

XXXII.

INCIDENTS IN CITY EVANGELIZATION.

THE NEW YORK CITY MISSION. — ORIGIN OF THE WORK. — THRILLING INCIDENTS. — TEMPERANCE IN A RUM SALOON. — RESCUE OF THE DESTITUTE. — A SOLDIER IN TROUBLE. — A YOUNG MAN'S STORY. — NOT EASILY DISCOURAGED. — A MISSIONARY'S DAILY WORK. — A FOOL ANSWERED ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY.

ORIGIN OF THE WORK.

THE New York City Mission, though not under that name, was founded February 19, 1827. Into this was merged the Young Men's Tract Society, which was formed in 1825. The work of the society for two years was to supply with tracts the shipping, markets, humane and criminal institutions, and the outskirts of the city. In June, 1832, a new feature in the work was introduced, especially by the lamented Harlan Page. It was the concentrated effort and prayer for the *salvation of individuals*. This gave directness and efficiency to the society, and missionaries were employed to labor in the destitute wards of the city. From November, 1834, to 1866, the number of regular missionaries increased from twelve to forty-five. The work among the New York poor and neglected has

continued for forty years. The society now employs forty-six missionaries, with twenty stations. These men, during the past year, have made about one hundred and twenty thousand visits to the neglected homes of the city, have reached fifty-three thousand nine hundred families, and have distributed nearly two millions of tracts in twelve different tongues. Walking through the lanes and by-ways of the city, they persuade multitudes to go to the house of God and to the Sunday school. Their work among neglected and vagrant boys and girls is very successful. Temporary relief has been afforded to the needy, and employment found for the stranger. Friendless girls — and they are counted by thousands — have been led to homes of security and protection. Fallen women have been led back to the path of rectitude, and over ten thousand have been led to attend some place of public worship. Young men have been enlisted in the mission work; religious reading has been furnished to police stations and the rooms of firemen; and this presents but a feeble view of the work of all shades and hues that the lowly demand, and these devout and self-denying men perform.

THRILLING INCIDENTS.

No book of romance could be made as thrilling as one filled with the details of real life among the destitute poor of New York. Men and women come here from all the cities and towns of the Union and the world. They come for hope of gain; to make a fortune; to get a livelihood, and to hide their characters in the wilderness of this great people. Many bring with them a little money, and hope to increase their

store. Many are seduced from home by offers of employment. Many come under promises of marriage. Sickness, bad society, sudden temptation and crime plunge them into want. Many sincerely repent, but are not able to escape from the mire into which they have fallen. The arm of the benevolent and the religious must help and rescue the fallen. In the thousands of visits that missionaries pay, facts that thrill the heart and move the compassion are daily gathered.

TEMPERANCE IN A RUM SALOON.

In a saloon where tracts had been previously left without opposition, the keeper said to the assistant, "I wish you and your tracts were in hell; you have made my customers crazy; you have injured my business." This was said with oaths and curses. As the visitor left the house, a man followed him, who said, "That bar-keeper told some truth. I was a hard drinker; within six months I have spent five hundred dollars in his house; but since I read your tracts I have quit drinking, and spent my time in seeking my soul's salvation." He stated that three others had followed his example, and they went together to church on the Sabbath.

As the assistant was crossing the Brooklyn ferry, he was accosted by a genteelly-dressed man, who said, "I believe you are the person who, in August last, took a wretched, bloated drunkard into the mission in Greenwich Street. After he signed the pledge, you gave him some clothing, and money to pay his fare to Brooklyn." The assistant remembered such a case. "Well," said the man, "I am that man. Leaving you, I went to my old employer, told him I had signed the pledge, and

asked him to try me again. With many fears he took me back. I thank God that by his grace I have kept my pledge, and gained my employer's confidence. I am now a member of the church, and an officer in the Sabbath school."

RESCUE OF THE DESTITUTE.

A Christian lady, riding from Newark to New York, met in the cars a girl in distress, and on reaching the city, she led her to the mission. The girl's story was briefly this: She was a German orphan, sixteen years old, at service in Erie, Pa. Another girl had persuaded her to go with her to New York, where, she was told, she could live without doing much work. Having money on hand, saved from her earnings, she agreed to go; and they started together. At Dunkirk, in the changing of cars, they became separated, and this girl remained and took the next train. A respectable looking woman in the same car, seeing her weep, tendered her sympathy, and told her she lived in New York, and would take her to a good place. On their arrival at Jersey City, she took the cars for Newark, N. J., where they put up at a public house, and occupied the same room for the night. When the girl awoke in the morning, her money, and her clothing, and her friend were gone. She could not leave her room; she was completely stripped. The wife of the hotel-keeper had compassion on her, and gave her an old dress and a ticket to this city. Her experience among strangers had made her anxious to return home. The funds needful to clothe her comfortably and procure a passage ticket to Erie were raised, and in a few days

she left for home, grateful that she had been providentially saved from ruin. She returned to the family she left, and in writing, says, "I think the Lord led me to your mission to convert me."

A SOLDIER IN TROUBLE.

Being requested to visit a needy family, the missionary hastened to the place given as their abode. This was in an upper room of an old tenant-house. On inquiry, he found it to be the family of one who had fought under the stars and stripes. He had been discharged from the service. His wife was confined to her bed by sickness, and was so feeble as to be seemingly but just alive. Three small but interesting children were shivering over a scanty fire. The soldier-husband and father acted as nurse and housekeeper. His room, both in order and cleanliness, gave evidence that he was one of those who could turn his hand to almost everything. Generous persons placed means in the hands of the missionaries for benevolent purposes, and the family was relieved. Spiritual as well as temporal ministrations were thankfully received, and the missionary always found a welcome.

A YOUNG MAN'S STORY.

"In September, 1857, I left my country home to seek my fortune in the metropolis of the nation, willing to work at anything that Providence should place in my way, unmindful what it might be. Upon my arrival here, the crisis was just beginning to tell with fearful effect upon all classes. Persons in almost every branch of industry were thrown out of employment, and even

the best known and most skilful found it difficult to obtain work at the then greatly reduced rates of compensation. I had previously worked at a trade, but leaving before my time had expired I was not entitled to a recommendation, nor did I get one. I had recourse to Mr. — the missionary's kind offices. I called on him, stated my case, and after he had listened to my story, he concluded to give me a recommendation, in substance as follows:—

"This is to certify that I believe — to be a faithful, honest, and industrious boy, and that I take great pleasure in recommending him to any person who may need his services, feeling satisfied that all work given him will be performed to the best of his ability."

"With this in my pocket, I again went forth, and soon succeeded in obtaining work at the miserable pittance of a dollar and a half per week, in a large manufactory where they were making a new article, on which the profits were at least a hundred per cent. I worked there for eighteen months, and the largest sum I obtained was two dollars and a half per week. During this time my winter evenings were spent in reading and at night school, never going to a place of amusement of any kind but once in all that time. In this way I became more perfect in my education, and, when fortune smiled on me I found myself reasonably competent to meet its duties; and commencing in my position at a salary of nine dollars per week, it has gone on increasing until now it is two thousand dollars a year. Many times during the last nine years I had promised myself the pleasure of calling on and thanking the kind giver of that recommendation, to which I owe my

present success ; but through some means or other my good intentions were not carried into execution in time to see my generous friend on earth, and I can show my gratitude in no better way than in aiding the good work in which he was engaged, which I propose doing in proportion to my means."

NOT EASILY DISCOURAGED.

The quarter just closing has had its usual measure of labor, disappointments, and success. A man with very bad clothes and worse habits had the good fortune to meet our assistant, who not only supplied his most pressing wants, but took him also under the shelter of his roof. Abusing the kindness of his benefactor, the man one day came home intoxicated, and instead of turning him from the door, Jason, full of patience and benevolence, shut him up in the garret. After much salutary counsel and judicious treatment he was induced to enter the army, where he faithfully served, until, being wounded, he was compelled to return. Upon his recovery he reënlisted, and, as a member of an invalid corps, is still in service. The second time he left the city he begged brother Jason to pray for him continually — a request that has been faithfully met. From time to time he has sent his earnings home, until there are five hundred dollars saved. Better than this, he has begun to lay up for himself treasure in heaven. As he had it in his heart to be a Christian, he thought he must stop smoking, and expressive of his determination he sent to his friend as vile a package as was ever transmitted by express — a quantity of tobacco and the stump of an old pipe. In a letter just received, he

says, "You will be glad to know that I sat down to the table of our Lord on the first Sabbath in June, having made profession of my faith."

A MISSIONARY'S DAILY WORK.

Like his experience, the duties of a city missionary are at times very peculiar. This is true, at least, whenever he has to convert a butcher's shop into a mission station. For example, he begins the day at an early hour, and is occupied with things ordinary and extraordinary until ten. He then goes over to James Pyle's to beg a box of soap ; and, glad at the success of his errand, he runs two or three blocks on his way back, out of mere forgetfulness. Now he has directions to give some workmen waiting to receive him ; a conversation with the gas-fitter, and a conference with the carpenter, which is presently interrupted by the woman who has come to clean, declaring that nothing worth naming can be done until the missionary goes to the corner grocery for "a scrubbing-brush and five cents' worth of washing soda." These procured, it is found that there is some whitewashing to be done, and unfortunately there is no one but "the man of all work" to do it ; and so, because the work, already too long delayed, must not be hindered, nothing is left but for the poor missionary to mount an empty dry-goods box and swing his brush until two long hours have filled him with fatigue and disgust. But it is twelve o'clock, and he has scarcely time for a hasty washing of hands and face, the removal of sundry "trade marks" from his coat and hat, and the polishing of his boots with a newspaper, for he has an appointment shortly after noon.

In an upper room a little company is gathered, while below a hearse and carriage stand waiting at the door. For the days of only one week was the daughter and sister visited before death came to put an end to all preparation. Looking upon the peaceful form, clad in the garments of the grave, where before the violence of pain almost prevented the utterance of bodily fear, and restless desire, and ardent hope at last, a theme was at once suggested, and the missionary found refreshment for his own spirit while he endeavored to comfort and instruct with thoughts of the happiness of that home, and of the nature and importance of the efforts to reach it, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

A FOOL ANSWERED ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY.

The missionary has often occasion for all his wits, and must sometimes "answer a fool according to his folly." On the top floor of a tenement-house in Mott Street lives a shoemaker, a hard drinker and a scoffer at religious things; but with all this a good-tempered fellow, who will bear plain talking. His family, and some girls who work with him, are in the habit of attending our meetings. One day in November, as the assistant was visiting them, with an evident design to make sport of him and his work, the shoemaker turned upon him, saying, "Mr. P——, you have made all my family believe there is a devil: now, did you ever see him?" "O, yes, sir," said he, "very many times. I can't say I ever saw the big old devil — he is too cunning for that; but I have seen a great many little ones. I saw one or two just before I came into your house." He

wanted to know how they looked. "Well, they were very much bloated up, eyes red, face a little peeled and bruised, and, phew! what a breath! One of them seemed to be holding the other up; and as I came up stairs they were holding on to the lamp-post to keep from falling." "Well, sir," said he, "I never saw the devil, and I'd like to see one." He felt he was in for it, that the women were laughing at him behind his back, and that he must make as good a fight as he could. With that the assistant led him up to his glass, saying, "Look there; you will see the description is all right." "Do you mean to call me a devil?" "Now, don't get mad; you know you began it." "That's so," said he; "but I'd like to have you prove I'm a devil." "Well, I'll prove you are a little one from Scripture. The Savior told the Jews, 'Ye are of your father the devil; the lusts of your father ye will do.' And the apostle says, 'Now the works of the flesh' — that is, of the devil — 'are manifest, which are these: adulteries, . . . murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.'" Without a word, he turned on his heel, went to his bench, and took up his lapstone. "I a devil" — rap, rap — "proved too by Scripture" — rap, rap — "pretty tough that on a fellow" — rap, rap, rap. His wife has told us he has not taken a drop since of any kind of liquor, not even beer.