

CHAPTER VII.

SEED SOWN IN THE MORNING.

"When parental influence does not convert, it hampers. It hangs on the wheels of evil. I had a pious mother who dropped things in my way—I could never rid myself of them"—GEOFF.

THE history of one of the members of our Mission so forcibly illustrates the truth that early impressions, though seemingly lost, frequently re-appear in after life,—as parchments whose first records have been displaced by vain legends, are enabled by a chemical process to reveal their original inscriptions—that its narration may not be without its lesson.

J. A. was born and brought up in a pious family. All recollections of his parents recognize the pervading element of their piety. A Methodist class-leader for fifty years, his father ever maintained a character without reproach. "Never did I see in him," said his son, "anything that would condemn him; he was a praying man, and in harvest time, when we had seven or eight men employed on the farm, all were required to be present at the regular family prayer, morning and evening." Parental admonition and example seemed

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for the time lost upon the son, who joined the Orange-men, and was thus brought into associations most unfavorable to his piety. His father frequently remonstrated with him upon his course of life, and told him with sorrow of heart, "that everything would go agin him until he turned to God—and that he would be brought very low before the Lord would raise him up."

One day as he was carrying a load of potatoes which his father had sold to the teacher of a school, he was attracted by a young girl seated in the window. "I liked her," he said, "and I thought she liked me," and though she was above his degree, he found some means of making known his attachment. Shortly after, having had a violent attack of fever, and being given over by the physicians, he sent a message to this young girl begging her to let him see her once before he died. She came, and standing on the porch, raised the window and leaning on the window-sill, she spoke to him, and as he looked upon her he saw the tears stealing down her face. Whether this interview was as healing medicine to the sick man, we know not, but he recovered, and married the object of his affections, much to the displeasure of her family. Her father gave her some money and fine cattle for her husband's farm, and then refused all further intercourse with her.

She soon accommodated herself to her new circumstances, and though unused to labor, after a few months, she dismissed the servant-girl and worked with her own hands. An increasing family and a diminishing income—the potato rot and the high price of provisions,—all things seemed indeed “to go agin” the struggling husband and father. With the hope of bettering his condition, he opened a store, and purchased a stock of provisions, partly on credit, but their hearts were “too soft” to demand fair prices from their starving customers, and the store proved a losing concern. The grocer from whom he had made his purchases, for a debt of £2 6s. threw him into prison, where he remained for four months. He found “favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison,” and as he neither drank nor smoked, he was entrusted with the task of allotting to the prisoners their portion of food. For this service he received one and sixpence a week, and when his wife came to visit him once a fortnight, he always had three shillings to give her to aid in supporting the five helpless children at home.

One day one of the turnkeys brought in four loaves of bread, which he had stolen from the baker's cart, and was proceeding to divide them, giving J. A. his portion, when he asked him how he obtained them, and on being told

remonstrated with him on his dishonesty, and insisted upon their being returned. The baker, who was a Catholic, on becoming acquainted with the circumstance, and knowing A—— to be an Orangeman, was much pleased with the man's honesty, and soon had an opportunity of manifesting his gratitude by kind deeds. A new law was passed, by which all who were imprisoned for debts under £10 were set free, and A—— regained his liberty. His friend, the baker, filled a box with bread for the freed prisoner to carry home, and took him nearly all the way in his car.

It was eleven at night, and thinking that his wife in her poverty might have no candle, by the light of which he could once more see her face and the loved faces of his children, he stopped to purchase one; for he had five shillings in his pocket. He first went to his father's house, and the mother came and threw herself upon his neck, and wept over her son, come back to her again. But a few months after this, she passed away into that land where all tears shall be wiped away. She went with him to be present at the joyful meeting with his family. Sore days and hard work were still before him, and though he had his own land, he wrought for a neighbor for four-pence a day.

His wife's father paid her passage and that of her

eldest daughter; and with a baby in her arms, she embarked for this country. On the voyage, One who could do better for that little one than its mother, took it to a world where "there is no sea"—neither trouble nor crying. The stricken wife and mother, who never complained of the life of privation and labor to which her marriage had introduced her, soon after her arrival patiently began her work, the avails of which were to reunite her to her husband. She was seamstress in a family in Westchester County,—and not a cent did she spend for herself, till her husband's passage money was transmitted to him. There was no surplus to defray little Johnny's passage, but how could the father leave his three year old boy behind? The two girls remained with their grandfather, but Johnny must share his fortunes, and with the child in his arms, he travelled to Belfast, where he was to take ship, with the hope of receiving aid from a friend there. That hope was disappointed; but on hearing his story, some one connected with the ship advised him to take his trunk below and await the issue. The next day, as two gentlemen were calling the roll of the passengers, the father came forward with his boy, and said he had only money to pay for himself, but he could not leave his child an orphan—and if not allowed to take him, he must

go to Liverpool, to try what he could do there. The one gentleman whispered to the other, and they told him to pass on; and he was permitted to bring his boy out free. Thus Providence, he said, was beginning to open his way for him, and he began then, *on the sea*, to pray to the God whose claims he had so long neglected.

He landed at night, with three pence in his pocket, and went to the Alms-house for shelter. In the morning, he went forth, holding his boy on his back, and a little bare foot in each hand, to protect it from the cold. By his side were two children, whose mother was dead, and who had come out to join their father, to whom he was taking them. A gentleman touched with the forlorn aspect of the group, stopped and put a shilling in the boy's hand, gave a piece of money to each of the children, and took them all to an eating-house, where he gave them a good breakfast. How gratefully has that way-side benefaction been remembered!

J. A. had been brought up on the same farm with Archbishop Hughes, and on the recent visit of this dignitary to the home of his boyhood, he had rambled with him over every nook of the farm. To his residence, therefore, he directed his steps, and on hearing his name, the Archbishop came out, asked him in

the parlor, and received him kindly. He gave him two dollars and a letter to a bookseller, to furnish him with books for sale. And at a subsequent time, when the poor man "got in a great strait," he gave him further assistance of money and clothes. The bookseller furnished him with a stock in trade, by which he contrived to make a living. He was soon joined by his wife, and they took a room in Mulberry street. He found his way to the Greene street church, where the pastor "clothed him from his skin out," for he found it hard to support himself and his family.

As he lived not far from the Five Points Mission, he went there to church, and while listening to the preaching, and the faithful personal admonitions of the Missionary, his heart was entirely subdued. When he went there to the Prayer-meetings, he said, all the early religious privileges he had slighted, rose up before him, and he resolved with strong crying and tears, to seek the God of his fathers. And he did seek him with an earnest heart for three months, and he "at length found the pearl of great price." It was one morning early, at four o'clock, while he was, lifting up his heart to God, he felt a sweet peace and joy, that God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned his sins, and brought him from darkness into light. He rose, and

kneeling down beside his bed, he thanked God for his great mercies to a poor unworthy sinner. And from that time he has been endeavoring to lead a new life.

A tall, handsome man is his wife's father—with a fine estate just inherited from an aunt—an elegant equipage—a train of dogs fed from his plentiful table—can he "hide himself from his own flesh?" Those two little girls for whom a mother's heart yearned, as she thought of the broad ocean that rolled between—can their mother's father withhold the boon which would restore them to the arms of their parents? When they ask bread, will he give them a stone? Yes, verily,—but kind friends were found at the Mission, and their proffered aid once more reunites the scattered family.

They are all together now, in their cheerful room, in the Mission building—and all the children in the Mission school. And the patient, uncomplaining wife is, we trust, learning in the school of Christ, where she will find a rest she never knew before—a peace which makes the heart of her husband glad, and which will prove to her a satisfying portion. "He prays for her night and day," he says, and gratefully does he acknowledge that "God even makes his worldly business to prosper"—that his "father's prayers have reached

him over the ocean," and have brought down blessings upon him. And when he heard of the poverty of his father, who, by the failure of the crops, had been reduced to "the walls of his house, grass for a goat, and turf-bog for the winter," he hastened to the coal-yard where he had just purchased a ton of coal, and leaving his own necessities to be supplied as he had need and means, he requested the money to be returned that he might send it to his father. The early prophecy was verified—he was brought to the lowest depths of want—he had left his father's house, and the farm, where his careless boyish years were spent, and had sunk down even to the Five Points, and there the Lord raised him up!

The Rescued Family.

"Look on this picture of joy and remember that portrait of sorrow. Behold the beauty of goodness, behold the deformity of sin."—TUPPER.

In the early part of June, 1850, shortly after the opening of the Mission-room, I observed, one Sunday morning, among the children gathered in the school, a girl of eight or nine years of age, whose innocent expression of countenance was so strongly contrasted with the bold air of most of her associates that it attracted my attention. When the school was dismissed I asked her name, and where she lived. She

seemed to shrink from the glance which I cast upon her tattered, filthy garments, and dishevelled hair.

"Do you know where the Tabernacle is?" I asked.

"O, yes; I sweep the street there sometimes, and sell mint at the hotel near it."

"Will you come to my house to-morrow morning, at No. —, near the Tabernacle? I wish to see you."

At nine o'clock the next morning she was at the door. I took her to the laundry, had her put into a tub of water, where she got a thorough ablution, and had afterward her hair well combed—an operation to which it seemed it had been months, if not years a stranger. As I had a little daughter about her age, whose clothes would fit her, I clothed her from head to foot, and when the bonnet was put upon her head the poor child looked up with a pleasant and happy expression of countenance, and broke the silence which she had maintained throughout the entire ceremony, as she exclaimed, "O, ma'am, how good I feel!" Soap and water, with clean clothes, had made a potent transformation; and the little, clean, satisfied face that looked out from the bonnet amply rewarded me. On leaving, she was told she must keep her clothes neat for the coming Sabbath, and another suit was in part provided for her. The following Sabbath she was one of the first at the Mission School, in as neat a trim as she had left me the Monday before. In the interim she had re-assumed her usual garb, to pursue her ordinary avocation, which was sweeping the street and supplying markets and hotels with mint for mint-juleps.

Little Jane's altered appearance made so favorable an impression on her associates, that I thought the rude, rough boys might be benefited by an example of cleanliness among their number. My eye again sought out and found the same innocent expression of face in an honest, well-behaved lad of

about fourteen years of age. He was so retiring and modest in his bearing, that I resolved to speak with him when school should be dismissed. I did so; invited him to my house; had him dressed; sent him to the hatter's for a cap, and had him fully prepared for the next Sabbath. Upon inquiry, I learned to my surprise that he was a brother to little Jane. The pantaloons which we had provided for him being too long, I told him to ask his mother to put a tuck in them, just where I put the pins for a mark.

The next Sabbath both the children were at the Mission School, clean and neatly dressed, but no alteration had been made in the pantaloons, the pins remaining just where I had placed them as marks for a tuck. He caught my eye as I entered, and while speaking with him I observed he was chewing tobacco. I desired him to come to my house again on the morrow. When he came I asked him if he believed I was his friend? "O yes, ma'am, I guess I do." "Then I wish you to feel, my boy, that what I say to you is the expression of my interest in your welfare, and I wish you to be open and frank with me, and answer me truly. Do not be afraid to own anything that is wrong in yourself; for I know you are surrounded by much to lead you astray."

From the look he gave me, I felt I had his confidence.

"Do you swear, Joseph?" "Yes, ma'am."

"Do you drink?" "No, ma'am."

"Do you break the Sabbath?" "Yes, ma'am, I'm afraid I do."

"Do you steal?" His no was emphasized and elongated, as with a look of almost triumphant innocence he said, "I never stole a pin in all my life."

"Well, Joseph, do you chew tobacco?" "Yes, ma'am."

"Quarrel with bad boys in the street?" "Yes; they lick me first, I pay them back, that's all."

Upon farther inquiry, I found he had been employed for two years to set up ninepins, in an alley in the basement of one of our principal hotels. For this work he received two dollars and a half a week, but the poor child was kept up nearly all night, and then sold papers to fill up his other waking hours.

When I asked him why he had not had his pantaloons made shorter, he hesitated, he seemed unwilling to answer; but on my repeating the question, with the assurance that it was no fault if he had forgotten to ask his mother, he replied, while his eye filled with tears, and his lip quivered with emotion, "My mother drinks, ma'am."

"Cannot you persuade your mother to become sober?" said I. "No, ma'am, she will not take the pledge."

I took down a book, and asked him if he could read? "Quite imperfectly," was the sensible reply.

I then read to him various incidents related in anecdotes for the young, by the late Rev. Daniel Smith, concerning the swearer, the Sabbath breaker, and the drunkard, showing him how signally God would bless even the efforts of a child to rescue a parent from intemperance. The silent tear rolled down his cheek as I urged upon him the necessity of doing all he could to free himself and family from the vices to which they were addicted; and he said most earnestly, "I won't swear any more, nor chew any more tobacco."

A few days after this promise was made, I observed Joseph again chewing. I said kindly to him, "So, Joseph, your habit of chewing was so strong you could not keep your promise." "O yes I have; I am chewing camomile flowers;" taking them from his vest pocket. He said his appetite left him when he gave up his tobacco and he was obliged to break off by this means, and he did succeed; a pattern, we think, for older heads.



"Will you take me to see your mother, Joseph?" said I, "Not to-day, ma'am, please."

"But why?" "She is not up yet; she is not sober."

"Never mind, let me go with you now; I think she will be up by the time we get there."

After much persuasion he consented. On our way down Anthony street, as if to prepare me for the wretchedness of his miserable home, he said I would find the house very dirty; but no anticipation could equal the sad reality. The entry through which I was obliged to pick my steps led to the door of a room, the air of which was almost intolerable, so offensive was the odor on opening the door. It was on the ground floor, and the crevices and holes of the broken flooring were a receptacle for the refuse food and slops. The front of the room had been used as a bar-room, but the partition had been taken down, and with it large pieces of the wall and ceiling. On a broken table, braced up against the wall to keep it from falling, lay a dog, beside a piece of bread, a dirty plate of butter, a broken tea-pot, and an iron pot with a few potatoes; a few plates, knives, and forks. Other furniture there was none, save an old chair without a back, a few dirty rags serving for bed and bed-clothes, and a broken bedstead thrown down in a drunken frolic a week before. And this was the home of those children, with their sweet, innocent faces—this was the atmosphere of physical and moral pollution in which these young creatures were being trained for eternity!

A man was seated on a bundle of old and fresh herbs, with three boys opposite him, all busily engaged tying up and arranging mint in bundles, for the markets and hotels. Could the drinkers of mint juleps, as they lifted the cup from the marble table of the gilded saloon, have seen the untold filth of the room in which the mint, gathered by the side of

the limpid brook, was prepared for their use, they would have dashed down the draught with disgust from their lips, and would never have felt an inclination to taste it again.

In the far corner of the room another scene presented itself. There lay the mother of the interesting children drunk, upon the floor. The boy, approaching her, pushed her with his foot, saying, with almost despairing earnestness in his tones, "Mother, get up; do get up; here is the lady who gave Jeannie and me our clothes; do get up." She was at length aroused by the child's appeal, and, staggering toward the mantel-piece, against which she leaned heavily, she said, "You are very good, ma'am, for what you did for my children—and I am very sick." "I think you look ill," I replied, "and I came here to see if I could do you any good." She was evidently affected at these words of kindness, but she only reiterated that she was so sick. And so she was, poor creature, with a sore and grievous sickness overpowering both body and mind; but she was to me a most interesting woman, her face indicating that she had not always been so degraded.

The man on the herbs, who had been listening to our conversation, and had not before spoken, now exclaimed, "You know you are not sick at all; you know you have been drunk all night; and I had to get the breakfast this morning my self. That is what ails her, ma'am." "Is this your husband?" I asked the woman. "Yes, ma'am; no, ma'am," she hurriedly answered. "No, ma'am; he has lived here with me since the children's father died, and he is very good to my children." "Are these three boys all your children?" "Only one; the other two lads who are bundling mint are not mine. I have but two boys and one girl. Those two boys, ma'am are orphans, whose parents died with the cholera; and they have lived here ever since, for I promised their mother to

look after them." And in all her degradation and poverty she had sheltered these orphans in her wretched home, and they accompanied the man when he went into the country to gather herbs, and assisted him to prepare them for sale; and in this way the family was supported.

I now expostulated with her on her vicious course of life. How could she, a mother, with three such very interesting children growing up around her, so debase herself? She replied, that she had no decent clothes, or they would have been married. The man, contradicting her, said that was not the case; for he had been willing several times to be married but "she would go on a spree, and then he would not have her." He added, that "if she only would keep sober, she was as respectable as any lady in New-York." I suggested, and then urged, that she should sign the pledge, and if she remained sober till after the Fourth of July, and they were still of the opinion that it would contribute to their happiness to be married, that suitable clothing should be provided, and the ceremony should take place in the Mission-room. She took the pledge and kept it: and on the evening of the 5th of July, 1850, they stood respectably arrayed in front of the altar in our Mission-room, while the missionary performed the marriage ceremony with great solemnity, and at the close gave them an instructive exhortation to be on their guard against the evils of intemperance.

They promised, as they returned home with lighter and happier hearts than they had known for many a day. A comfortable room was then procured for them. It was neatly white-washed, and furnished with the luxuries of bedsteads, bedding, chairs, and a table. A place was found for the man in a coal-yard, and the elder boy, Joseph, was placed at a trade, the younger children at school, and the orphan boys at trades.

After some months the watchful oversight of the woman was thought to be no longer necessary, and she broke her pledge. We besought her again to sign it; and, to our surprise, she not only consented to do so, but said, with a strength of resolution, "I shall now sign it as I ought: I feared my habits were too strong when I signed before, and therefore allowed you to write my name, while I put my cross under it: I feared I would break it, but now with the help of the Lord, I think I can keep it;" and she wrote her name as well as we could have written it for her; and, though nearly two years have elapsed since, yet she maintains her integrity, and has never tasted anything that could intoxicates. The husband has never broken his pledge at all, but is considered a strictly honest, sober man, and still retains his place in the coal-yard. Joseph, by his strict attention to evening school, has learned to read and write; and his employer intrusts him with every valuable article in his store, and believes him to be worthy of unlimited confidence. And as we visit them from time to time in their altered home, they show us, with great satisfaction, some addition to its comforts—a clock, bureau, and a few pictures, &c., which their savings have enabled them to purchase; and if a new dress or coat is purchased, they wish us to see it, even before it is worn, knowing how fully we rejoice in all their prosperity. At the last Thanksgiving supper, when seven hundred of the locality were fed in the mammoth tent, we invited them to be present, but Joseph replied:—"We are out of the Five Points now, and I do not wish to eat with them;" thus proving that when self respect is gained, they will not desire to live among the degraded.

This is but one of the families rescued from deep degradation through the instrumentality of the Ladies' Home Missionary Society; and there are still innocent young faces

pleading for their neglected childhood, their miserable homes, and their abandoned parents. Will not the citizens of New-York, by their liberal gifts, enable this society to carry out their plans to satisfactory issues? The Mission has a public good in view, and it looks for public sympathy and support. It endeavors to elevate the temporal condition of these poor, forlorn ones, so long uncared for, but it also aims to throw the Christian element among these degraded masses, with the strong faith that it will even here attest its divine origin and its wonder-working power—that the little leaven will leaven the whole lump.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARY D ———.

Life to life, and dust to dust!
 Christ hath bled upon a tree,
 Thine the promise, ours the trust,
 We are weak, but God is just;
Miserere Domine.

READ.

ONE Sabbath afternoon in the winter of 1852, I was looking for the residence of some of our school children, who lived at No. 2 Cow Bay. Not knowing which room in the building they occupied, I knocked at each door successively till I reached the second story front room. The door being opened I observed a very sickly looking woman shivering with an ague, sitting upon a hard bench. On enquiring the cause I found she was just recovering from a hemorrhage of the lungs, and she said the sitting posture gave her more relief. I did not doubt it, for the bed (if it might be called one) was a poor pallet on a few planks nailed against the wall to serve for a bedstead, while the scanty covering scarcely sufficed to keep her from freezing.— We were enabled from the Mission wardrobe to supply