inner and intimate bonds, of which the outward are but a symbol. If her fall has been indeed his 'diminishing'—if the frivolity and narrowness of woman's spirit, her inability to rise above the actual and personal, has too often limited man's horizon, what will her 'fulness' be? If he has suffered from her poverty, how will he rejoice in her 'wealth'—in her more tender and chastened feelings, her more unselfish and expanded aims? Woman has already done much for herself by herself. Let him, then, become in all things the helper of his help-meet; let her not want his generous co-operation in aiding her to reach the goal of her so-evident and worthy ambition,—

'At last to set herself to Him,
Like perfect music unto noble words.'

THERE is nothing, Montalembert says, so picturesque as charity, if only you do not come too near it! The amateur occasional philanthropist who takes up a striking case of destitution now and then, gets, possibly, to the exact point of view at which rags fly about gracefully and dirt looks like the true Spanish brown; vice, want, and squalor have, in certain lights, a poetry of their own, dark Rembrandt-like shadows, comic gleams and sparkles, veins of tenderness that are not discoverable in the ordinary track of respectable life. Come a little nearer, however, and this confessed attrac-
tion is apt to disappear, and its place to be taken
by all that is most repulsive, disheartening, and
wearying. *By shiftiness and shiftlessness, trick,
deception, improvidence, and reckless folly, and
behind all these lies a far darker background,
looming in hints and traces of the treachery and
cruelty that have their habitation in the dark
places of the earth, in a region which may be
truly described as ‘a land of darkness—as dark-
ess itself, and of the shadow of death, without
any order, and where the light is as darkness.’
A steadfast Christian worker may go on for a
while pretty smoothly, then the current of his
work will seem to bring him, as it were naturally,
into the thick of some network of misery and evil
so intricate and wide-spreading that he is inclined,
with the prophet of old, to sit down ‘astonied.’
He feels powerless, helpless, hopeless. A chill
recoil from his work, made up of disgust and
weariness, steals across him; and for such recoils
there is but one remedy—to come yet nearer.
Then we get beyond the tinsel sentiment, and
with it beyond the repulsion to natural feeling;
then we come to life's real romance, in learning
what true love is, and what true pity. We no

longer believe, as we did when we first started,
that all unfortunate people are good, and all
vicious people interesting; but we learn to pity, to
bear with, and even in a certain sense to love
them as they are.

There is as much pathos in the life of a really
benevolent person as there is in all true love-
stories. He sets forth full of hope, and, like a
Paladin of old, burning to redress grievances;
he believes in love and in its conquering might,
and expects through it to overcome all things;
gradually strange experiences break in upon
him; he learns that however strong love may
be, it does not always win the battle; he finds
himself misunderstood, contradicted, defeated by
those he is trying to raise and rescue. He begins
to enter into the terrible truth of the Chinese
saying, Do no good, and thou shalt get no evil;
and at last, like Assheton Smith, that mighty
hunter, he learns deliberately and habitually1 to
ride for a fall.

1. Mr. Assheton Smith was wont to say that with a fall you might get
over anything, and that every man who professed to ride ought to
know how to fall. He himself knew how to fall, and in all his falls,
which numbered over seventy, never but twice broke a bone. People
were not astonished at seeing him go straight at the most tremendous
places, but they were a little surprised to see that he did not even look
His dreams, perhaps, had been much like those of the tender-souled Reformer who thought that it was given to him to convert the world, but was not long in discovering that 'old Adam was too strong for young Melanchthon.' He finds many illusions die away, but their place is taken by a steadfast guiding light, less bright perhaps than sober, but clear enough to live and work by. Many theories, too, have to be given up, but an experience worth them all compensates for their dismissal. Every year that is added to the term of his patient continuance in well-doing makes him expect less, and hope more. I must explain this apparent paradox by saying that he has grown more and more deeply persuaded of the value of the great principles he works by, but more prepared to meet with check and hindrance in their practical carrying out. While he is more certain of ultimate results, he is less confident of present success. What gain is too great not to be hoped for by one who commands the mightiest agencies! What check too pitiful not to be endured by one who works with the slenderest, most easily dis-

round at the leap when he was over. 'Fling your heart over,' he would say, 'and your horse will follow.'

ordered, machinery! Plus noble des professions, plus triste des métiers, is the motto alike of the Physician and the Philanthropist.

All things in human nature and in human society show us that there is something evil in both against which good everlastingly struggles, and as yet with a very incomplete measure of success. In education, and in all governments, whether political, parochial, or domestic, we find a revelation of 'our deep original wound,'—a wound which philanthropy, by its very nature and office, probes to its very core.

For, active goodness, we must ever remember, brings to light much evil that would otherwise have been unheard of. There is a strange smoothness on the surface of society which makes it sometimes hard to believe in the corruption and cruelty that too often underlie it. Yet any one who consistently gives his life and heart to redress wrong and to relieve suffering, soon gets below this surface, and without necessarily adopting harsh and gloomy theories of human affairs, keeps below it in so far as to be for ever unable to return to the easy-going humanitarian view of life which so delights in the discovery 'of a soul of
goodness in things evil.' One single carefully tracked case of crime or suffering will sometimes introduce him to fearful systems of evil, outbranching complications of depravity,—will set him down, as it were, in the midst of things that it is impossible to set right. He will find himself confronted with naked selfishness, greed, and cruelty; and over and under and through all beside, he will track the serpent-windings of that which is the waster of natural life, the loosener of family bonds, the death of nobler thought and sweeter instinct,—denounced by an apostle as 'the corruption that is in the world.' Illustrations of what I now refer to would be of too dark a character to meet the general eye. What I mean is sufficiently intelligible to all who have striven in any persevering way to befriend and raise their fellow-men. All such persons have found that the knowledge of evil has been forced upon them, and with that knowledge they have been compelled, like our first parents, to exchange the culture of Eden for that of earth with its work among self-sown thorns and briers. And without even entering on life's darker aspects, a short experience in working for others is enough to show us how much of sadness and weariness inevitably enters into the account of warm practical benevolence. If we worked for the ideal poor man, brave, industrious, patient, grateful, philanthropy would indeed be an Arcadian pasture; but the ideal complete man, as Schiller truly observes, seldom wants to be helped at all, and is able generally to do pretty well for himself. We work for the actual man, with his actual incapacities and imperfections, whom we must take, and, alas, must too often leave, as he is!

The great army of the beaten in life, among whom the chief work of benevolence lies, falls naturally into two grand divisions,—the unfortunate and the undeserving; nor can these battalions be marshalled so strictly but that we shall find a mixed multitude for ever hovering between them, seeming to belong now to one, and now to the other line,—individuals and families, the warp and woof of whose career is so crossed by mingling lines of misfortune and ill-desert, that, as in the hues of a shot-silk, we sometimes think one, and sometimes another, the predominating colour. For we must
remember that the unfortunate, speaking generally, are not so through the mere force and malice of outward circumstances, be these never so unfriendly, but through the existence of some great inward deficiency, which sinks them below life's ordinary level, and prevents their taking advantage of the favourable chances and changes which it puts in the way of all. Outward trials may for a time depress, and even overwhelm a really energetic mind, but only for a time; the strong spirit will regain its equipoise, re-adjust its scanty resources, and be ready, under whatever disadvantages, to re-assert its right to a place and a share in existence. But there are hundreds of our fellow-creatures who have no such reserve forces to draw upon; hundreds of people in every rank of life whose measure of physical, intellectual, and moral strength falls far below the average standard; people without inward spring, or nerve, or fibre, who, so long as the surroundings of existence are in their favour, so long as they are blest with the props and buttresses of competence, friends, and health, may get through life pretty fairly, but who, if they once sink below its surface, can be raised again by no amount of leverage. Characters of this kind, weak, irresolute, incapable, are the standing crux and problem of the benevolent, incompetent to stand alone, and less happy than the Irish gig-horse of undying memory, who, though he could not stand, could go, they are always needing help, and though they seem little better for all that is done for them, to abandon them altogether would be too heartless, and indeed not very easy. Once taken on hand, they become a permanent life-entail upon one's expenditure, a loose fringe about one's life, not adorning the garment it clings to, yet not readily detached from it. Not to dwell upon the circle of humble clients of both sexes who are apt to grow up round every kind-hearted person, perhaps morally interesting, but manually unskillful, who never do their work quite so well as it would have been done by more flourishing members of the same profession, who does not know what it is to become implicated in the fortunes of some friendless and destitute boy or girl, let us say an orphan, deficient in early training, unskilled, unsteadfast, yet to let go whose hands, once placed within our
own, would be to consign to irretrievable ruin; who is always being placed out, seldom giving satisfaction, sometimes running away, often getting into trouble, and drawing friends and patrons into the same? Then there are the distressed families, always in emergencies, who seem to have a magnetic attraction for calamity, who have more accidents and fevers in any given time than all their neighbours put together, and who are sure to come in for a double portion of whatever evil anybody else meets with.

' I sometimes wonder,' I once heard a very kind-hearted man say, in speaking of an indigent and improvident family of this sort, 'what would have become of them if they had not happened to meet with me; or whether, after all, they would have been any worse off? I suppose they would have got along somehow, and that is about all they do now!'

In a saying of Solomon—' The poor is oppressed because he is poor'—lies the key to much that perplexes our dealings with the unfortunate. They provoke us by their improvidence and want of management; but does not the very nature of good management imply more of choice, forethought, and resource, than lies within the possibilities of extreme poverty? To take one instance: the poor necessarily buy at a dearer rate than the rich do. They get a worse article, and less of it, for their money, than those who can choose their own time and place for buying; and the same exigency runs more or less through their whole economy of life. It is certain, as a general rule, that the better you are off the better you are able to manage. Some lives seem baffled from their very outset, and when to the harsh limitations of poverty, sickness and the want of hope are added, a nameless depression and a readiness to depend on others becomes an ineradicable mental habit. We must all admit, that the idea of help is never so blessed as when it links itself with the idea of placing its object beyond the need of help in circumstances friendly to the development of his own powers, yet there are many whom we must be content to help without ever hoping to lift or raise. A kind-hearted young lady, making a weekly raid and foray in her district, is surprised to find she does so little good, is disheartened
because the children are still dirty, and the houses forlorn, even after she has given them much good advice, and perhaps a little money. But could she look within the crevices of the houses she visits for a few minutes, and of the hearts that are not opened to her even for that short time, she would be too thankful to be able to do any good, to reckon up whether it was much or little. Life-long habits will not give way to a few words of kindly counsel, be they spoken never so fitly; nor is it in the power of gifts, however judiciously and constantly bestowed, to restore the long-continued household desolation, which has often its origin in the misconduct of some one person in a family reacting on its more deserving members. But who shall say that it is not much to bring a ray of hope within a hopeless heart; to kindle a cheerless hearth into even transitory comfort; to lighten the eyes of the disconsolate, and make him perceive that there is such a thing in the world, and in the order of things, as comfort and joy? And who, to look yet deeper, shall say into what wasted neglected heart, the word spoken in faith and love may find entrance, and spring up, even after long years of silence and darkness, into a seed of imperishable life?

I remember once, in a manufacturing district in Lancashire, in which I was almost a stranger, going into a cottage, which stood a little distance off the road, either to ask my way, or some such casual question. The scene which offered itself was one not easily dismissed from the imagination. The room contained next to no furniture, and, I think, no fire, for the time was summer. In the midst of it, lying on a settle, was a young man of about twenty, poorly dressed, and evidently dying of some fearful scrofulous disorder. He was literally like Lazarus—full of sores. In a corner of the room a very old ill-looking woman, palsied, and a complete bundle of rags, crouched and shook, and muttered to herself. She appeared insane, but was really idiotic through long-continued habits of drinking. A miserable-looking little girl of about thirteen, stunted in figure, and deeply marked with small-pox, seemed the only person able to do anything. The young man was

1 Jeremy Taylor.
uncouth and ignorant, and gave surly answers to my sympathizing inquiries. Nothing could exceed the forlorn look of this house, or its utter barrenness of hope and cheer. Upon after inquiry, I found its middle term was a father, a man not only entirely given up to drinking, but of harsh and brutal character, wholly indifferent to his home and children. Now it is evident, that to turn a house like this into the abode of comfort, and order, and love, to make it, in fact, a home, would have required a miracle, say rather a series of miracles, far more wonderful than those recorded in Scripture. It would have been a greater work than the turning of water into wine, inasmuch as a moral transformation exceeds a material one, yet, like that, a change possible only to Him to whom all things are possible. "No power can regenerate but that which made, nor renew but that which created." Amelioration, however, to those who are content with its small and sure results, is always to be numbered among things hoped for; and even in this desolate home, Wordsworth's deep saying, that 'all things are less dreadful than they seem,' was realized. The young man was not so inaccessible as he appeared to be, and had even then a friend and comforter in a kind neighbour in his own class, who read and prayed with him through his sad illness, and was with him when he died, cheering him with words of heavenly hope. The little girl proved remarkably desirous to improve, and afterwards came under the direction and training of some distant relations, people of uncommon and valuable character, who had at all times shown deep compassion for this unhappy family, and who were too happy to meet and further any plans that were suggested for her benefit. I remember at the time being surprised to find that such a wretched family had any really good people connected with them, and I remember, also, how many difficulties in the way of helping them were removed by this connexion. I have since found it is a fact of life, that even under the most untoward and apparently hopeless circumstances, the attempt to do good will reveal good, and be met in quarters where aid seems least of all to be looked for. There is a large

1 Robert Barclay.
amount of latent good ever existing in the world, an auxiliary force of kindness, not strong enough to do the whole work itself, not ready enough perhaps to begin or organize, but happy to aid and further, and on this contingent a steadfast worker may always reckon surely. Kind-hearted people, working together from different points of the social compass, may accomplish wonders of ministry and comfort,—moral support and a little money being supplied by the lady, active service by the kind, poor neighbours; only, in many cases like that of the family I have described, the very circumstances oblige us to be content with very limited results.

And we must be satisfied with results still more limited when we attempt the other great branch of merciful endeavour, that of restoring the morally fallen. It is scarcely possible to estimate the amount of patience required for this work, because it is scarcely possible for any but an experienced person to appreciate its difficulty. Gardening is no playwork when we have, like the indefatigable Hollanders, at once to create the soil we hope to raise our flowers from, and to lift and keep our little plot above the reach of waters, ever threatening to sap or to overwhelm. In ordinary benevolent work we shall find, as I have said, many auxiliaries, but in working among the morally degraded all things seem to band themselves together against good; early association, lifelong habit, instinct, passion, even the affection of which such hearts remain capable, all are on the side of vice; all things are against the patient worker; all things, except the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and the unsearchable human heart, which testifies out of the very depths of its want and need of Him. Si descendero in infernum, ades.

In dealing with the more lawless classes, we cannot say that it is the first step which costs the most; their minds are not difficult to stir and awaken,—indeed, their susceptibilities to good impressions are often quicker than those of more happily situated people, just because goodness is to them a beautiful and new thing; they have never come across it in their daily experience; and it is to them, in the truest sense, poetry, which they will admire, and, as it were, caress, in their
hearts with a sort of delighted wonder. A poor
girl in jail once said to me: 'O ma'am, I'd such
a beautiful dream last night—a dream all about
heaven.' As prisoners in general are about as
much given to 'tell you their dreams' as was Dr.
Watts' sluggard, I prepared myself to listen with
patience. I do not now remember the particu-
lars of the dream, having heard so many like it,
about angels, and flowers, and harpers with golden
harps, but I have not forgotten the simplicity with
which she ended: 'And I wish, ma'am, I could often
have such dreams as that; I am sure they would
help to make me a better girl.' People of this class
are also, as I have elsewhere stated, wonderfully
alive to goodness of an exalted character. Com-
fortable and respectable people often find much
to cavil at in the few who devote their lives and
generies to the sins and sorrows of humanity.
They are apt to consider them enthusiastic, weak,
inconsistent; but not thus do they appear to the
miserable hearts into whose wounds they alone
pour the balm and oil of human sympathy, the
wine of heavenly consolation and hope. To
them they are even as the angels, beings of a
different order, whose virtues are to them unap-
proachable, but even in contact with whom they
feel a superstitious safety, as if their bodily pre-
sence were a charm and amulet against evil. A
lady who had been for some time engaged with a
class of female prisoners, had become a good deal
interested in a young woman, imprisoned for a
long term, whose remarks and questions evidenced
an unusual degree of intelligence, and who took a
lively interest in the instructions that were given,
though this interest seemed to be more that of a
lively and intelligent curiosity than that of an
awakened heart and conscience. She had been
what is technically called 'a travelling thief,' and
the companion of men living by bold and care-
fully-planned schemes of robbery, and she liked
to tell, though not without evident compunctions
visitings, of the large sums of money, even amount-
ing to a hundred pounds at a time, that these men
had been used to intrust her with. As the time
for her leaving jail drew near, she became still
more attentive, quiet, and serious, and expressed
great dissatisfaction at the prospect of returning
to her reckless and miserable way of life. The
lady urged her strongly to enter the penitentiary, acquire good ways, and make a fresh start in life, telling her that she might yet be a good and a happy woman. But to this step she resolutely objected, saying that she knew that she could never bear the necessary confinement and restraint, so that her friend bade her farewell kindly and with regret. On her next visit, however, to the prison, she heard that Ann — had gone straight to the penitentiary, and had left a message hoping that Miss — would not be long in going to see her there. The lady went, and found her in the probationary cell, looking most cheerful and contented, and asked her, after a very cordial greeting had been exchanged, what had made her all at once decide to come there, when her mind had seemed so set against the idea. 'Well, ma'am,' the girl replied with great naïveté, it was all along of those things you gave me.' (The lady had been in the habit of giving her class little presents and rewards, such as pin cushions and needlebooks, or small religious pictures—all things of the most trifling value.) 'When I was putting up my bundle to leave jail I spread them out upon the bed, and

I said to myself, Now, thou's been a good lass for a good bit of time, and thou's got all these nice things, and a good friend beside; and if thou's a good lass a little longer, thou'll perhaps get more nice things and more friends; and then, ma'am, the more I looked at them the more I liked them, and I couldn't find in my heart to throw them away, and so I just thought I'd come here at once.' 'Well, Ann,' returned her friend, 'I am very glad you came anyhow; but why should you have thought of throwing the little things away because you were leaving jail? you know they were your own.' The lady has said she can never forget the quick and sudden feeling with which the girl returned—'And do you think, ma'am, I would take anything you had given me to the sort of places I go to? I would rive them to pieces sooner.'

Ann — remained at the penitentiary, and for some time behaved remarkably well; then she became unsettled and restless, and after a few months made a forcible escape from the restraint she could no longer endure, by climbing over the wall, in company (as far as I now remember) with
a girl who had fallen under her influence. She returned to a course of evil, and this little incident concerning her only tends to show that it is not in feeling, sensibility, and quick and sincere impulse to good, that the class she belongs to are invariably deficient. What they do want, what they always want, is principle, self-restraint, and whatever in a well-balanced life tends to turn good impressions into permanent and habitual motives of action. Their minds are sometimes stirred to frenzy by trifles, at all times apt to be agitated by the most contradictory motives. Like shifting sands you never know whereabouts the next moment may have carried them; and he who works among them must be ever ready to begin all over again. Who is there that comes to such a task prepared for half its difficulties? An unfortunate woman, an outcast!—there is something touching in these very expressions, something that brings before us the woman who washed our Saviour’s feet with her tears, and at the same time reminds us of the characters so often met with in modern poems and novels,—the wrecked yet nobly freighted lives, the women lost, in a social point of view, yet still full of womanly instincts, ready to turn at a word or look of love. To persons accustomed to sentimentalize upon social sores, but who have never really touched them with the tips of their fingers, there must be something a little startling in the contrast offered to their conceptions by a few pages like the following ones, taken, without selection or alteration, from a record of work among them, kept at the time, of such cases as seemed more hopeful or interesting than others:—

Jail Diary.—‘In the early part of April I was greatly interested in a nice-looking girl called Jane M’Ewan (alias Brown), her countenance remarkably intelligent, and her bringing-up better than is usual among girls of her class. The wardswomen greatly interested in her. She talked to me very feelingly of her utter weariness of her wretched way of life; and when I spoke to her about its inevitable end, she said, “O ma’am, I can see all that clearly; I don’t want sense, and I don’t want grace either, for that matter, but what I do want is the power to keep steady.” She spoke much to me of a strong, almost sensible, struggle with evil, of bad thoughts assaulting her
night and day, and driving away the better ones she strove to encourage. What Miss M— (the schoolmistress) told me about her throws a curious light upon the waywardness and impulsiveness of this class of women. A few days before the conversation I allude to she had been speaking of a man with whom she had been living—a low wretch, who lived upon her miserable gains, and beat and ill-used her so that she often feared for her life. She said, “If he does not come to meet me when I go out of jail, I will go home, get blazing drunk, and smash everything in the house to pieces.” Only two hours after making this speech, which it is difficult to connect with her sensible civilized countenance and manner, she went to Mrs. D—, and announced her intention of trying to get into the penitentiary. This girl was placed in a respectable lodging, and had work found for her. She did well for some little time, then formed an acquaintance with a man of bad character, became unsettled, and decamped.

April 22.—A young woman of the name of Mary Loft stayed behind the rest of the class to speak to me. She leaves jail in a fortnight, and sees at present no opening towards a better life, after which she earnestly, but almost hopelessly, aspires. She is a girl of the lowest class, her countenance broad and flat, disfigured by the small-pox, and her features swollen, possibly with drink; but her aspect is redeemed, in so far as this is possible, by the most touching expression of humility and self-abjection, which breathes in every word she speaks, to an extent I have never yet met with in any woman except Mrs. H—, so that, in a short conversation with her, I learnt more of the true feelings of the wretched class she belongs to than I have ever yet done: all she said was so simply spoken, without cant or varnish of any kind. She has been often in jail, brought back, sometimes, after an absence of a day or two. “The police,” she said, “dug me.” She told me that she drank and made disturbances. “All women like me,” she said, “drink; there is not one of us that does not drink; we could not live our lives without it; it would be impossible.” She told me that when sober, she knew what modesty, or at least shame was; she could not bear any one to accost her; but when drunk, she said, “I will go
after any one." She said she did not care for drink for its own sake; and when leading an industrious and quiet life, as when in jail, never wished for it at all. She connected her drinking entirely with her life. Two years ago, I found she had tried to commit suicide by throwing herself from an upper window from utter misery and self-despair. I told her, in the course of conversation, that I had lately seen some women brought to jail walking arm in arm, looking unconcerned, and laughing boldly. She said, "They may seem as if they did not care what people think of them, and put on that brazened look; but it is put on; in their hearts they feel what they are; they cannot help it." Some of her observations showed a deep moral susceptibility, strangely at variance with her low, almost degraded, aspect. This was betrayed in the way in which she received some remarks I made, as to the wickedness of women of her class in robbing good poor women of happiness in their husbands, and of the money spent over them being taken from what ought to support wives and children.

"This girl has been two years in Newcastle Peni-
tentiary, has relapsed again into vice; but has evi-
dently there received a seed of good. The diffi-
culties in the way of her improvement are very great; but her desires after good seem very strong. This girl was placed in a Reformatory, or rather Refuge, conducted on principles which allowed an unusual degree of freedom, almost independence, to its inmates; they were permitted, so long as they behaved well and conformed to a few known rules, to go to certain houses in the town to work by the day, returning to the Home at a fixed hour.

"On June 22d, I saw Mary Loft, under the care of Mrs. P. at the Brandling Home; her behaviour at present gives entire satisfaction; she is cheerful, steady, and very industrious; the improvement in her looks is something extraordinary. She told me that she is perfectly happy, having got among kind people, and out of the way of the temptations she feared so much. She has some near relations in Newcastle, whom she has, for fear of falling among her old set, never seen, or felt any desire to go to see, neither, she tells me, has she ever felt any wish for drink. It appears that she has been,
though so young, twenty-three times in Durham Gaol. I find that on her being last sent there, she had been much impressed by the policeman who brought her, talking kindly and like "a father," and asking her if she was not tired of this "dog's life."

'This poor girl, however, even under circumstances eminently favourable to the development of good, did not fulfil her promise of true amendment. She failed under no stronger temptation than that of the strange restlessness, which seems the curse of those whose lives have been lawless and unrestrained, coming across their spirits from time to time like a fierce and withering wind, driving them from every happier anchorage. She became discontented, moody, and finally absconded from the Refuge, going back into "the abyss" out of which so few feet return to take hold upon the paths of life.'

These illustrations seem, so far as they have already gone, more calculated to restrain expectation than to animate hope; it would be easy, however, to interleave them with brighter pages,1

1 I had written as far as these very words (Dec. 16, 1865) when something called me from my writing, and its subject passed from my mind. In the afternoon, I was told that a young woman had called to see me, and a remarkably nice-looking young person, in really handsome and comfortable winter garb, presented herself. The name she had was strange to me, and so at first sight seemed her face, until she smiled, when a gradual light broke in upon me, and I recognised features that had once been as familiar to me as those which beset and haunt one in a perplexing dream. About ten years since, a little girl, named Jane ——, had been an inmate in a small reformatory in which I was at that time interested. She came from one of the large pit-villages in Durham, and was placed with us by one of the county magistrates, under whose notice her sad case had fallen, that she might be rescued from the ill-treatment of her mother, a woman of the most abandoned habits, who would sometimes turn the poor child into the street, and leave her, unless some neighbour took compassion on her, to pass the night there. When she came to us, and for long afterwards, it was but too evident that she had been both beaten and starved, her poor little face and figure were thin and elfish, in the extreme, her arms dwindled to skin and bone, her whole physical and moral being were undeveloped through neglect, and dwarfed by ill-usage. Her quick, ever-restless eye, and hurried, nervous movements, betrayed the presence of continual fear and apprehension, and it was evident that though she seemed to feel the kindness she met with, and was cunning and endearing in her own ways, that she was not able to believe in it fully, so many and so needless were her little artifices and flatteries, so ingenious the webs of deception she was for ever weaving about us. Some of these were of a very transparent texture, and once, in the very midst
and lazy, belonging to a family of average respectability in Yorkshire, got unsettled, and came to Hartlepool on tramp, committed some petty theft, and was sent to jail; his case was there looked into, and after some correspondence with his family, his brother came and took him home. After a short time, however, he appeared again for another theft, and when his term of commitment was at an end, the chaplain, wishing to give him a

of her fits and schemes, I can remember her weeping; this time real, sincere tears, because she had not a doll like one which had been given to the matron’s baby. Though she was long in the Refuge, and, I think, in a certain way, rather liked by everybody, what between her deceit and her childishness, we never seemed to make any real way with her, and even after we got her placed out in a humble situation, where she might have done well, she still seemed ‘condemned our souls to cross.’ One day the matron received a hasty summons—Jane had fallen down a flight of steps and broken her leg; investigation showed, however, that Jane had not fallen, but thrown herself down the steps, contriving to twist and hurt herself just enough to get a holiday from work and a return to the Refuge!

At last she drifted from us altogether. Many years after this, when I was visiting the penitentiary, a young woman came up to me with the most ardent demonstrations of attachment, nor could I truly say, even upon meeting-ground so little to be desired, that the reciprocity was all on one side, the improvement in her whole aspect was so marked and unmistakable. Her conduct during the whole time she stayed there was excellent in all ways, and on going out she found and kept respectable places.

I had lost sight of her for some few years, and this was Jane, well married in a neighbouring town, and come over to Durham to see all her old friends. While we were talking of past times, it occurred to me to say,—‘And how old are you now, Jane?’ ‘Just twenty-one, ma’am.’

A commentary, I thought, upon the strange discrepancies of human life! A life of struggle and evil lived through, before the age at which happier lives are beginning to unfold!
The next extract is interesting, as showing the extraordinary difficulties that make it so hard for one who has once got off the right track to return to it at all. The world is not the friend of such, nor the world's law. This was a lad of about nineteen, a born and trained thief, who had spent the better half of his life in jail; of originally delicate constitution, and broken in health by his way of life. As he gave promises of amendment on going out of jail, we gave him a letter of recommendation to a shipping agent at Sunderland; he found a vessel and went out to sea, but suffered so severely from sea-sickness, that the captain soon returned him on hands. He was then sent to a lodging, maintained there for a while, and told to seek out work for himself. After some days had passed by, my door-bell rang rather late one evening, and I was told that William —— wanted to see me. I had him in, and learned that he had met with work at an iron-foundry at some distance. Wages, etc., looked satisfactory, and it was hard to say whether he or I was the best pleased with this new opening. We sat together for some little time, chatting in high spirits. As I found he was not to receive his wages until the fortnight's end, I lent him ten shillings to be going on with until then, and for this I remember he wished to give me security upon his only available property, or at least that which he seemed to consider as being such,—the writing of agreement with his master. He looked very nice and smart, in a gay necktie and respectable coat; he said these had been lent him by a friend. He bade me good-bye, saying he would start that night for the foundry, as it was six miles off, so as to be ready for his work in the morning. After he had gone, my servant had shut up the house and retired to bed, came another ring. I opened the door; this time it was a policeman. "Have you had W. here?" (my heart sunk at once within me.) "I want him for a theft committed this afternoon." Two lads coming down street made off with some clothes hanging for sale at a shop door, and in doing so, were seen by two of the prison officers, who gave chase after them. One boy threw down the clothes, and succeeded in getting away; the other boy took to the river, swam across, made for Framwellgate (the very street where William
was lodging), and dodged there till they lost him too. These two officers swore that this boy was William ——, with whose face they were perfectly familiar, as he had left the jail so lately. I thought the case looked awkward; the testimony of the two officers was a strong point against W., so also was the fact of his not being in his ordinary clothes when he called on me, looking as if he might have changed them, and against these I had nothing to oppose in his favour except an inward intuition, which made it hard for me to believe him guilty. I told the policeman that he had gone to the —— Ironworks, and in the morning set off to make inquiries at his late lodgings. "Where," I said, "is William?" The landlady answered, "Gone to work at ——." "Did he go last night?" "No," she replied. "Why not?" "Why, sir, you kept him rather late, and it was a very dark night, and he went off this morning, in time to be there by six o'clock." A man sitting by the fire said, "I see" (or went with him) "a good part of the way." Just at this minute another man popped in his head from an inner room, with "How d'ye do, sir?" (This was a noted thief, who had been often in prison.) "I am trying to make an honest livelihood." After a little chat, I said, "I suppose you have heard of the robbery yesterday afternoon, and of the boy taking to the river?" They said they had heard all about it. "Was that boy William ——?" "No, certainly not." I then explained why I had come, and told them about William's visit to me, and asked about his having changed his clothes. "These clothes, sir," said the thief, "were mine. I lent them to make him look a little decent when he came to you, and I can let you see them now," which he did. The first-mentioned man volunteered to go with me to the police-station. The policeman listened to what we had to say, but laughed at the statement, and told me his comrade had already gone to the ironworks for William. When he arrived, however, his case was disposed of in an altogether unexpected way, by the shopkeeper at once swearing that he was not the boy by whom he had been robbed. William was of course acquitted. I have often thought of what he said to me when we were talking the matter over: "I have been taken up by the police, as you know,
sir, over and over again. I thought nothing of it: it seemed just what I was expecting; but this time, when I had made up my mind to do well, the very first day that I was trying to make an honest living for myself, to have the police after me, and me innocent, I felt just as if my heart would have broken." And even as it was, this strange mistake had an adverse influence upon poor William's fortunes, as the owner of the iron-foundry, annoyed at the policeman's coming, and perhaps not satisfied with the light thus thrown on William's antecedent history, refused to employ him any longer. He had fresh work to seek, under fresh difficulties; and during his life, which was a very short one, did not again meet with so good an opening. Yet he never returned to any evil ways.¹

¹ One great difficulty in the way of real improvement is the despair into which a person of this class, really trying to do better, is apt to be thrown by any untoward accident. It makes them feel apparently as if they were the mock and sport of some malign destiny, and is sometimes enough to scatter good and hopeful resolutions to the winds. I shall never forget seeing a girl of the lowest class in an absolute frenzy of grief and rage at the loss of a shilling, which had been given her by a lady, that she might find a night's food and lodgingrespectably, while further arrangements were being made for her. On her way she had met some of her old companions, and, showing this shilling, one of them snatched it from her in joke; it fell, rolled into some chink, and was lost! At the time, her destiny seemed to turn upon this shilling.

In the same records I find a story of a little boy, who had wandered from London along with two others in search of work. As he was a remarkably bright, civil, and interesting boy, and did not seem equal to regular work, employment was found for him as a street shoe-black, while he received instruction in reading and writing in the evenings. After a while, as no better opening for him seemed to offer, his fare was paid back to his friends in London, and for a while no more was heard of him. One night, however, there was a summons to the door, and there stood the little man, this time smart and smiling, and in full sailor costume. 'What, you here again?' exclaimed his friend. 'Yes, sir,' he said, 'but this time, for once, I've not come to trouble you, just to see you and my other friends, and enjoy myself for a day or two,' and went on to explain that a gentleman in London had interested himself in his welfare, and had bound him to a ship, which had brought him to Sunderland, on this his first voyage. He was both proud and happy, and stayed and enjoyed himself to his heart's content. This was in October 1861. In a week or two from
this time, the whole North-Eastern coast was
strewed with wrecks, and among them was the
ship the little boy was in, which went down
near Hartlepool. He was the only one on board
who perished, and this, as far as could be learnt,
through his timidity and irresolution, which made
him slow in leaving the sinking vessel, and unable
to take advantage of the help the more experienced
sailors would have given him.

Here I read also of many other wandering
boys thrown out of work, sometimes by illness,
sometimes by the failure of employers; of youths
of various ages, friendless, penniless, sinking with
fatigue or fever; some of whom, by a little timely
aid, were restored to health, others sent back to
their homes, and others, for whom nothing more
could be done, who were helped to die in at least
comparative comfort. Vagrants, as a class, are
more difficult to deal with even than criminals.
Thieving being in so far a profession, demands
the exercise of skill, patience, and ingenuity, quali-
ties capable of being trained to better objects:
confirmed begging brings nothing into play except
lying and laziness, and from its habit of parading
or counterfeiting misery, and calling out pity, kind-
ness, and all the best feelings of humanity, only to
deceive and mock them, seems to induce a form
of character more utterly mean and worthless than
any other. Still in criminal life, in vagrant life, in
any society however lawless and degraded, that has
not altogether lapsed from the features of humanity,
there will be probably found some person or per-
sions able to be helped to good, and these fall into vari-
ous classes. First of all come those who, with
tolerable bringing up, and many good instincts, have
yet, in a moment of moral weakness, or through
some extraordinary pressure of circumstances—
say utter friendlessness or extreme poverty—been
driven to an evil way of life, but who have never
really embraced it in heart and will. Such per-
sions can probably never be restored without some
exterior aid, their way is so hedged about and
shut in with difficulties; but when a hand is once
held out to them it is all they need; when a path
is once opened up to them, they will follow it
with even affecting perseverance, and go on to
steadfast goodness. Then again, there are natures,
the whole bent and sit of which is so powerfully
attracted to good, that they will maintain their hold upon it, even if they can only do it with cramping-irons, like the dwarf pine of the Alps, which wraps its storm-twisted arms about the rocks, and grows along them horizontally, just as the winds will let it. With such rare natures, the moral claims of life, especially such as are connected with family relationship, have the strength and tenacity of instincts, and like an instinct too is their desire for self-culture and improvement, even under circumstances the least friendly to their development. Such people will learn better ways, if they have but once the chance of seeing them, will acquire useful arts, will help themselves, will help others, will draw about them comfort, order, and happiness, and as far as their influence can extend, will make a moral wilderness blossom like the rose.

I know at this moment a woman, reared in the very depths of poverty and moral abasement, who has had almost from her own girlhood the care and charge of eight brothers. Her father abandoned his family early in life, and when the mother, a woman of but indifferent character, died, Ann contrived, by her own energy and untiring resource, to hold a home, though of the very poorest kind, together, so that her younger brothers might not have to go to the workhouse. In spite of all her efforts, they have not thriven any better in life than very poor families generally do. Some of the eight are in the army, some in the collieries, some on the tramp; one, who was a poacher, dead; one in and out of jail as it happens; not one of them, so far as I know, in prosperous circumstances. Ann is now married, but no less than before the devoted, indefatigable friend and slave of her brothers; for them she plans, saves, schemes; she can on suitable occasions scold and cuff them; in fact, there is nothing that she cannot, has not done, except cease to love and labour for them. I have scarcely ever seen her, however poor at the time, however ragged, that she was not patiently working out some long-cherished object, whether it might be the purchase of a second-hand 'suit' for one of her elder brothers, or the sending of one of the younger ones to a night-school. Even in her poorest days she could find stray halfpence, pocket-money, or the shadow of such, 'to encour-
age them to be good.' The journeys she has undertaken for these brothers, the accidents and illnesses she has nursed them through, the self-denials she has endured on their behalf, would fill a book. Ann has never been able to rise above early disadvantages, or to emancipate herself from low and disreputable connexions. The family she has married into, like her own, can scarcely be numbered among the respectable; she herself is not always clean, and never strictly tidy; yet in her I see one of family-life's obscurer heroines, and am never in her company without thinking of Elizabeth of Siberia.

And there is yet another class able to be helped to good,—one as interesting to the psychologist as it is to the Christian, a class the possibility of whose existence one would be inclined to reject on a priori grounds, but who are known experimentally to all who are familiar with the strange and mingled deposits which the great ocean of life casts from time to time on its surf-beaten, wreck-bestrewn shore. I mean such natures as, being born and trained in evil, live and move in it as their natural element and condition, without its gaining admittance to that which is deepest within them, as if the citadel of their soul were guarded by some strange and secret spell.1 When these people once see what is good, they seem to recognise it as something which has originally belonged to them, love it, and rise to it at once.

To all of these classes, moral support and help is much, I may indeed say that it is everything. It gives that quickening impulse, without which, speaking after a human manner, the latent seed of

1 Such characters, I think, owe their immunity less to strength of character than to simplicity and a childlike passiveness, through which, even while they are personally implicated and involved in evil, they seem to escape that conscious depravity, which is its true sting. Evil has them in its embrace, but it is that of a parasitical plant, whose root of life is in no way intertwined with their own, so that, when the bond is once broken, the soul has done with it for ever. Among the worst classes of society, in the worst ages of the world, such characters have been more common than a superficial observer could believe. The affecting true story of 'Jeanie Cameron,' by a prison matron, exemplifies my statement; but I know no such touching illustration of it as is the story of the beautiful Mlle. Aissé (told by St. Beuve), a Creassian slave, brought to Paris as a little girl by a French nobleman in the time of the Regency, and for many years the darling of the most corrupt court and society in the world. Once, when on some pleasure journey, she fell for a short time under the influence of a woman of exalted goodness. The effect of this interlude was sudden, but lasting. At once and for ever, she broke every former tie, even such as were most tenderly cherished, and dedicated her whole life to repentance. She says in one of her letters, 'I had never seen virtue, how should I know what it was like? Had I known it sooner, I should have always loved it.' See also on this subject some highly interesting remarks on the character of Lucrezia Borgia, in Mr. T. A. Trollope's Decade of Italian Women.
good would never have power to detach itself from surrounding obstructions. Who shall estimate under such circumstances what is the worth of a friend to the life, a helper to the soul, making a link between it and its God?

But why need instances be multiplied to confirm what all experience proves, that every generous and exalted life blesses—who shall say how greatly?—not only through direct effort, but simply by being what it is. Just as a selfish and contracted nature makes all shrink and narrow up with which it comes in contact, so does a free and bountiful spirit expand and quicken all it meets with; it touches more points than it is itself aware of, and is for ever widening its circle of benediction, and drawing within it some fresh and warm interest. And it is a very narrow conception of such a life that would limit its influence to those who stand openly and confessedly in need of help. In every class of life there are burdened and breaking hearts, straitened and sorrowful lives, people to whom a cheerful hour, a visit to a pleasant house, a well-timed gift, a kindly letter, is as valuable as are food and raiment to those who have neither. Who shall tell where the warmth and radiance a generous heart casts round it stops? We may as well try to measure a sunbeam, or to mark the place it falls on. The best blessing lies

*Not in that which we give, but that which we share; For the gift without the giver is bare.*

The difficulties which attend doing good are undoubtedly many and great, and we shall find just the same difficulties, whether we take them in their number or in their strength, in being good, God’s work in His servants, as well as their work for Him, having many a check and hindrance. Yet not to believe in good and in its final and complete victory, is simply not to believe in God Himself. In the keeping of His commandments there is great reward; in a life of love, which keeps them all at once, the greatest and richest of any. Therefore, ‘in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.’

1 James Russell Lowell.