

Alice threw her arms around her kind minister, as though she could not sever that last kind bond. But the bell rang, and placing them hurriedly in the steamboat which was to carry them to Piermont, the Missionary returned strong in faith and hope, that the Christian efforts thus put forth would in due time receive their full and adequate reward.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TWENTY-SHILLING PIECE

“‘A trifle’—granted—but on trivial things
The moral destiny of man oft turns.”

In the winter of 1850, my servant entered the parlor one evening quite late, to inform me that a man who seemed in great distress was at the front door, saying he had been sent to my address, hearing I was one of the ladies of the Home Mission. It was inconvenient for me to see the man at the time, (having a party of friends spending the evening with me,) but I felt inclined to help him, and giving the servant some money to procure his supper and lodging, I told her to bid him come to me in the morning.

Next morning he came, looking pale, sick, and emaciated. On inquiry I learned he was an Englishman, and had been induced to come to this country to dissipate the melancholy which settled upon his mind after the death of a beloved wife. He had sufficient means when he arrived (in July before) to have kept him several months, until he could have procured a

situation, but immediately on his arrival he had been seized with a disease which became chronic, and he had been obliged not only to spend all his means, but to dispose of every article of clothing, and in their stead take up a suit which was little else than rags. Almost the first question I asked, after he had given me his history, was, "Are you a strictly temperate man?" "Yes, madam, I am. You can have no proof but my word, but I am *in every sense* a strictly temperate man, although my appearance is sadly the reverse of the condition you expect to find a sober, honest man in." There was such an air of sincerity in all he said, and withal such a woe-begone expression of countenance, that I felt all the sympathy in my heart roused.

I sent to a neighbor, who had kindly offered to assist me when a true case presented, for a suit of men's clothes. They were sent, including hat, boots, &c. I gave him money for his breakfast and shaving; told him to take the clothes, and return to me again in the course of the day. He left, with great thankfulness, and about two hours afterward called again, looking like another being. I imagined he looked even in better health than in the morning. I then felt anxious to know how he found his way to the Five Points. He replied, that when his money was all spent, and nothing

remained in prospect but a death in the poor-house, he thought of some friends who had left England some years before (but who were in very reduced circumstances) that were living in New-York, somewhere. He succeeded in finding them in Anthony-street, near Cow Bay, and they kindly offered to give him a corner of their room to lie upon; but they were so poor themselves that they could do nothing more for him. He then learned that the Ladies' Home Mission would help him to clothes, and might possibly obtain a situation for him.

The more I saw of the man, the more enlisted my feelings became, and the strong intelligence which marked his conversation proved to me he had been both well-bred and educated. I inquired what business he thought he could engage in, with his weak state of health. He said he had been "an out-door clerk at home, and wrote evenings;" and his doctor had said he should try and find some out-door employment now. I asked him if he thought he could undertake to get subscribers for periodicals. He replied that that would just suit him, as he was better acquainted with books than anything else.

I gave him a twenty-shilling gold piece, (a small

sum, the reader will say, to establish a man in business,) provided him with a carpet-bag, and told him to go to Harpers' and get some of their cheap monthly issues, and get a few from Virtue's, and make the attempt, and to come to me in a few days, if he thought he could succeed, and we would help him still further. In about a week he called, but I was not at home. Months rolled on; he again called, but I was in the country.

I saw nothing more of my man, and I thought it would prove perhaps another of the many instances of ingratitude which we meet with in passing through life. But I was mistaken. On New Year's day, when friends were making their accustomed calls, a man was standing near the house waiting until a number of gentlemen passed out, when he rang the bell, gave the servant a card with his name written upon it, asking her at the same time to ascertain "if I was quite alone, as he did not wish to intrude upon company." She thought this rather a strange request for such a gentlemanly-looking man to make, but replied that I was quite alone. He came into the parlor, and I did not at first recognise him, but on his beginning at once to apologize for calling on New Year's day, I recognised his voice.

He continued, "No one madam, that calls on you

to-day calls to pay a *visit of gratitude*; I come to express mine." Expecting to hear of some efficient help from his friends, or some good fortune that had met him, I congratulated him on his improved health and appearance, and asked him what had wrought the change. I felt humbled when he told me that my poor little offering of twenty shillings had, with the blessing of God, effected it all. He then said the evening he came to our dwelling he had made up his mind to put an end to his existence if help did not come; but he had great reason to bless God, who had not only given him temporal relief, but had enabled him to call upon God in the hour of trouble, and He had heard his prayer; his heart was changed, and he owed his Maker a debt of gratitude he could never pay.

He said the Messrs. Harper treated him very kindly, and afforded him every facility in his work. And he has succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations, delivering his books in New-York, Brooklyn, and Williamsburgh. Drawing his purse from his pocket, he said, "I have not only this good suit of clothes upon me, but I have sent out money for my only son, and have saved in the year besides, forty dollars." He had paid for his lodging at his friend's, and was now boarding at a druggist's in a respectable part of the city. I

wept at his recital, and in truth it was to me the most pleasant visit of the New Year's day.

He appeared afraid to take my time, and seemed hurt when I refused to allow him to return me the money. Next spring he called on me to say his son had arrived, and he was still prospering in his business, making from twelve to fifteen dollars a week. He seemed as if he never could express his gratitude for his comforts, and read to me a letter in answer to one he had written to England expressive of his great thankfulness.

A few months after, a card accompanied by a book was left at my door, with the request that I would not pain him with the refusal of this small token of gratitude. Since then, we hear of his continued prosperity. This is but one of the many instances which have brought to light the fact that there are those living in the Five Points who have once known and seen better days; that many hundreds are virtuously poor, and that they are alive to kindness, and most grateful for our attentions to them and their children.

During the past year alone over sixty children have been placed in good homes—boys at trades, women supplied with work, and fifteen hundred have signed the temperance pledge. We, therefore, feel greatly en-

couraged, and believe our labor will not be in vain, for in due time we will reap if we faint not.

The Withered Arm.

"What good a little kindness may effect!
What pain relieve—what destiny avert!"

Passing up Cross-street one bleak winter's morning, I observed a little girl, whose appearance was so forlorn and sad, that I felt anxious to know where she lived, and what caused her intense expression of sorrow. I therefore asked her name and where she lived, and desired her to take me to see her mother. "I have no mother," she replied, "but my father lives in the attic of No. —, Cross-street, and you may go up and see him."

I followed her to the third floor, up a narrow, dirty stair-case. Knocking at the door, we were met by a man who seemed both surprised and pleased to see me in his wretched, miserable home—for home it was, although destitute of chair or table. In the middle of the room, which was about nine feet square, stood a small cylinder-stove, the pipe passing through a pane of the window. Beside the stove was a basket, containing a small supply of shavings. Upon a few dirty rags, which

covered some shavings, lay a sick boy, about five years old. Upon the stove some miserable food was cooking, the fumes of which, mingling with the smoke of pine shavings, filled the room, causing the little sufferer to cough constantly.

The father appearing to be perfectly sober, I asked him what had brought upon him this extreme destitution. He replied, "Want of work and poverty," adding that he had always got on well until his good wife died, about four years before, and then misfortune took hold of him. He had nearly lost the sight of one eye, and during the stages of its inflammation and subsequent loss, had been obliged to spend all he had earned or saved. The loss of his eye preventing him from carrying his hod, he had no other means left for his support than visiting the markets and carrying baskets for the purchasers at the stalls, his little girl going out daily to beg the food she would prepare (young as she was) for his return. Sometimes he made but 25 cents a day. I asked him if he had signed the pledge. "Yes, indeed, madam," was the reply, "more than twelve years ago, when I married my wife, I took the pledge, *and have never broken it.*" I asked him if it would not be well to let us get good places for the children, and then he could support

himself more comfortably, for I had learned in the course of conversation, that he paid a dollar a week for his wretched room, and was often left without a cent when the rent was paid. But he said nothing in the world could induce him to part with his children for he had promised his dying wife not to part with them, under any circumstances. When about leaving, I offered the girl a piece of money. I found she could not reach out the hand next to me to receive it, and that it hung powerless by her side. I took the withered arm, covered with filthy rags, and could have wept over the expression of her face when I said, "Dear girl, how did this come, and how long has your hand been so useless?" "Indeed, madam," the father replied, "she went to bed well at night; the visitation of God came, and in the morning she was just as you see her. I do not complain; but the poor dear child will never get over it; she scarcely ever smiles."

With a heavy heart I took the girl home with me the next day, had her well washed and dressed from head to foot, then had her taken to a physician, who said her arm was paralyzed, most probably from exposure and cold at night. The arm was electro-magnetized, and every pain taken to restore its use, but it was only partially restored. Subsequent visits

proved all the statements of the man to be true, and never have I seen a more touching proof of devoted parental love than in this poor man in his miserable habitation. The little boy, with care, was restored to health. The children were placed in school, and more profitable work was soon obtained for the man. But the poor children were still left daily surrounded with everything to contaminate, without any one to look after them, or to attend to the washing of their clothes. Even the comfortable clothes the Mission provided were soon so filthy that we had to take them off. On one of my visits I asked him if it would not be well for him to look out for a suitable companion who would take charge of his children, and by taking in work, be a help to him. He smiled, and said he had thought that was all that could make a man of him again in feeling; and he did know an excellent woman, who lived in New-Jersey, with whom he had been acquainted for fifteen years; and he often thought if God directed him he would like to be married to her.

Without much ceremony he visited his old friend, moved his residence, and became known by his uniform sobriety and honesty. He soon presented so good an appearance that he was made the agent of the tenement house in which he lived. He married the

choice of his heart, and now they are happy. I visit them in their new home, and find every little comfort in their dwelling; the house the perfection of neatness; the children well managed. The girl has learned both to read and write, and they often tell me very interesting histories in the Bible she has read to them. The man seems like a changed being, bright and happy. The woman assists in supporting the family by taking in sewing and washing, and although nearly three years have elapsed, I have seen a continued improvement in them all, and in no instance have felt that my confidence was misplaced, or my advice unwisely given. These people, in many instances, only want some one to tell them what to do. They need to be instructed in the very first steps toward making their condition better; and we generally find them very teachable. In some respects it would be rather hazardous to advise a man to marry in the midst of his destitution and misery; but here no other remedy could meet the case—the father obstinately refusing to allow his children to be taken from him, even if they were placed in better homes and well provided for. And any one to see them now in their comfortable home, with their neatly-furnished apartments, would say, it could not be so, if woman had not a share or hand in it.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHILDREN OF THE "FIVE POINTS."

"Alas! to think upon a child
That has no childish days,
No happy home, no counsel mild;
No words of prayer and praise!

"Man from the cradle—'tis too soon
To earn their daily bread,
And heap the heat and toil of noon
Upon an infant's head.

"To labor ere their strength be come,
Or starve—such is the doom
That makes, of many a hapless home,
One long and living tomb."

WHEN the ladies commenced their mission in this miserable locality, the hope of rescuing the children from the almost certain result of corrupt parental example was perhaps the strongest feeling that influenced them.

The children! hundreds of them with drunken fathers and drunken mothers, who made no provision for their comfort, and scarce any for their physical existence, beyond the miserable dens they called their homes, and in which, after a day of begging and per-

haps want, and after a day's exposure to every evil influence, they crept to sleep—greeted with oaths and curses, and oft-times with stripes and heavy blows! Children! precocious in self-reliance, in deceit, in every evil passion, while the better nature within them slumbered or had been destroyed because no suitable means had ever been used to vivify or awaken it!

"For here the order was reversed,
And infancy, like age,
Knew of existence but its worst,
One dull and darkened page,
Written with tears and stamped with toil,
Crushed from the earliest hour,
Weeds darkening on the bitter soil
That never knew a flower."

The ladies, with woman's instinct and woman's tact, recognized them not only as depraved little human beings, but as *children*; their young hearts beating with childish hopes and fears, with childish yearnings and desires; awake to every tone of kindness, and yet so unaccustomed to any government but that of hasty blows and brutal caprice, that it seemed almost impossible to subdue and retain them by those laws of love and gentleness which yet were the only means deemed expedient or useful. There are, however, bright exceptions. We gaze on a few sweet young faces, and smooth the silken hair of some whose appearance declares maternal care, and in the visits made we find

now and then a cleaner home, and hear all a tender mother's anxiety and thankfulness for her children expressed, and listen to tales of privation and sufferings which words could scarcely exaggerate. We also have occasionally touching illustrations of the finer shades of character, which awaken peculiar sympathy and hope. On one of the regular days for the distribution of clothing a lady was attracted by the countenance of a pale, weary-looking child about nine years of age. She carried with difficulty a large baby, more than a year old, and, although the children all around her were full of life and hilarity, she sat listless and unmused, no smile betraying childish interest or joy. On inquiry, Mrs. Luckey remarked, "That child has a drunken father who abuses her mother dreadfully, and she lives in a constant state of terror and dread." The lady resolved to watch over that little girl, and throw some sunshine over the darkened path of the drunkard's child. Closer acquaintance revealed a maturity of thought and a strength of sympathy with her suffering mother touching in the extreme. She came regularly to Sunday-school, but always, during the session, would whisper, "Mrs. Luckey, please let me run home and see how mother does—I am afraid father will come home and hurt her," &c. Her little heart seemed at

rest, and her face had an abiding look of weary despondency. After some acts of exceeding violence, the mother was obliged to complain against her husband. Maggie loved her father; for, when sober, he was kind, and she pleaded, "O mother! do not let them take him away, for what shall I do without a father?" He was committed to the Tombs, and the next morning early, Maggie took her little brother, four years of age, by the hand, went to the prison, and sat hour after hour by the window, talking to, and trying to amuse her father until his time of liberation came. Of late her countenance has brightened, and she greets the lady (who in heart adopted her) with somewhat of childish glee.

One little news-boy was found who regularly paid his drunken mother's rent out of his scanty earnings, and had remained comparatively untainted by the scenes of vice that met his every step.

The children give evidence also of bright intellect and quick perception. One afternoon a number of them had collected around the door of the "Old Brewery," waiting for the appearance of Mrs. Luckey. The rain poured in torrents, and they stood without a shelter of any kind. Mr. Luckey opened his office door, and kindly urged them to run home; that Mrs. L. was

detained by the rain, and might not arrive for some time. Turning from them, he closed the door; but, quick as the lightning's flash, his ear was greeted by the full chorus of one of their hymns,

"We'll stand the storm, it won't be long,
We'll anchor by and bye,"

and they stood it until Mrs. Luckey appeared, and anchored them by a good fire, and applied the hymn they had so sweetly sung.

The Dying Girl.

"She lay down in her poverty
Toil stricken though so young,
And words of human sorrow
Fell trembling from her tongue.

There were palace homes around her;
And pomp and pride swept by
The poor deserted chamber
Where she lay down to die."—MANY HOW

THE work of *faith* is blessed; but when the fruit is permitted soon to appear, we may and ought to rejoice with exceeding joy. Amid many discouragements, we have always been comforted and strengthened by the success of the Sabbath school; and as our children are

one after another translated into heaven from their comfortless homes on earth, we exult in imagination of the mighty contrast from the dreary cellars and garrets of the Five Points, to the radiant paradise of God; from the neglect of callous and degraded human hearts, to the eternal and everflowing love of their redeeming God; from hunger, and weariness, and pain to that glorious land of which it is written, "*there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.*" Several children have died during the past year. In each instance the little books given in the Sunday school had been treasured and enjoyed. During their illness the hymns they had learned were constantly repeated and sung, and one little spirit passed away in the very utterance of those cheering words, "There is a happy land."

This hymn takes special hold on every young heart far more than any other we have ever tried to teach. Why? Is it the utter absence of everything that makes childhood happy in the present, that leads them thus early to anticipate that future? or does God open to those destined early to pass from these miserable scenes of earth, a vista through which they perceive, with more than childish vision, the beauty of that happier

land to which they are hastening? We know not; but the fact is evident, that the hymn has a powerful and peculiar charm.

On the first Sabbath the school opened, a timid-looking girl, about 12 years of age hovered around the door. She resisted every effort to induce her to enter, generally fleeing as soon as she was spoken to, to her home in the Old Brewery, where she lived with a wretched, drunken mother. At times the teachers pursued her with words of kindness, but in vain. After some time, of her own accord, she entered, and immediately became an attentive and interested scholar. Months rolled away and her improvement became evident, but being retiring and reserved we could learn but little of her feelings.

Last winter it was announced that Mary was ill, and she was visited in her wretched home. We found her in bed in a corner of a large room, where at least twenty persons were accommodated at night, and where cooking and eating was done for and by all. She did not seem sick but she would not rise, nor eat, nor scarcely speak. It was ascertained that grief for her wretched mother and her own forlorn condition were pressing her to the grave, yet she resisted all wishes to remove her to the hospital, and thus separate her from her

mother. She was supplied with needful things, was comforted and encouraged, and for a little time seemed to rally, and crept, pale and sad looking into the Mission room.

Soon however, it became apparent that she was failing fast. She had been removed to a comfortable room, and was continually visited by Mr. and Mrs. Luckey, and other friends of the Mission.

A friend who visited her one day, after conversing on spiritual things, asked, "Is there anything you would like to have, Mary?" She shook her head, and said "Nay." "Can't you think of anything; I will get you whatever you wish," (thinking, perhaps her sickly appetite might be craving some of the luxuries of life.) Again a languid negative was given. Her kind friend still lingered, and suddenly the color mounted to the pale face, a look full of animation succeeded the languid glance, the thin lip quivered, and she exclaimed, "O, yes, I want one thing," and raising herself in the bed, reiterated, "I want one thing." "What is that, Mary, I promise you, you shall have it?" A moment's pause, and the answer came, "I want you to bring some of the Sunday school children here, and let them sing for me. O, will you?"

The Sunday, after the request was granted; and the exquisite enjoyment written on that pale suffering face, the tearful eye, and the unspoken gratitude, formed a scene for a painter to witness and pourtray. "There is a happy land," was the favorite hymn, and many times since then has the only wish she has expressed been thus gratified. She is slowly fading away; she converses but little, but when we speak of the Saviour her color rises and her eyes fill with tears. She says she is trusting in Christ, and those who know her best have full confidence that our God is thus gently preparing her to enter the "happy land."

In her home of poverty, amid her many privations, sinking in langour and pain, she utters no complaint, nor breathes one earthly wish. Thank God for the wondrous power of his redeeming grace to strengthen and to satisfy!

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHILDREN.

"Who bids for the little children
Body and soul and brain;
Who bids for the little children—
Young and without stain?
'I bid,' said Beggary, howling,
'I'll buy them one an' all,
I'll teach them a thousand lessons—
To lie, to skulk, to crawl.'

"And I'll bid higher and higher,
Said Crime, with wolfish grin,
'For I love to lead the children
Through the pleasant paths of sin.
They shall swarm in the streets to plifer,
They shall plague the broad highway,
Till they grow too old for pity,
And ripe for the law to slay.'

"Oh shame!" said true Religion,
'Oh, shame that this should be
I'll take the little children—
I'll take them all to me
I'll raise them up with kindness
From the mire in which they've trod,
I'll teach them words of blessing,
I'll lead them up to God.' "