

Mission House; precious stones, gathered from deep caverns of crime, yawning abysses of iniquity—needing to be “cleared of the dark incrustations of sin,” and to be “fretted” and polished, that they may shine in that day when the Lord of Hosts maketh up his jewels.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAYNOOTH PRIEST.

THE experience of those who visit at the Five Points, is singularly varied and interesting. Some new phase of human life is continually presented—not always portraying the gradations of vice, and leading us step by step to the lowest point that fallen humanity can reach; not merely relieving the dark picture by a faint flash, which seems only to reveal what might have been, if purer influences had sooner exerted their power, and which was not, because the Christian Church had failed to perform its appropriate work here, until hundreds of adults were hardened in vice, and scores of children blighted in their opening years.

Not always are pictures such as these permitted to agonize the Christian hearts, who, in the providence of God, are called to labor in this fearful place.

Ever and anon, amid this desert waste, is discovered an oasis so green and so refreshing, that the desponding laborer, gazing on the scene, feels new life rushing

through his exhausted spirit, reviving him afresh, for the continued path of painful effort.

This chapter will illustrate our meaning. We leave the openly vicious, whose lives have been reformed through the influences issuing from the Mission. We forget the drunkard, the swearer, and the gambler, and turn to the moral man, who, with a cultivated intellect, and an irreproachable character, was brought in the providence of God, from a far country, to the Five Points, there to learn that morality is not religion; there to be made a partaker of that inward life, for which he had sought through many weary years. It is pleasant to trace his onward course of usefulness, and leave him in the strength of his manhood, occupying a sphere, which in the language of a poet,

"Might fill an angel's heart,
And filled a Saviour's hands."

Then we depict the strangest sight of all. A Christian, sick, aged and in utter poverty, living in the Five Points—strong in hope, triumphant in faith, irreproachable in life, powerful in example, victorious in death. "'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange," and we pause and wonder before these varied manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power, of the wondrous adaptation of

redemption's glorious plan to man, irrespective of country, name, and all those adventitious circumstances which so affect human judgment and human estimation. The second year of the Mission opened amid many difficulties and trials. The bold idea of purchasing 'the old Brewery,' had not yet been uttered except in the form of a suppressed wish, which it seemed extravagant to cherish; and the germ of all the embarrassments, which in succeeding months gathered darkly around us, was even then unfolding; creating an atmosphere so dim, that the eye of faith alone could look beyond it, and discern the star of Bethlehem pointing us onward to that visible manifestation of the Saviour's power and glory in this benighted place, the hope of which had inspired us to attempt a Mission here, and sustained us thus far in our weary work.

While sending abroad our temporal charities, as far and wide as our limited means would permit, the main design of the Mission was never for a moment forgotten. What though the drunkard was reformed, the vicious reclaimed, the idle supplied with work? What though the children were gathered into school, and their miserable parents in some degree influenced by the kindness thus shown? While all this was effected, in numberless instances, time was giving place to eter-

nity. Together, the Christian laborers and the hardened sinners were hurrying to the judgment seat. The soul, the immortal soul, encased in the diseased and loathsome body, and almost benumbed under the combined pressure of ignorance and sin, seemed ever to utter a low and plaintive cry for rescue and for aid, to those who were rejoicing in the personal consciousness of a present and Almighty Saviour—and stronger and yet stronger grew the resolve, that no plan of outward success, no prospect of worldly popularity, no rapid advance of visible improvement, should for one moment usurp the place, or occupy the time of those direct, religious influences, which alone can work the abiding moral renovation of the undying spirit.

Prominent among the religious meetings thus sedulously maintained, was the class-meeting, but so modified to suit the existing want of the people that the original idea of its institution was almost lost; for it was not the meeting together of Christians to compare the actual experience of renewed hearts, and to receive encouragement and instruction from a leader in advance of them in deep spiritual knowledge. It was more properly an inquiry-meeting, where the ignorant, the superstitious, or the half awakened sinner came to ask questions, to propose doubts, to admit increasing

light, and to be led from the first dawn of spiritual day, into the noontide brightness of conscious personal salvation.

One Sunday morning, the Mission-room was filled, as usual, with rescued children, and attentive adult listeners. The Missionary preached from, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He explained simply and solemnly the nature of true repentance, its necessity, and the fearful results of neglecting it.

While enforcing the subject, his eye rested upon a countenance he had not seen before. It was that of a respectable looking man, in the prime of life. It indicated deep and troubled thought, but as visitors were frequent at the Mission, and his whole appearance seemed to show that he did not belong to that region, the natural conclusion was, that he was a casual, though deeply interested visitor. The time and place of the class-meeting were announced, and a general invitation was given to all anxious on the subject of religion to attend.

The evening came, and in the little Mission room were assembled from twenty to thirty ignorant and degraded men and women. In some, curiosity had been the predominant motive; in others, a vague alarm had been awakened; in some, the influence of earlier

years were asserting their power; in others, the spirit of true repentance was revealing the past, and awakening a faint hope for the future. As the Missionary glanced over his little flock to take anew the gauge of their necessities, he saw the stranger who had attracted his notice on the preceding Sabbath. He was there in that little, simple meeting. Who was he? What brought him there? thought the Missionary, too much accustomed, however, to strange things to feel more than a momentary hesitation. The hymn was sung, the prayer uttered, the usual testimony elicited, suitable advice given to all who were in the habit of attending, and the Missionary accosted the stranger.

He arose, and in a calm and impressive manner, made (in substance) the following remarks: "I was brought up a Roman Catholic. I was for many years a priest in that communion, but several years ago through the reading of the Holy Scriptures, I became convinced that neither the doctrine nor the practice of that Church is in accordance with the word of God. I left it, and have ever since been seeking after light and rest. I left my native country, and am here a stranger in a strange land. Last Sunday, sir, I heard you preach. You explained the nature of true repen-

tance. With exceeding power, the question was forced upon my mind, Have I repented? I felt I had not, according to that rule. You spoke of forgiveness of sins, and the consciousness of pardon. I saw there was an experience I had never known. I had professed for years to forgive the sins of others, and I felt that hour, that mine were not forgiven. You enforced the text that *all* would perish, except they repented. I saw I was among the number, and I became alarmed. I went home to read, and think, and pray, but the conviction continues. I am alarmed to-night. What must I do, Sir, to obtain rest and safety? I came here to be instructed in these important truths." He sat down, and for some moments silence prevailed. The Missionary was praying for "the wisdom that is profitable to direct." A conversation then ensued. Feelings were expressed, difficulties stated, and explanations given. The plan of redemption was simply unfolded, and passages of Scripture marked for examination and for proof. They parted, with the mutual agreement to pray earnestly for the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit, until they should meet again.

For weeks, a similar course was pursued. On the Sabbath he was a wrapt and prayerful listener. In the temperance meetings, he exerted all his influence, and in

the class-meeting, he narrated his struggles and his desires. His manner was singularly calm and quiet. He would give the most perfect analysis of his emotions, compare them with the word of God, note where they were in accordance with it, and where they came short of its requirements. But to his own perception, this seemed a mere intellectual process. He complained that he did not feel, while the Missionary and his wife, who were sympathizing with him at every step, saw clearly, that while light increased, his spirituality increased also, and that he was gradually approaching that point where the witness of acceptance would seal the perfect consecration, and the consciousness of adoption fill him with joy unspeakable. Three months passed by; for occasionally he was impeded by harassing doubts and fears. "Justification by faith" was a mystery not yet grasped. He saw clearly his need of a Saviour. He recognized Jesus as that Saviour. He rejoiced in the redemption accomplished for the world. He believed that he was included in it, but the simple reliance of the soul upon Christ, as a personal present Saviour, was not yet exercised. The transition point was not yet passed.

Some months previous to this, a youth connected with the Sabbath School of the Mission, had been taken

ill, and was now about to die. Peace reigned in his heart, and Heaven was opening before him. A summons came to the Missionary to visit him once more, and he invited his anxious friend to accompany him. Together they stood beside that bed of death. The wasted, pallid face grew bright at their approach, and to the Missionary's question, "How do you feel now, Thomas?" came forth the triumphant response: "Oh, I am happy, Mr. Luckey. I feel I am going home. My sins are all forgiven, praise, praise the Lord." They bowed in prayer and praise, and then, having an engagement, the Missionary immediately left. His companion remained beside the dying lad. Weak and exhausted, he lay motionless, with his eyes closed, looking as though the vital spark was even then extinguished. Solemn and varied were the thoughts that occupied that watcher's mind, and filled his heart with almost uncontrollable emotion. Not that the scene in all respects was new. He had stood beside scores of death beds, and heard confessions, and given absolution, and applied holy oil. He had seen souls trembling on the verge of Purgatory, and shrinking in utter dread from the undefined process which was to prepare them eventually for a distant Heaven; and he had soothed them with the promise of innumerable masses which were to redeem them from

the bondage of another sphere. But in the clear light which had lately shone into his mind, he saw that this was not the truth. He saw that earth was the place where redemption was achieved, and where victory was promised. In the Bible he had read, "O, death, where is thy sting, O, grave, where is thy victory!" "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And here, before his eyes was a living, yet dying exemplification of these glorious truths. He saw clearly that Christ was indeed a Saviour—an Almighty Saviour. The triumphant words of the dying lad were ringing in his ears, "I am happy. I am going Home. My sins are all forgiven." Unconsciously, his personal confidence was increasing, and faith and hope were gaining ascendancy over doubt and fear. He sat gazing on the boy. Suddenly the closed eye opened, and fastened its earnest gaze upon him, and with supernatural energy, the dying lad exclaimed, "Mr. —, are your sins forgiven? Is Christ your Saviour?" The dim eye closed again, and the mortal put on immortality. "Is Christ your Saviour?" the question echoed through that gazer's heart. Rapidly his mind surveyed the past, the present, and the future. The fulness and freeness of redeeming grace opened to his spiritual vision. His weary

heart reposed itself on Christ. The witness of acceptance was clearly and joyously experienced, and he exclaimed,—“O, yes. I feel He is my Saviour. O, Thomas, would that you had lived till I could have told you so!”

The work was done, and the man stood forth a redeemed and willing Agent. To find a proper sphere of action was now the question which he naturally referred to his Christian friends. Many difficulties arose. Those who did not know the minutæ of his history were afraid he might be insincere—he might be a Jesuitical teacher. But the Missionary knew better. He knew how gradually and thoughtfully that “inner work” had been accomplished, and he had daily evidence that it was deep and thorough. He stood surety for him, and Mr. — was employed by the American Bible Society, as Agent in various places, and by the American and Foreign Christian Union, as colporteur and reader. This general work did not satisfy him. His heart yearned for the communion in which he had found light and peace, and he wrote to Mr. L., stating his difficulties and wishes.

The influence of his spiritual father was again exerted. He was introduced into the — Conference and he is now the pastor of a charge in a neighboring state.

A sphere seems opening before him, which, if he lives to fill successfully, will reveal with sunlight clearness why he was brought to the Five Points, there to have his deepest sympathies for the Mission enlisted, and to feel a tie to his spiritual birth-place, stronger than that which binds him to ease, fame, or a more honorable position among men.

The facts contained in the above sketch were perfectly familiar to many. But to make assurance doubly sure, the writer addressed a letter to the Rev. Mr. —, requesting information on some points. We give his answer, even at the risk of repetition, as confirmatory of many facts, particularly those public ones which are known to many, and must be interesting to all.

Dec. 10, 1853.

In compliance with your request, I hasten to give you a sketch of the history of my past life, in the hope that it may, in some measure, contribute to advance the interests of the "Mission."

I was born in Ireland, in the town of C—, County of M—, and Province of Connaught. From my childhood I had been intended for the Romish Priesthood. I was accordingly educated for that profession; was in due time sent by the then Bishop of the Diocese (Killala) to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth; finished my Collegiate course therein; was "ordained" in

College, and immediately after was sent by the Bishop to Dean L.'s parish with full power and *extraordinary* jurisdiction, to officiate there as Roman Catholic Priest. I said extraordinary—for while no other priest in the Diocese had the power of absolving in the confessional any man or woman who was guilty of the *awful* crime of going into a Protestant House of worship, during (they would not say *Divine*) service, I had, as I then foolishly imagined, the power of absolving in such a case. That is called a "reserved case," because it is *reserved* to the Bishop. I have made a digression from my subject, for the purpose of letting the reader know the reason why my Catholic countrymen are so much afraid of entering any of our Meeting-Houses on the Sabbath day. But to return. I officiated as Priest for the space of eight years—reading masses, hearing confessions, giving absolutions, enjoining penances, giving the Eucharist, banishing the Devil out of tubs full of pure water by reading certain Latin prayers over them, and throwing in some salt, and then sprinkling the people with the same, or, in other words with "*Holy Water*," anointing, not the *sick*, but the *dying*, giving them the "*Viaticum*," and reading masses for the repose of their souls, after their death. For a considerable time before the expiration of the period above named, I was harassed and perplexed with doubts, in reference to Transubstantiation and priestly absolution. I endeavored to shake them off by falling

back on the "Infallibility" of *The Church*, and, as I was bound to do in such a case, by going to confession; and in that tribunal, it was invariably decided that my doubts were a temptation of the Devil! but all this did not remove them, for though sometimes checked by the various restraints imposed upon me, they were sure to return with renewed force. In this state I spent many sleepless nights and wearisome days, till at length, by frequent and attentive reading of the Bible, I found myself in good faith, constrained, though reluctantly, to come to the conclusion that these doctrines not only had no foundation in the word of God, but were repugnant thereto. This being the case, and therefore, not being able, conscientiously or consistently, to remain any longer in "Mother Church," I resolved to leave, and accordingly did so, and joined the Church of England, in connexion with which I was, after some time, appointed curate in my native town. This of itself is proof positive that my previous moral character was unexceptionable, and also that the step which I had so lately taken must have proceeded from conviction alone, in the absence of any other motive whatever. As it appears to me to be of the utmost importance to establish this point, I here give the words of the Church of England Minister himself, whose assistant I had been:—

"The Rev.—, who was for many years a priest in the Church of Rome, officiated by permission of the

Lord Bishop of Tuam, as assistant to me for more than a year in this parish.

"RICH'D ST. GEORGE,
Vicar of Killala, Ireland.

"August 12th, 1850."

I sent Rev. R. St. George a written resignation of my curacy, and then had a far wider field for work, for I was soon invited by Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodist ministers, far and near, to preach in their respective churches; and I did so, and have been instrumental, I trust, in doing much good by preaching in the Irish language to hundreds of Romanists, who could not be reached in any other way. I subsequently began to hold meetings in the rural districts amongst the Roman Catholics, on week-day evenings, and continued to preach in three different places on the Sabbath. At length being left to my own resources almost entirely for maintenance, and being a very poor hand at making my wants known to those who would be ready to assist me with pecuniary aid, I came to the determination of setting out for America. Accordingly I left Ireland in April, 1851, and sailed from Liverpool for New York. I arrived here without suffering in any way from the voyage, not having been even sea-sick; and found difficulties in my way, for some time, by reason of not being then connected with any particular section of the Church of Christ; but after some time, I had to say

with the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O, my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

Having heard of the Mission at the Five Points, and what was being done there in the cause of Temperance and the Gospel, I went thither, became acquainted with Brother Luckey, then the Ladies' Missionary in that place, and the more I saw of him the better I liked him. I heard him preach on the ensuing Sabbath, assisted in keeping drunken men and women from talking during sermon, and children from pulling each other by the hair. I endeavored to get every one of the degraded and abandoned creatures in the shape of human beings, to sign the pledge, and pray to God to give them grace and strength to keep it. I attended the prayer-meetings and class-meetings while in New York. It was here I was led to see and feel that during the time past I had been only drawing a line of demarcation between truth on one hand and error on the other, but that I never really experienced the love of God in my heart before; never up to that time knew anything of the power of religion in the soul. Instead of preaching to others, I now began to preach to myself, and to read, meditate and pray. While I thus continued to progress in spirituality, I did what I could to promote the religion whose power I then felt, among all those with whom I came in contact, especially in that part of the city. I have been successively and successfully employed by the Rockland County Bible Society, as their agent in that county; by the American Bible Society in New

York at Staten Island; by the American Foreign and Christian Union, in Norfolk County, Mass., and am now pastor of the M. E. Church. In all these stations I have discharged my duty faithfully and fearlessly, "being strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."

Yours respectfully,

G.——"

The Rich Poor Man.

"How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is man!"

In the fall of 1851, my attention was called to an old man, who had taken a seat in the Mission room. His whole appearance bore the marks of respectability, although his clothing was very common, and the cane upon which he leaned for support, was but a rude stick. He was evidently in declining health, but his face seemed the index of patient resignation. For several succeeding Sabbaths he continued to come, and one day I resolved to follow the old man home, unnoticed by him. He walked slowly up Anthony street, till he passed Centre. When a few doors above, he went down a crooked pair of steps, to the basement

of an old house. I waited till he had entered, and then knocked at the door. It was opened by a pleasant-faced Irish woman, who bade me come in. "Have you any children who do not attend Sabbath-school?" I asked, (this being the question we often put when visiting strangers in this locality.) "No, ma'am; this is all I have," holding up her infant for my admiration. I spoke to the child, while at the same time I took a survey of the apartment. It was not a large room, yet four bedsteads were placed against its sides, with no division or compartment, save a strip of muslin. Reader! this was a *boarding house*, of rather a better class than many we witness in the Five Points, for it had the luxury of bedsteads, which, if I might judge from their appearance, had comfortable beds upon them. I found it was near dinner time; the boarders were expected home. *One had arrived*, and had taken his seat upon a bench, and was opening a Bible. *It was our old friend from the Mission room.* "You read the Bible, I see," said I, addressing the old man. "Is it a favorite book with you, sir?" "Oh, yes, indeed," he replied, while his eyes filled with tears; "*it is all I have* in this world. It is my *treasure*. Nothing is left me in this world but this." The woman continued, "Yes, he seems to take great comfort in his

reading, but though I don't think just as he does," said the in a low tone of voice, "yet it seems to be his greatest comfort, and makes him very happy, though he is so poorly." "Do you board here?" I asked. "I lodge here when I can pay a shilling a night, and that dear, good woman," pointing to the hostess, "gives me nearly all I need to eat." "Indeed, ma'am," said the woman, "I think it is a pity for such an old man to be without a home, poor creature; and I tells him to be aisy, for my boarders all love him,—the creature, he is so harmless." "But the *Lord* opens my way all the time," said this aged saint, "I have been down the street aways, to hear Mr. Luckey, the Missionary, preach, and I like him much; and he is good to me. And a lady has given me some money; see here," showing twenty-five cents, "this is all I need, and this has she done three times. The *Lord* reward her." Fearing I was intruding upon their dining hour, (for the food seemed already to be served from the stove,) I was about taking my leave; but the woman bade me stay, and I was glad of the opportunity; as it enabled me to gather a little of the old man's history. He said, "I have served God from my youth. I can scarcely recollect when I did not love him, and he has never left me nor forsaken me. Poor health, and a broken fortune in Ireland,

induced me, at the request of friends, to come to this country in search of a son, who had left Ireland a number of years before, and, though I failed continually in health, and though I have not succeeded in finding my son, yet God has not left me one moment. My feet were led to this neighborhood; and subsequently my ear caught the sound of singing at the Mission room, and surely God's hand was in this direction. I am *rich*. I do not heed these poor wants of the body, for I am always supplied. I have need of nothing." "Oh, the thankful creature!" interrupted the Irish woman. "Yes, ma'am, I have need of nothing; for the Lord is with me. He is my companion by day and night. The streams of mercy and salvation are always full." My heart swelled with emotion; tears flowed from my eyes, as I looked upon this humble, patient, expectant heir of salvation. I said, as I left, "Oh, the *riches* of God's grace; this is the strongest proof of abiding, lively faith I have ever witnessed." We visited him often, and in the Missionary he found a good friend who assisted in supplying his temporal wants. He began to fail more rapidly, and it was thought advisable to remove him to a room in the "Old Brewery," where he would have more quiet, and where a person could be in attendance upon him. The Missionary

had a little room partitioned off from a large apartment for old "Father Best," as we used to call him; and the wardrobe supplied comfortable pillows and blankets. And when the aged saint was put in his quiet room, such a strain of thanksgiving as ascended thence, was never heard before in the Old Brewery. *There*, where a few months before, nothing met the ear but the most awful curses and blasphemies, where none but thieves and assassins frequented, *there* lay an heir of God, a joint heir of the Redeemer of the world, from whom the high praises of his God were continually ascending. His gratitude was most touching. "It is more than I deserve. I do not wish any thing more. It is more than my Master had; less will answer me. You give me pain by the trouble you take," were the replies, continually given to our desires to help him. The strong faith and confidence that had supported him through many years of privation and suffering were eminently triumphant now. To our enquiries as to his spiritual enjoyment as he declined, he would answer, "God is *good*; he is sweetly near. Soon, I shall dwell with him forevermore." The Bible seemed all his own. He had been so constant a reader of its truths, that he seemed to know every promise it contained, and rested on them most unwaveringly,

and as he had been taught by the Holy Spirit, to appropriate them to himself. "I am nothing," said he to me, during the last conversation I had with him, "but Christ is my rock—he is my all and in all."

On the Thursday preceding his death, he seemed so far spent that his friends thought he was dying, and we surrounded his bed side. "Father Best, you are about to leave us." "No! I shall be here a few days longer. If I have a wish, it is that I may enter the house of my rest on Sabbath morning, the morning of my Redeemer's resurrection."

That wish was gratified. A few days passed on, and in the midnight stillness which preceded the Sabbath's dawn, were heard from that rudely constructed room, the exclamations, "Almost gone!"—"Glory be to God!" "The promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus." "My Redeemer, my everlasting portion." Gradually he sunk, but the lamp of life continued to flicker until *six of the clock* proclaimed it to be indeed the day on which the Saviour burst the bars of death; then exclaiming, while the light of heaven rested on his countenance, "I knew I should enter into rest on the Lord's day," his triumphant spirit passed the portals of the skies. A neat coffin was provided, and a grave secured in

Greenwood, where his earthly remains were left to repose until summoned by the archangel's trump.

During his illness he had expressed much solicitude respecting that part of his family whom he had left in Ireland, with the expectation that they would soon follow him to this country. When it became evident that he was sinking, and that they would no more meet on earth, he expressed a strong desire that some of the friends would write to them, and tell them that the promises of God had all been verified in his experience, and that now when every earthly support was failing, the rock on which he had built his hopes for eternity, stood firm beneath him; and that although they would never meet again on earth, he confidently expected to meet them all in heaven. After his decease, that letter was written to his wife in Ireland, and very soon an answer was returned by his widow, expressing the warmest thanks for the kindness which had been shown to her suffering husband, and praying that heaven's richest blessings might rest on those who had thus administered comfort to the dead, and to the living.