As he stood before the Old Brewery in vacant mood, a man issued from Murderer's Alley; and accosting him kindly, asked if he wished to sell those boots. He stretched out his hand to take them, they were yielded almost unconsciously, and the thief rushed back into the "Old Brewery." He rushed after him, and by a sudden turn, entered Mr. Luckey's office. He recognized him as the good Missionary of whom he had heard, and thinking he would aid him to recover his lost property, addressed him as above related.

"What is your name?" asked Mr. Luckey. "My name, Sir, is John T——." He proceeded to give a short, but as we afterwards learned a correct account of his drunken career, and then added, "I am at present, in an awful state, both of body and mind; and, I want you, Sir, to remove this dreadful spell from me." Mr. L., perceiving that the delirium tremens was rapidly increasing upon him, and that it was useless to reason, said—"None but God, with your earnest prayers, can keep you; I cannot." The man arose, and staggering towards Mr. L., said, with maniac energy, "*you cannot, you cannot!* Don't that good Book say, the fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man avail-

eth much? Yes; God will hear you, but he will not hear such a wretch as I am." "I have," he added, "as nice a wife and children as any body has, and if I am too far gone to be helped, which I fear is the case, you can benefit them. I have ruined them," said he, weeping bitterly, "I have ruined them, wretch as I am. Mr. Luckey, won't you come and see them?" "Yes," was the answer, "if you will do as I shall direct, I will come and see you all." "When?" he asked. "At three o'clock this afternoon." Holding out his hand in token of assent, and grasping Mr. L.'s with the utmost energy, he immediately left the office. At the appointed hour, the Missionary was there: but, Oh! what a scene. His wife weeping, his children, fine looking, intelligent boys, nestled in a corner in deep affright; while the father lay stretched upon his miserable bed, trembling from head to foot, as he grappled with all the horrors of delirium tremens. He saw fearful sights—he heard dreadful sounds—snakes and vipers were crawling over him, and winding round him; and as Mr. Luckey entered, he, in tones of agony, besought him to keep the demons off.

Mr. L. succeeded in diverting his mind long enough to get his consent to take an opiate, and, after obtaining a promise that he would come to the office and

take the pledge, and giving such relief to the wife as circumstances demanded, he left the wretched man with the earnest prayer that God would come to his rescue. Deeply did the Missionary feel that only an Omnipotent arm could break those fearful chains, and set that struggling captive free. The next morning, Mr. T. emaciated and desponding, was there as he had promised, and willingly took the pledge—this was the first step. But it did not bring peace. His mind seemed fully awake to the fact that his present misery was only the result of a previous cause. He was assured by Mr. L., that his only hope of success was in obtaining a radical change of heart. He said he was fully convinced of this, and believed that this was his last chance—that the Spirit now resisted, would depart forever. Mr. L. encouraged him to believe that God was willing to aid and strengthen him, and being alone in the office, they solemnly covenanted together to pray for this object, and he assured Mr. L., that he would regularly attend the religious meetings connected with the Mission.

Mr. Luckey advised him to take a room in the Old Brewery, that he might be thus removed from former evil associations. He frankly confessed that he had no money to pay for the room. Mr. L. promised to

become responsible to the agent for one month's rent, and to aid in obtaining work for him.

This was done—the outward pressure was removed—the chains of watchful kindness were thrown around him, words of sympathy and love were ever spoken, but day after day elapsed and found him bowed in deep and utter condemnation.

He regularly attended the class, the prayer-meeting, and listened to the preaching of the Gospel, with rapt attention, but the agony of deep remorse seemed to press him to earth, and in vain was Christ offered to him as a present Saviour. Wasted time, wrecked powers, broken health, a desolated home, and a future retribution followed him like spectres, and stood between him and a proffered salvation.

Again the hour of the weekly Class-meeting arrived and Mr. T. sat in his accustomed seat. The Missionary in his turn stood before the penitent man, scarcely knowing how to address him. Was not prayer to be answered? Had he not proclaimed God faithful and true? How could he discover the hindrance and lead that burdened soul to rest? Raising his heart in earnest prayer for direction, and asking that *now* might prove the hour of deliverance, he asked the usual question, "How do you feel to-night, brother T.!" The tall form

arose before him, the dark eye rested sadly upon him, and the earnest, mournful answer came, "I have tried to do as you advised me, sir, but the more I pray and the more I reflect upon my sinfulness, the worse I appear to get. I can do no more, I give myself up into the hands of my God." "Do you? do you?" answered the Missionary, "this is all that he requires."

He requested the Class to sing

"But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe,
Here Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do."

"Do you," asked Mr. L., "do you?" To which he responded "yes I do, I do," and immediately his chains fell off, and glory to God swelled from his freed heart and burst from his loosened tongue. The tall form grew taller as it erected itself in conscious freedom, the dark eye kindled with a living light, the clear tone lost its sadness, and with indescribable energy he continued, "I feel as I never felt before, I feel that God has pardoned all my sins, and this is the happiest hour of my life. Oh! help me to praise God and pray that he may strengthen and keep me." We will not attempt to describe the joy of that hour. The missionary's heart was full, and they bowed and wept together

Weeks and months rolled away, and the man gave evidence of entire transformation. He was intelligent, and able to give a reason for his hope. He soon began to take part in the prayer-meetings and temperance meetings, and the influence of his words and looks was felt deeply throughout the Mission bounds.

In a conversation with him, one of the ladies learned that his former wife was a devoted Christian; and years before he had bowed beside her triumphant death-bed, and heard her last prayer for him tremble on her dying lips. Years of sin and misery had fled since then—and memory, faithful to her trust, had often recalled that scene, awakening the most bitter anguish. Now, it arose before him, to deepen his gratitude and strengthen his faith. The sudden and total disuse of liquor seemed to create a lassitude and weakness, and for a time we feared that consumption was doing its fatal work. The inner man grew strong—peace—deep peace was so written upon a naturally expressive countenance, as to attract the attention even of casual visitors; but those who were watching him with the most earnest Christian solicitude were anticipating his speedy removal to his home above.

Just at this crisis, an unexpected opening invited him

to the country. All urged his departure, for his own benefit, and that of his two fine boys.

We parted with deep regret, for amid the many discouragements which pressed upon our hearts, the sight of that peaceful countenance, bright index of a renovated heart, that visible proof of what the grace of God could accomplish, always brought strength and encouragement; and it seemed hard to let the lights of the Mission thus remove.

The summer fled—his health became renovated, his steady piety continued; business prospered, and he is now a respectable, thriving mechanic, a happy, consistent Christian, a living monument of God's almighty power, a reformed, converted inebriate.

Eighteen months have rolled away since that miserable drunkard staggered into the office of the "Old Brewery," which had just been redeemed from Satan's possession, by the liberality of a generous public. If the Missionary had not been there, and been faithful to his ministry, such results could not have followed. God set his seal of approbation thus early on the effort, and encouraged those engaged to press on amid innumerable difficulties. In answer to a letter of inquiry just written, Mr. Luckey, who, by the Conference removal, was stationed at the same place to which T. had removed

says, "Brother T. and his wife (who experienced religion a few days after he did,) have been received into full membership. They are very much respected and beloved here as well as at the Mission on account of their exemplary deportment, and humble devotion." He adds, "Brother T. paid his rent at the Old Brewery before the month was out, and regularly ever after. He has now all his winter provisions in and paid for, and is out of debt. He has not to my knowledge transgressed the strictest principle of Christianity since the day of his conversion, eighteen months ago!"

Triumphant Death.

"The being born to toil, to die,
To break forth from the tomb,
Unto far nobler destiny
Than waits the sky-lark's plume!
I saw him, in that thoughtful hour,
Win the first knowledge of his dower!

"It seem'd as if a temple rose
Before me brightly there,
And in the depths of its repose,
My soul o'erflowed with prayer,
Feeling a solemn presence nigh—
The flower of new-stamped sanctity!"

On one of the coldest days of the extremely cold winter of 1851-52, a visitor entered a basement

room in Cow bay. This locality and "the Old Brewery," are the two most famous spots in that dark region. For misery, degradation, filth, and populousness they cannot be exceeded, and it requires considerable physical and moral courage to climb to garrets and descend to cellars, where every sense is offended by the extreme wretchedness which abounds on every hand.

In this basement room, from which some women were vainly trying to exclude the rain-water which had just rained down in torrents and was overflowing the gutters, which were choked with ice and refuse, a young man was found in the last stage of consumption, lying on the floor, without sufficient clothing to shield him in any degree from the excessive cold. Such relief was afforded as was in the immediate power of the visitor, and the case was reported.

A day or two after, two ladies, interested in the Mission, called. Conversing with him they found him in a subdued state of mind, seeming to recognize the hand of God in his affliction, and prepared for further teaching. They gave him instruction in the simplest manner possible, (for he had been an ignorant Catholic,) sang for him, "Arise, my soul, arise," to which he listened with the utmost interest,

occasionally responding to the sentiments uttered, and after joining in prayer, left him in strong faith that God had visited the man, and by his providence and his Spirit was assuredly leading him to himself. Through the interest and care of several benevolent friends he was soon removed to a quiet attic room, supplied with comfortable bedding and clothing, furnished with nourishing food, and visited continually by the Missionary and his wife. Previously, however, to his removal, and immediately after the ladies' visit, Mr. Luckey called. He then found him with a broken and a contrite heart. He instructed him in the nature of simple, immediate faith in a present Saviour, and kneeling in prayer endeavored to lead his mind to Jesus. As he prayed faith strengthened, and when he arose the countenance of the man plainly revealed that the crisis had passed, and Barney Hart was rejoicing in *conscious* pardon.

"The soul, the awakening soul I saw,
My watching eye could trace
The shadows of its new-born awe,
Sweeping o'er that pale face.

"And reverently my spirit caught
The reverence of his gaze;
A sight with dew of blessing fraught
To hallow after-days;
To make the proud heart meekly wise,
By the sweet faith in those calm eyes."

After his removal from the terrible place in which he was found, he was visited almost daily, either by the missionary and his wife, or by the friends deeply interested in the Mission. He was instructed and examined until all were satisfied of the reality of the change within him. His mind was kept in perfect peace; calmness was written on every feature of his countenance. The Lord, in mercy to his suffering frame, kept the tempter from exerting his usual influence, and day after day, and week after week, witnessed the gradual and painful decay of the outer man, while the inward man grew strong and yet stronger in faith and hope and love, until the ransomed spirit took its triumphant flight to heaven. On the succeeding Sabbath the funeral services were held in the Mission-room. The coffin was brought in, and by its side was a little one containing a child three years of age, who had died the day before. A funeral sermon was preached to a crowded audience, (among whom were many Catholics,) by the Missionary, who most judiciously improved the solemn occasion, and then the bodies were borne to Greenwood Cemetery, the expenses being defrayed by many friends. As Barney's name, by his own request, had been enrolled upon the Church-

book of the Mission weeks before he died, we had promised to bury him in a Protestant ground.

Thus passed one spirit from the Five Points to the throne of God, but not the only one, for of several adults we have entertained the strongest hopes, and some of our Sabbath-school children have died, singing, "There is a happy land."

We have sowed the seed with trembling, and watered it with tears; we have hoped, yea, believed that it was taking deep root in many hearts, and occasionally we have exulted over the ripe fruit which was soon garnered in heaven. We are looking for greater things, hoping it is but the first-fruits of the harvest, and we ask the continued prayers and aid of our friends.