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A PEEP INTO CUT-THROAT ALLEY.

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ACCOMPANIED by our friend Mr. Barlow—the successor of Mr. Pease in the Five Points House of Industry—we spent two hours on Saturday evening last *under the crust* that thinly overlays New-York depravity. Strangers who see only the Broadway side of the great metropolis, have no idea of this other and far more suggestive side. Both sides ought to be studied; for New-York is yet destined to be half palace and half tenement-house; it will be the inheritance of the millionaire and the child of poverty, while the great middling class are swarming to Brooklyn, Jersey City, and the outlying regions of broad streets and pure atmosphere. At this moment there is a *single block* in the Fourth Ward that outnumberes the whole gorgeous Fifth Avenue, with its fifty millions of personal wealth. At the ballot-box, five thousand dollars are on a par with all these millions—the Five Points out-vote the Fifth avenue.

But to our nocturnal exploration. We took a policeman with us, and the boy "Patchie" to carry the dark lantern. Our first look is into that classic region Cow Bay, a narrow close that puts out from Worth street, adjoining the House of Industry. Part of it is pulled away, but the crazy, toppling tenement-houses that remain are as thickly populated as an an-

cient cheese. Thieves, beggars, prostitutes, old and young, black, white, and gray, huddle together here every night in the indiscriminate beastliness of a sty. One thousand persons here occupy a space but little larger than Trinity Church! In one of these dismal garrets they found the shattered wreck—still fair in its ruin—of a millionaire's beautiful daughter. She was lying on the bare floor with a drunken negro; her father is master of a brown-stone palace in Uppertendom. They never could reform her. The horrid greed for rum was unconquerable. We pass by the garret where they found her. By the light of Patchie's lantern we find another door. It lost latch and hinges long ago; it is fastened by a large stone. The policeman raps with his club, and shouts: "Halloo! let us in!" No answer. He surges once against the door, and lo! before us sits old Sambo over his brazier of coals, toasting his hands, and in the corner of the den is a long pile of rags. Nothing else in the den but that oleaginous negro and the rag-pile. It moves at one end; an Irish woman lifts her tangled mop of a head out of the heap, and with a jolly voice, bids us "good evenin'." "Look here, gentlemen, look at this little codfish;" and with this she lifts out from beneath the rags a diminutive mulatto child of a few weeks old, to the great delight of Sambo, who reveals all his ivory. Heaven pity an immortality thus begun! What an outfit! A Five Points garret, a Pariah father, a prostitute mother, an oath its "first baby-talk," rum its first medicine, theft its first lesson, a prison its first house, and the Potter's Field its final resting-place! This is the career of a native American child, born within hearing of a hundred Sabbath-bells!

Stumbling down a stairway, from which the banisters were long ago broken away for firewood, we enter a dark room (only one tallow-candle burning dimly in the corner) into which are huddled five and twenty human beings. Along the walls are ranged beds or bunks, one above the other, covered with rotting quilts and unwashed coverlids. Each of these rents for sixpence a night to any thief or beggar who may choose to apply for lodging. No distinctions are made for sex or color. Patchie carries the lamp about, and we peep at the different heads projecting from under the stacks of rags—in one bed a gray-haired, shriveled object, cuddling close to the soft, yellow

locks of a slumbering child. While we are reconnoitering, something black, like a huge dog, runs past us and dives under a bed. "What is here, good friend?" "Oh! only the goats," replies a merry Milesian. "Do they live with you all in this room?" "To be sure they do; we feeds 'em on 'tatie-skins, and milks 'em for the babies." Country-born as we are, we have often longed to "keep a dairy" in this creamless city, but it never occurred to us before that a bedroom was amply sufficient for the purpose. Truly, necessity is a sharp-witted mother of inventions.

Opposite to Cow Bay lies CUT-THROAT ALLEY. Two murders a year is about the average product of the civilization of this dark defile; it is flanked by a brothel and a grog-shop. The keeper of that famous grog-shop died not long ago, leaving a fortune of \$50,000.

Past this slave-pen of alcohol we push our way up into the Alley. The stairway is dark and dangerous. Through one rotten door after another we grope along. At length we reach a wretched garret, through whose open chinks the snow has filtered in upon the muddy floor. There is not a solitary article of furniture in the apartment, except one broken stove, from which the last handful of coal-cinders has died out. Beside the stove sat a half-naked woman, wrapped in a tattered shawl, and moaning over a terrible burn that covered her whole right breast. She had fallen, when intoxicated, upon the stove, and no one had cared enough for her to carry her off to the hospital. She looks up piteously through her tears, and exclaims: "For God's sake, gentlemen, can't you get me a glass of *gin*?" A half-eaten crust lay by her, a cold potato or two, but the irrepressible thirst for gin clamored for relief before either pain or hunger. "Good woman," said the policeman, "where's Mose?" "Here he is." A heap of rags beside her was uncovered, and there lay the sleeping face of an old negro, apparently of fifty; *her* skin was as fair and smooth as the Prince of Wales's. In nearly every garret we entered, the same practical amalgamation was in fashion; but in each case a black Othello had won a fair Desdemona, and not one white man was found with a colored wife. Where the blacks were found by themselves, we generally encountered tidiness, and some sincere attempts at industry and honest self-support. Mr. Barlow tells

me that the negroes of the Five Points are fifty per cent in advance of the Irish as to sobriety and decency. In one attic to which we crept, a tidy negress sat reading by a table on which lay a Bible, a hymn-book, a copy of Miss Harland's "Nemesis," and several other volumes. By the stove sat a little girl who attends the mission-school, and over the door was nailed a horse-shoe "to bring good luck."

It was pleasant to find that in many of the most loathsome cellars and attics, Mr. Barlow was gratefully recognized by the wretched inmates. In one place he had nursed a dying child; in another he had prayed by a sick-bed; to another he had come like a gleam of sunshine into their bleak, dreary existence. He is a faithful missionary, to whom the Christian philanthropy of the land owes a hearty and generous support in his toil of love. To the policeman they seemed about as much accustomed as to Mr. Barlow. When we entered a crowded cellar in Baxter street, and Patchie's lantern shone on the officer's cap and buttons, a crash was heard in the window at the opposite end of the cellar, and a mass of broken glass rattled on the floor. "Poor fool!" muttered the policeman, "he thinks I am after him; but I will have him before morning."

From all the sickening scenes of squalor, drunkenness, misery, and crime, what a relief it was to us to return to the House of Industry, with its neat school-rooms, its capacious chapel, and its row of cheerful children marching up to their little beds. It was like coming into the light-house after the storm. Blessings on this haven of hope! It has been the starting-point of a new and a better life to many a poor waif on the stream of misery and sin. It is a house of labor and a house of prayer. The only avenue of hope for hundreds of wretched children in that region, lies through the Mission House and the House of Industry. Let every rural reader of this hurried sketch pay Mr. Barlow a visit when he comes to New-York, and not forget to bring his purse. Every Christian citizen of our metropolis should be familiar with this institution; he will offer a very different sort of prayer at his own family altar after an hour spent among the wrecks and the rescues of the Five Points.