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THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF REAL LIFE.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

PHILADELPHIA:

1851.

PREFACE.

To all, as they pass through the world, come "light and shadow." Though the sun may be in the heavens, clouds often intervene, and cast deep shadows about our footsteps. But, it is a truth which we cannot too deeply lay to heart, that, in our life, as in nature, the exhalations which form the obscuring cloud arise from below. They are not born in the pure heavens, but spring out of the earth beneath. If there was nothing evil in the mind, there would be no cloud in the sky of our being,--all would be "eternal sunshine."

If, therefore, in this book the lights and shadows are blessed; if,

in a word, the clouds often hang heavy and remain long in the sky, the fault is in those whose histories we have written. But the sky does not always remain dark. As the heart becomes filled with better purposes through the trials and pains of adversity, or comes out purer from the furnace of affliction, the clouds disperse, and the blessed sunlight comes again. Lay this up for your consolation, all ye who are in trouble and affliction, and look hopefully in the future. It will not always remain dark as in the present time.

PUBLISHER'S INTRODUCTION.

ACCOMPANYING this volume, is a brief auto-biography. In circulating Mr. Arthur's "Sketches of Life and Character," the publisher met so frequently with an expressed desire to know something of one whose writings had made him a general favorite that he was led to solicit a personal sketch, to go with a new collection of his writings. It is but due to the author to say, that his concurrence in the matter was not without considerable reluctance. From this sketch it will be seen that Mr. Arthur is a self-made man, and that he has gained his present enviable position through long and patient labor, and against the pressure of much that was adverse and discouraging. In his elevation he has this pleasing reflection, that in seeking to gain a high place for himself, he has dragged no one down, but rather, sought to carry along, in his upward way, all who could be induced to go with him.

The portrait given in this volume, was engraved from one recently painted by Lambdin, and is considered a very good likeness. Mr. Arthur is now in his forty-second year, and looks somewhat younger than the artist has represented him.

For the information of those who wish to procure Mr. Arthur's Temperance Tales, the publisher would state, that in "Lights and Shadows of Real Life," are included all the stories contained in the recently issued edition of "Illustrated Temperance Tales," besides nearly two hundred pages of additional matter, thus making a larger, more miscellaneous, and more acceptable book for all readers.

BRIEF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

In compliance with the earnest request of the publisher of this volume, I have, with a reluctance that I find it difficult to overcome, consented to furnish a brief sketch personal to myself. Although my name has been constantly appearing for some twelve or fifteen years, yet I have lost none of that, shrinking from notoriety and observation which made me timid and retiring when a boy. The necessity to write as a means of livelihood, and to write a great deal, has brought me so frequently before the public, that I have almost ceased to think about the matter as any thing more than an ordinary occurrence; but, now, when called upon to write about myself, I find that the edge of a natural sensitiveness is quite as keen as ever. But, I will call the feeling a weakness, and try to repress it until I have finished my present task.

I was born in the year 1809, near Newburgh, Orange County, New York; and my eyes first opened on the beautiful scenery of the Hudson. My earliest recollection is of Fort Montgomery, some six miles below West Point, on the river, where my parents resided for a few years previous to 1817. In the Spring of that year, they removed to Baltimore, which became my place of residence until 1841, when I came to Philadelphia, where I have since lived.

My early educational advantages were few. There were no public schools in Maryland, when I was a boy, and, as my father had a large family and but a moderate income, he could afford to send his children to school only for a limited period. He knew the value, however, of a good education, and did all for us in his power. Especially did he seek to inspire his children with a regard for religious truth, and, both by precept and example, to lead them into the practice of such things as were honest and of good rest. In all this, he was warmly seconded by a mother who still survives; and for whom, it is but just to say, that her children feel the tenderest regard--and well may they do so, for they owe her much.

At school, I was considered a very dull boy. My memory was not retentive, and I comprehended ideas and formulas expressed by others in a very imperfect manner. I needed a careful, judicious, and patient teacher, who understood the character of my mind, and who was able to come down to it with instruction in the simplest and clearest forms; thus helping me to think for myself and to see for myself. Instead of this, I was scolded and whipped because I could not understand things that were never explained. As, for instance, a slate and pencil were placed in my hands after I had learned to read, upon which was a sum in simple addition for which I was required to find an answer. Now, in the word, "Addition," as referring to figures, I saw no meaning. I did not comprehend the fact, in connexion with it, that two and two made four. True, I had learned my "Addition Table," but, strangely enough, that did not

furnish me with any clue towards working out the problem of figures set for me on my slate. I was then in my ninth year; and I can remember, to this day, with perfect distinctness, how utterly discouraged I became, as day by day went by, and still I had not found a correct result to any one of my sums, nor gained a single ray of light on the subject. Strange as it may seem, I remained for several months in simple addition before I knew how to sum up figures, and then the meaning of addition flashed, in a sudden thought upon my mind, while I was at play. I had no trouble after that. During the next week, I escaped both scolding and "belaboring" (a favorite phrase of my teacher's), and then passed on to subtraction. Five minutes devoted to an explanation, in some simple form, of what "Addition" meant, would have saved me the loss of months, to say nothing of the pain, both mental and bodily, that I suffered during the time.

With such a mind and such a teacher, it is no wonder that I made but little progress during the few years that I went to school. Beyond reading and writing, Arithmetic and English Grammar included the entire range of my studies. As for Arithmetic, I did not master half the common rules, and Grammar was to my mind completely unintelligible.

In the end, my teacher, declared that it was only wasting time and money to send me to school, and advised my father to put me out to a trade. This was done. I left home and entered upon an apprenticeship shortly after passing my thirteenth year.

If I found it extremely difficult to comprehend ideas as expressed in ordinary written forms, I was not without thoughts of my own. I had an active mind, and soon after entering upon my apprenticeship the desire for knowledge became strong. As food for this was supplied, even though in a stinted measure, the desire gained strength, and I began a system of self-education that was continued for years afterwards. Of course, the system was a very imperfect one. There was no one to select books for me, nor to direct my mind in its search after knowledge. I was an humble apprentice boy, inclined from habit to shrink from observation, and preferring to grope about in the dark for what I was in search of, rather than intrude my wants and wishes upon others. Day after day I worked and thought, and night after night I read and studied, while other boys were seeking pleasure and recreation. Thus, through much discouragement, the years passed by; and thus time went on, until I attained the age of manhood, when, defective sight compelled me to give up the trade I had been acquiring for over seven years.

Beyond this trade, my ability to earn a living was small. My efforts at self-education had been guided by no definite aims in life. I had read, studied and thought, more to gratify a desire for knowledge than to gain information with the end of applying it to any particular use. The consequence was, that on reaching manhood, I entered the world at a great disadvantage. My trade, to learn which I had spent so many years, could not be followed, except at the risk

of losing my sight, which had failed for the three preceding years with such rapidity that I was now compelled to use glasses of strong magnifying power. I had but slight knowledge of figures, and was not, therefore, competent, to take the situation of a clerk. At this point in my life, I suffered from great discouragement of mind. Through the kind offices of a friend, a place was procured for me in a counting room, at a very small salary, where but light service was required, and where I found but few opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of business. Here I remained for over three years, almost as much shut out from contact with the business world as when an apprentice, and with plenty of time on my hands for reading and writing, which I improved.

The necessity for a larger income caused me to leave this place, and accept of one in which a higher ability was required. In 1833 I went to the West as agent for a Banking Company; but the institution failed and I returned to Baltimore, out of employment. During all this time, I was devoting my leisure moments to writing, not that I looked forward to authorship as a trade--nothing could have been more foreign to my thoughts;--I continued to write, as I had begun, prompted by an impulse that I felt little inclination to resist.

At this point in my life, I was induced, in association with a friend who was as fond of writing as myself, to assume the editorial charge of a literary paper. And here began, in earnest, my literary labors, that have since continued with only brief periods of intermission.

As an author, I have never striven for mere reputation; have never sought to make a name. Circumstances, over which I had little control, guided my feet, and I walked onward in the path that opened before me, not doubting but that I was in the right way. If other employment had offered; if I had received a good business education, and been able, through that means, to have advanced myself in the world, I would, like thousands of others who had an early fondness for literary pursuits, soon have laid aside my pen and given to trade the best energies of my mind. But Providence guided my feet into other paths than these. They were rough and thorny at times, and I often fainted by the way; yet renewed strength ever came when I felt the weakest. If my earnest labor has not been so well rewarded in a money-sense as it might have been had I possessed a business education at the time of my entrance upon life, my reward in another sense has been great. Though I have not been able to accumulate wealth, I have gained what wealth alone cannot give, a wide-spread acknowledgment that in my work I have done good to my fellow men. This acknowledgment comes back upon me from all directions, and I will not deny that it affords me a deep interior satisfaction. Could it be otherwise? And with this heart-warming satisfaction, there arises ever in my mind a new impulse, prompting to still more earnest efforts in the cause of humanity.

My choice of temperance themes has not arisen from any experience in my own person of the evils of intemperance, but from having been an

eye and ear witness to some of the first results of Washingtonianism, and seeing, in the cause, one worthy the best efforts of my pen. The temperance cause I recognized as a good cause, and I gave it the benefit of whatever talent I possessed. And I have the pleasant assurance, from very many who have had better opportunities to know than myself, that my labor has not been in vain. Thus much I have ventured to write of myself. Beyond this, let my works speak for me. I can say no more.

Philadelphia, May, 1850.

T. S. A.

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THE FACTORY GIRL.

THERE was something wrong about the affairs of old Mr. Bacon. His farm, once the best tilled and most productive in the neighbourhood, began to show evidences of neglect and unfruitfulness; and that he was going behindhand in the world, was too apparent in the fact, that, within two years he had sold twenty acres of good meadow, and, moreover, was under the necessity of borrowing three hundred dollars on a mortgage of his landed property. And yet, Mr. Bacon had not laid aside his habits of industry. He was up, as of old, with the dawn, and turned not his feet homeward from the field until the sun had taken his parting glance from the distant hill-tops.

A kind-hearted, cheerful-minded man was old Mr. Bacon, well liked by all his neighbours, and loved by his own household. His two oldest children died ere reaching the age of manhood; three remained. Mary Bacon, the eldest of those who survived, now in her nineteenth year, had been from earliest childhood her father's favourite; and, as she advanced towards womanhood, she had grown more and more into his heart. In his eyes she was very beautiful; and his eyes, though partial, did not deceive him very greatly, for Mary's face was fair to look upon.

We have said that Mr. Bacon was a kind-hearted cheerful-minded man. And so he was; kind-hearted and cheerful, even though clouds were beginning to darken above him, and a sigh from the coming tempest was in the air. Yet not so uniformly cheerful as of old, though never moody nor perverse in his tempers. Of the change that was in progress, the change from prosperity to adversity, he did not seem to be painfully conscious.

Yes, there was something wrong about the affairs of old Mr. Bacon. A habit indulged through many years, had acquired a dangerous influence over him, and was gradually destroying his rational ability to act well in the ordinary concerns of life. As a young man, Mr. Bacon drank "temperately," and he drank "temperately" in the prime of life; and now, at sixty, he continued to drink "temperately," that is, in his own estimation. There were many, however, who had reason to think differently. But Mr. Bacon was no bar-room loungee; in fact, he rarely, if ever, went to a public house; it was in his own home and among his household treasures, that he placed to his lips the cup of confusion.

The various temperance reforms had all found warm advocates among

his friends and neighbours; but Mr. Bacon stood aloof. He would have nothing to do in these matters.

"Let them join temperance societies who feel themselves in danger," was his good natured answer to all argument or persuasion addressed to him on the subject.

He did not oppose nor ridicule the movement. He thought it a good thing; only, he had in it no personal interest.

And so Mr. Bacon went on drinking "temperately" until habit, from claiming a moderate indulgence, began to make, so it seemed to his friends, rather unreasonable demands. Besides this habit of drinking, Mr. Bacon had another habit, that of industry; and, what was unusual, the former did not abate the latter, though it must be owned that it sadly interfered with its efficiency. He was up, as we have said, with the dawn, and all the day he was busy at work; but, somehow or other, his land did not produce as liberally as in former times, and there was slowly creeping over every thing around him an aspect of decay. Moreover, he did not manage, as well as formerly, the selling part of his business. In fact, his shrewdness of mind was gone. Alcohol had confused his brain. Gradually he was retrograding; and, while more than half conscious of the ruin that was in advance of him, he was not fully enough awake to feel seriously alarmed, nor to begin anxiously to seek for the cause of impending evil. And so it went on until Mr. Bacon, suddenly found himself in the midst of real trouble. The value of his farm, which, after parting with the twenty acres of meadow land, contained but twenty-five acres, had been yearly diminishing in consequence of bad culture, and defective management of his stock had reduced that until it was of little consequence.

The holder of the mortgage was a man named Dyer, who kept a tavern in the village that lay a mile distant from the little white farm-house of Mr. Bacon. When Dyer commenced his liquor-selling trade, for that was his principal business, he had only a few hundred dollars; now he was worth thousands, and was about the only man in the neighbourhood who had money to lend. His loans were always made on bond and mortgage, and, it was a little remarkable, that he was never known to let a sober, industrious farmer or store-keeper have a single dollar. But, a drinking man, who was gradually wasting his substance, rarely applied to him in vain; for he was the cunning spider watching for the silly fly. More than one worn-out and run-down farm had already come into his hands, through the foreclosure of mortgages, at a time of business depression, when his helpless victims could find no sympathizing friends able to save them from ruin.

One day, in mid-winter, as Mr. Bacon was cutting wood at his rather poorly furnished wood pile, the tavern-keeper rode up. There was something in his countenance that sent a creeping sense of fear to the heart of the farmer.

"Good morning, Mr. Dyer," said he.

"Good morning," returned the tavern-keeper, formally. His usual smile was absent from his face.

"Sharp day, this."

"Yes, rather keen."

"Won't you walk in and take something?"

"No, thank you. H-h-e-em!"

There was a pause.

"Mr. Bacon."

The farmer's eye sunk beneath the cold steady look of Dyer.

"Mr. Bacon, I guess I shall have to call on you for them three hundred dollars," said the tavern-keeper, in a firm voice.

"Can't pay that mortgage now, Mr. Dyer," returned Bacon, with a troubled expression; "no use to think of it."

"Rather a cool way to treat a man after borrowing his money. I told you when I lent it that I might want it at almost any time."

"Oh! no, Mr. Dyer. It was understood, distinctly, that from four to six months' notice would be given," replied Mr. Bacon, positively.

"Preposterous!" ejaculated the tavern-keeper. "Never thought of such a thing. Six months notice, indeed!"

"That was the agreement," said Mr. Bacon, firmly.

"Is it in the bond?"

"No, it was verbal, between us."

Dyer shook his head, as he answered,--

"No, sir. I never make agreements of that kind; the money was to be paid on demand, and I have ridden over this morning to make the demand."

"It is midwinter, Mr. Dyer," was replied in a husky voice.

"Well?"

"You know that a small farmer, like me, cannot be in possession, at this season, of the large sum you demand."

"That is your affair, Mr. Bacon. I want my money now, and must have it."

There was a tone of menace in the way this was said that Mr. Bacon fully understood.

"I haven't thirty dollars, much less three hundred, in my possession," said he.

"Borrow it, then."

"Impossible! money has not been so scarce for years. Every one is complaining."

"You'd better make the effort, Mr. Bacon, I shall be sorry to put you to any trouble, but my money will have to be forthcoming."

"You will not enter up the mortgage?" said the farmer.

"It will certainly come to that, unless you can pay it."

"That is what I call oppression!" returned Mr. Bacon, in momentary indignation, for the utterance of which he was as quickly repentant.

"Good morning," said Dyer, suddenly turning his horse's head, and riding off at a brisk trot.

For nearly five minutes, old Mr. Bacon stood with his axe resting on the ground, lost in painful thought. Then he went slowly into the house, and sitting down before the fire, let his head sink upon his breast, and there mused on the trouble that was closing around him. But there came no ray of light, piercing the thick darkness that had fallen so suddenly.

Nothing was then said to his family on the subject, but it was apparent to all that something was wrong, for the lips that gave utterance to so many pleasant words, and parted so often in cheerful smiles, were still silent.

"Are you not well, to-day?" asked Mrs. Bacon, as the family gathered around the dinner-table, and she remarked her husband's unusually sober face.

"Not very well," he replied.

"What ails you, father?" said Mary, with tender concern in her voice, and her eyes were turned upon him with affectionate earnestness.

"Nothing of much consequence, child," was answered evasively. "I shall be better after dinner."

And as Mr. Bacon spoke he poured out a larger glass of brandy than

usual--he always had brandy on the table at dinner time--and drank it off. This soon took away the keen edge of suffering from his feelings, and he was able to affect a measure of cheerfulness. But he did not deceive the eyes of Mrs. Bacon and Mary.

"I wonder what ails father!" said Mary, as soon as she was alone with her mother.

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Bacon, thoughtfully, "he seems troubled about something."

"I saw that Mr. Dyer, who keeps tavern over in Brookville, talking with father at the wood-pile this morning."

"You did!" Mrs. Bacon spoke with a new manifestation of interest.

"Yes; and I thought, as I looked at him out of the window, that he appeared to be angry about something."

Mrs. Bacon did not reply to this remark. Soon after, on meeting her husband, she said to him,

"What did Mr. Dyer want this morning?"

"Something that he will not get," replied Mr. Bacon.

"The money he loaned you?"

"Yes."

"It's impossible to pay it back now, in the dead of winter," said Mrs. Bacon, in a troubled tone of voice, "he ought to know that."

"And he does know it."

"What did you tell him?"

"That to lift the mortgage now was out of the question."

"Won't he be troublesome? You remember how he acted towards poor old Mr. Peabody."

"I know he's a hard-hearted, selfish man. I don't believe that there is a spark of humanity about him. But he'll scarcely go to extremities with me. I don't fear that."

"Did he threaten?"

"Yes. But I hardly think that he was in earnest."

How far this last remark of old Mr. Bacon was correct, the following brief conversation will show. It took place between Dyer and a miserable pettyfogging lawyer, in Brookville, named Grant.

"I've got a mortgage on old Bacon's farm that I wish entered up," said the tavern-keeper, on calling at the lawyer's office.

"Can't he pay it off?" inquired Grant.

"Of course not. He's being running down for the last six or seven years, and is now on his last legs."

"And so you mean to trip him up before he falls of himself." The lawyer spoke in an unfeeling tone and with a sinister smile.

"If you please to say so," returned Dyer. "I've wanted that farm of his for some time past. When I took the mortgage on it my object was not a simple investment at legal interest; you know that I can do better with money than six per cent a year."

"I should think you could," responded the lawyer, with a chuckle.

"When I loaned Bacon three hundred dollars, of course I never expected to get the sum back again. I understood, perfectly well, that sooner or later the mortgage would have to be entered up."

"And the farm becomes yours for half its real value."

"Exactly."

"Are you not striking to soon?" suggested the lawyer.

"No."

"Some friend may loan him the amount."

Dyer shook his head.

"It's a tight time in Brookville."

"I know."

"And still better for my purpose," said Dyer, in a low, meaning, voice; "drunkards have few friends; none, in fact, willing to risk their money on them. Put the screws to Bacon, and his farm will drop into my hands like a ripe cherry."

"You can hardly call Bacon a drunkard. You never see him staggering about, nor lounging in bar-rooms."

"Do you remember his farm seven years ago?"

"Perfectly well."

"Look at it now."

"There's a great difference, certainly."

"Isn't there! What's the reason of this?"

"Intemperance, I suppose."

"Drunkenness!" said the tavern-keeper. "That is the right word. He don't spend much in bar-rooms, but look over his store bill and you'll find rum a large item."

"Poor Bacon! He's a good sort of a man," remarked the lawyer. "I can't help feeling sorry for him. He's his own worst enemy."

"I want you to push this matter through in the quickest possible time," said Dyer, in a sharp, firm voice.

"Very well. It shall be done. I know my business."

"And I know mine," returned the tavern-keeper.

On the next day, Mr. Bacon was formally notified that proceedings had been instituted for the satisfaction of the mortgage. This was bringing the threatened evil before his eyes in the most direct aspect. In considerable alarm and perturbation, he called over to see Dyer.

"You cannot mean to press this matter on to the utmost extremity," said he, on meeting the tavern-keeper, the hard aspect of whose features gave him little room for hope.

"I certainly mean to get my three hundred dollars," was replied.

"Can you not wait until after next harvest?"

"I have already told you that I want my money now," said Dyer, with affected anger. "If you can pay me, well; if not, I will get my own by aid of the Sheriff."

"That is a hard saying, Mr. Dyer," returned the farmer, in a subdued voice.

"Nevertheless, it is a true one, friend Bacon, true as gospel."

"I haven't the money, nor can I borrow it, Mr. Dyer."

"Your misfortune, not mine. Though I must say, it is a little strange."

"What is strange?"

"That a man who has lived in this community as long as you have, can't find a friend willing to loan him three hundred dollars to save his farm from the Sheriff. There's something wrong."

Yes, there was something wrong, and poor old Mr. Bacon felt it now more deeply than ever. Another feeble effort at remonstrance was made, when Mr. Dyer coldly referred him to Grant the lawyer, who had now entire control of the business. But he did not go to him. He felt that to do so would be utterly useless.

Regular proceedings were entered upon for the settlement of the mortgage, and hurried to an issue as speedily as possible. It was all in vain that Mr. Bacon sought to borrow three hundred dollars, or to find some person willing to take the mortgage on his farm, and let him continue to pay the interest. It was a season when few had money to spare, and those who could have advanced the sum required, hesitated about investing it where there was little hope of getting the amount back again except by execution and sale. For, Mr. Bacon, in consequence of his intemperance, was steadily running behindhand; and all his neighbours knew it.

The effect of this trouble on the mind of Mr. Bacon was to cause him to drink harder than before. His cheerful temper gave place to a silent moodiness, when in partial states of sobriety, which were now of rare occurrence, and he lost all interest in things around him. A greater part of his time was spent in wandering restlessly about his house or farm, but he put his hand to scarcely any work.

Deeply distressed were Mrs. Bacon and Mary. Each of them had called, at different times on Mr. Dyer, in the hope of moving him by persuasion to turn from his purpose.

But, only in one way would he agree to an amicable settlement, and that was, by taking the farm for the mortgage and three hundred dollars cash; by which means he would come into possession of property worth from twelve to fifteen hundred dollars. This offer he repeated to Mary, who was the last to call upon him in the hope of turning him from his purpose.

"No! Mr. Dyer," said the young girl firmly, even while tears were in her eyes. "My father will not let the place go at a third of its real value."

"He over-estimates its worth," replied Dyer, with some impatience, "and he'll find this out when it comes under the hammer."

"You will not, I am sure you will not, sacrifice my father's little place,--the home of his children," said Mary, in an appealing voice.

"I shall certainly let things take their course," replied the tavern-keeper. "Tell your father, from me, that he has nothing to hope for from any change in my purpose, and that he need make no more efforts to influence me. I will buy the place, as I said, for six hundred dollars, its full value, or I will sell it for my claim."

And saying this, the man left, abruptly, the room in which his interview with Mary was held, and she, hopeless of making any impression on his feelings, arose and retired from the house, taking, with a sad heart, her way homeward. Never before had Mary, a gentle-hearted, quiet, retiring girl, been forced into such rough contact with the world at any point. Of this act of intercession for her father, Mr. Bacon knew nothing. Had she dropped (sic) a word of her purpose in his hearing, he would have uttered a positive interdiction. He loved Mary as the apple of his eye, and she loved him with a tender, self-devoted affection. To him, she was a choice and beautiful flower, and even though his mind had become, in a certain degree, degraded and debased by intemperance, there was in it a quick instinct of protection when any thing approached his child.

Slowly and thoughtfully, with her eyes bent upon the ground, did Mary Bacon pursue her way homeward; and she was not aware of the approach of footsteps behind her, until a man stood by her side and pronounced her name.

"Mr. Green!" said she, in momentary surprise, pausing as she looked up.

Mr. Green was a farmer in easy circumstances, whose elegant and highly cultivated place was only a short distance from her father's residence. He was, probably, the richest man in the neighbourhood of Brookville; though, exceedingly close in all money matters. Mr. Bacon would have called upon him for aid in his extremity, but for two reasons. One was, Mr. Green's known indisposition to lend money, and the other was the fact that he had several times talked to him about his bad drinking habits; at which liberty he had taken offence, and retorted rather sharply for one of his mild temper.

The colour mounted quickly to Mary's face, as she paused and lifted her eyes to the countenance of Mr. Green. The fact was, she had been thinking about him, and, just at the moment he came to her side, she had fully made up her mind to call upon him before going home.

"Well Mary," said he, kindly, and he took her hand.

Mary's lips quivered, but she could not utter a word.

Mr. Green moved on, still holding her hand, and she moved by his side.

"I'm sorry to hear," said Mr. Green, "that your father is in trouble. I learned it only an hour ago."

"That is just what I was coming to see you about," replied Mary, with a boldness of speech that surprised even herself.

"Indeed! Then you were coming to see me," said Mr. Green, in a voice that was rather encouraging than otherwise.

"Yes, sir. But father knows nothing of my purpose."

"Oh! Well, Mary, what is it you wish to say to me?"

The young girl's bosom was heaving violently. Some moments passed ere she felt calm enough to proceed. Then she said--

"Mr. Dyer has a mortgage on father's place for three hundred dollars, and is going to sell it."

"Mr. Dyer is a hard man, and your father should not have placed himself in his power," remarked Mr. Green.

"Unhappily, he is in his power."

"So it seems. Well, what do you wish me to do in the case?"

"To lend me three hundred dollars," said Mary, promptly. Thus encouraged to speak, she did not hesitate a moment.

"Lend you three hundred dollars! returned Mr. Green, rather surprised at the directness of her request. "For what use?"

"To pay off this mortgage, of course," replied Mary.

"But, who will pay me back my money?" inquired Mr. Green.

"I will," said Mary, confidently. "You! Pray where do you expect to get so much money from?"

"I expect to earn it," was firmly answered.

Mr. Green paused, and turning towards Mary, looked earnestly into her young face that was lit up with a beautiful enthusiasm.

"Earn it, did you say?"

"Yes, sir, I will earn and pay it back to you, if it takes a lifetime to do it in."

"How will you earn it, Mary?"

Mary let her eyes fall to the ground, and stood for a moment or two. Then looking up, she said--

"I will go to Lowell."

"To Lowell?"

"Yes, sir."

"And work in a factory?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Green moved on again, but in silence, and Mary walked with an anxious heart by his side. For the distance of several hundred yards they passed along and not a word was spoken.

"To Lowell?" at length dropped from the lips of Mr. Green, in a tone half interrogative, half in surprise. Mary did not respond, and the silence continued until they came to a point in the road where their two ways diverged.

"Have you thought well of this, Mary?" said Mr. Green, as he paused here, and laid his hand upon a gate that opened into a part of his farm.

"Why should I think about it, Mr. Green?" replied Mary. "It is no time to think, but to act. Hundreds of girls go into factories, and it will be to me no hardship, but a pleasure, if thereby I can help my father in this great extremity."

"Is he aware of your purpose?"

"Oh, no sir! no!"

"He would never listen to such a thing."

"Not for a moment."

"Then will you be right in doing what he must disapprove?"

"It is done for his sake. Love for him is my prompter, and that will bear me up even against his displeasure."

"But he may prevent your going, Mary."

"Not if you will do as I wish."

"Speak on."

"Lend me three hundred dollars on my promise to you that I will immediately go to Lowell, enter a factory, and remain at work until the whole sum is paid back again from my earnings."

"Well!"

"I will then take the money and pay off the mortgage. This will release father from his debt to Mr. Dyer, and bring me in debt to you."

"I see."

"Father is an honest and an honourable man."

"He is, Mary," said Mr. Green. His voice slightly trembled, for he was touched by the words of the gentle girl.

"He will not be able to pay you the debt in my stead."

"No."

"And, therefore, deeply reluctant as he may be to let me go, he cannot say nay."

"Walk along with me to my house," said Mr. Green, as he pushed open the gate at which he stood, "I must think about this a little more."

The result was according to Mary's wishes. Mr. Green was a true friend of Mr. Bacon's, and he saw, or believed that he saw, in his daughter's proposition, the means of his reformation. He, therefore, returned into the village, and going to the office of Grant, satisfied the mortgage on Mr. Bacon's property, and brought all the papers relating thereto away and placed them in Mary's hands.

"Now," said he, on doing this, "I want your written promise to pay me the three hundred dollars in the way proposed. I will draw up the paper, and you must sign it."

The paper was accordingly drawn up and signed. It stipulated that Mary was to start for Lowell within three weeks, and that she was to have two years for the full payment of the debt.

"My brave girl!" said Mr. Green, as he parted with Mary. "No one will be prouder of you than I, if you accomplish the work to which you are about devoting yourself. Happy would I be, had I a daughter with your true heart and noble courage."

Mary's heart was too full to thank him. But her sweet young face was beaming with gratitude, as she turned away and hurried homeward.

Mr. Bacon was walking uneasily, backwards and forwards in the old porch, when Mary entered the little garden gate. She advanced towards him with a bright face, holding out as she did so, a small package of papers.

"Good news, father!" she exclaimed. "Good news!"

"How? What, child?" eagerly asked the old man, his mind becoming suddenly bewildered.

"The mortgage is paid, and here is the release!" said Mary, still holding out the package of papers.

"Paid! Paid, Mary! Who paid it?" returned Mr. Bacon, with the air of a man awaking from a dream.

"I have paid it, father dear!" answered Mary, in a trembling voice; and she kissed the old man's cheek, and then laid her face down upon his breast.

"You, Mary?" Where did you get money?"

"I borrowed it," murmured the happy girl.

"Mary! Mary! what does this mean?" said the old man, pushing back her face and gazing into it earnestly. "Borrowed the money! Why, who would lend you three hundred dollars? Say, child!"

"I borrowed it of Mr. Green," replied Mary, and as she said this, she glided past her father and entering into the house, hurried away to her mother. But ere she had time to inform her of what she had done, the father joined them, eager for some further explanations. When, at last, he comprehended the whole matter, he was, for a time like a man stricken down by a heavy blow.

"Never," said he, in the most solemn manner, "will I consent to this. Mr. Green must take back his money. Let the farm go! It shall not be saved at this price."

But he soon comprehended that it was too late to recall the act of his daughter. The money had already passed into the hands of Dyer, and the mortgage been cancelled. Still, he was fixed in his purpose that Mary should not leave home to spend two long years of incessant toil in a factory, and immediately called on Mr. Green in order to make with him some different arrangement for the payment of the loan. But, to his surprise and grief, he found that Mr. Green was unyielding in his determination to keep Mary to her contract.

"Surely! surely! Mr. Green, "urged the distressed father, "you will not hold my dear child to this pledge, made under circumstances of so trying a nature? You will not punish--I say _punish_--a gentle girl like her for loving her father too well."

"If there is any hardship in the case," replied Mr. Green, calmly, "you are at fault, and not me, Mr. Bacon."

"Why do you say that?" inquired the old man.

"For the necessity which drove your child to this act of self-sacrifice, you are responsible."

"Oh sir! is this a time to wound me with words like these? Why do you turn a seeming act of kindness into the sharpest cruelty?"

"I speak to you but the words of truth and soberness, Mr. Bacon. These, no man should shrink from hearing. Seven years ago, your farm was the most productive in the neighborhood, and you in easy circumstances. What has produced the sad change now visible to all eyes? What has taken from you the ability to manage your affairs as

prosperously as before? What has made it necessary for your child to leave her father's sheltering roof and bury herself for two long years in a factory, in order to save you from total ruin? Go home, Mr. Bacon, and answer these questions to your own heart, and may the pain you now suffer lead you to act more wisely in the future."

"My daughter shall not go!" exclaimed the old man, passionately.

"I hold her written pledge to repair to Lowell at the expiration of three weeks, and to repay the loan I made her in two years. Will you compel her to violate her contract?"

"I will execute another mortgage on my farm and pay you back the loan."

"Act like a wise man," said Mr. Green. "Let your daughter carry out her noble purpose, and thus relieve you from embarrassment."

"No, no, Mr. Green! I cannot think of this. Oh, sir! pity me! Do not force my child away! Do not lay so heavy a burden on one so young. Think of her as your own daughter, and do to me as you would yourself wish to be done by."

But Mr. Green was deaf to all these appeals. He was a man of great firmness of purpose, and not easily turned to the right nor to the left.

During the next three weeks, Mr. Bacon tried every expedient in his power, short of a total sacrifice of his little property, to raise the money, but in vain. Except for a circumstance new in his life, he would, in his desperation, have accepted Dyer's offer of six hundred dollars for his farm, and thus prevented Mary's departure for Lowell--that circumstance was his perfect sobriety. Not since the day when Mr. Green charged upon him the responsibility of his child's banishment from her father's house, had he tasted a drop of strong drink. His mind was therefore clear, and he was restrained by reason from acts of rashness, by which his condition would be rendered far worse than it was already.

Bitter indeed were the sufferings of Mr. Bacon, during the quick passage of the three weeks--at the expiration of which time Mary was to leave home, in compliance with her contract--and the more bitter, because his mind was unobscured by drink. At last, the moment of separation came. It was a clear cold morning towards the latter end of March, when Mary left, for the last time, her little chamber, and came down stairs dressed for her journey. Ever, in the presence of her father and mother, during the brief season of preparation, had she maintained a cheerful and confident exterior; but, in her heart, there was a painful shrinking back from the trial upon which she was about entering. On going by the door of Mary's chamber, a few minutes before she came down, Mrs. Bacon saw her daughter kneeling at her bedside, with her face deeply buried among the clothes. Not till that moment did she fully comprehend the trial through which

her child was passing.

The stage was at the door, and Mary's trunk strapped up in the boot before she came down. In the porch stood her father and mother, and her younger brother and sister, waiting her appearance.

"Good bye, father," said the excellent girl, in a cheerful voice, as she reached out her hand.

Mr. Bacon caught it eagerly, and essayed to speak some tender and encouraging words. But though his lips moved, there was no sound upon the air.

"God bless you!" was at length uttered in a sobbing voice. A fervent kiss was then pressed upon her lips, and the old man turned away and staggered rather than walked back into the house.

More calmly the mother parted with her child. It was a great trial for Mrs. Bacon, but she now fully comprehended the great use to flow from Mary's self-devotion, and, therefore, with her last kiss, breathed a word of encouragement.

"It is for your father. Let that sustain you to the end." A few moments more, and the stage rolled away, bearing with it the very sunlight from the dwelling of Mr. Bacon. Poor old man! Restlessly did he wander about for days after Mary's departure, unable to apply himself, except for a little while at a time, to any work; but his inquietude did not drive him back to the cup he had abandoned. No, he saw in it too clearly the cause of his present deep distress, to look upon and feel its allurements. What had banished from her pleasant home that beloved child, and sent her forth among strangers to toil from early morning until the going down of the sun? Could he love the cause of this great evil? No! There was yet enough virtue in his heart to save him. Love for his child was stronger than his depraved love of strong drink. A few more ineffectual efforts were made to turn Mr. Green from his resolution to hold Mary to her contract, and then the humbled father resigned himself to the necessity he could not overcome, and with a clearer mind and a newly awakened purpose, applied himself to the culture of his farm, which, in a few months, had a more thrifty appearance than it had presented for years.

In the mean time, Mary had entered one of the mills at Lowell, and was doing her work there with a brave and cheerful spirit. Some painful trials, to one like her, attended her arrival in the city and entrance upon the duties assumed. But daily the trials grew less, and she toiled on in the fulfilment of her contract with Mr. Green, happy under the ever present consciousness that she had saved her father's property, and kept their homestead as the gathering place of the family. At the end of three months, she came back and spent a week. How her young heart bounded with joy at the great change apparent in every thing about the house and farm, but, most of all, at the change in her father. He was not so light of word and

smilingly cheerful as in former times, but he was sober, perfectly sober; and she felt that the kiss with which he welcomed her brief return, was purer than it had ever been.

On the very day Mary came back, she called over to see Mr. Green, and paid him thirty-seven dollars on account of the loan, for which he gave her a receipt. Then he had many questions to ask about her situation at Lowell, and how she bore her separation from home, to all of which she gave cheerful answers, and, in the end, repeated her thanks for the opportunity he had given her to be of such great service to her father.

Mr. Green had a son who, during his term at college, exhibited talents of so decided a character that his father, after some deliberation, concluded to place him under the care of an eminent lawyer in Boston. In this position he had now been for two years, and was about applying for admission to the bar. As children, Henry Green and Mary Bacon had been to the same school together, and, as children, they were much attached to each other. Their intercourse, as each grew older, was suspended by the absence of Henry at college, and by other circumstances that removed the two families from intimate contact, and they had ceased to think of each other except when some remembrance of the past brought up their images.

After paying Mr. Green the amount of money which she had saved from her earnings during the first three months of her factory life, Mary left his house, and was walking along the carriage way leading to the public road, when she saw a young man enter the gate and approach her.

Although it was three years since she had met Henry Green, she knew him at a glance, but he did not recognize her, although struck with something familiar in her face as he bowed to her in passing.

"Who can that be?" said he to himself, as he walked thoughtfully along. "I have seen her before. Can that be Mary Bacon? If so, how much she has improved!"

On meeting his father, the young man asked if he was right in his conjecture about the young person he had just passed, and was answered in the affirmative.

"She was only a slender girl when I saw her last. Now, she is a handsome young woman," said Henry.

"Yes, Mary has grown up rapidly," replied Mr. Green, evincing no particular interest in the subject of his remark.

"How is her father doing now?" asked Henry.

"Better than he did a short time ago," was replied

"I'm glad to hear that. Does he drink as much as ever?"

"No. He has given up that bad habit."

"Indeed! Then he must be doing better."

"He ran himself down very low," said Mr. Green, "and was about losing every thing, when Mary, like a brave, right-minded girl, stepped forward and saved him."

"Mary! How did she do that, father?"

"Dyer had a mortgage of three hundred dollars on his farm, and was going to sell him out in mid-winter, when nobody who cared to befriend him had money to spare. On the very day I heard about his trouble, Mary called on me and asked the loan of a sum sufficient to lift the mortgage.

"But how could she pay you back that sum?" asked the young man in surprise.

"I loaned her the amount she asked," replied Mr. Green, "and she has just paid me the first promised instalment of thirty-seven dollars."

"How did she get the money?"

"She earned it with her own hands."

"Where?"

"In Lowell."

"You surprise me," said Henry. "And so, to save her father from ruin, she has devoted her young life to toil in a factory?"

"Yes; and the effect of this self-devotion has been all that I hoped it would be. It has reformed her father. It has saved him in a double sense."

"Noble girl!" exclaimed the young man, with enthusiasm.

"Yes, you may well say that, Henry," replied Mr. Green. "In the heart of that humble factory girl is a truly noble and womanly principle, that elevates her, in my estimation, far above any thing that rank, wealth, or social position alone can possibly give."

"But father," said Henry, "is it right to subject her to so severe a trial? It will take a long, long time, for her to earn three hundred dollars. Does not virtue like hers--"

"I know what you would say," interrupted Mr. Green. "True I could cancel the obligation and derive great pleasure from doing so, but it is the conclusion of my better judgment, all things considered, that she be permitted to fill up the entire measure of her contract.

The trial will fully prove her, and bring to view the genuine gold of her character. Moreover, it is best for her father that she should seem to be a sufferer through his intemperance. I say seem, for, really, Mary experiences more pleasure than pain from what she is doing. The trial is not so great as it appears. Her reward is with her daily, and it is a rich reward."

Henry asked no further question, but he felt more than a passing interest in what he had heard. In the course of a week, Mary returned to Lowell and he went back to Boston.

Three months afterwards, Mary again came home to visit her parents, and again called upon Mr. Green to pay over to him what she had been able to save from her earnings. It so happened that Henry Green was on a visit from Boston, and that he met her, as before, as she was retiring from the house of his father. This time he spoke to her and renewed their old acquaintance, even going so far as to walk a portion of the way home with her. At the end of another three months, they met again. Brief though this meeting was, it left upon the mind of each the other's image more strongly impressed than it had ever been. In the circle where Henry Green moved in Boston, he met many educated, refined, and elegant young women, some of whom had attracted him strongly; but, in the humble Mary Bacon, whose station in life was that of a toiling factory girl, he saw a moral beauty whose light threw all the allurements presented by these completely into shadow.

Six months went by. Henry Green had been admitted to the bar, and was now a practising attorney in Boston. It was in the pleasant month of June and he had come home to spend a few weeks with his family. One morning, a day or two after his return, as he sat conversing with his father, the form of some one darkened the door.

"Ah Mary!" said the elder Mr. Green rising and taking the hand of Mary Bacon, which he shook warmly. "My son, Henry," he added, presenting the blushing girl to his son, who, in turn, took her hand and expressed the pleasure he felt at meeting her. Knowing the business upon which Mary had called, Henry, not wishing to be present at its transaction, soon retired. As he did so, Mary drew out her purse and took therefrom a small roll of bank bills, saying, as she handed it to Mr. Green,

"I have come to make you another payment."

With a grave, business-like air, Mr. Green took the money and, after counting it over, went to his secretary and wrote out a receipt.

"Let me see," said he, thoughtfully, as he came back with the receipt in his hand. "How much does this make? One, two, three, four, five quarterly payments. One hundred and eighty-seven dollars and a half. You'll soon be through, Mary. There is nothing like patience, perseverance, and industry. How is your father this morning?"

"Very well, sir."

"I think his health has improved of late."

"Very much."

"And so has every thing around him. I was looking at his farm a few days ago, and never saw crops in a finer condition. And how is your health, Mary."

"Pretty good," was replied, though not with much heartiness of manner.

Mr. Green now observed her more closely, and saw that her cheeks were thinner and paler than at her last visit. He did not remark on it, however, and, after a few words more of conversation, Mary arose and withdrew.

It was, perhaps, an hour afterwards, that Henry said to his father,

"Mary Bacon doesn't look as well as when I last saw her."

"So it struck me," returned Mr. Green.

"I'm afraid she has taken upon her more than she has the strength to accomplish. She is certainly paler and thinner than she was, and is far from looking as cheerful and happy as when I saw her six months ago."

Mr. Green did not reply to this, but his countenance assumed a thoughtful expression.

"Mary is a good daughter," he at length said, as if speaking to himself.

"There is not one in a thousand like her," replied Henry, with a warmth of manner that caused Mr. Green to lift his eyes to his son's face.

"I fully agree with you in that," he answered.

"Then, father," said Henry, "why hold her any longer to her contract, thus far so honorably fulfilled. The trial has proved her. You see the pure gold of her character."

"I have long seen it," returned Mr. Green.

"Her father is thoroughly reformed."

"So I have reason to believe."

"Then act from your own heart's generous impulses, father, and

forgive the balance of the debt."

"Are you certain that she will accept what you ask me to give? Will her own sense of justice permit her to stop until the whole claim is satisfied?" asked Mr. Green.

"I cannot answer for that father," returned Henry. "But, let me beg of you to at least make the generous offer of a release."

Mr. Green went to his secretary, and, taking a small piece of paper from a drawer, held it up, and said--

"This, Henry, is her acknowledgment of the debt to me. If I write upon it 'satisfied,' will you take it to her and say, that I hold the obligation no farther."

"Gladly!" was the instant reply of Henry. "You could not ask me to do a thing from which I would derive greater pleasure."

Mr. Green took up his pen and wrote across the face of the paper, in large letters, "satisfied," and then, handing it to his son, said--

"Take it to her, Henry, and say to her, that if I had given way to my feelings, I would have done this a year ago. And now, let me speak a word for your ear. Never again, in this life, may a young woman cross your path, whose character is so deeply grounded in virtue, who is so pure, so unselfish, so devoted in her love, so strong in her good purposes. Her position is humble, but, in a life-companion, we want personal excellences, not extraneous social adjuncts. You have my full consent to win, if you can, this sweet flower, blooming by the way-side. A proud day will it be for me, when I can call her my daughter. I have long loved her as such."

More welcome words than these Mr. Green could not have spoken to his son. They were like a response to his own feelings. He did not, however, make any answer, but took the contract in silence and quickly left the room.

The reader can easily anticipate what followed. Mary did not go back to Lowell. A year afterwards she was introduced to a select circle of friends in Boston as the wife of Henry Green, and she is now the warmly esteemed friend and companion of some of the most intelligent, refined, right-thinking, and right-feeling people in that city. Her husband has seen no reason to repent of his choice.

As for old Mr. Bacon, his farm has continued to improve in appearance and value ever since his daughter paid off the mortgage; and as he, once for all, banished liquor from his house, he is in no danger of having his little property burdened with a new encumbrance. His cheerfulness has returned, and he bears as of old, the reputation of being the best tempered, best hearted man in the neighborhood.

TWO PICTURES.

Two beautiful children, a boy and a girl, the oldest but six years of age, came in from school one evening, later than usual by half an hour. Both their eyes were red with weeping, and their cheeks wet with tears. Their father, Mr. Warren, who had come home from his business earlier than usual, had been waiting some time for their return, and wondering why they stayed so late. They were his only children, and he loved them most tenderly. They had, a few weeks before, been entered at a school kept by a lady in the neighborhood--not so much for what they would learn, as to give occupation to their active minds.

"Why, Anna! Willy!" exclaimed Mr. Warren, as the children came in, "what's the matter? Why have you stayed so late?"

Anna lifted her tearful eyes to her father's face, and her lip curled and quivered. But she could not answer his question.

Mr. Warren took the grieving child in his arms, and as he drew her to his bosom, said to Willy, who was the oldest--

"What has made you so late, dear?"

"Miss Roberts kept us in," sobbed Willy.

"Kept you in!" returned Mr. Warren, in surprise. "How came that?"

"Because we laughed," answered the child, still sobbing and weeping.

"What made you laugh?"

"One of the boys made funny faces."

"And did you laugh too, dear?" asked the father of Anna.

"Yes, papa. But I couldn't help it. And Miss Roberts scolded so, and said she was going to whip us."

"And was that all you did?"

"Yes, indeed, papa," said Willy.

"I'll see Miss Roberts about it," fell angrily from the lips of Mr.

Warren. "It's the last time you appear in her school. A cruel-minded woman!"

And then the father soothed his grieving little ones with affectionate words and caresses.

"Dear little angels!" said Mr. Warren to his wife, shortly afterwards, "that any one could have the heart to punish them for a sudden outburst of joyous feelings! And Anna in particular, a mere babe as she is, I can't get over it. To think of her being kept in for a long half hour, under punishment, after all the other children had gone home. It was cruel. Miss Roberts shall hear from me on the subject."

"I don't know, dear, that I would say any thing about it," remarked the mother, who was less excited about the matter, "I don't think she meant to be severe. She, doubtless, forgot that they were so very young."

"She'd no business to forget it. I've no idea of my children being used after this fashion. The boy that made them laugh should have been kept in, if any punishment had to be inflicted. But it's the way with cruel-minded people. The weakest are always chosen as objects of their dislike."

"I am sure you take this little matter too much to heart," urged the mother. "Miss Roberts must have order in her school, and even the youngest must conform to this order. I do not think the punishment so severe. She had to do something to make them remember their fault, and restrain their feelings in future; and she could hardly have done less. It is not too young for them to learn obedience in any position where they are introduced."

But the over fond and tender father could see no reason for the punishment his little ones had received; and would not consent to let them go again to the school of Miss Roberts. To him they were earth's most precious things. They were tender flowers; and he was troubled if ever the winds blew roughly upon them.

Seven years have passed. Let us visit the home of Mr. Warren and look at him among his children. No; we will not enter this pleasant house--he moved away long ago. Can this be the home of Mr. Warren! Yes. Small, poor, and comfortless as it is! Ah! there have been sad changes.

Let us enter. Can that be Warren? That wretched looking creature--with swollen, disfigured face and soiled garments--who sits, half stupid, near the window? A little flaxen-haired child is playing on the floor. It is not Anna. No; seven years have changed her from the fairylike little creature she was when her father became outraged at her punishment in Miss Roberts' school! Poor Anna! That was light as the thistle down to what she has since received from the hands of her father. The child on the floor is

beautiful, even in her tattered clothes. She has been playing for some time. Now her father calls to her in a rough, grumbling voice.

"Kate! You, Kate, I say!"

Little Kate, not five years old, leaves her play and goes up to where her parent is sitting.

"Go and get me a drink of water," said he in a harsh tone of authority.

Kate takes a tin cup from a table and goes to the hydrant in the yard. So pleased is she in seeing the water run, that she forgets her errand. Three or four times she fills the cup, and then pours forth its contents, dipping her tiny feet in the stream that is made. In the midst of her sport, she hears an angry call, and remembering the errand upon which she has been sent, hurriedly fills her cup again and bears it to her father. She is frightened as she comes in and sees his face; this confuses her; her foot catches in something as she approaches, and she falls over, spilling the cup of water on his clothes. Angrily he catches her up, and, cruel in his passion, strikes her three or four heavy blows.

"Now take that cup and get me some water!" he cries, in a loud voice, "and if you are not here with it in a minute, I'll beat the life half out of you! I'll teach you to mind when your spoken to, I will! There! Off with you!"

Little Kate, smarting from pain, and trembling with fear, lifts the cup and hurries away to perform her errand. She drops it twice from her unsteady hands ere she is able to convey it, filled with water, to her parent, who takes it with such a threatening look from his eyes, that the child shrinks away from him, and goes from the room in fear.

An hour passes, and the light of day begins to fade.

Evening comes slowly on, and at length the darkness closes in. But twice since morning has Warren been from the house, and then it was to get something to drink. The door at length opens quietly, and a little girl enters. Her face is thin and drooping, and wears a look of patient suffering.

"You're late, Anna," says the mother, kindly.

"Yes, ma'am. We had to stay later for our money. Mr. Davis was away from the store, and I was afraid I would have to come home without it. Here it is."

Mrs. Warren took the money.

"Only a dollar!" There was disappointment in her tones as she said this.

"Yes, ma'am, that is all," replied Anna, in a troubled voice. "I spoiled some work, and Mr. Davis said I should pay for it, and so he took half a dollar from my wages."

"Spoiled your work!" spoke up the father, who had been listening. "That's more of your abominable carelessness!"

"Indeed, father; I couldn't help it," said Anna, "one of the girls--"

"Hush up, will you! I want none of your lying excuses. I know you! It was done on purpose, I have not the least doubt."

Anna caught her breath, like one suddenly deprived of air. Tears rushed to her eyes and commenced falling over her cheeks, while her bosom rose and fell convulsively.

"Come, now! None of that!" said the cruel father sternly. "Stop your crying instantly, or I will give you something to cry for! A pretty state of things, indeed, when every word must be answered by a fit of crying!"

The poor child choked down her feelings as best she could, turning as she did so from her father; that he might not see the still remaining traces of her grief which it was impossible at once to hide.

Not a single dollar had the idle, drunken father earned during the week, that he had not expended in self-indulgence; and yet, in his brutality, he could roughly chide this little girl, yet too young for the taskmaster, because she had lost half a dollar of her week's earnings through an accident, the very nature of which he would not hear explained. So grieved was the poor child at this unkindness, that when supper was on the table she shrunk away from the room.

"Come, Anna, to your supper," called the mother.

"I don't wish any thing to eat," replied the child, in a faint voice.

"Oh, yes; come and get something."

"Let her alone!" growls the father. "I never humor sulky children. She doesn't deserve any supper."

The mother sighs. While the husband eats greedily, consuming, himself, more than half that is on the table, she takes but a few mouthfuls, and swallows them with difficulty.

After supper, Willy, who is just thirteen, and who has already been bound out as an apprentice to a trade, comes home. He has a tale of suffering to tell. For some fault his master has beaten him until

the large purple welts lie in meshes across his back from his shoulders to his hips.

"How comes all this?" asks Mr. Warren. There is not the smallest sign of sympathy in his voice.

Willy relates the cause, and tells it truly. He was something to blame, but his fault needed not the correction of stripes even lightly applied.

"Served you right!" said the father, when the story was ended. "No business to have acted so. Do as you are told, and mind your work, and you'll escape flogging. Otherwise, I don't care how often you get it. You've been spoiled at home, and it'll do you good to toe the mark. Did your master know you were coming home to-night?"

"No, sir," replied the boy, with trembling lips, and a choking voice.

"Then what did you come for? To get pitied? Do right and you'll need no pity."

"Oh, James, don't speak so to the child!" said Mrs. Warren, unable to keep silence.

This was answered by an angry look.

"You must go back to your master, boy," said the father, after a pause. "When you wish to come home, ask his consent."

"He doesn't object to my coming home," said Willy, his voice still quivering.

"Go back, I tell you! Take your hat, there, and go back. Don't come here any more with your tales!"

The boy glanced towards his mother, and read pity and sympathy in her countenance, but she did not countermand the order; for she knew that if she did so, a scene of violence would follow.

"Ask to come home in the morning," said she to her boy, as she held his hand tightly in hers at the door. He gave her a look of tender thankfulness, and then went forth into the darkness, feeling so sad and wretched that he could not repress his tears.

Seven years. And was only this time required to effect such a change! Ah! rum is a demon! How quickly does it transform the tender husband and parent into a cruel beast! Look upon these two pictures, ye who tarry long at the wine! Look at them, but do not say they are overdrawn! They have in them only the sober hues and subdued colors of truth.

BRANDY AS A PREVENTIVE.

THE cholera had made its appearance in New York, and many deaths were occurring daily. Among those who weakly permitted themselves to feel an alarm amounting almost to terror, was a Mr. Hobart, who, from the moment the disease manifested itself, became infested with the idea that he would be one of its victims.

"Doctor," said he to his family physician, meeting him one day in the street, "is there nothing which a man can take that will act as a preventive to cholera?"

"I'll tell you what I do," replied the doctor.

"Well, what is it?"

"I take a glass of good brandy twice a day. One in the morning and the other after dinner."

"Indeed! And do you think brandy useful in preventing the disease?"

"I think it a protection," said the doctor. "It keeps the system slightly stimulated; and is, besides, a good astringent."

"A very simple agent," remarked Mr. Hobart.

"Yes, the most simple that we can adopt. And what is better, the use of it leaves no after bad consequences, as is too often the case with medicines, which act upon the system as poisons."

"Sometimes very bad consequences arise from the use of brandy," remarked Mr. Hobart. "I have seen them in my time."

"Drunkenness, you mean."

"Yes."

"People who are likely to make beasts of themselves had better let it alone," said the doctor, contemptuously. "If they should take the cholera and die, it will be no great loss to the world."

"And you really think a little good brandy, taken daily, fortifies the system against the cholera?"

"Seriously I do," replied the doctor. "I have adopted this course

from the first, and have not been troubled with a symptom of the disease."

"I feel very nervous on the subject. From the first I have been impressed with the idea that I would get the disease and die."

"That is a weakness, Mr. Hobart."

"I know it is, still I cannot help it. And you would advise me to take a little good brandy?"

"Yes, every day."

"I am a Son of Temperance."

"No matter; you can take it as medicine under my prescription. I know a dozen Sons of Temperance who have used brandy every day since the disease appeared in New York. It will be no violation of your contract. Life is of too much value to be put in jeopardy on a mere idea."

"I agree with you there. I'd drink any thing if I thought it would give me an immunity against this dreadful disease."

"You'll be safer with the brandy than without it."

"Very well. If you think so, I will use it."

On parting with the doctor, Mr. Hobart went to a liquor store and ordered half a gallon of brandy sent home. He did not feel altogether right in doing so, for it must be understood, that, in years gone by, Mr. Hobart had fallen into the evil habit of intemperance, which clung to him until he run through a handsome estate and beggared his family. In this low condition he was found by the Sons of Temperance, who induced him to abandon a course whose end was death and destruction, and to come into their Order. From that time all was changed. Sobriety and industry were returned to him in many of the good things of this world which he had lost, and he was still in the upward movement at the time when the fatal pestilence appeared.

On going home at dinner time, Hobart's wife said to him, with a serious face--

"A demijohn, with some kind of liquor in it, was sent here to-day."

"Oh, yes," he replied, it is brandy that Doctor L--ordered me to take as a cholera preventive."

"Brandy!" ejaculated Mrs. Hobart, with an expression of painful surprise in her voice and on her countenance, that rather annoyed her husband.

"Yes. He says that he takes it every day as a preventive, and directed me to do the same."

"I wouldn't touch it if I were you. Indeed I wouldn't," said Mrs. Hobart, earnestly.

"Why wouldn't you?"

"You will violate your contract with the Sons of Temperance."

"Not at all. Brandy may be used as a medicine under the prescription of a physician. I wouldn't have thought of touching it had not Doctor L--ordered me to do so."

"You are not sick, Edward."

"But there is death in the very air I breathe. At any moment I am liable to be struck down by an arrow sent from an unseen bow, unless a shield be interposed. Such a shield has been placed in my hands. Shall I not use it?"

Mrs. Hobart knew her husband well enough to be satisfied that remonstrance and argument would be of no avail, now that his mind was made up to use the brandy; and yet so distressed did she feel, that she couldn't help saying, with tears in her eyes--

"Edward, (sic) let me beg of you not to touch it."

"Would you rather see me in my coffin?" replied Mr. Hobart, with some bitterness. "Death may seem a light thing to you, but it is not so to me."

"You are not sick," still urged the wife.

"But I am liable, as I said just now, to take the disease every moment."

"You will be more liable, with your system stimulated and disturbed by brandy. Let well enough alone. Be thankful for the health you have, and do not invite disease."

"The doctor ought to know. He understands the matter better than you or I. He recommends brandy as a preventive. He takes it himself."

"Because he likes it, no doubt."

"It is silly for you to talk in that way," replied the husband, with much impatience. "He isn't rendered more liable to the disease by taking a little pure brandy, for he says that it keeps him perfectly well."

"A glass of brandy every day may have been his usual custom," urged Mrs. Hobart. "In that case, in its continuance, no change was

produced. But your system has been untouched by the fiery liquid for nearly five years, and its sudden introduction must create disturbance. It is reasonable."

"The doctor ought to know best," was replied to this. "He has prescribed it, and I must take it. Life is too serious a matter to be trifled with. 'An ounce of preventive is worth a pound of cure,' you know."

"I am in equal danger with yourself," said Mrs. Hobart; "and so are the children."

"Undoubtedly. And I wish you all to use a little brandy."

"Not a drop of the poison shall pass either my lips or those of the children," replied Mrs. Hobart, with emphasis.

"As you please," said the husband, coldly, and turned away.

"Edward!" Mrs. Hobart laid her hand upon his arm. "Edward! Let me beg of you not to follow this advice."

"Why will you act so foolishly? Has not the doctor ordered the brandy? I look to him as the earthly agent for the preservation of my health and the saving of my life. If I do not regard his advice, in what am I to trust?"

"Remember the past, Edward," said the wife, solemnly.

"I do remember it. But I fear no danger."

Mrs. Hobart turned away sadly, and went up to her chamber to give vent to her feelings alone in tears. Firm to his purpose of using the preventive recommended by the doctor, Mr. Hobart, after dinner, took a draught of brandy and water. Nearly five years, as his wife remarked, had elapsed since a drop of the burning fluid had passed his lips. The taste was not particularly agreeable. Indeed, his stomach rather revolted as the flavor reached his palate.

"It's vile stuff at best," he remarked to himself, making a wry face. "Fit only for medicine. Not much danger of my ever loving it again. I wish Anna was not so foolish. A flattering opinion she has of her husband!"

The sober countenance of his wife troubled Mr. Hobart, as he left home for his place of business earlier by half an hour than usual. Neither in mind nor body were his sensations as pleasant as on the day before. The brandy did something more than produce an agreeable warmth in his stomach. A burning sensation soon followed its introduction, accompanied by a feeling of uneasiness that he did not like. In the course of half an hour, this unnatural heat was felt in every part of his body, but more particularly about his head and face; and it was accompanied by a certain confusion of mind that

prevented his usual close application to business during the afternoon.

Towards evening, these disagreeable consequences of the glass of cholera-preventive he had taken in a great measure subsided; but there followed a dryness of the palate, and a desire for some drink more pleasant to the taste than water. In his store was a large pitcher of ice-water; but, though thirsty, he felt no inclination to taste the pure beverage; but, instead, went out and obtained a glass of soda water. This only made the matter worse. The half gill of syrup with which the water was sweetened, created, in a little while, a more uneasy feeling. Still, there was no inclination for the water that stood just at hand, and which he had daily found so refreshing during the hot weather. In fact, when he thought of it, it was with a sense of repulsion.

In this state, the idea of a cool glass of brandy punch, or a mint julep, came up in his mind, and he felt the draught, in imagination, at his lips.

"A little brandy twice a day; so the doctor said." This was uttered half aloud.

Just at the moment a slight pain crossed his stomach. It was the first sensation of the kind he had experienced since the epidemic he so much dreaded had appeared in the city; and it caused a slight shudder to go through his frame, for he was nervous in his fear of cholera.

"A little mint with the brandy would make it better still. I don't like this feeling. I'll try a glass of brandy and mint." Thus spoke Mr. Hobart to himself.

Putting on his hat, he went forth for the purpose of getting some brandy and mint. As he stepped into the street the pain was felt again, and more distinctly. The effect was to cause a slight perspiration to manifest itself on the face and forehead of Mr. Hobart, and to make, in his mind, the necessity for the brandy and mint more imperative. He did not just like to be seen going boldly in at the door of a refectory or drinking-house in a public place, for he was a Son of Temperance, and any one who knew this and happened to see him going in, could not, at the same time, know that he was acting under his physician's advice. So he went off several blocks from the neighborhood in which his store was located, and after winding his way along a narrow, unfrequented street, came to the back entrance of a tavern, where he went in, as he desired, unobserved.

Years before, Hobart had often stood at the bar where he now found himself. Old, familiar objects and associations brought back old feelings, and he was affected by an inward glow of pleasure.

"What! you here?" said a man who stood at the bar, with a glass in

his hand. He was also a member of the Order.

"And you here!" replied Mr. Hobart.

"It isn't for the love of it, I can assure you," remarked the man, as he looked meaningly at his glass. "These are not ordinary times."

"You are right there," said Hobart. "A little brandy sustains and fortifies the system. That all admit."

"My physician has ordered it for me. He takes a glass or two every day himself, and tells me that, so far, he has not been troubled with the first symptom."

"Indeed. That is testimony to the point."

"So I think."

"Who is your physician?"

"Dr. L--."

"He stands high. I would at any time trust my life in his hands."

"I am willing to do so." Then turning to the bar-keeper, Mr. Hobart said--"I'll take a glass of brandy and water, and you may add some mint."

"Perhaps you'll have a mint julep?" suggested the barkeeper, winking aside to a man who stood near, listening to what passed between the two members of the Order.

"Yes--I don't care--yes. Make it a julep," returned Hobart. "It's the brandy and mint I want. I've had a disagreeable sensation," he added, speaking to the friend he had met, and drawing his hand across his stomach as he spoke, "that I don't altogether like. Here it is again!"

"A little brandy will help it."

"I hope so."

When the mint julep was ready, Hobart took it in his hand and retired to a table in the corner of the room, and the man he had met went with him.

"Ain't you afraid to tamper with liquor?" asked this person, a little seriously, as he observed the relish with which Hobart sipped the brandy. Some thoughts had occurred to himself that were not very pleasant.

"Oh, no. Not in the least," replied Mr. Hobart. "I only take it as a medicine, under my physician's order; and I can assure you that the

taste is quite as disagreeable as rhubarb would be. I believe the old fondness has altogether died out."

"I'm afraid it never dies out," said the man, whose eyes told him plainly enough, that it had not died out in the case of the individual before him, notwithstanding his averment on the subject.

"I feel much better now," said Mr. Hobart, after he had nearly exhausted his glass. "I had such a cold sensation in my stomach, accompanied by a very disagreeable pain. But both are now gone. This brandy and mint have acted like a charm. Dr. L--understands the matter clearly. It is fortunate that I saw him this morning. I would not have dared to touch brandy, unless under medical advice; and, but for the timely use of it, I might have been dangerously ill with this fatal epidemic."

After sitting a little while longer, the two men retired through the back entrance to escape observation.

"How quickly these temperance men seize hold of any excuse to get a glass of brandy," said the bar-keeper to a customer, as soon as Hobart had retired, laughing in a half sneer as he spoke. "They come creeping in through our back way, and all of them have a pain! Ha! ha!"

"I've taken a glass of brandy and water, every day for the last five years," replied the man to whom this was addressed, "and I continue it now. But I can tell you what, if I'd been an abstainer, you wouldn't catch me pouring it into my stomach now. Not!! All who do so are more liable to the disease."

"So I think," said the bar-tender. "But every one to his liking. It puts money in our till. We've done a better business since the cholera broke out, than we've done these three years. If it were to continue for a twelve month we would make a fortune."

This was concluded with a coarse laugh, and then he went to attend to a new customer for drink.

For all Mr. Hobart had expressed himself so warmly in favor of brandy, and had avowed his freedom from the old appetite, he did not feel altogether right about the matter. There was a certain pressure upon his feelings that he could not well throw off. When he went home in the evening, he perceived a shadow on the brow of his wife; and the expression of her eyes, when she looked at him, annoyed and troubled him.

After supper, the uneasiness he had felt during the afternoon, returned, and worried his mind considerably. The fact was, the brandy had already disturbed the well balanced action of the lower viscera. The mucous membrane of the whole (sic) alimentary canal had been stimulated beyond health, and its secretions were increased and slightly vitiated. This was the cause of the uneasiness he felt, and

the slight pains which had alarmed him. By ten o'clock his feelings had become so disagreeable, that he felt constrained to meet them with another "mouthful," of brandy. Thus, in less than ten hours, Mr. Hobart had wronged his stomach by pouring into it three glasses of brandy; entirely disturbing its healthy action.

The morning found Mr. Hobart far from feeling well. His skin was dry and feverish and his mouth parched. There was an uneasy sensation of pain in his head. Immediately upon rising he took a strong glass of brandy. That, to use his own words, "brought him up," and made him feel "a hundred per cent better." During the forenoon, however, a slight diarrhoea manifested itself. A thrill of alarm was the consequence.

"I must check this!" said he, anxiously. And, in order to do so, another and stronger glass of brandy was taken.

In the afternoon, the diarrhoea appeared again. It was still slight, and unaccompanied by pain. But, it was a symptom not to be disregarded. So brandy was applied as before. In the evening, it showed itself again.

"I wish you would give me a little of that brandy," said he to his wife. "I'm afraid of this, it must be stopped."

"Hadn't you better see the doctor?"

"I don't think it necessary. The brandy will answer every purpose."

"I have no faith in brandy," said Mrs. Hobart. Poor woman! she had cause for her want of faith!

"I have then," replied her husband. "It's the doctor's recommendation. And he ought to know."

"You were perfectly well before you commenced acting on his advice."

"I was well, apparently. But, it is plain that the seeds of disease were in me. There is no telling how much worse I would have been."

"Nor how much better. For my part I charge it all on the brandy."

"That's a silly prejudice," said Mr. Hobart, with a good deal of impatience. "Every one knows that brandy is a remedy in diseases of this kind; not a producing cause."

Mrs. Hobart was silent. But she did not get the brandy. That was more than she could do. So her husband got it himself. But, in order to make the medicinal purpose more apparent, he poured the liquor into a deep plate, added some sugar, and set it on fire.

"You will not object to burnt brandy at least," said he. "That you know to be good."

Mrs. Hobart did not reply. She felt that it would be useless. Only a disturbance of harmony could arise, and that would produce greater unhappiness. The brandy, after having parted with its more volatile qualities, was introduced into Mr. Hobart's stomach, and fretted that delicate organ for more than an hour.

"I thought the burnt brandy would be effective," said Mr. Hobart on the next morning. "And it has proved so." In order not to lose this good effect, he fortified himself before going out with some of the same article, unburnt. But, alas! By ten o'clock the diarrhoea showed itself again, and in a more decided form.

"Oh dear!" said he in increased alarm. "This won't do. I must see the doctor." And off he started for Doctor L--'s office. But, on the way he could not resist the temptation to stop at a tavern for another glass of brandy, notwithstanding he began to entertain a suspicion as to the true cause of the disturbance. The doctor happened to be in. "I think I'd better have a little medicine, doctor," said he, on seeing his medical adviser. "A stitch in time, you know."

"Ain't you well?"

"No," and Mr. Hobart gave his symptoms.

"An opium pill will do all that is required," said the doctor.

"Shall I continue the brandy?" asked the patient.

"Have you taken brandy every day since I saw you?" inquired the doctor.

"Yes; twice, and sometimes three times."

"Ah!" The doctor looked thoughtful.

"Shall I continue to do so?"

"Perhaps you had better omit it for the present. You're not in the habit of drinking any thing?"

"No. I haven't tasted brandy before for five years."

"Indeed! Yes, now, I remember you said so. You'd better omit it until we see the effect of the opium. Sudden changes are not always good in times like these."

"I don't think the brandy has hurt me," said Mr. Hobart.

"Perhaps not. Still, as a matter of prudence, I would avoid it. Let the opium have a full chance, and all will be right again."

An opium pill was swallowed, and Mr. Hobart went back to his place of business. It had the intended effect. That is, it cured one disease by producing another--suspended action took the place of over-action. He was, therefore, far from being in a state of health, or free from danger in a cholera atmosphere. There was one part of the doctor's order that Mr. Hobart did not comply with. The free use of brandy for a few days rekindled the old appetite, and made his desire for liquor so intense, that he had not, or, if he possessed it, did not exercise the power of resistance.

Sad beyond expression was the heart of Mrs. Hobart, when evening came, and her husband returned home so much under the influence of drink as to show it plainly. She said nothing to him, then, for that she knew would be of no avail. But next morning, as he was rising, she said to him earnestly and almost tearfully.

"Edward, let me beg of you to reflect before you go further in the way you have entered. You may not be aware of it, but last night you showed so plainly that you had been drinking that I was distressed beyond measure. You know as well as I do, where this will end, if continued. Stop, then, at once, while you have the power to stop. As to preventing disease, it is plain that the use of brandy has not done so in your case; but, rather, acted as a predisposing cause. You were perfectly well before you touched it; you have not been well since. Look at this fact, and, as a wise man, regard its indications."

Truth was so strong in the words of his wife, that Mr. Hobart did not attempt to gainsay them.

"I believe you are right," he replied with a good deal of depression apparent in his manner. "I wish the doctor had kept his brandy advice to himself. It has done me no good."

"It has done you harm," said his wife.

"Perhaps it has. Ah, me! I wish the cholera would subside."

"I think your fear is too great," returned Mrs. Hobart. "Go on in your usual way; keep your mind calm; be as careful in regard to diet, and you need fear no danger."

"I wish I'd let the brandy alone!" sighed Mr. Hobart, who felt as he spoke, the desire for another draught.

"So do I. Doctor L--must have been mad when he advised it."

"So I now think. I heard yesterday of two or three members of our Order who have been sick, and every one of them used a little brandy as a preventive."

"It is bad--bad. Common sense teaches this. No great change of habit is good in a tainted atmosphere. But you see this now, happily, and

all will yet be well I trust."

"Yes; I hope so. I shall touch no more of this brandy preventive. To that my mind is fully made up."

Mrs. Hobart felt hopeful when she parted with her husband. But she knew nothing of the real conflict going on in his mind between reason and awakened appetite--else had she trembled and grown faint in spirit. This conflict went on for some hours, when, alas! appetite conquered.

At dinner time Mrs. Hobart saw at a glance how it was. The whole manner of her husband had changed. His state of depression was gone, and he exhibited an unnatural exhilaration of spirits. She needed not the sickening odor of his breath to tell the fatal secret that he had been unable to control himself.

It was worse at night. He came home so much beside himself that he could with difficulty walk erectly. Half conscious of his condition, he did not attempt to join the family, but went up stairs and groped his way to bed. Mrs. Hobart did not follow him to his chamber. Heartsick, she retired to another room, and there wept bitterly for more than an hour. She was hopeless. Up from the melancholy past arose images of degradation and suffering too dreadful to contemplate. She felt that she had not strength to suffer again as she had suffered through many, many years. From this state she was aroused by groans from the room where her husband lay. Alarmed by the sounds, she instantly went to him.

"What is the matter?" she asked, anxiously.

"Oh! oh! I am in so much pain!" was groaned half inarticulately.

"In pain, where?"

"Oh! oh!" was repeated, in a tone of suffering; and then he commenced vomiting.

Mrs. Hobart placed her hand upon his forehead and found it cold and clammy. Other and more painful symptoms followed. Before the doctor, who was immediately summoned, arrived, his whole system had become prostrate, and was fast sinking into a state of collapse. It was a decided case of cholera.

"Has he been eating any thing improper?" asked Doctor L--, after administering such remedies, and ordering such treatment as he deemed the case required.

"Has he eaten no green fruit?"

"None."

"Nothing, to my knowledge, replied Mrs. Hobart. "We have been very

careful in regard to food."

"Nor unripe vegetables?"

Mrs. Hobart shook her head.

"Nor fish?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"That is strange. He was well a few days ago."

"Yes, perfectly, until he began to take a little brandy every day as a preventive."

"Ah!" The doctor looked thoughtful. "But it couldn't have been that. I take a little pure brandy every day, and find it good. I recommend it to all my patients."

Mrs. Hobart sighed. Then she asked--"Do you think him dangerous?"

"I hope not. The attack is sudden and severe. But much worse cases recover. I will call round again before bed time."

The doctor went away feeling far from comfortable. Only a few hours before he, had left a man sick with cholera beyond recovery, who had, to his certain knowledge, adopted the brandy-drinking-preventive-system but a week before; and that at his recommendation. And here was another case.

At eleven o'clock Dr. L--called to see Mr. Hobart again, and found him rapidly sinking. Not a single symptom had been reached by his treatment. The poor man was in great pain. Every muscle in his body seemed affected by cramps and spasms. His mind, however, was perfectly clear. As the doctor sat feeling his pulse, Hobart said to him--

"Doctor L--, it is too late!"

"Oh, no. It is never too late," replied the doctor. "Don't think of death; think of life, and that will help to sustain you. You are not, by any means, at the last point. Hundreds, worse than you now are, come safely through. I don't intend to let you slip through my hands."

"Doctor," said the sick man, speaking in a solemn voice, "I feel that I am beyond the reach of medicine. I shall die. What I now say I do not mean as a reproach. I speak it only as a truth right for you to know. Do you see my poor wife?"

The doctor turned his eyes upon Mrs. Hobart, who stood weeping by the bedside.

"When she is left a widow, and my children orphans," continued the patient, "remember that you have made them such!"

"Me! Why do you say that, Mr. Hobart?" The doctor looked startled.

"Because it is the truth. I was a well man, when you, as my medical adviser, recommended me to drink brandy as a protection against disease. I was in fear of the infection, and followed your prescription. From the moment I took the first draught my body lost its healthy equilibrium; and not only my body, but my mind. I was a reformed man, and the taste inflamed the old appetite. From that time until now I have not been really sober."

The doctor was distressed and confounded by this declaration. He had feared that such was the case; but now it was charged unequivocally.

"I am pained at all this," he replied, "In sinning I sinned ignorantly."

But, ere he could finish his reply, the sick man became suddenly worse, and sunk into a state of insensibility.

"If it be in human power to save his life," murmured the doctor--"I will save it."

Through the whole night he remained at the bed-side, giving, with his own hands, all the remedies, and applying every curative means within reach. But, when the day broke, there was little, if any change for the better. He then went home, but returned in a couple of hours.

"How is your husband?" he asked of the pale-faced wife as he entered. She did not reply, and they went up to the chamber together. A deep silence reigned in the room as they entered.

"Is he asleep?" whispered the doctor.

"See!" The wife threw back the sheet.

"O!" was the only sound that escaped the doctor's lips. It was a prolonged sound, and uttered in a tone of exquisite distress. The white and ghastly face of death was before him.

"It is your work!" murmured the unhappy woman, half beside herself in her affliction.

"Madam! do not say that!" ejaculated the physician. "Do not say that!"

"It is the truth! Did he not charge it upon you with his dying breath?"

"I did all for the best, madam! all for the best! It was an error in

his case. But I meant him no harm."

"You put poison to his lips, and destroyed him. You have made his wife a widow and his children orphans!"

"Madam!--"The doctor knit his brows and spoke in a stern voice. But, ere he had uttered a word more, the stricken-hearted woman gave a wild scream and fell upon the floor. Nature had been tried beyond the point of endurance, and reason was saved at the expense of physical prostration.

A few weeks later, and Doctor L--, in driving past the former residence of Mr. Hobart, saw furniture cars at the door. The family were removing. Death had taken the husband and father, and the poor widow was going forth with her little ones from the old and pleasant home, to gather them around her in a smaller and poorer place. His feelings at the moment none need envy.

How many, like Mr. Hobart, have died through the insane prescription of brandy as a preventive to cholera! and how many more have fallen back into old habits, and become hopeless drunkards! Brandy is not good for health at any time; how much less so, when the very air we breathe is filled with a subtle poison, awaiting the least disturbance in the human economy to affect it with disease.

THE TEMPERANCE PLEDGE.

"I WANT a quarter of a dollar, Jane."

This was addressed by a miserable creature, bloated and disfigured by intemperance, to a woman, whose thin, pale face, and heart-broken look, told but too plainly that she was the drunkard's wife.

"Not a quarter of a dollar, John? Surely you will not waste a quarter of a dollar of my hard earnings, when you know that I can scarcely get food and decent clothes for the children?"

As the wife said this, she looked up into her husband's face with a sad appealing expression.

"I must have a quarter, Jane," said the man firmly.

"O, John! remember our little ones. The cold-weather will soon be here, and I have not yet been able to get them shoes. If you will

not earn any thing yourself, do not waste the little my hard labor can procure. Will not a sixpence do? Surely that is enough for you to spend for--"

"Nothing will do but a quarter, Jane, and that I must have, if I steal it!" was the prompt and somewhat earnest reply.

Mrs. Jarvis laid aside her work mechanically and, rising, went to a drawer, and from a cup containing a single dollar in small pieces, her little all, took out a quarter of a dollar, and turning to her husband, said, as she handed it to him--

"Remember, that you are taking the bread out of your children's mouths!"

"Not so bad as that, I hope, Jane," said the drunkard, as he clutched the money eagerly; something like a feeble smile flitting across his disfigured and distorted countenance.

"Yes, and worse!" was the response, made in a sadder tone than that in which the wife had at first spoken.

"How worse, Jane?"

"John!" and the wife spoke with a sudden energy, while her countenance lighted up with a strange gleam. "John, I cannot bear this much longer! I feel myself sinking every day. And you--you who pledged yourself--"

Here the voice of the poor woman gave way, and covering her face with her hands, she bent her head upon her bosom, and sobbed and wept hysterically.

The drunkard looked at her for a moment, and then turning hurriedly, passed from the room. For some moments after the door had closed upon her husband, did Mrs. Jarvis stand, sobbing and weeping. Then slowly returning to her chair near the window, she resumed her work, with an expression of countenance that was sad and hopeless.

In the mean time, the poor wretch who had thus reduced his family to a state of painful destitution, after turning away from his door, walked slowly along the street with his head bowed down, as if engaged in, to him, altogether a new employment, that of self-communion. All at once a hand was laid familiarly upon his shoulders, and a well-known voice said--

"Come, John, let's have a drink."

"Jarvis looked up with a bewildered air, and the first thing that caught his eye, after it glanced away from the face of one of his drinking cronies, was a sign with bright gold letters, bearing the words, "EAGLE COFFEE-HOUSE." That sign was as familiar to him as the face of one of his children. At the same moment that his eyes rested

upon this, creating an involuntary impulse to move towards the tavern-door, his old crony caught hold of his coat-collar and gave him a pull in the same direction. But much to the surprise of the latter, Jarvis resisted this attempt to give his steps a direction that would lead him into his old, accustomed haunt.

"Won't you drink this morning, Jarvis?" asked the other, with a look of surprise.

There was evidently a powerful struggle going on in the mind of the drunkard. This lasted only for a moment or two, when he said, loudly, and emphatically--

"No!"

And instantly broke from his old boon companion, and hurried on his way.

A loud laugh followed him, but he heeded it not. Ten minutes' walk brought him to the store of a respectable tradesman.

"Is Mr. R--in?" he asked, as he entered.

"Back at the desk," was the answer of a clerk.

And Jarvis walked back with a resolute air.

"Mr. R--, I want to sign the pledge!"

"You, Jarvis?" Mr. R--said, in tones of gratified surprise.

"Yes, me, Mr. R--. It's almost a hopeless case; but here goes to do my best."

"Are you fully sensible of what you are about doing, Jarvis?"

"I think I am, Mr. R--. I've drunk nothing since yesterday morning, and with the help of Him above, I am determined never to drink another drop as long as I live! So read me the pledge and let me sign it."

Mr. R--turned at once to the constitution of the Washington Temperance Society, and read the pledge thereunto annexed:

"We, the undersigned, do pledge ourselves to each other, as gentlemen, that we will not, hereafter, drink any spiritous liquors, wine, malt, or cider, unless in sickness, and under the prescription of a physician."

Jarvis took the pen in his hand, that trembled so he could scarcely make a straight mark on paper, and enrolled his name among the hundreds of those, who, like him, had resolved to be men once more. This done, he laid down the quarter of a dollar which he had

obtained from his wife, the admission fee required of all who joined the society. As he turned from the tradesman's store, his step was firmer and his head more erect, than, in a sober state, he had carried it for many a day.

From thence he proceeded to a hatter's-shop.

"Well, Jarvis," was uttered in rather a cool, repulsive tone, as he entered.

"Are you not in want of a journeyman, Mr. Warren?"

"I don't want you, Jarvis."

"If you will give me work, I'll never get drunk again, Mr. Warren."

"You've said that too many times, Jarvis. The last time you went off when I was hurried with work, and caused me to disappoint a customer, I determined never to have any thing more to do with you."

"But I'll never disappoint you again," urged the poor man earnestly.

"It's no use for you to talk to me, Jarvis. You and I are done with each other. I have made up my mind never again to have a man in my shop who drinks rum."

"But I've joined the temperance society, Mr. Warren."

"I don't care if you have: in two weeks you'll be lying in the gutter."

"I'll never drink liquor again if I die!" said Jarvis, solemnly.

"Look here, you drunken vagabond!" returned the master hatter in angry tones, coming from behind the counter, and standing in front of the individual he was addressing--"if you are not out of this shop in two minutes by the watch, I'll kick you into the street! So there now--take your choice to go out, or be kicked out."

Jarvis turned sadly away without a reply, and passed out of the door through which he had entered with a heart full of hope, now pained, and almost ready to recede from his earnest resolution and pledge to become a sober man and a better husband and father. He felt utterly discouraged. As he walked slowly along the street, the fumes of a coffee-house which he was passing, unconsciously, struck upon his sense, and immediately came an almost overpowering desire for his accustomed potation. He paused--

"Now that I try to reform, they turn against me," he sighed bitterly. "It is no use; I am gone past hope!"

One step was taken towards the tavern-door, when it seemed as if a strong hand held him back.

"No--no!" he murmured, "I have taken the pledge, and I will stand by it, if I die!" Then moving resolutely onward, he soon found himself near the door of another hatter's-shop. Hope again kindled up in his bosom, and he entered.

"Don't you want a hand, Mr. Mason?" he asked, in a hesitating tone.

"Not a drunken one, Jarvis," was the repulsive answer.

"But I've reformed, Mr. Mason."

"So I should think from your looks."

"But, indeed, Mr. Mason I have quit drinking, and taken the pledge."

"To break it in three days. Perhaps three hours."

"Won't you give me work, Mr. Mason, if I promise to be sober?"

"No! For I would not give a copper for your promises."

Poor Jarvis, turned away. When he had placed his hand to the pledge, he dreamed not of these repulses and difficulties. He was a good workman, and he thought that any one of his old employers would be glad to get him back again, so soon as they learned of his having signed the total-abstinence pledge. But he had so often promised amendment, and so often broken his promise and disappointed them, that they had lost all confidence in him; at least, the two to whom he had, thus far, made application.

After leaving the shop of Mr. Mason, Jarvis seemed altogether irresolute. He would walk on a few steps, and then pause to commune with his troubled and bewildered thoughts.

"I will try Lankford," said he, at length, half-aloud; "he will give me work, surely."

A brisk walk of some ten minutes brought him to the door of a small hatter's-shop in a retired street. Behind the counter of this shop stood an old man, busily employed in ironing a hat. There was something benevolent in his countenance and manner. As Jarvis entered, he looked up, and a shade passed quickly over his face.

"Good morning, Mr. Lankford," said Jarvis, bowing, with something like timidity and shame in his manner.

"Are you not afraid to come here, John?" replied the old man, sternly.

"I am ashamed to come, but not afraid. You will not harm me, I know."

"Don't trust to that, John. Did you not steal, ay, that is the word--did you not steal from me the last time I employed you?" The old man was stern and energetic in his manner.

"I was so wicked as to take a couple of skins, Mr. Lankford, but I did very wrong, and am willing to repay you for them, if you will give me work. I was in liquor when I did it, and, when in liquor, I have no distinct consciousness of the evil of any action."

"Give you work, indeed! O, no! John; I cannot give you another chance to rob me."

"But I will not get drunk any more. And you know, Mr. Lankford, that while I was a sober man, and worked for you, I never wronged you out of a sixpence worth."

"Won't get drunk any more! Ah! John, I have lived too long in the world, and have seen too much, to heed such promises."

"But I am in earnest, Mr. Lankford. I signed the pledge this morning."

"You!" in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, _I_ signed it."

"Ah, John," after a pause, and shaking his head. incredulously, "I cannot credit your word, and I am sorry for it."

"If I have signed the pledge, and if I am really determined to be a reformed man, will you give me work, Mr. Lankford!"

The old man thought for a few moments, and then said, half-sorrowfully--

"I am afraid of you, John. You are such an old offender on the score of drunkenness, that I have no confidence in your power to keep the pledge."

"Then what _shall_ I do!" the poor wretch exclaimed, in tones that made the heart of the old man thrill--for nature and pathos were in them. "Now that I am trying in earnest to do better, no one will give me a word of encouragement, nor a helping hand. Heaven help me!--for I am forsaken of man."

Mr. Lankford stood thoughtful and irresolute for some moments. At length, he said--

"John, if you will bring me a certificate from Mr. R--, that you have signed the total-abstinence pledge, I will give you another trial. But if you disappoint me again, you and I are done for ever."

The countenance of Jarvis brightened up instantly. He turned quickly

away, without reply, and hurried off to the store of Mr. R--, the secretary of the society he had joined. The certificate was, of course, obtained.

"And you have joined, sure enough, John," Mr. Lankford said, in a changed tone, as he glanced over the certificate.

"Indeed I have, Mr. Lankford."

"And you seem in earnest."

"If I was ever in earnest about any thing in my life, I am in earnest now."

"Keep to your pledge, then, John, and all will be well. While you were a sober man, I preferred you to any journeyman in my shop. Keep sober, and you shall never want a day's work while I am in business."

The poor man was now shown his place in the shop, and once again he resumed his work, though under a far different impulse than had, for years, nerved him to action.

Two hours brought his regular dinner-time, when Jarvis, who began to feel the want of food, returned home, with new and strange feelings about his heart. One impulse was to tell his wife what he had done, and what he was doing. But then he remembered how often he had mocked her new springing hopes--how often he had promised amendment, and once even joined a temperance society, only to relapse into a lower and more degraded condition.

"No, no," he said to himself, after debating the question in his mind, as he walked towards home; "I will not tell her now. I will first present some fruit of my repentance. I will give such an assurance as will create confidence and hope."

Mrs. Jarvis did not raise her eyes to the face of her husband, as he entered. The sight of that once loved countenance, distorted and disfigured, ever made her heart sick when she looked upon it. Jarvis seated himself quietly in a chair, and held out his hands for his youngest child, not over two years old, who had no consciousness of his father's degradation. In a moment the happy little creature was on his knee. But the other children showed no inclination to approach.

The frugal meal passed in silence and restraint. Mrs. Jarvis felt troubled and oppressed--for the prospect before her seemed to grow more and more gloomy. All the morning she had suffered from a steady pain in her breast, and from a lassitude that she could not overcome. Her pale, thin, care-worn face, told a sad tale of suffering, privation, confinement, and want of exercise. What was to become of her children she knew not. Under such feelings of hopelessness, to have one sitting by her side, who could take much

of her burdens from her, were he but to will it--who could call back the light to her heart, if only true to his promise, made in earlier and happier years--soured in some degree her feelings, and obscured her perceptions. She did not note that some change had passed upon him; a change that if marked, would have caused her heart to leap in her bosom.

As soon as Jarvis had risen from the table, he took his hat, and kissing his youngest child, the only one there who seemed to regard him, passed quickly from the house. As the door closed after him, his wife heaved a long sigh, and then rising, mechanically, proceeded to clear up the table. Of how many crushed affections and disappointed hopes, did that one deep, tremulous sigh, speak!

Jarvis returned to his work, and applied himself steadily during the whole afternoon. Whenever a desire for liquor returned upon him, he quenched it in a copious draught of water, and thus kept himself as free from temptation as possible. At night he returned, when the same troubled and uneasy silence pervaded the little family at the supper-table. The meal was scanty, for Mrs. Jarvis's incessant labor could procure but a poor supply of food. After the children had been put to bed, Mrs. Jarvis sat down, as usual, to spend the evening, tired as she was, and much as her breast pained her, in sewing. A deep sigh heaved involuntarily her bosom as she did so. It caught the ear of her husband, and smote upon his heart. He knew that her health was feeble, and that constant labor fatigued her excessively.

"I wouldn't sew to-night, Jane," he said. "You look tired. Rest for one evening."

Mrs Jarvis neither looked up nor replied. There was something in the tone of her husband's voice that stirred her feelings;--something that softened her heart towards him. But she dared not trust herself to speak, nor to let her eye meet his. She did not wish to utter a harsh nor repulsive word, nor was she willing to speak kindly to him, for she did not feel kindly,--and kind words and affected cheerfulness, she had already found but encouraged him in his evil ways. And so she continued to ply her needle, without appearing to regard his presence. Her husband did not make another effort to induce her to suspend her labors; for, under existing circumstances, he was particularly desirous of not provoking her to use towards him the language of rebuke and censure. After sitting silent, for, perhaps half an hour, he rose from his chair, and walked three or four times backwards and forwards across the room, preparatory to going out to seek a coffee-house, and there spend his evening, as his wife supposed. But much to her surprise, he retired to their chamber, in the adjoining room. While still under the expectation of seeing him return, his loud breathing caught her quick ear. He was asleep!

Catching up the light, as she arose suddenly to her feet, she passed, with a hasty step, into the chamber. He had undressed himself, was in bed, and sound asleep. She held the candle close to

his face; it was calmer than usual, and somewhat paler. As she bent over him, his breath came full in her face. It was not loaded with the disgusting fumes that had so often sickened her. Her heart beat quicker--the moisture dimmed her eye--her whole frame trembled. Then looking upwards, she uttered a single prayer for her husband, and, gliding quietly from the room, sat down by her little table and again bent over her work. Now she remembered that he had said, with something unusual in his tones--"I would not sew to-night, Jane; you look tired; rest for one evening"--and her heart was agitated with a new hope; but that hope, like the dove from the ark, found nothing upon which to rest, and trembled back again into a feeling of despondency.

On the next morning, the unsteady hand of Jarvis, as he lifted his saucer to his lips at the breakfast-table, made his wife's heart sink again in her bosom. She had felt a hope, almost unconsciously. She remembered that at supper-time his hand was firm--now it was unnerved. This was conclusive to her mind, that, notwithstanding his appearance, he had been drinking. But few words passed during the meal, for neither felt much inclined to converse.

After breakfast, Jarvis returned to the shop and worked steadily until dinner-time, and then again until evening. As on the night before, he did not go out, but retired early to bed. And this was continued all the week. But the whole was a mystery to his poor wife, who dared not even to hope for any real change for the better. On Saturday, towards night, he laid by his work, put on his coat and hat, and went into the front shop.

"So you have really worked a week, a sober man, John?" Mr. Lankford said.

"Indeed, I have. Since last Sunday morning, no kind of intoxicating liquor has passed my lips."

"How much have you earned this week, John?"

"Here is the foreman's account of my work, sir. It comes to twelve dollars."

"Still a fast workman. You will yet recover yourself, and your family will again be happy, if you persevere."

"O, sir, they shall be happy! I _will_ persevere!"

Another pause ensued, and then Jarvis said, while the color mounted to his cheek--

"If you are willing, Mr. Lankford, I should like you to deduct only one-half of what I owe you for those furs I took from you, from this week's wages. My family are in want of a good many things; and I am particularly desirous of buying a barrel of flour to-night."

"Say nothing of that, John. Let it be forgotten with your past misdeeds. Here are your wages--twelve dollars--and if it gives you as much pleasure to receive, as it does me to pay them, then you feel no ordinary degree of satisfaction."

Mr. Jarvis received the large sum for him to possess, and hurried away to a grocery. Here he bought, for six dollars, a barrel of flour, and expended two dollars more of his wages in sugar, coffee, tea, molasses, &c. Near to the store was the market-house. Thence he repaired, and bought meat and various kinds of vegetables, with butter, &c. These he carried to the store, and gave directions to have all sent home to him. He had now two dollars left out of the twelve he had earned since Monday morning, and with these in his pocket, he returned home. As he drew near the house, his heart fluttered in anticipation of the delightful change that would pass upon all beneath its humble roof. He had never in his life, experienced feelings of such real joy.

A few moments brought him to the door, and he went in with the quick step that had marked his entrance for several days. It was not quite dark, and his wife sat sewing by the window. She was finishing a pair of pantaloons that had to go home that very evening, and with the money she was to get for them she expected to buy the Sunday dinner. There was barely enough food in the house for supper; and unless she received her pay for this piece of work, she had no means of getting the required sustenance for herself and children--or rather, for her husband, herself and children. The individual for whom it was intended was not a prompt pay-master, and usually grumbled whenever Mrs. Jarvis asked him for money. To add to the circumstances of concern and trouble of mind, she felt almost ready to give up, from the excessive pain in her breast, and the weakness of her whole frame. As her husband came in, she turned upon him an anxious and troubled countenance; and then bent down over her work and plied her needle hurriedly. As the twilight fell dimly around, she drew nearer and nearer to the window, and at last stood up, and leaned close up to the panes of glass, so that her hand almost touched them, in order to catch the few feeble rays of light that were still visible. But she could not finish the garment upon which she wrought, by the light of day. A candle was now lit, and she took her place by the table, not so much as glancing towards her husband, who had seated himself in a chair, with his youngest child on his knee. Half an hour passed in silence, and then Mrs. Jarvis rose up, having taken the last stitch in the garment she was making, and passed into the adjoining chamber. In a few minutes she came out, with her bonnet and shawl on, and the pair of pantaloons that she had just finished on her arm.

"Where are you going, Jane?" her husband asked, in a tone of surprise, that seemed mingled with disappointment.

"I am going to carry home my work."

"But I wouldn't go now, Jane. Wait until after supper."

"No, John. I cannot wait until after supper. The work will be wanted. It should have been home two hours ago."

And she glided from the room.

A walk of a few minutes brought her to the door of a tailor's-shop, around the front of which hung sundry garments exposed for sale. This shop she entered, and presented the pair of pantaloons to a man who stood behind the counter. His face relaxed not a muscle as he took them and made a careful examination of the work.

"They'll do," he at length said, tossing them aside, and resuming his employment of cutting out a garment.

Poor Mrs. Jarvis paused, dreading to utter her request. But necessity conquered the painful reluctance, and she said--

"Can you pay me for this pair to-night, Mr. Willets?"

"No. I've got more money to pay on Monday than I know where to get, and cannot let a cent go out."

"But, Mr. Willets, I--"

"I don't want to hear any of your reasons, Mrs. Jarvis. You can't have the money to-night."

Mrs. Jarvis moved slowly away, and had nearly reached the door, when a thought of her children caused her to pause.

"I cannot go, Mr. Willets, without the money," she said, suddenly turning, and speaking in an excited tone.

"You will go, I'm thinking, madam," was the cool reply.

"O, sir," changing her tone, "pay me what you owe me; I want it very much."

"O, yes. So you all say. But I am used to such make-believes. You get no money out of me to-night, madam. That's a settled point. I'm angry now--so you had better go home at once; if you don't, I'll never give you a stitch of work, so help--"

Mrs. Jarvis did not pause to hear the concluding words of the sentence.

"What shall I do?" was the almost despairing question that she asked of herself, as she hurried towards her home. On entering the house she made no remark, for there was no one to whom she could tell her troubles and disappointment, with even the most feeble hope of a word of comfort.

"Does Mr. Jarvis live here?" asked a rough voice at the door.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Well, here is a barrel of flour and some groceries for him."

"There must be some mistake, sir."

"Is not this Mr. Jarvis's?"

"Yes."

"And number 40?"

"Yes."

"Then this is the place, for that was the direction given me."

"Yes, this is the place--bring them in," spoke up Jarvis, in an animated tone.

The drayman, of course, obeyed. First he rolled in the barrel of flour; then came a number of packages, evidently containing groceries; and, finally, one or two pieces of meat, and sundry lots of vegetables.

"How much is to pay?" asked Jarvis.

"Twenty-five cents, sir," responded the drayman, bowing.

The twenty-five cent piece was taken from his pocket with quite an air, and handed over. Then the drayman went out and that little family were alone again. During the passage of the scene just described, the wife stood looking on with a stupid and bewildered air. When the drayman had departed, she turned to her husband, and said--

"John, where did these things come from?"

"I bought them, Jane."

"You bought them?"

"Yes, I bought them."

"And pray, John, what did you buy them with?"

"With the quarter of a dollar you gave me on Monday."

"John!"

"It is true, Jane. With that quarter I went and joined the Washington Total-Abstinence Society, and then went to work at Mr.

Lankford's. Here is the result of one week's work, besides this silver," handing her all that remained, after making the purchases.

"O, John, John," the wife exclaimed, bursting into tears, "do not again mock my hopes. I cannot bear much more."

"In the strength of Him, Jane, who has promised to help us when we call upon Him, 'I will not disappoint the hopes I now revive,'" said Jarvis, slowly and solemnly.

The almost heart-broken wife and mother leaned her head upon the shoulder of her husband, and clung to his side with a newly-revived confidence, that she felt would not be disappointed, while the tears poured from her eyes like rain. But her true feelings we cannot attempt to describe--nor dare we venture to sketch further the scene we have introduced. The reader's imagination can do it more justice, and to him we leave that pleasing task, with only the remark, that Mrs. Jarvis's newly-awakened joys and hopes have not again been disappointed.

TIME, FAITH, ENERGY.

"I DON'T see that I am so much better off," said Mr. Gordon, a man who had recently given up drinking. "I lost my situation on the very day I signed the pledge, and have had no regular employment since."

"But you would have lost your situation if you hadn't signed the pledge, I presume," said the individual to whom he was complaining.

"Yes. I lost it because I got drunk and spoiled my job. But to hear some temperance people talk, one who didn't know would be led to believe that, the very moment the pledge was signed, gold could be picked up in the streets. I must confess that I haven't found it so. Money is scarcer with me than it ever was; and though I don't spend a cent for myself, my family haven't a single comfort more than they had before."

"Though there's no disputing the fact that they would have many less comforts if you hadn't signed the pledge?"

"No, I suppose not. But I cannot help feeling discouraged at the way things go. If I had the same wages I received before I signed the pledge, I could be laying up money. But, as it is, it requires the utmost economy to keep from getting in debt."

"Still, you do manage to keep even?"

"Yes."

"On about half your former income?"

"A little over half. I used to get ten dollars a week. Now I manage, by picking up odd jobs here and there, to make about six."

"Then you are better off than you were before."

"I hardly see how you can make that out."

"Your family have enough to live upon--all they had before--and you have a healthier body, a calmer mind, and a clearer conscience. Isn't here something gained?"

"I rather think there is," replied Gordon, smiling.

"And I rather think you are a good deal better off than you were before. Isn't your wife happier?"

"O! yes. She's as cheerful as a lark all the day."

"And doesn't murmur because of your light wages?"

"No, indeed! not she. I believe if I didn't earn more than three dollars a week, and kept sober, she would make it do, somehow or other, and keep a good heart. It's wonderful how much she is changed!"

"And yet you are no better off? Ain't you better off in having a happy wife and a pleasant home, what I am sure you hadn't before?"

"You are right in that. I certainly had neither of them before. Oh! yes. I am much better off all around. I only felt a little despondent, because I can't get regular employment as I used to, and good wages; for now, if I had these, I could do so well."

"Be patient, friend Gordon; time will make all right. There are three words that every reformed man should write on the walls of his chamber, that he may see them every morning. They are 'Time, Faith, Energy.' No matter how low he may have fallen; no matter how discouraging all things around him may appear; let him have energy, and faith in time, and all will come out well at last."

Gordon went home, feeling in better heart than when he met the temperance friend who had spoken to him these encouraging words.

Henry Gordon, when he married, had just commenced business for himself, and went on for several years doing very well. He laid by enough money to purchase himself a snug little house, and was in a

good way for accumulating a comfortable property, when the habit of dram-drinking, which he had indulged for years, became an over-mastering passion. From that period he neglected his business, which steadily declined. In half the time it took to accumulate the property he possessed, all disappeared--his business was broken up, and he compelled to work at his trade as a journeyman to support his family. From a third to a half of the sum he earned weekly, he spent in gratifying the debasing appetite that had almost beggared his family and reduced him to a state of degradation little above that of the brute. The balance was given to his sad-hearted wife, to get food for the hungry, half-clothed children.

Nor was this all. Debts were contracted which Gordon was unable to pay. One or two of his creditors, more exacting than the rest, seized upon his furniture and sold it to satisfy their claims, leaving to the distressed family only the few articles exempt by law.

Things had reached this low condition, when Gordon came home from the shop, one day, some hours earlier than usual. Surprised at seeing him, his wife said--

"What's the matter, Henry? Are you sick?"

"No!" he replied, sullenly, "I'm discharged."

"Discharged! For what, Henry?"

"For spoiling a job."

"How did that happen?" Mrs. Gordon spoke kindly, although she felt anxious and distressed.

"How has all my trouble happened?" asked Gordon, with unusual bitterness of tone. "I took a glass too much, and--and--"

"It made you spoil your job," said his wife, her voice still kind.

"Yes. Curse the day I ever saw a drop of liquor! It has been the cause of all my misfortunes."

"Why not abandon its use at once and for ever, Henry?"

"That is not so easily done."

"Hundreds have done it, and are doing it daily, and so may you. Only make the resolution, Henry. Only determine to break these fetters, and you are free. Let the time past, wherein you have wrought folly, and your family suffered more than words can express, suffice. Only will it, and there will be a bright future for all of us."

Tears came into the eyes of Mrs. Gordon while she made this appeal, although she strove hard to appear calm. Her husband felt a better

spirit awaking within him. There was a brief struggle between appetite and the good resolution that was forming in his mind, and then the latter conquered.

"I will be free!" he said, turning towards the door through which he had a little while before entered, and hurriedly leaving the house.

The hour that passed from the time her husband went out until he returned, was one of most anxious suspense to Mrs. Gordon. Her hand trembled so that she could not hold her needle, and was obliged to lay aside the sewing upon which she was engaged, and go about some household employments.

"Mary, I have signed the pledge, if that will do any good," said Gordon, opening the door and coming in upon his wife with his pledge in his hand. "There," and he unrolled the paper and pointed to his name; "there is my signature, and here is the document."

He did not speak very cheerfully; but his wife's face was lit up with a sudden brightness, followed by a gush of tears.

"Do any good!" she replied, leaning her head upon his shoulder, and grasping one of his hands tightly in both of hers. "It will do all good!"

"But I have no work, Mary. I was discharged to-day, and it is the only shop in town. What are we to do?"

"Mr. Evenly will take you back, now that you have signed the pledge."

"Perhaps he will!" Gordon spoke more cheerfully. "I will go and see him to-morrow."

Mrs. Gordon prepared her husband a strong cup of coffee, and baked some nice hot cakes for his supper. She combed her hair, and made herself as tidy as possible. The children, too, were much improved in their looks by a little attention, which their mother felt encouraged to give. There was an air of comfort about the ill-furnished dwelling of Henry Gordon that it had not known for a long time, and he felt it.

On the next morning, after breakfast, Gordon went back to the shop from which he had been discharged only the day previous. Evenly, the owner of it, was a rough, unfeeling man, and had kept Gordon on, month after month, because he could not well do without him. But, on the very day he discharged him, a man from another town had applied for work, and the spoiled job was made an excuse for discharging a journeyman, whose habits of intoxication had always been offensive to the master-workman.

When Gordon entered the shop for the purpose of asking to be taken back, he met Evenly near the door, who said to him, in a rough

manner--

"And what do you want, pray?"

"I want you to take me back again," replied Gordon. "I have signed the pledge, and intend leading a sober life hereafter."

"The devil you have!"

"Yes sir. I signed it yesterday, after you discharged me."

"How long do you expect to keep it?" asked Evenly, with a sneer.

"Long enough to reach the next grogshop?"

"I have taken the pledge for life, I trust," returned the workman, seriously. He was hurt at the contemptuous manner of his old employer, but his dependent condition made him conceal his feelings.

"You will have no more trouble with me."

"No, I am aware of that. I will have no more trouble with you, for I never intend to let you come ten feet inside the front door of my shop."

"But I have reformed my bad habit, Mr. Evenly. I will give you no more trouble with my drinking," said the poor man, alarmed at this language.

"It's no use for you to talk to me, Gordon," replied Evenly, in a rough manner. "I've long wanted to get rid of you, and I have finally succeeded. Your place is filled. So there is no more to say on that subject. Good morning."

And the man turned on his heel and left Gordon standing half stupified at what he had heard.

"Rum's done the business for you at last, my lark! I told you it would come to this!" said an old fellow workman, who heard what passed between Gordon and the employer. He spoke in a light, insulting voice.

Without replying, the unhappy man left the shop, feeling more wretched than he had ever felt in his life.

"And thus I am met at my first effort to reform!" he murmured, bitterly.

"Hallo, Gordon! Where are you going?" cried a voice as these words fell from his lips.

He looked up and found himself opposite to the door of one of his old haunts. It was the keeper of it who had called him.

"Come! Walk in and let us see your pleasant face this morning. Where

were you last night? My company all complained about your absence. We were as dull as a funeral."

"Curse you and your company too!" ejaculated Gordon between his teeth, and moved on, letting his eyes fall again to the pavement.

"Hey-day! What's the matter?"

But Gordon did not stop to bandy words with one of the men who had helped to ruin him.

"It's all over with us, Mary. Evenly's got a man in my place," said Gordon, as he entered his house and threw himself despairingly into a chair. "But won't he give you work, too?" asked Mrs. Gordon, in a husky voice.

"No! He insulted me, and said I should never come ten feet inside of his shop."

"Did you tell him that you had signed the pledge?"

"Yes. But it was no use. He did not seem to care for me any more than he did for a dog."

The poor man's distress was so great that he covered his face with his hands, and sat swinging his body to and fro, and uttering half-suppressed moans.

"What are we to do, Mary? There is no other shop in town," he said, looking up, after growing a little calm. "Doesn't it seem hard, just as I am trying to do right?"

"Don't despair, Henry. Let us trust in Providence. It is only a dark moment; yet, dark as it is, it is brighter to me than any period has been for years. A clear head and ready hands will not go long unemployed. I do not despond, dear husband, neither should you. Keep fast anchored to your pledge, and we will outride the storm."

"But we shall starve, Mary. We cannot live upon air."

"No," replied Mrs. Gordon; "but we can live upon half what you have been earning at your trade, and quite as comfortably as we have been living. And it will be an extreme case, I think, if you can't get employment at five dollars a week, doing something or other. Don't you?"

"It appears so. Certainly I ought to be able to earn five dollars a week, if it is at sawing wood. I'll do that--I'll do any thing."

"Then we needn't be alarmed. I'll try and get some sewing at any rate, to help out. So brighten up, Henry. All will be well. It will take a little time to get things going right again; but time and industry will do all for us that we could ask."

Thus encouraged, Gordon started out to see if he could find something to do. It was a new thing for him to go in search of work; and rather hard, he felt, to be obliged almost to beg for it. Where to go, or to whom to apply, he did not know. After wandering about for several hours, and making several applications at out of the way places with no success, he turned his steps homeward, feeling utterly cast down. In this state, he was assailed by the temptation to drown all his trouble in the cup of confusion, and nearly drawn aside; but a thought of his wife, and the bright hope that had sprung up in her heart in the midst of darkness, held him back.

"It's no use to try, Mary," he said, despondingly, as he entered his poorly-furnished abode, and found his wife busy with her needle. "I can't get any work."

"I have been more successful than you have, Henry," Mrs. Gordon returned, speaking cheerfully. "I went to see if Mrs. Hewitt hadn't some sewing to give out, and she gave me a dozen shirts to make. So don't be discouraged. You can afford to wait for work even for two or three weeks, if it doesn't come sooner. Let us be thankful for what we have to-day, and trust in God for to-morrow. Depend upon it, we shall not want. Providence never forsakes the man who is trying to do right."

Thus Mrs. Gordon strove to keep up the spirits of her husband. After dinner, he went out again and called to see a well-known temperance man. After relating to him what he had done, and how unhappily he was situated in regard to work, the man said--

"It won't do to be idle, Gordon; that's clear. An idle man is tempted ten times to another's once. You will never be able to keep the pledge unless you get something to do. We must assist you in this matter. What can you do besides your trade?"

"I have little skill beyond my regular calling; but then, I have health, strength, and willingness; and I think these might be made useful in something."

"So do I. Now to start with, I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will come and open my store for me every morning, make the fire and sweep out, and come and stay an hour for me every day while I go to dinner, I will give you three dollars a week. Two hours a day is all your time I shall want."

"Thank you from my heart! Of course I accept your offer. So far so good," said Gordon, brightening up.

"Very well. You may begin with to-morrow morning. No doubt you can make an equal sum by acting as a light porter for the various stores about. I can throw a little in your way; and I will speak to my neighbors to do the same." There was not a happier home in the whole town than was the home of Henry Gordon that night, poor as it was.

"I knew it would all come out right," said Mrs. Gordon. "I knew a better day was coming. We can live quite comfortably upon five or six dollars a week, and be happier than we have been for years."

When Gordon thought of the past, he did not wonder that tears fell over the face of his wife, even while her lips and eyes were bright with smiles. As the friend had supposed, Gordon was employed to do many errands by the storekeepers in the neighborhood. Some weeks he made five dollars and sometimes six or seven. This went on for a few months, when he began to feel discouraged. The recollection of other and brighter days returned frequently to his mind, and he began ardently to desire an improved external condition, as well for his wife and children as for himself. He wished to restore what had been lost; but saw no immediate prospect of being able to do so. Six dollars a week was the average of his earnings, and it took all this, besides what little his wife earned, to make things tolerably comfortable at home.

Gordon was in a more desponding mood than usual, when he indulged in the complaint with which our story opens. What was said to him changed the tone of his feelings, and inspired him with a spirit of cheerfulness and hope.

"Time, Faith, Energy!" he said to himself, as he walked with a more elastic step. "Yes, these must bring out all right in the end. I will not be so weak as to despond. All is much improved as it is. We are happier and better. Time, Faith, Energy! I will trust in these."

When Gordon opened the door of his humble abode, he found a lad waiting to see him, who arose, and presenting a small piece of paper, said--

"Mr. Blake wishes to know when you can settle this?"

Mr. Blake was a grocer, to whom ten dollars had been owing for a year. He had dunned the poor drunkard for the money until he got tired of so profitless a business, and gave up the account for lost. By some means, it had recently come to his ears that Gordon had signed the pledge.

"Some chance for me yet," he said, and immediately had the bill made out anew, and sent in; not thinking or caring whether it might not be premature for him to do so, and have the effect to discourage the poor man and drive him back to his old habits. What he wanted was his money. It was his due; and he meant to have it if he could get it.

"Tell Mr. Blake that I will pay him as soon as possible. At present it is out of my power," said Gordon, in answer to the demand.

The lad, in the spirit of his master, turned away with a sulky air, and left the house.

Poor Gordon's feelings went down to zero in a moment.

"It's hopeless, Mary! I see it all as plain as day," he said. "The moment I get upon my feet, there will be a dozen to knock me down. While I was a drunkard, no one thought of dunning me for money; but now that I am trying to do right, every one to whom I am indebted a dollar will come pouncing down upon me."

"It's a just debt, Henry, you know, and we ought to pay it."

"I don't dispute that. But we can't pay it now."

"Then Blake can't get it now; so there the matter will have to rest. A little dunning won't kill us. We have had harder trials than that to bear. So don't get discouraged so easily."

The words "Time, Faith, Energy!" came into the mind of Gordon and rebuked him.

"There is sense in what you say, Mary," he replied. "I know I am too easily discouraged. We owe Blake, that is clear; and I suppose he is right in trying to get his money. We can't pay him now; and therefore he can't get it now, do what he will. So we will be no worse for his dunning, if he duns every day. But I hate so to be asked for money."

"I'll tell you what might be done," said Mrs. Gordon.

"Well?" inquired the husband.

"Mr. Blake has a large family, and no doubt his wife gives out a good deal of sewing. I could work it out."

Gordon thought a few moments, and then said--

"Or, better than that; perhaps Blake would let me work it out in his store. I have a good deal of time on my hands unemployed."

"Yes, that would be better," replied Mrs. Gordon; "for I have as much sewing as I can do, and get paid for it all."

This thought brightened the spirits of Gordon. As soon as he had eaten his dinner he started for the store of Mr. Blake.

"I've come to talk to you about that bill of mine," said Mr. Gordon.

"Well, what of it?" returned the grocer. "I wish to pay it, but have not the present ability. I lost my situation on the very day I signed the pledge, and have had no regular employment since. So far, I have only been able to pick up five or six dollars a week, and it takes all that to live upon. But I have time to spare, Mr. Blake, if I have no money; and if I can pay you in labor, I will be glad to do

so."

"I don't know that I could ask more than that," replied the grocer.
"If I did, I would be unreasonable. Let me see: I reckon I could find a day's work for you about the store at least once a week, for which I would allow you a credit of one dollar and a quarter. How would that do?"

"It would be exactly what I would like. I can spare you a day easily. And it is much better to work out an old debt than to be idle."

"Very well, Gordon. Come to-morrow and work for me, and I will pass a dollar and a quarter to your account. I like this. It shows you are an honest man. Never fear but what you'll get along."

The approving words of the grocer encouraged Gordon very much. On the next day he went as he had agreed and worked for Mr. Blake. When he was about leaving the store at night, Blake called to him and said--

"Here, Gordon; stop a moment. I want you to put up a pound of this white crushed sugar; and a quarter of young hyson tea."

Gordon did as he was directed. Blake took the two packages from the counter, and handing them to Gordon, said--

"Take them to your wife with my compliments, and tell her that I wish her joy of an honest husband."

Gordon took the unexpected favor, and without speaking, turned hastily from the grocer and walked away.

"Behind _that_ frowning Providence
He hid a smiling face,"

said Mrs. Gordon, with tearful eyes, when her husband presented her the sugar and tea, and repeated what the grocer had said.

"Yes. It was a blessing sent to us in disguise," returned Gordon.
"How little do we know of the good or ill that lies in our immediate future!"

"Do not say ill, dear husband--only seeming ill; if we think right and do right. When God makes our future, all is good; the ill is of our own procuring."

"Right, Mary. I see that truth as clear as if a sunbeam shone upon it."

"Time, Faith, Energy!" murmured Gordon to himself, as he lay awake that night, thinking of the future. Before losing himself in sleep, he had made up his mind to go to another creditor for a small

amount, and see if he could not make a similar arrangement with him to the one entered into with the grocer. The man demurred a little, and then said he would take time to think about it. When Gordon called again, he declined the proposition, and said he had sold his goods for money, not for work.

"But I have no money," replied Gordon.

"I'll wait awhile and see," returned the man, in a way and with a significance that fretted the mind of Gordon.

"He'll wait until he sees me getting a little ahead, and then pounce down upon me like a hawk upon his prey."

Over this idea the reformed man worried himself, and went home to his wife unhappy and dispirited.

"I owe at least a hundred and fifty or two hundred dollars," he said; "and there is no hope of inducing all of those to whom money is due to wait until we can pay them with comfort to ourselves. I shall be tormented to death, I see that plain enough."

"Don't you look at the dark side, Henry?" replied his wife to this.

"I think you do. You owe some eight or ten persons, and one of them has asked you for what was due. You offered to work out the debt, and he accepted your offer. To another who has not asked you, you go and make the same offer, which he declines, preferring to wait for the money. There is nothing so really discouraging in all this, I am sure. If he prefers waiting, let him wait. No doubt it will be the same to us in the end. As to our getting much ahead or many comforts around us until our debts are settled off, we might as well not think of that. We will feel better to pay what we owe as fast as we earn it; and, more than that, it will put the temptation to distress us in nobody's way. If one man won't let you work out your debt, why another will. I've no doubt that two-thirds of your creditors will be glad to avail themselves of the offer."

Thus re-assured, Gordon felt better. On the next day he tried a third party to whom he owed fifteen dollars. This man happened to keep a retail grocery and liquor store. That is, he had a bar at one counter, and sold groceries at the other. Two-thirds of the debt was for liquor. "I want to wipe off that old score of mine, if I can, Mr. King," said Gordon, as he met the storekeeper at his own door.

"That's clever," replied Mr. King. "Walk in. What will you take? Some brandy?"

And Mr. King stepped behind the counter and laid his hand upon a decanter.

"Nothing at all, I thank you," replied Gordon quickly.

"Why how's that? Have you sworn off?"

"Yes. I've joined the temperance society."

The storekeeper shrugged his shoulders. "I didn't expect that of you, Gordon. I thought you were too fond of a little creature comfort."

"I ruined myself and beggared my family by drink, if that is what you mean by creature comfort. Poor comfort it was for my wife and children, to say nothing of my own case, which was, Heaven knows, bad enough. But I have come to talk to you about paying off that old score. Now that I've given up drinking, I want to try and be honest if I can."

"That's right. I like to see a man, when he sets out to be decent, go the whole figure. Have you got the money?"

"No. I wish I had. I have no money and not half work; but I have time on my hands, Mr. King."

"Time? That is what some people call money. You want to pay me in time, instead of money, I presume? Rather rich, that, Gordon! But time don't pass current, like money, in these diggins, my friend. There are a plenty who come here--and throw it away for nothing. I can get more than I want."

"I have no wish to throw my time away, nor to pass it upon you for money, Mr. King. What I want is, to render you some service--in other words, to work for you, if you can give me something to do. I have time on my hands unemployed, and I wish to turn it to some good account."

"O, yes. I understand now. Very well, Gordon; I rather think I can meet your views. Yesterday my barkeeper was sent to prison for getting into a scrape while drunk, and I want his place supplied until he gets out. Come and tend bar for me a couple of weeks, and I will give you a receipt in full of all demands."

Gordon shook his head and looked grave.

"What's the matter? Won't you do it?"

"No, sir. I can't do that."

"Why?"

"Because I have sworn neither to taste, touch, nor handle the accursed thing. Neither to drink it myself, nor put it to the lips of another. No, no, Mr. King, I can't do that. But I will sell your groceries for you three days in the week, for four weeks. Part of my time is already regularly engaged."

"Go off about your business!" said the store-keeper, his face red

with anger at the language of the reformed man, which he was pleased to consider highly insulting. "I'll see to collecting that bill in a different way from that."

By this time Gordon was learning not to be frightened and discouraged at every thing. His wife had so often showed him its folly, that he felt ashamed to go to her again in a desponding mood, and therefore cheered himself up before going home.

In other quarters he found rather better success. Not all of those he owed were of the stamp of the two to whom application had last been made. In less than six months he had worked out nearly a hundred dollars of what he owed, and had regular employment that brought him in six dollars every week, besides earning, by odd jobs and light portorage, from two to three dollars. His wife rarely let a week go without producing her one or two dollars by needle-work. Little comforts gradually crept in, notwithstanding all their debts were not yet paid off. This was inevitable.

By the end of twelve months Gordon found himself clear of debt, and in a good situation in a store at five hundred dollars a year.

"So much for 'Time, Faith, Energy,'" he said to himself, as he walked backwards and forwards, in his comfortable little home, one evening, thinking of the incidents of the year, and the results that had followed. "I would not have believed it. Scarcely a twelvemonth has passed, and here am I, a sober man and out of debt."

"Though still very far from the advanced position in the world you held a few years ago, and to which you can never more attain," said a desponding voice within him. "A man never has but one chance for attaining ease and competence in this life. If he neglects that, he need not waste his time in any useless struggles."

"Time, Faith, Energy!" spoke out another voice. "If one year has done so much for you, what will not five, ten, or twenty years do? Redouble your energies, have confidence in the future, and time will make all right."

"I will have faith in time; I will have energy!" responded the man in Gordon, speaking aloud.

From that time Gordon and his wife lived with even stricter economy than before, in order to lay by a little money with which he could,--at some future time, re-commence his own business, which was profitable. There was still only a single shop in town, and that was the one owned by his old employer, who had, in fact, built himself up on his downfall, when he took to drinking and neglecting his business. On less than a thousand dollars Gordon did not think of commencing business. Less than that he knew would make the effort a doubtful one. This amount he expected to save in about five years.

Two years of this time had elapsed, and Gordon had four hundred

dollars invested and bearing interest. He still held his situation at five hundred dollars per annum. The only shop yet established in the town for doing the work for which he was qualified both as a journeyman and master workman, was that owned and still carried on by his old employer, who had made a good deal of money; but who had, of late, fallen into habits of dissipation and neglected his business.

One evening, while Gordon was reading at home in his comfortable little sitting-room, with his wife beside him engaged with her needle, and both feeling very contented, there was a rap at the door. On opening it Gordon recognized Mr. Evenly, and politely invited him to come in. After being seated, his old employer, who showed too plainly the debasing signs of frequent intoxication, said--

"Gordon what are you doing now?"

The reformed man stated the nature of his occupation.

"What salary do you receive?" asked Evenly.

"Five hundred dollars a year."

"Do you like your present employment?"

"Yes, very well. It is lighter than my old business, and much cleaner."

"Would you be willing to come to work for me again?" further inquired Evenly.

"I don't know that I would. My present situation is permanent, my employer a very pleasant man, and my work easy."

"Three things that are very desirable, certainly. But I'll tell you what I want, and what I will give you. Perhaps we can make a bargain. There is no man in town who understands our business better than you do. That I am free to admit. Heretofore I have been my own manager; but I am satisfied that it will be for my interest to have a competent foreman in my establishment. If I can find one to suit me I will give him liberal wages. You will do exactly; and if you will take charge of my shop, I will make your wages fifteen dollars a week. What do you say to that?"

"I rather think," replied Gordon, "that I will accept your offer. Five dollars a week advance in wages for a poor man is a consideration not lightly to be passed by."

"It is not, certainly," remarked Evenly. "Then I may consider it settled that you will take charge of my shop."

"Yes. I believe I needn't hesitate about the matter."

So the arrangement was made, and Gordon went back to the shop as foreman, from which he had been discharged as a journeyman three years before.

Firmly bent upon commencing the business for himself, whenever he should feel himself able to do so, Gordon continued his frugal mode of living for two years longer, when the amount of his savings, interest and all added, was very nearly fifteen hundred dollars. The time had now come for him to take the step he had contemplated for four years. Evenly received the announcement with undisguised astonishment. After committing to such competent hands the entire manufacturing part of his business, he had given himself up more and more to dissipation. Had it not been for the active and energetic manner in which the affairs of the shop were conducted by Gordon, every thing would have fallen into disorder. But in a fair ratio with the neglect of his principal was he efficient as his agent.

"I can't let you go," said Evenly, when Gordon informed him of his intention to go into business for himself. "If fifteen dollars a week doesn't satisfy you, you shall have twenty."

"It is not the wages," replied Gordon. "I wish to go into business for myself. From the first this has been my intention."

"But you haven't the capital."

"Yes. I have fifteen hundred dollars."

"You have!"

"Yes. I have saved it in four years. That will give me a fair start. I am not afraid for the rest."

Evenly felt well satisfied that if Gordon went into business for himself, his own would be ruined, and therefore, finding all efforts to dissuade him from his purpose of no avail, he offered to take him in as a partner. But to this came an unexpected objection. Gordon was averse to such a connection. Being pressed to state the reason why, he frankly said--

"My unwillingness to enter into business with you arises from the fact that you are, as I was four years ago, a slave to strong drink. You are not yourself one half of the time, and hardly ever in a fit condition to attend to business. Pardon me for saying this. But you asked for my reason, and I have given it."

Evenly, at first, was angry. But reflection soon came, and then he felt humiliated as he had never felt before. There was no intention on the part of Gordon to insult him, nor to triumph over him, but rather a feeling of sorrow; and this Evenly saw.

"And this is your only objection?" he at length said.

"I have none other," replied Gordon.

"If it did not exist you would meet my proposals?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Then it shall no longer exist. From this hour I will be as free from the vice you have named as you are."

"Will you sign the pledge?"

"Yes, this very hour."

And he did so.

A year afterwards an old friend, who had joined the temperance ranks about the time Gordon did, and who had only got along moderately well, passed the establishment of EVENLY & GORDON, and saw the latter standing in the door.

"Are you in this concern?" he asked, in some surprise.

"Yes."

"And making money fast?"

"We are doing very well."

"Gordon, I don't understand this altogether. I tried to recover myself, but soon got discouraged, and have ever since plodded along in a poor way I live, it is true; but you are doing much better than that. What is your secret?"

"It lies in three words," replied Gordon.

"Name them."

"Time, Faith, Energy!"

The man looked startled for a moment, and then walked away wiser than when he asked the question. Whether he will profit by the answer we cannot tell. Others may, if they will.

FLUSHED WITH WINE.

"WASN'T that Ernestine Lee that we passed this moment?" asked Harvey Lane, a young M.D., of his friend James Everett, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, I believe it was--"Everett returned, rather coldly.

"You believe it was! Surely, James, nothing has occurred to destroy the intimacy that has for some time existed between you."

"You saw that we did not speak."

"I did."

"And, probably, shall never be on terms of friendship again."

"What you say pains me very much, James. Of course there is a reason for so great a change. May I ask what it is?"

"It is, no doubt, a good deal my own fault. But still, I cannot help thinking that she has taken offence too suddenly, where no offence was intended. You know that I have been long paying attentions to her?"

"Yes."

"If I remember rightly, I told you last week, that my intentions towards her were of a serious character. In a word, that I had fully made up my mind to ask her hand in marriage."

"O, yes,--I remember it very well. And that is the reason why I felt so much surprised at seeing you pass each other, without speaking."

"Well, a few evenings ago, I called, as usual, intending, if a good opportunity offered, to make known my true feelings towards her. Unfortunately, I had dined out that day with some young friends. We sat late at table, and when I left, I was a _little flushed with wine_. It was a very little, for you know that I can drink pretty freely without its being seen. But, somehow, or other, I was more elated than is usual with me on such occasions, and when I called on Ernestine, felt as free and easy as if everything was settled, and we were to be married in a week. For a time, we chatted together very pleasantly; then I asked her to play and sing for me. She went to the piano, at my request, and played and sung two or three very sweet airs. I don't know which it was that elated my feelings so much--the wine, or the delightful music. Certain it is, that at the conclusion of a piece, I was in such rapture, that I threw my arms around her neck, drew back her head, and kissed her with emphatic earnestness."

"Why, James!"

"You may well be surprised at the commission of so rude and ungentlemanly an act. But, as I have said, I was flushed with wine."

"How did Ernestine act?"

"She was, of course, deeply indignant at the unwarrantable liberty. Springing from the piano-stool, her face crimsoned over, she drew herself up with a dignified air, and ordered me instantly to leave her presence. I attempted to make an apology, but she would not hear a word. I have since written to her, but my letter has been returned unopened."

"Really, that is unfortunate," the friend of Everett said, with concern. "Ernestine is a girl whom any man might be proud to gain as a wife. And, besides her personal qualifications, a handsome fortune will go with her hand."

"I know all that too well, Harvey. Fool that I have been, to mar such prospects as were mine! But she must have known that I was not myself--and ought to have charged the fault upon the wine, and not upon me."

"Such a discrimination is not usually made."

"I know that it is not. And for not making it in my case, I certainly cannot help blaming Ernestine a little. She must have known, that, had I not been flushed with wine, I never would have taken the liberty with her that I did. As it is, however, I am not only pained at the consequences of my foolishness, but deeply mortified at my conduct."

"Is there no hope of a reconciliation?"

"I do not think there is any. If she had accepted my written apology for the act, there would have been some hope. But the fact of her returning my letter unopened, is conclusive as to the permanency of the breach. I can now make no further advances."

"Truly, it is mortifying!" the friend remarked. Then, after a pause, he added, with emphasis--

"What fools this wine does make of us, sometimes!"

"Doesn't it? Another such a circumstance as this, would almost drive me to join a temperance society."

"O, no, hardly that, James."

"Well, perhaps not. But, at least, to eschew wine for ever."

"Wine is good enough in its place; but, like fire, is rather a bad master. Like you, I have injured my prospects in life by an over-indulgence in the pleasures of the cup."

"You?"

"Yes."

"When did that happen?"

"Since I last saw you."

"Indeed! I am sorry to hear you say so. But how was it?--tell me."

"You know, that as a young physician, I shall have to struggle on in this city for years before I can rise to any degree of distinction, unless aided by some fortunate circumstance, that shall be as a stepping-stone upon which to elevate me, and enable me to gain the public eye. I am conscious that I have mastered thoroughly the principles of my profession--and that, in regard to surgery, particularly, I possess a skill not surpassed by many who have handled the knife for years. Of this fact, my surgical teacher, who is my warm friend, is fully aware. At every important case that he has, I am desired to be present, and assist in the operation, and once or twice, where there were no friends of the patient to object, I have been permitted to perform the operation myself, and always with success. In this department of my profession, I feel great confidence in myself--and it is that part of it, in which I take the most interest."

"And in which, I doubt not, you will one day be distinguished."

"I trust so; and yet, things look dark enough just now. But to go on. A few days ago, I dined with some friends. After dinner, the bottle was circulated pretty freely, and I drank as freely as the rest, but was not aware of having taken enough to produce upon me any visible effects. It was about an hour after the table had been cleared for the wine, that an unusually loud ringing of the door-bell attracted our attention. In a few moments after, I heard a voice asking, in hurried tones, for Doctor Lane. Going down at once to the hall, I found old Mr. Camper there, the rich merchant, in a state of great agitation.

"'Doctor,' said he, grasping my arm,--'a most terrible accident has happened to my daughter!--thrown from a carriage!--My physician cannot be found, and as I have often heard your skill warmly alluded to by him, I desire your instant attendance. My carriage is at the door--Come along with me, quickly.'

"Catching up my hat, I attended him at once, and during our rapid drive to his princely residence, learned that his only daughter had been thrown from a carriage, and dreadfully injured; but in what way, could not ascertain. Unaccountably to myself, I found my mind all in confusion,--and, strange, unprofessional omission! forgot to request that I be driven first to my office for my case of instruments. We had not proceeded half the distance to Mr. Camper's

residence, before I noticed that the old man became silent, and that his eye was fixed upon me with a steady, scrutinizing gaze. This added to the confusion of mind which I felt. At length the carriage stopped, and I accompanied Mr. Camper to his daughter's chamber, hurriedly, and in silence. As I paused by the bed upon which she lay, I again noticed that he was regarding me with a steady searching look, and an expression of face that I did not like, and could not understand.

"I proceeded, however, at once, to examine the condition of my patient, who lay in a kind of stupor. There was a deep gash on the side of her face, from which the blood had issued profusely. By the aid of warm-water, I soon cleared the wound from a mass of coagulated blood that had collected around it, and was glad to find that it was not a serious one. I then proceeded to examine if there were any fractures. All this time my hands were unsteady, my face burned, and my mind was confused. _I was conscious that I had taken too much wine._

"'There is no apparent injury here,' I at length said, after examining the arms and chest. 'She is probably only stunned by the concussion.'

"'But she could not stand on her feet when first lifted after the fall, and fainted immediately upon attempting to sustain her own weight,' Mr. Camper replied.

"I then made further examination, and found sad indications of her fall, in a fractured patella. The knee was, however, so swollen, that I could not ascertain the nature, nor extent of the fracture.

"'What do you find the matter there, doctor?' Mr. Camper asked, after I had finished my examination.

"'A very serious injury, sir, I am sorry to say,' was my reply.

"'Of what nature?' was his somewhat stern inquiry.

"'Her knee-pan is fractured, sir; but so much swollen, that I cannot, now, fully ascertain the extent of the injury.'"

"Henry!" cried the old man in a quick, eager tone to an attendant, "go again for doctor L--; and if he is not in, go for doctor R--; and if you cannot find him, call on doctor T--, and ask him to come instantly."

The attendant hurriedly departed, when Mr. Camper turned slowly towards me, with a mingled expression of anger, pain, and contempt, upon his face, and said, in a stern voice,

"'Go home young man! and quit drinking wine, or quit the profession! You are in no fit state to undertake a case like this.'

"It came upon me like a peal of thunder from an unclouded summer sky. It was the knell of newly-awakened hopes--the darkening of newly-opening prospects. Silently I turned away under the cutting rebuke, and left the house."

"Really, that was most unfortunate!" his friend Everett remarked, with earnest sympathy.

"Could anything have been more unfortunate, or more mortifying. Her case was one that I fully understood; and could have treated successfully. It would have brought me into contact with the family for six months, or more, and the *_eclat_* which I should have derived from the case, would have given me a prominence as a young surgeon, that I am afraid the fact of my losing the case under such mortifying circumstances, will prevent me ever attaining in this city."

"Really, Harvey, I do feel exceedingly pained at what you have told me. Confound this wine! I believe it does more harm than good."

"Too free an indulgence of it does, no doubt. Our error has lain in this. We must be more prudent in future."

"Suppose we swear off for ever from touching it."

"No, I will not do that. Wine is good in its place, and I shall continue to use it, but more moderately. A physician never knows the moment he may be called upon, and should, therefore, always be in a state to exercise a clear head and a steady hand."

"Certainly, we have both of us had lessons not soon to be forgotten," was the reply; and then the two young men separated.

Two weeks from the day this conversation took place, doctor Lane and his friend James Everett met at a supper-party, where all kinds of liquors were introduced, and every kind of inducement held out for the company to drink freely. Both of the young men soon forgot their resolutions to be guarded in respect to the use of wine. As the first few glasses began to take effect, in an elevation of spirits, each felt a kind of pride in the thought that he could bear as much as any one there, and not show signs of intoxication.

By eleven o'clock, there was not one at the table who was not drunk enough to be foolish. The rational and intelligent conversation that had been introduced early in the evening, had long since given place to the obscene jest--the vulgar story--or the bacchanalian song. Gayest of the gay were our young men, who had already, one would think, received sufficient lessons of prudence and temperance.

"Take care, James!" cried Lane, across the table to his friend Everett, familiarly, late in the evening. "You are pouring the wine on the table, instead of in your glass."

"You are beginning to see double," was Everett's reply, lifting his head with a slight drunken air, and throwing a half-angry glance upon his friend.

"That is more than you can do," was the retort, with a meaning toss of the head.

"I don't understand you," Everett said, pausing with the decanter still in his hand, and eyeing his friend, steadily.

"Don't you, indeed! You see yourself in a state of blessed singleness--ha! Do you take?"

"Look here, James,--you are my friend. But there are things that I will not allow even a friend to utter. So take care now!"

"Ha! ha! There comes the raw. Do I rub too hard, my boy?"

"You 're drunk, and a fool into the bargain!" was the angry retort of Everett.

"Not so drunk as you were when you hugged and kissed Ernestine Lee! How do you like--?"

Lane could not finish the sentence, before the decanter which Everett had held in his hand glanced past his head with fearful velocity, and was dashed into fragments against the wall behind him. The instant interference of friends prevented any further acts of violence.

It was about ten o'clock on the next morning that young doctor Lane sat in his office, musing on the events of the previous night, of which he had only a confused recollection, when a young man entered, and presented a note. On opening it, he found it to be a challenge from Everett.

"Leave me your card, and I will refer my friend to you," was his reply, with a cold bow, as he finished reading the note. The card was left, and the stranger, with a frigid bow in return, departed.

"Fool, fool that I have been!" ejaculated Lane, rising to his feet, and pacing the floor of his office backwards and forwards with hurried steps. This was continued for nearly half an hour, during which time his countenance wore a painful and gloomy expression. At last, pausing, and seating himself at a table, he murmured, as he lifted a pen,

"It is too late now for vain regrets."

He then wrote a note with a hurried air, and dispatched it by an attendant. This done, he again commenced pacing the floor of his office, but now with slower steps, and a face expressive of sad determination. In about twenty minutes a young man entered, saying,

as he did so--

"I'm here at a word, Harvey--and now what is this important business which I can do for you, and for which you are going to be so everlastingly obliged?"

"That will tell you," Lane briefly said, handing him the challenge he had received.

The young man's face turned pale as he read the note.

"Bless me, Harvey!" he ejaculated, as he threw the paper upon the table. "This is a serious matter, truly! Why how have you managed to offend Everett? I always thought that you were friends of the warmest kind."

"So we have been, until now. And at this moment, I have not an unkind thought towards him, notwithstanding he threw a bottle of wine at my head last night, which, had it taken effect, would have, doubtless, killed me instantly."

"How in the world did that happen, doctor?"

"We were both flushed with wine, at the time. I said something that I ought not to have said--something which had I been myself, I would have cut off my right hand before I would have uttered--and it roused him into instant passion."

"And not satisfied with throwing the bottle of wine at your head, he now sends you a challenge?"

"Yes. And I must accept it, notwithstanding I have no angry feelings against him; and, but for the hasty step he has now taken, would have most willingly asked his pardon."

"That, of course, is out of the question now," the friend replied.

"But I will see his second; and endeavour, through him, to bring about a reconciliation, if I can do so, honourably, to yourself."

"As to that," replied Lane, "I have nothing to say. If he insists upon a meeting, I will give him the satisfaction he seeks."

It was about half an hour after, that the friend of Lane called upon the friend of Everett. They were old acquaintances.

"You represent Everett, I believe, in this unpleasant affair between him and doctor Lane," the latter said.

"I do," was the grave reply.

"Surely we can prevent a meeting!" the friend of Lane said, with eagerness.

"I do not see how," was the reply.

"They were flushed with wine when the provocation occurred, and this ought to prevent a fatal meeting. If Lane insulted Everett, it was because he was not himself. Had he been perfectly sober, he would never have uttered an offensive word."

"Perhaps not. But with that I have nothing to do. He has insulted my friend, and that friend asks a meeting. He can do no less than grant it--or prove himself a coward."

"I really cannot see the necessity that this should follow," urged the other. "It seems to me, that it is in our power to prevent any hostile meeting."

"How?"

"By representing to the principals in this unhappy affair, the madness of seeking each other's lives. You can learn from Everett what kind of an apology, if any, will satisfy him, and then I can ascertain whether such an apology will be made."

"You can do what you please in that way," the friend of Everett replied. "But I am not disposed to transcend my office. Besides, I know that, as far as Everett is concerned, no apology will be accepted. The insult was outrageous, involving a breach of confidence, and referring to a subject of the most painful, mortifying, and delicate nature."

"I am really sorry to hear that both you and your friend are determined to push this matter to an issue, for I had hoped that an adjustment of the difficulty would be easy."

"No adjustment can possibly take place. Doctor Lane must fight, or be posted as a coward, and a scoundrel."

"He holds himself ready to give Mr. Everett all the satisfaction he requires," was the half-indignant reply.

"Then, of course, you are prepared to name the weapons; and the time and place of meeting?"

"I am not. For so confident did I feel that it would only be necessary to see you to have all difficulties put in a train for adjustment, that I did not confer upon the subject of the preliminaries of the meeting. But I will see you again, in the course of an hour, when I shall be ready to name them."

"If you please." And then the seconds parted.

"I am afraid this meeting will take place in spite of all that I can do," the friend of doctor Lane said, on returning after his interview with Everett's second. "The provocation which you gave

last night is felt to be so great, that no apology can atone for it."

"My blood probably will,--and he can have that!" was the gloomy reply.

A troubled silence ensued, which was at last broken by the question,

"Have you decided, doctor, upon the weapons to be used?"

"Pistols, I suppose," was the answer.

"Have you practised much?"

"Me! No. I don't know that I ever fired a pistol in my life."

"But Everett is said to be a good shot."

"So much the worse for me. That is all."

"You have the liberty of choosing some other weapon. One with which you are familiar."

"I am familiar with no kind of deadly weapons."

"Then you will stand a poor chance, my friend; unless you name the day of meeting next week, and practise a good deal in the meantime."

"I shall do no such thing. Do you suppose, that if I fight with Everett, I shall try to kill him? No. I would not hurt a hair of his head. I am no murderer!"

"Then you go out under the existence of a fatal inequality."

"I cannot help that. It is my misfortune. I did not send the challenge."

"That is no reason why you should not make an effort to preserve your own life."

"If we both fire at once, and both of our balls take effect, the fact that my ball strikes him will not benefit me any. And suppose he should be killed, and I survive, do you think I could ever know a single hour's happiness? No--no--I choose the least of two evils. I must fight. But I will not kill."

"In this you are determined?"

"I certainly am. I have weighed the matter well, and come to a positive decision."

"You choose pistols, then?"

"Yes. Let the weapons be pistols."

"When shall the meeting take place?"

"Let it be to-morrow morning, at sunrise. The quicker it is over, the better."

This determined upon, the friend went again to the second of Everett, and completed all necessary arrangements for the duel.

It was midnight, and young doctor Lane sat alone in his chamber, beside a table, upon which were ink and paper. He had, evidently, made several attempts to write; and each time failed from some cause to accomplish his task. Several sheets of paper had been written upon, and thrown aside. Each of these bore the following words:--

"_My Dear Parents:--_When these lines are read by you, the hand that penned them will be cold and nerveless--"

Thus far the unhappy young man could go, but no farther. Imagination pictured too vividly the heart-stricken father who had so often looked down upon him when a boy with pride and pleasure, and the tender, but now agonized mother, as that appalling announcement met their eyes.

Again, for the fifth time, he took up his pen, murmuring in a low tone, yet with a resolute air,

"It must be done!"

He had again written the words:--

"My Dear Parents--"

When his ear caught the sound of steps, strangely familiar to his ear, ascending the stairs, and approaching his chamber. He paused, and listened with a heart almost stilled in its pulsations. In a brief space, the door of his room opened, and a grey-haired, feeble old man came slowly in.

"My father!" exclaimed Harvey, starting to his feet in astonishment--scarcely, for the moment, being able to realize whether it were indeed his father, or, only an apparition.

"Thank heaven! that I have found my son alive--" ejaculated the old man, uncovering his head, and lifting his eyes upward. "O, Harvey, my child!" he then said, with an earnest pathos, that touched the young man's heart--"how could you so far forget us as to think even for a single moment of the dreadful act you are preparing to commit?"

"I had hoped to be spared this severest trial of all," the young man said, rising and grasping the hand of his father, while the tears

sprang to his eyes. "What officious friend has taken the pains to disturb both your peace and mine--dragging you thus away from your home, in the vain effort to prevent an act that must take place."

"Speak not so rashly, my son! It cannot, it must not, it shall not take place!"

"I have no power to prevent it, father."

"You are a free agent."

"Not to do a deed of dishonour,--or, rather, I am not free to suffer dishonour."

"There is no honour in wantonly risking or taking life, Harvey."

"I insulted a friend, in the grossest manner."

"_That_ was dishonourable. But why did you insult him?"

"I was _flushed with wine_."

The old man shook his head, sadly.

"I know it was wrong, father. But it can't be helped now. Well, as I said; I insulted him, and he has demanded satisfaction. Can I do less than give it to him?"

"If you insulted him, you can apologize. And, from what I know of James Everett, he will at once forgive."

"I cannot do that now, father. He threw a bottle of wine at my head, and then precipitately challenged me. I owe at least something to myself."

"And something, I should think, to your mother, if not to me," replied the old man, bitterly. "How, think you she will receive the news of your death, if the combat should terminate fatally for you? Or, how, if your hands should become stained with the blood of your friend?"

"Talk not thus, father! Talk not thus!" ejaculated the young man, rising up quickly, and beginning to pace the floor of his chamber with hurried steps. "Is not my situation dreadful enough viewed in any light? Then why seek to agonize my heart with what I would gladly forget? I am already racked with tortures that can scarcely be endured--why seek to run my cup of misery over?"

"I seek but to save you, my child," the father replied, in a voice that suddenly became low and tremulous.

"It is a vain effort. There is but one course for me, and that is to go on, and meet whatever consequences ensue. The result may not be

so bad as feared."

"Harvey!" old Mr. Lane said, in a voice that had somewhat regained its steadiness of tone. "This meeting must not take place. If you persist in going out tomorrow morning, I must take measures to prevent it."

"And thus dishonour your son."

"All dishonour that will appertain to you, Harvey, appertains to you now. You insulted your friend. Neither your death nor his can atone for that offence. If reparation be truly made, it will come in some other form."

"It is vain to urge that matter with me," was the reply to this. "I must give James Everett the satisfaction he requires to-morrow morning. And now, father, if I should fall, which heaven forbid for others' sakes more than my own," and the young man's voice quivered, "break the matter to my mother as gently as possible--tell her, that my last thoughts were of her, and my last prayer that she might be given strength from above to bear this heavy affliction."

It was a damp, drizzly morning, just at break of day, when Harvey Lane, accompanied by his friend, and a young physician, entered a close carriage, and started for the duelling-ground, which had been selected, some four miles from the city. Two neat mahogany cases were taken along, one containing a pair of duelling pistols, and the other a set of surgical instruments. As these were handed in, the eye of Lane rested upon them for a moment. They conjured up in his mind no very pleasant thoughts. He was very pale, and silent. Nor did his companions seem in much better condition, or much better spirits. A rapid drive of nearly three quarters of an hour brought them upon the ground. The other party had not yet arrived, but came up in a few minutes afterwards. Then commenced the formal preparations. The ground was measured off--ten paces. The seconds prepared the deadly weapons which were to heal the honour that had been so dreadfully wounded, and arranged all the minor provisions of the duel.

During all this time, neither of the young men looked towards each other, but each paced rapidly over a little space of ground, backwards and forwards, with agitated steps--though evidently with an effort to seem composed.

"Ready," said Lane's second, at length, close to his ear.

The young man started, and his cheek blanched to a pale hue. He had been thinking of his father and mother. With almost the vividness of reality had he seen them before him, and heard their earnest; tearful pleadings with him to forbear for their sakes, if not for his own. But he took the deadly weapon in his hand mechanically, and moved to the position that had been assigned him. The arrangement was, that the seconds should give the words--one--two--three--in

slow succession, and that the parties should fire as soon after "three" was uttered, as they chose.

Their positions taken, the young men's eyes met for the first time--and for the first time they looked again upon each other's faces. The word one had been given, at which each raised his pistol,--_two_ was uttered--and then another individual was suddenly, and unexpectedly added to the party, who threw himself in front of Harvey Lane, in range of both the deadly weapons. Turning, then, towards Everett, he said, lifting his hat, and letting his thin grey hairs fall about his forehead--

"We cannot spare our son, yet, James! We are growing old, and he is our only child. If he were taken thus away from us, we should not be able to bear it. For our sakes, then, James, if he has injured you, forgive him."

Already had the face of his old and long-trying friend, as he met its familiar expression, softened in some degree the feelings of Everett, and modified the angry vindictiveness which he still continued to cherish. The apparition of the father, and his unexpected appeal, completely conquered him, and he threw, with a sudden effort, his pistol away some twenty yards.

"I am satisfied!" he said, in a low tone, advancing, and taking the old man's hand. "You have conquered the vindictive pride of a foolish heart."

"I know that I grossly insulted you, James"--Harvey Lane said, coming quickly forward, and offering his hand. "But would I, could I have done it, if I had been myself?"

"No, Harvey, you could not! And I was mad and blind that I would not see this"--Everett replied, grasping the hand of his friend. "We were both _flushed with wine_, and that made both of us fools. Surely, Harvey, we have had warning enough, of the evil of drinking. Within the last two weeks, it has seriously marred our prospects in life, and now it has brought us out here with the deliberate intent of taking each other's lives."

"From this hour, I solemnly declare, that I will never again touch, taste, or handle the accursed thing!" Lane said, with strong emphasis.

"In that resolution I join you," replied Everett, with a like earnest manner. "And let this resolution be the sealing bond of our perpetual friendship."

"Amen!" ejaculated Harvey Lane, solemnly,--and, "Amen!" responded the old man, fervently, lifting his eyes to Heaven.

SWEARING OFF.

"JOHN," said a sweet-faced girl, laying her hand familiarly upon the shoulder of a young man who was seated, near a window in deep abstraction of mind. There was something sad in her voice,--and her countenance, though, lovely, wore an expression of pain.

"What do you want, sister?" the young man replied, without lifting his eyes from the floor.

"You are not happy, brother."

To this, there was no reply, and an embarrassing pause of some moments ensued.

"May I speak a word with you, brother?"--the young girl at length said, with a tone and manner that showed her to be compelling herself to the performance of a painful and repugnant task.

"On what subject, Alice?" the brother asked, looking up with a doubting expression.

This question brought the colour to Alice's cheeks, and the moisture to her eyes.

"You know what I would say, John," she at length made out to utter, in a voice that slightly trembled.

"How should I know, sister?"

"You were not yourself last night, John."

"Alice!"

"Forgive me, brother, for what I now say," the maiden rejoined. "It is a painful trial, indeed; and were it not that I loved you so well--were it not that, besides you, there is no one else in the wide world to whom I can look up, I might shrink from a sister's duty. But I feel that it would be wrong for me not to whisper in your ear one warning word--wrong not to try a sister's power over you."

"I will forgive you this time, on one condition," the brother said, in a tone of rebuke, and with a grave expression of countenance.

"What is that?" asked Alice.

"On condition that you never again, directly or indirectly, allude to this subject. It is not in your province to do so. A sister should not look out for her brother's faults."

A sudden gush of tears followed this cold, half-angry repulse; and then the maiden turned slowly away and left the room.

John Barclay's anger towards his only sister, who had no one, as she had feelingly said, in the wide world to look up to and love, but him, subsided the moment he saw how deeply his rebuke had wounded her. But he could not speak to her, nor recall his words--for the subject she had introduced was one so painful and mortifying, that he could not bear an allusion to it.

From long indulgence, the habit of drinking had become confirmed in the young man to such a degree that he had almost ceased to resist an inclination that was gaining a dangerous power over him. And yet there was in his mind an abiding resolution one day to break away from this habit. He did not intend to become a drunkard. Oh, no! The condition of a drunkard was too low and degrading. He could never sink to that! After awhile, he intended to "swear off," as he called it, and be done with the seductive poison altogether; but he had not yet been able to bring so good a resolution into present activity. This being his state of mind--conscious of danger, and yet unwilling to fly from that danger, he could not bear any allusion to the subject.

Half an hour, passed in troubled thought, elapsed after this brief interview between the brother and sister, when the young man left the house and took his way, scarcely reflecting upon where he was going, to one of his accustomed places of resort--a fashionable drinking house, where every device that ingenuity could invent, was displayed to attract custom. Splendid mirrors and pictures hung against the walls, affecting the mind with pleasing thoughts--and tempting to self-indulgence. There were lounges, where one might recline at ease, while he sipped the delicious compounds the richly furnished bar afforded, never once dreaming that a serpent lay concealed in the cup that he held to his lips--a serpent that one day would sting him, perhaps unto death!

"Regular as clock-work,"--said an old man, a friend of Barclay's father, who had been dead several years, meeting the young man as he was about to enter the attractive establishment just alluded to.

"How?" asked Barclay in a tone of enquiry.

"Six times a day, John, is too often for you to be seen going into the same drinking-house,"--said the old man, with plain-spoken honesty.

"You must not talk to me in that way, Mr. Gray," the other rejoined sternly.

"My respect and regard for the father, will ever cause me to speak plainly to the son when I think him in danger," was Mr. Gray's calm reply.

"In danger of what, Mr. Gray?"

"In danger of--shall I utter the word in speaking o' the son of my old friend, Mr. Barclay? Yes; in danger of--drunkenness!"

"Mr. Gray, I cannot permit any one to speak to me thus."

"Be not offended at me, John. I utter but the truth."

"I will not stand to be insulted by any one!" was the young man's angry reply, as he turned suddenly away from his aged friend, and entered the drinking-house. He did not go up at once to the bar, as had been his habit, but threw himself down upon one of the lounges, took up a newspaper, and commenced; or rather, appeared to commence reading, though he did not, in fact, see a letter.

"What will you have, Mr. Barclay?" asked an officious attendant, coming up, a few moments after he had entered.

"Nothing just now," was the reply, made in a low tone, while his eyes were not lifted from the newspaper. No very pleasant reflections were those that passed through his mind as he sat there. At last he rose up quickly, as if a resolution, had been suddenly formed, and left the place where clustered so many temptations, with a hurried step.

"I want you to administer an oath," he said, entering the office of an Alderman, a few minutes after.

"Very well, sir. I am ready," replied the Alderman. "What is its nature?"

"I will give you the form."

"Well?"

"I, John Barclay, do solemnly swear, that for six months from this hour, I will not taste a drop of any kind of liquor that intoxicates."

"I wouldn't take that oath, young man," the Alderman said.

"Why not?"

"You had better go and join a temperance society. Signing the pledge will be of as much avail."

"No--I will not sign a pledge never to drink again. I'm not going to

make a mere slave of myself. I'll swear off for six months."

"Why not swear off perpetually, then?"

"Because, as I said, I am not going to make a slave of myself. Six months of total-abstinence will give me a control over myself that I do not now possess."

"I very much fear, sir," urged the Alderman, notwithstanding he perceived that the young man was growing impatient--"and you must pardon my freedom in saying so, that you will find yourself in error. If you are already so much the slave of drink as to feel yourself compelled to have recourse to the solemnities of an oath to break away from its bewitching power, depend upon it, that no temporary expedient of this kind will be of any avail. You will, no doubt, keep your oath religiously, but when its influence is withdrawn, you will find the strength of an unsupported resolution as weak as ever."

"I do not believe the position you take to be a true one," argued young Barclay--"All I want is to get rid of present temptation, and to be freed from present associations. Six months will place me beyond the reach of these, and then I shall be able to do right from an internal principle, and not from mere external restraint."

"I see the view you take, and would not urge a word against it, did I not know so many instances of individuals who have vainly opposed their resolutions against the power of habit. When once an appetite for intoxicating drinks has been formed, there is only one way of safety--that of taking a perpetual pledge of total-abstinence. That, and that alone is the wall of sure protection. Without it, you are exposed to temptations on every hand. The manly and determined effort to be free will not always avail. In some weak and unsuspecting moment, the tempter will steal quietly in, and all will be again lost."

"It is useless, sir, to argue the point with me," Barclay replied to this. "I will not now take the pledge--that is settled. I will take an oath of abstinence for six months. If I can keep to it that long, I can keep from drinking always."

Seeing that further argument would be useless, the Alderman said no more, but proceeded to administer the oath. The young man then paid the required fee and turned from the office in silence.

When Alice left the room in tears, stung by the cutting rebuke of her brother, she retired to her chamber with an oppressed and aching heart. She loved him tenderly. They were, sister and brother, alone in the world, and, therefore, her affections clung the closer to him. The struggle had been a hard one in bringing herself to perform the duty which had called down upon her the anger of one for whom she would almost have given her life; and, therefore, the result was doubly painful, more particularly, as it had effected nothing,

apparently, towards a change in his habits.

"But perhaps it will cause him to reflect.--If so, I will cheerfully bear his anger," was the consoling thought that passed through her mind, after the passage of an hour, spent under the influence of most painful feelings.

"O, if he will only be more on his guard," she went on, in thought--"if he will only give up that habit, how glad I should be!"

Just then she heard him enter, and marked the sound of his footsteps as he ascended to his own room, with a fluttering heart. In the course of fifteen or twenty minutes, he went down again, and she listened to observe if he were going out. But he entered the parlours, and then all was, again, quiet.

For some time Alice debated with herself whether she should go down to him or not, and make the effort to dispel the anger that she had aroused against her; but she could not make up her mind how to act, for she could not tell in what mood she might find him. One repulse was as much, she felt, as she could bear. At last, however, her feelings became so wrought up, that she determined to go down and seek to be reconciled. Her brother's anger was more than she could bear.

When she entered the parlours, with her usual quiet step, she found him seated near the window, reading. He lifted his head as she came in, and she saw at a glance that all his angry feelings were gone. How lightly did her heart bound as she sprang forward!

"Will you forgive me, brother?" she said, laying her hand upon his shoulder as she stood by his side, and bent her face down until her fair cheek almost touched his own.

"Rather let me say, will you forgive me, sister?" was his reply, as he kissed her affectionately--"for the unkind repulse I gave you, when to say what you did must have caused you a most painful sacrifice of feeling?"

"Painful indeed it was, brother. But it is past now and all forgiven."

"Since then, Alice," he said, after a pause, "I have taken a solemn oath, administered by an Alderman, not to touch any kind of intoxicating drink for six months."

"O, I am so glad, John!" the sister said, a joyful smile lighting up her beautiful young face. "But why did you say six months? Why not for life?"

"Because, Alice, I do not wish to bind myself down to a kind of perpetual slavery. I wish to be free, and act right in freedom from a true principle of right. Six months of entire abstinence from all

kinds of liquor will destroy that appetite for it which has caused me, of late, to seek it far too often. And then I will, as a free man, remain free."

"I shall now be so happy again, John!" Alice said, fully satisfied with her brother's reason.

"So you have not been happy then of late?"

"O, no, brother. Far from it."

"And has the fact of my using wine so freely been the cause of your unhappiness?"

"Solely."

"Its effects upon me have not been so visible as often to attract your attention, Alice?"

"O, yes, they have. Scarcely a day has gone by for three or four months past, that I could not see that your mind was obscured, and often your actions sensibly affected."

"I did not dream that it was so, Alice."

"Are you not sensible, that at Mr. Weston's, last night you were by no means yourself?"

"Yes, Alice, I am sensible of that, and deeply has it mortified me. I was suffering acutely from the recollection of the exposure which I made of myself on that occasion, especially before Helen, when you alluded to the subject. That was the reason that I could not bear your allusion to it. But tell me, Alice, did you perceive that my situation attracted Helen's attention particularly?"

"Yes. She noticed, evidently, that you were not as you ought to have been."

"How did it affect her, Alice?" asked the young man.

"She seemed much pained, and, I thought, mortified."

"Mortified?"

"Yes."

A pause of some moments ensued, when Barclay asked, in a tone of interest,

"Do you think it has prejudiced her against me?"

"It has evidently pained her very much, but I do not think that it has created in her mind any prejudice against you."

"From what do you infer this, Alice?"

"From the fact, that, while we were alone in her chamber, on my going up stairs to put on my bonnet and shawl, she said to me, and her eyes were moist as well as my own, 'Alice, you ought to speak to your brother, and caution him against this free indulgence in wine; it may grow on him, unawares. If he were as near to me as he is to you, I should not feel that my conscience was clear unless I warned him of his danger.'"

"Did she say that, sister?"

"Yes, those were her very words."

"And you did warn me, faithfully."

"Yes. But the task is one I pray that I may never again have to perform."

"Amen," was the fervent response.

"How do you like Helen?" the young man asked, in a livelier tone, after a silence of nearly a minute.

"I have always been attached to her, John. You know that we have been together since we were little girls, until now we seem almost like sisters."

"And a sister, truly, I hope she may one day become," the brother said, with a meaning smile.

"Most affectionately will I receive her as such," was the reply of Alice. "Than Helen Weston, there is no one whom I had rather see the wife of my dear brother."

As she said this, she drew her arm around his neck, and kissed him affectionately.

"It shall not be my fault, then, Alice, if she do not become your sister--" was the brother's response.

Rigidly true to his pledge, John Barclay soon gained the honourable estimation in the social circle through which he moved, that he had held, before wine, the mocker, had seduced him from the ways of true sobriety, and caused even his best friends to regard him with changed feelings. Possessing a competence, which a father's patient industry had accumulated, he had not, hitherto, thought of entering upon any business. Now, however, he began to see the propriety of doing so, and as he had plenty of capital, he proposed to a young man of industrious habits and thorough knowledge of business to enter into a co-partnership with him. This offer was accepted, and the two young men commenced the world with the fairest prospects.

Three months from the day on which John Barclay had mentioned to his sister that he entertained a regard for Helen Weston, he made proposals of marriage to that young lady, which were accepted.

"But how in regard to his pledge?" I hear some one ask.

O, as to that, it was kept, rigidly. Nothing that could intoxicate was allowed to touch his lips. Of course, he was at first frequently asked to drink by his associates, but his reply to all importunities was--

"No--I have sworn off for six months."

"So you have said for the last six months," remarked young man, named Watson, one day, on his refusing for the twentieth time to drink with him.

"Not for six months, Watson. It is only three months this very day since I swore off."

"Well, it seems to me like six months, anyhow. But do you think that you feel any better for all this total-abstinence?"

"O as to that, I don't know that I feel such a wonderful difference in body; but in mind I certainly do feel a great deal better."

"How so?"

"While I drank, I was conscious that I was beginning to be too fond of drinking, and was too often painfully conscious that I had taken too much. Now, I am, of course, relieved from all such unpleasant feelings."

"Well, that's something, at least. But I never saw you out of the way."

"Do you know the reason; Watson?"

"No."

"I'll tell you. You were always too far gone yourself, when we drank freely together, to perceive my condition."

"So you say."

"It's true."

"Well, have it as you like. But, see here, John, what are you going to do when your six months are out?"

"I'm going to be a sober man, as I am now."

"You never were a drunkard."

"I was precious near being one, then."

"Nonsense! That's all some old woman's notion of yours."

"Well, be that as it may, I certainly intend continuing to be as sober a man as I have been for the last three months."

"Won't you drink a drop after your time is up?"

"That'll be just as I choose. I will drink or let it alone, as I like. I shall then be free to drink moderately, or not at all, as seems agreeable to me."

"That is a little more sensible than your perpetual total-abstinence, teetotal, cold-water system. Who would be such a miserable slave? I would rather die drunk in the gutter, than throw away my liberty."

"I believe I have said as much myself."

"Don't you feel a desire to have a good glass of wine, or a julep, now and then?"

"No, not the slightest. I've sworn off for six months, and that ends the matter. Of course, I have no more desire for a glass of liquor than I have to fly to the moon,--one is a moral, and the other a physical impossibility; and, therefore, are dismissed from my thoughts."

"What do you mean by a moral impossibility?"

"I have taken an oath not to drink for six months, and the violation of that oath is, for one of my views and feelings, a moral impossibility."

"Exactly. There are three months yet to run, you say. After that, I hope to have the pleasure of taking a glass of wine with you in honour of your restoration to a state of freedom."

"You shall have that pleasure, Watson, if it will really be one--" was Barclay's reply, as the two young men parted.

Time wore on, and John Barclay, besides continuing perfectly sober, gave constant attention to business. So complete a change in him gave confidence to the parents and friends of Helen Weston, who made no opposition to his wish for an early marriage. It was fixed to take place on the evening of the very day upon which his temporary pledge was to expire.

To the expiration of this pledge, Barclay had never ceased, from the moment it was taken, to look forward with a lively interest. Not

that he felt a desire to drink. But he suffered himself to be worried with the idea that he was no longer a free man. The nearer the day came that was to terminate the period for which he had bound himself to abstinence, the more did his mind dwell upon it, and the more did he desire its approach. It was, likewise, to be his wedding-day, and for that reason, also, did he look eagerly forward. But it is doubtful whether the consummation of his marriage, or the expiration of his pledge, occupied most of his thoughts. The day so long looked for came at last.

The day that was to make Barclay a free man, and happy in the possession of one of the sweetest girls for a wife he had ever seen.

"I shall not see you again, until to-night, John," his sister said to him, as he was about leaving the house, after dinner, laying her hand as she spoke upon his arm, and looking into his face with a quiet smile resting upon her own lovely features.--"I have promised Helen to go over and spend the afternoon with her."

"Very well, sis'."

"Of course we shall see you pretty early,"--an arch smile playing about her lips as she made the remark.

"O, yes, I shall be there in time," was the brother's smiling reply, as he kissed the cheek of Alice, and then turned away and left the house. He first proceeded to his store, where he went through, hurriedly, some business that required his attention, occupying something like an hour. Then he went out, and walked rapidly up one of the principal streets of the city, and down another, as if on some urgent errand. Without stopping anywhere, he had nearly returned to his own store, when he was stopped by a friend, who accosted him with--

"Hallo, John! Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"I am on my way to the store."

"Any life and death in the case?"

"No.--Only I'm to be married to-night, as you are aware; and, consequently, am hardly able to tell whether I am on my head or my heels."

"True enough! And besides, you are a free man today, are you not?"

"Yes, Watson, thank Heaven! that trammel will be off in half an hour."

"You must be fond of trammels, John, seeing that you are going to put another on so soon after getting rid of this--" the friend said, laughing heartily at his jest.

"That will be a lighter, and far pleasanter bondage I trust, Watson, than the one from which I am about escaping. It will be an easy yoke compared to the galling one under which I have toiled for the last six months. Still, I do not regret having bound myself as I did. It was necessary to give me that self-control which I had well-nigh lost. Now I shall be able to act like a rational man, and be temperate from principle, and not from a mere external restraint that made me little better than a machine."

"Your time will be up, you say, in half an hour?"

"Yes--" looking at his watch--"in ten minutes. It is later than I thought."

"Come, then, let us go over to R--'s--it is full ten minutes' walk from here--and take a drink to freedom and principle."

"I am ready to join you, of course," was Barclay's prompt reply, as he drew his arm within that of his friend, and the two turned their steps towards the drinking establishment that had been named by the latter.

"A room, a bottle of sherry, and some cigars," said Watson, as they entered the drinking-house, and went up to the bar.

In a few minutes after, they were alone, with wine and glasses before them.

"Here's to freedom and principle!" said Watson, lifting his glass, after having filled his own and Barclay's.

"And here's to the same high moral (sic) attributes which should ever be man's distinguishing characteristics," responded Barclay, lifting his own glass, and touching with it the brim of that held in the hand of his friend. Both then emptied their glasses at a draught.

"Really, that is delicious!" Barclay said, smacking his lips, as the rich flavour of the wine lingered on his palate with a sensation of exquisite delight.

"It's a pretty fair article," was the indifferent reply of Watson--"though I have tasted better in my time. Long abstinence has made its flavour peculiarly pleasant. Here, let me fill your glass again."

Without hesitating, Barclay presented his glass, which was again filled to the brim. In the next moment it was empty. So eager was he to get it to his lips, that he even spilled a portion of the wine in lifting it hurriedly. Suddenly his old, and as he had thought, extinguished desires, came back upon him, roused into vigorous activity, like a giant awakening refreshed by a long repose. So keen was his appetite for wine, and stimulating drinks, thus suddenly restored, that he could no more have withstood its influence than he

could have borne up against the current of a mighty river.

"Help yourself," said his friend, ere another minute had elapsed, as Barclay took up the bottle to fill his glass for the third time.

"Long-abstinence has no doubt made you keen."

"It certainly has, or else this is the finest article of wine that has ever passed my lips."

'It's not the best quality by a good deal; still it is pretty fair. But won't you try a mint-julep, or a punch, by way of variety?"

"No objection," was the brief response.

"Which will you choose?"

"I'll take a julep."

"Two juleps," said Watson to the waiter who entered immediately afterwards.

The juleps were soon ready, each furnished with a long straw.

"Delicious!" was Barclay's low, and delighted ejaculation, as he bent to the table, and "imbibed" through the straw a portion of the liquid.

"Our friend R--understands his business," was Watson's brief reply.

A silence of some moments ensued, during which a painful consciousness of danger rushed through the mind of Barclay. But with an effort he dismissed it. He did not intend to drink beyond the bounds of moderation, and why should he permit his mind to be disturbed by idle fears?

* * * * *

"It is time that brother was here," Alice said to Helen Weston, as the two maidens sat alone, near a window in Helen's chamber, the evening twilight falling gently and with a soothing influence.

"Yes. I expected him earlier," was the reply, in a low tone, while Helen's bosom heaved with a new, and exquisitely pleasurable emotion. "What can keep him?"

"He is lingering at his toilet, perhaps," Alice said, with a smile.

All was silent again for many minutes, each gentle and innocent heart; busy with images of delight.

"It's strange that he does not come, Alice, or sister, as I must call you," Helen remarked, in a graver tone, as the shadowy twilight

deepened until everything wore a veil of indistinctness.

"There! That must be him!" Alice said. "Hark! That is certainly his voice! Yes--And he is coming right up to your room, as I live, as boldly as if the house belonged to him."

While Alice was yet speaking, the door of the chamber in which they sat was swung open with a rude hand, and her brother entered. His face was flushed, and his whole person in disorder.

"Why, brother! what has kept--," but the sister could utter no more. Her tongue was paralyzed, and she stood, statue-like, gazing upon him with a look of horror. He was intoxicated! It was his wedding-night, a portion of the company below, and the gentle, affectionate maiden who was to become his bride, all attired and waiting, and he had come intoxicated!

Poor Helen's bewildered senses could not at first fully comprehend the scene. When she did realize the terrible truth, the shock was more than she could bear.

Over the whole scene of pain, disorder, and confusion, that transpired on that evening, we must draw a veil. Any reader of even ordinary imagination can realize enough of the exquisite distress which it must have brought to many hearts, without the aid of distinct pictures. And those who cannot realize it, will be spared the pain of its contemplation.

One week from that night, at about nine o'clock in the evening, as old Mr. Gray was passing along one of the principal streets of the city where the occurrences we are relating took place, a young man staggered against him, and then fell at full length upon the pavement, from whence he rolled into the gutter, swollen by a smart shower that had just fallen. Too drunk to help himself, he must have been drowned even in that insignificant stream, had there not been help at hand.

Mr. Gray came at once to his relief, and assisted him to rise and get upon the pavement. But now he was unable to stand. Either hurt by the fall, or unnerved by the liquor he had taken, he was no longer able to keep his feet. While Mr. Gray stood holding him up, undetermined how to act, another young man, not quite so drunk as the one he had in charge, came whooping along like an Indian.

"Hallo! Is this you, John, holding up old Mr. Gray? or is it old Mr. Gray holding you up! [hiccup.] Blast me! If I can tell which of you is drunk, or which sober. Let me see? hic-hic-cup. Was it the Whale that swallowed Jonah, or Jonah the Whale? Is it old Mr. Gray--hic-cup--that is drunk, or John Barclay?"

"John Barclay!" ejaculated the old man, in a tone of surprise and grief. "Surely this wretched young man is not John Barclay!"

"If he is not John Barclay, then I am not--hic-cup--not Tom Watson. He's a bird, though! aint he, old gentleman?--hic-cup--Look here, I'll give you five dollars,--hic-cup--if you'll stop these,--hic--these confounded hic-hic-hic-cups--There now--There's a chance for you!--hic--blast 'em! He swore off for six months, ha! ha! ha! And it's just,--hic--just a week to-night since the six months were up. Hurrah for freedom and principle! Hur--hic--hurrah!"

"Thomas Watson!--"

"Don't come your preaching touch over me, mister, if you please. I'm free Tom Watson,--hic-hic-hic-cup--I'm--hic--I'm a regular team--whoop! John, there, you see, would drink to freedom and principle,--hic-cup--on the--hic--day his pledge was up. But the old fellow was--hic--too strong--hic-cup--for him. He's been drunk as a fool ever since--hic-cup!--"

Just at that moment a cab came by which was stopped by the old man. Young Barclay was gotten into it and driven to Mr. Gray's dwelling.

When brought to the light, he presented a sad spectacle, indeed. His face was swollen, and every feature distorted. His coat was torn, and all of his clothing wet and covered with mud. Too far gone to be able to help himself, Mr. Gray had him removed to a chamber, his wet garments taken off, and replaced by dry under-clothing. Then he was put into a bed and left for the night. When the morning broke, Barclay was perfectly sober, but with a mind altogether bewildered. The room in which he found himself, and the furniture, were all strange. He got up; and looked from the window; the houses opposite were unfamiliar.

"Where am I? What is the meaning of all this?" he said, half-aloud, as he turned to look for his clothes. But no garments of any kind, not even his hat and boots, were visible.

"Strange!" he murmured, getting into bed again, and clasping his hands tightly upon his aching and bewildered head. He had lain, thus, for some minutes, trying to collect his scattered senses, when the door of his chamber was opened by a servant, who brought him in a full suit of his own clothes; not, however, those he remembered to have worn the day previous.

As soon as the servant had withdrawn, the young man, who had felt altogether disinclined to speak to him, hurriedly arose, and dressed himself. On attempting to go out, he was surprised, and somewhat angered, to find that the door of the room had been locked.

Ringing the bell with a quick jerk, he awaited, impatiently, an answer to his summons, for the space of about a minute, when he pulled the cord again with a stronger hand. Only a few moments more elapsed, when the key was turned in the door, and Mr. Gray entered.

"Mr. Gray! Is it possible!" Barclay ejaculated, as the old man

stepped into the room, and closed the door after him.

"I can hardly believe it possible, John," his father's friend said, as he turned towards him a sad, yet unreprieving countenance.

"But what is the meaning of all this, Mr. Gray? Where am I? And how came I here?"

"Sit down, John, and be calm. You are in my house. Last night I took you from the gutter, too much intoxicated to help yourself. You would have drowned there, in three inches of water, had not a friendly hand been near to save you."

"Dreadful!" ejaculated the young man, striking his hand hard against his forehead, while an expression of shame and agonizing remorse passed over his face.

"It is, indeed, dreadful to think of, my young friend!" Mr. Gray remarked, in a sympathizing tone. "How wretched you must be!"

"Wretched? Alas! sit, you cannot imagine the horror of this dreadful moment. Surely I have been mad for the past few days! And enough has occurred to drive me mad."

"So I should think, John. But that is past now, and the future is still yours, and its bright page still unsullied by a single act of folly."

"But the past! The dreadful past! That can never be recalled--never be atoned for," Barclay replied, his countenance bearing the strongest expression of anguish and remorse. "To think of all I have lost To think how cruelly I have mocked the fondest hopes, and crushed the purest affections--perhaps broken a loving heart by my folly. O, sir! It will drive me mad!"

As the young man said this, he arose to his feet, and commenced pacing the room to and fro with agitated steps. Now striking his hands against his forehead, and now wringing them violently.

"Since that accursed hour," he resumed, after a few minutes thus spent, "when I madly tempted myself, under the belief that I had gained the mastery over a depraved appetite by an abstinence from all kinds of liquor for six months, I have but a dim recollection of events. I do, indeed, remember, with tolerable distinctness, that I went to claim the hand of Helen Weston, according to appointment. But from the moment I entered the house, all is to me confusion, or a dead blank. Tell me, then, Mr. Gray,"--and the young man's voice grew calmer,--"the effect of my miserable conduct upon her whom I loved purely and tenderly. Let me know all. I ask no disguise."

"The effect, John, has been painful, indeed. Since that dreadful night, she has remained in a state of partial delirium. But her physician told me, yesterday, that all of her symptoms had become

more favourable."

"And how is her father, and friends?"

"Deeply incensed, of course, at your conduct."

"And my sister? How is Alice?"

"She keeps up with an effort. But oh, how wretched and broken-hearted she looks! Is it not dreadful, John, to think, how, by a single act of folly, you have lacerated the hearts that loved you most, and imposed upon them burdens of anguish, almost too heavy to be borne?"

"It is dreadful! dreadful! O, that I had died, before I became an accursed instrument of evil to those I love. But what can I do, Mr. Gray, to atone, in some degree, for the misery I have wrought?"

"You can do much, John, if you will."

"If I will, Mr. Gray?"

"Yes, John, if you will."

"There is nothing that I am not ready to do, Mr. Gray--even the cutting off of my right hand, could it be of any avail."

"You swore off, as I believe you called it, for six months, did you not?"

"Yes."

"Had you any desire to drink, during that time?"

"None."

"Sign a pledge of perpetual total-abstinence, and you are safe from all future temptations. Time will doubtless heal the present painful wounds."

"And make a slave of myself, Mr. Gray. Surely I ought to have power enough over myself to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, without binding myself down by a written contract."

"That is true; but, unfortunately, you have not that control over yourself. Your only safety, then, lies in the pledge. Take that, and you throw between yourself and danger an insurmountable barrier. You talk about freedom; and yet are a slave to the most debasing appetite. Get free from the influence of that eager, insatiable desire, and you are free, indeed. The perpetual total-abstinence pledge will be your declaration of independence. When that is taken, you will be free, indeed. And until it is taken, rest assured, that none of your friends will again have confidence in you. For their

sakes,--for your sister's sake, that peace may once more be restored to her troubled heart--for the sake of her, from whose lip you dashed the cup of joy, sign the pledge."

"I will sign it, Mr. Gray. But name not her whom I have so deeply wronged. I can never see Helen Weston again."

"Time heals many a wound, and closes many a breach my young friend."

"It can never heal that wound, nor close that breach," was the sad response. "But give me a pen and ink, and some paper; and let me write a pledge. I believe it is necessary for me to sign one."

The materials for writing were brought as desired, and Barclay wrote and subscribed a pledge of perpetual abstinence from all that could intoxicate.

"That danger is past," he said, with a lighter tone, as he arose from the table at which he had been writing. "I can never pass another such a week as that which has just elapsed."

"Now come down and take a good warm breakfast with me," Mr. Gray said, in a cheerful voice.

"Excuse me if you please," Barclay replied. "I cannot meet your family this morning, after what has occurred. Besides, I must see my sister as quickly as possible, and relieve, as far as lies in my power, her suffering heart."

"Go then, John Barclay," the old man said. "I will not, for Alice's sake, urge you to linger a moment."

It was still early when Mr. Barclay entered his own home. He found Alice sitting in the parlour so pale, haggard, and wretched, that her features hardly seemed like those of his own sister. She looked up into his face as he came in with a sad, doubting expression, while her lips trembled. One glance, however, told her heart that a change had taken place, and she sprang quickly towards him.

"Alice, my own dear sister!" he said, as her head sank upon his breast. "The struggle is over. I am free once more, and free for ever. I have just signed a pledge of total-abstinence from all that can intoxicate--a pledge that will remain perpetually in force."

"And may our Father in Heaven help you to keep it, John," the maiden murmured, in a low, fervent tone.

"I will die before it shall be violated," was the stern response.

One year from that time, another bridal party assembled at the residence of Mr. Weston. Helen long since recovered from the shock she had received, had again consented to be led to the altar, by John Barclay, whose life had been, since he signed the pledge, of

the most unexceptionable character. Indeed, almost his only fault in former times had been a fondness for drinking, and gay company. Not much of boisterous mirth characterized the bridal party, for none felt like giving way to an exuberance of feeling,--but there was, notwithstanding few could draw a veil entirely over the past, a rational conviction that true and permanent happiness must, and would crown that marriage union. And thus far, it has followed it, and must continue to follow it, for John Barclay is a man of high-toned principle, and would as soon think of committing a highway robbery, as violating his pledge.

THE FAILING HOPE.

"SHALL I read to you, ma?" said Emma Martin, a little girl, eleven years of age, coming up to the side of her mother, who sat in a musing attitude by the centre-table, upon which the servant had just placed a light.

Mrs. Martin did not seem to hear the voice of her child; for she moved not, nor was there any change in the fixed, dreamy expression of her face.

"Ma," repeated the child, after waiting for a few moments, laying, at the same time, her head gently upon her mother's shoulder.

"What, dear?" Mrs. Martin asked, in a tender voice, rousing herself up.

"Shall I read to you, ma?" repeated the child.

"No--yes, dear, you may read for me"--the mother said, and her tones were low, with something mournful in their expression.

"What shall I read, ma?"

"Get the Bible, dear, and read to me from that good book," replied Mrs. Martin.

"I love to read in the Bible," Emma said, as she brought to the centre-table that sacred volume, and commenced turning over its pages. She then read chapter after chapter, while the mother listened in deep attention, often lifting her heart upwards, and breathing a silent prayer. At last Emma grew tired with reading, and closed the book.

"It is time for you to go to bed, dear," Mrs. Martin observed, as the little girl showed signs of weariness.

"Kiss me, ma," the child said, lifting her innocent face to that of her mother, and receiving the token of love she asked. Then, breathing her gentle,

"Good-night!" the affectionate girl glided off, and retired to her chamber.

"Dear child!" Mrs. Martin murmured, as Emma left the room. "My heart trembles when I think of you, and look into the dark and doubtful future!"

She then leaned her head upon her hand, and sat in deep, and evidently painful abstraction of mind. Thus she remained for a long time, until aroused by the clock which struck the hour of ten.

With a deep sigh she arose, and commenced pacing the room backwards and forwards, pausing every now and then to listen to the sound of approaching footsteps, and moving on again as the sound went by. Thus she continued to walk until nigh eleven o'clock, when some one drew near, paused at the street door, and then opening it, came along the passage with a firm and steady step.

Mrs. Martin stopped, trembling in spite of herself, before the parlour door, which a moment after was swung open. One glance at the face of the individual who entered, convinced her that her solicitude had been unnecessary.

"Oh, James!" she said, the tears gushing from her eyes, in spite of a strong effort to compose herself,--"I am so glad that you have come!"

"Why are you so agitated, Emma?" her husband said, in some surprise, looking inquiringly into Mrs. Martin's face.

"You staid out so late--and--you know I am foolish sometimes!" she replied, leaning her head down upon his shoulder, and continuing to weep.

A change instantly passed upon Mr. Martin's countenance, and he stood still, for some time, his face wearing a grave thoughtful expression, while his wife remained with her head leaning upon him. At last he drew his arm tenderly around her, and said--

"Emma, I am a sober man."

"Do not, dear James! speak of that. I am so happy now!"

"Yes, Emma, I will speak of it now." And as he said so, he gently seated her upon the sofa, and took his place beside her.

"Emma"--he resumed, looking her steadily in the face. "I have resolved never again to touch the accursed cup that has so well-nigh destroyed our peace for ever."

"Oh, James! What a mountain you have taken from my heart!" Mrs. Martin replied, the whole expression of her face changing as suddenly as a landscape upon which the sun shines from beneath an obscuring cloud. "I have had nothing to trouble me but that--yet that one trouble has seemed more than I could possibly bear."

"You shall have no more trouble, Emma. I have been for some months under a strange delusion, it has seemed. But I am now fully awake, and see the dangerous precipice upon which I have been standing. This night, I have solemnly resolved that I would drink no more spirituous liquors. Nothing stronger than wine shall again pass my lips."

"I cannot tell you how my heart is relieved," the wife said. "The whole of this evening I have been painfully oppressed with fear and dark forebodings. Our dear little girl is now at that age, when her future prospects interest me all the while. I think of them night and day. Shall they all be marred? I have asked myself often and often. But I could give my heart no certain answer. I need not tell you why."

"Give yourself no more anxiety on this point, Emma," her husband replied. "I will be a free man again. I will be to you and my dear child all that I have ever been."

"May our Heavenly Father aid you to keep that resolution," was the silent prayer that went up from the heart of Mrs. Martin.

The failing hope of her bosom revived under this assurance. She felt again as in the early years of their wedded life, when hope and confidence, and tender affection were all in the bloom and vigour of their first development. The light came back to her eye, and the smile to her lip.

It was about four months afterwards, that Mr. Martin was invited to make one of a small party, given to a literary man, as visiter from a neighbouring city.

"I shall not be home to dinner, Emma," he said, on leaving in the morning.

"Why not, James?" she asked.

"I am going to dine at four, with a select party of gentlemen."

Mrs. Martin did not reply, but a cloud passed over her face, in spite of an effort not to seem concerned.

"Don't be uneasy, Emma," her husband said, noting this change. "I shall touch nothing but wine. I know my weakness, and shall be on my guard."

"Do be watchful over yourself, for my sake, and for the sake of our own dear child," Mrs. Martin replied, laying her arm tenderly upon his shoulder.

"Have no fear, Emma," he said, and kissing the yet fair and beautiful cheek of his wife, Mr. Martin left the house.

How long, how very long did the day seem to Mrs. Martin! The usual hour for his return came and went, the dinner hardly tasted; and then his wife counted the hours as they passed lingeringly away, until the dim, grey twilight fell with a saddening influence around her.

"He will be home soon, now," she thought. But the minutes glided into hours, and still he did not come. The tea-table stood in the floor until nearly nine o'clock, before Mrs. Martin sat down with little Emma. But no food passed the mother's lips. She could not eat. There was a strange fear about her heart--a dread of coming evil, that chilled her feelings, and threw a dark cloud over her spirits.

In the meantime, Martin had gone to the dinner-party, firm in his resolution not to touch a drop of ardent spirits. But the taste of wine had inflamed his appetite, and he drank more and more freely, until he ceased to feel the power of his resolution, and again put brandy to his lips, and drank with the eagerness of a worn and thirsty traveller at a cooling brook. It was nine o'clock when the company arose, or rather attempted to arise from the table. Not all of them could accomplish that feat. Three, Martin among the rest, were carried off to bed, in a state of helpless intoxication.

Hour after hour passed away, the anxiety of Mrs. Martin increasing every moment, until the clock struck twelve.

"Why does he stay so late?" she said, rising and pacing the room backwards and forwards. This she continued to do, pausing every now and then to listen, for nearly an hour. Then she went to the door and looked long and anxiously in the direction from which she expected her husband to come. But his well-known form met not her eager eyes, that peered so intently into the darkness and gloom of the night. With another long-drawn sigh, she closed the door, and re-entered the silent and lonely room. That silence was broken by the loud and clear ringing of the clock. The hour was one! Mrs. Martin's feelings now became too much excited for her to control them. She sank into a chair, and wept in silent anguish of spirit. For nearly a quarter of an hour her tears continued to flow, and then a deep calm succeeded--a kind of mental stupor, that remained until she was startled again into distinct consciousness by the sound of the clock striking two.

All hope now faded from her bosom. Up to this time she had entertained a feeble expectation that her husband might be kept away from some other cause than the one she so dreaded; but now that prop became only as a broken reed, to pierce her with a keener anguish.

"It is all over!" she murmured bitterly, as she again arose, and commenced, walking to and fro with slow and measured steps.

It was fully three o'clock before that lonely, and almost heart-broken wife and mother retired to her chamber. How cruelly had the hope which had grown bright and buoyant in the last few months, gaining more strength and confidence every day, been again crushed to the earth!

For an hour longer did Mrs. Martin sit, listening in her chamber, everything around her so hushed into oppressive silence, that the troubled beating of her own heart, was distinctly audible. But she waited and listened in vain. The sound of passing footsteps that now came only at long, very long intervals, served but to arouse a momentary gleam in her mind, to fade away again, and leave it in deeper darkness.

Without disrobing, she now laid herself down, still listening, with an anxiety that grew more and more intense every moment. At last, over-wearied nature could bear up no longer, and she sunk into a troubled sleep. When she awoke from this, it was daylight. Oh, how weary and worn and wretched she felt! The consciousness of why she thus lay, with her clothes unremoved, the sad remembrance of her hours of waiting and watching through nearly the whole night, all came up before her with painful distinctness. Who but she who has suffered, can imagine her feelings at that bitter moment?

On descending to the parlour, she found her husband lying in a half-stupid condition on the sofa, the close air of the room impregnated with his breath--the sickening, disgusting breath of a drunken man! Bruised, crushed, paralyzed affection had now to lift itself up--the wife just ready to sink to the earth, powerless, under the weight of an overburdening affliction, had now to nerve herself under the impulse of duty.

"James! James!" she said, in a voice of assumed calmness--laying her hand upon him and endeavouring to arouse him to consciousness. But it was a long time before she could get him so fully awake as to make him understand that it was necessary for him to go up stairs and retire to bed. At length she succeeded in getting him into his chamber before the servants had come down; and then into bed. Once there, he fell off again into a profound sleep.

"Is pa sick?" asked little Emma, coming into her mother's chamber, about an hour after, and seeing her father in bed.

"Yes, dear, your father is quite unwell!" Mrs. Martin said, in a

calm voice.

"What ails him, ma?" pursued the child.

"He is not very well, dear; but will be better soon," the mother said, evasively.

The little girl looked into her mother's face for a few moments unsatisfied with the answer, and unwilling to ask another question. She felt that something was wrong, more than the simple illness of her father.

It was near the middle of the day when Mr. Martin became fully awake and conscious of his condition. If he had sought forgetfulness of the past night's debauch and degradation, the sad, reproving face of his wife, pale and languid from anxiety and watching, would too quickly have restored the memory of his fall.

The very bitterness of his self-condemnation--the very keenness of wounded pride irritated his feelings, and made him feel gloomy and sullen. He felt deeply for his suffering wife--he wished most ardently to speak to her a word of comfort, but his pride kept him silent. At the dinner hour, he eat a few mouthfuls in silence, and then withdrew from the table and left the house to attend to his ordinary business. On his way to his office, he passed a hotel where he had been in the habit of drinking. He felt so wretched--so much in want of something to buoy up his depressed feelings, that he entered, and calling for some wine, drank two or three glasses. This, in a few minutes, had the desired effect, and he repaired to his office feeling like a new man.

During the afternoon, he drank wine frequently; and when he returned home in the evening, was a good deal under its influence; so much so, that all the reserve he had felt in the morning was gone. He spoke pleasantly and freely with his wife--talked of future schemes of pleasure and success. But, alas! his pleasant words fell upon her heart like sunshine upon ice. It was too painfully evident that he had again been drinking--and drinking to the extent of making him altogether unconscious of his true position. She would rather a thousand times have seen him overwhelmed by remorse. Then there would have been something for her hope to have leaned upon.

Day after day did Mr. Martin continue to resort to the wine-cup. Every morning he felt so wretched that existence seemed a burden to him, until his keen perceptions were blunted by wine. Then the appetite for something stronger would be stimulated, and draught after draught of brandy would follow, until when night came, he would return home to agonize the heart of his wife with a new pang, keener than any that had gone before.

Such a course of conduct could not be pursued without its becoming apparent to all in the house. Mrs. Martin had, therefore, added to the cup of sorrow, the mortification and pain of having the

servants, and her child daily conscious of his degradation. Poor little Emma would shrink away instinctively from her father when he would return home in the evening and endeavour to lavish upon her his caresses. Sometimes Mr. Martin would get irritated at this.

"What are you sidling off in that way for, Emma?" he said, half-angrily, one evening, when he was more than usually under the influence of liquor, as Emma shrunk away from him on his coming in.

The little girl paused and looked frightened--glancing first at her mother, and then again, timidly, at her father.

"Come along here, I say," repeated the father, seating himself, and holding out his hands.

"Go, dear," Mrs. Martin said.

"I reckon she can come without you telling her to, madam!" her husband responded, angrily. "Come along, I tell you!" he added in a loud, excited tone, his face growing red with passion.

"There now! Why didn't you come when I first spoke. to you, ha?" he said, drawing the child towards him with a quick jerk, so soon as she came within reach of his extended hand. "Say. Why didn't you come Tell me! Aint I your father?"

"Yes, sir," was the timid reply.

"And havn't I taught you that you must obey me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why didn't you come, just now, when I called you?"

To this interrogation the little girl made no reply, but looked exceedingly frightened.

"Did you hear what I said?" pursued the father, in a louder voice.

"Yes, sir."

"Then answer me, this instant! Why didn't you come when I called you?"

"Because, I--I--I was afraid," was the timid, hesitating reply.

Something seemed to whisper to the father's mind a consciousness, that his appearance and conduct while under the influence of liquor, might be such as not only to frighten, but estrange his child's affection from him; and he seemed touched by the thought, for his manner changed, though he was still to a degree irrational.

"Go away, then, Emma! Take her away, mother," he said, in a tone

which indicated that his feelings were touched. "She don't love her father any more, and don't care anything more about him," pushing at the same time the child away from him.

Poor little Emma burst into tears, and shrinking to the side of her mother, buried her face in the folds of her dress, sobbing as if her heart were breaking.

Mrs. Martin took her little girl by the hand and led her from the room, up to the chamber, and kissing her, told her to remain there until the servant brought her some supper, when she could go to bed.

"I don't want any supper, ma!" she said, still sobbing.

"Don't cry, dear," Mrs. Martin said, soothingly.

"Indeed, ma, I do love father," the child said--looking up earnestly into her mother's face, the tears still streaming over her cheeks.

"Won't you tell him so?"

"Yes, Emma, I will tell him," the mother replied.

"And won't you ask him to come up and kiss me after I'm in bed?"

"Yes, dear."

"And will he come?"

"Oh, yes; he will come and kiss you."

Martin remained with her little girl until her feelings were quieted down, and then she descended with reluctant steps to the parlour. There was that in the scene which had just passed, that sobered, to a great extent, the half-intoxicated husband and father, and caused him to feel humbled and pained at his conduct; which it was too apparent was breaking the heart of his wife, and estranging the affection of his child.

When Mrs. Martin re-entered the parlour, she found him sitting near a table, with his head resting upon his hand, and his whole manner indicating a state of painful self-consciousness. With the instinctive perception of a woman, she saw the truth; and going at once up to him, she laid her hand upon him, and said:

"James--Emma wants you to come up and kiss her after she gets into bed. She says that she does love you, and she wished me to tell you so."

Mr. Martin did not reply. There was something calm, gentle, and affectionate, in the manner and tones of his wife--something that melted him completely down. A choking sob followed; when he arose hastily, and retired to his chamber. Mrs. Martin did not follow him thither. She saw that his own reflections were doing more for him

than anything that she could do or say; and, therefore, she deemed it the part of wisdom to let his own reflections be his companion, and do their own work.

When Mr. Martin entered his chamber, he seated himself near the bed, and leaned his head down upon it. He was becoming more and more sobered every moment--more and more distinctly conscious of the true nature of the ground he occupied. Still his mind was a good deal confused, for the physical action of the stimulus he had taken through the day, had not yet subsided; although there was a strong mental counteracting cause in operation, which was gradually subduing the effect of his potations. As he sat thus, leaning his head upon his hand, and half-reclining upon the bed, a deep sigh, or half-suppressed sob, caught his ear. It came from the adjoining chamber. He remembered his child in an instant. His only child--whom he most fondly loved. He remembered, too, her conduct, but a short time before, and saw, with painful distinctness, that he was estranging from himself, and bringing sorrow upon one whose gentle nature had affected even his heart with feelings of peculiar tenderness.

"My dear child!" he murmured, as he arose to his feet, and went quietly into her room. She had already retired to bed, and lay with her head almost buried beneath the clothes, as if shrinking away with a sensation akin to fear. But she heard him enter, and instantly rose up, saying, as she saw him approach her bed--

"O, pa, indeed I do love you!"

"And I love you, my child," Mr. Martin responded, bending over her and kissing her forehead, cheeks, and lips, with an earnest fondness.

"And don't you love ma, too?" inquired Emma.

"Certainly I do, my dear! Why do you ask me?"

"Because I see her crying so often--almost every day. And she seems so troubled just before you come home, every evening. She didn't use to be so. A good while ago, she used to be always talking about when pa would be home; and used to dress me up every afternoon to see you. But now she never says anything about your coming home at night. Don't you know how we used to walk out and meet you sometimes? We never do it now!"

This innocent appeal was like an arrow piercing him with the most acute pain. He could not find words in which to frame a reply. Simply kissing her again, and bidding her a tender good-night, he turned away and left her chamber, feeling more wretched than he had ever felt in his life.

It was about twelve years since the wife of Mr. Martin had united her hopes and affections with his. At that time he was esteemed by

all--a strictly temperate man, although he would drink with a friend, or at a convivial party, whenever circumstances led him to do so. From this kind of indulgence the appetite for liquor was formed. Two years after his marriage, Martin had become so fond of drinking, that he took from two to three glasses every day, regularly. Brandy at dinner-time was indispensable. The meal would have seemed to him wanting in a principal article without it. It was not until about five years after their marriage that Mrs. Martin was aroused to a distinct consciousness of danger. Her husband came home so much intoxicated as to be scarcely able to get up into his chamber. Then she remembered, but too vividly, the slow, but sure progress he had been making towards intemperance, during the past two or three years, and her heart sunk trembling in her bosom with a new and awful fear. It seemed as if she had suddenly awakened from a delusive dream of happiness and security, to find herself standing at the brink of a fearful precipice.

"What can I do? What shall I do?" were questions repeated over and over again; but, alas! she could find no answer upon which her troubled heart could repose with confidence. How could she approach her husband upon such a subject? She felt that she could not allude to it.

Month after month, and year after year, she watched with an anguish of spirit that paled her cheek, and stole away the brightness from her eye, the slow, but sure progress of the destroyer. Alas! how did hope fail--fail--fail, until it lived in her bosom but a faint, feeble, flickering ray. At last she ventured to remonstrate, and met with anger and repulse. When this subsided, and her husband began to reflect more deeply upon his course, he was humbled in spirit, and sought to heal the wound his conduct and his words had made. Then came promises of amendment, and Mrs. Martin fondly hoped all would be well again. The light again came back to her heart. But it did not long remain. Martin still permitted himself to indulge in wine, which soon excited the desire for stronger stimulants, and he again indulged, and again fell.

Ten times had he thus fallen, each time repenting, and each time restoring a degree of confidence to the heart of his wife, by promises of future abstinence. Gradually did hope continue to grow weaker and weaker, at each relapse, until it had nearly failed.

"There is no hope," she said to herself, mournfully, as she sat in deep thought, on the evening in which occurred the scene we have just described. "He has tried so often, and fallen again at every effort. There is no hope--no hope!"

It was an hour after Mr. Martin had retired to his chamber, that his wife went up softly, and first went into Emma's room. The child was asleep, and there was on her innocent face a quiet smile, as if pleasant images were resting upon her mind. A soft kiss was imprinted on her fair forehead, and then Mrs. Martin went into her own chamber. She found that her husband had retired to bed and was

asleep.

But few hours of refreshing slumber visited the eyelids of the almost despairing wife. Towards morning, however, she sank away into a deep sleep. When she awoke from this, it was an hour after daylight. Her husband was up and dressed, and sat beside the bed, looking into her face with an expression of subdued, but calm and tender affection.

"Emma," he said, taking her hand, as soon as she was fairly awakened, "can you again have confidence in me, or has hope failed altogether?"

Mrs. Martin did not reply, but looked at her husband steadily and inquiringly.

"I understand you," he said, "you have almost, if not altogether ceased to hope. I do not wonder at it. If I had not so often mocked your generous confidence, I would again assure you that all will be well. I see that what I say does not make the warm blood bound to your face, as once it did. I will not use idle words to convince you. But one thing I will say. I have been, for sometime past, conscious, that it was dangerous for me to touch wine, or ale, or anything that stimulates, as they do. They only revive an appetite for stronger drinks, while they take away a measure of self-control. I have, therefore, most solemnly promised myself, that I will never again touch or taste any spirituous liquors, wine, malt, or cider. Nor will I again attend any convivial parties, where these things are used. Hereafter, I shall act upon the total-abstinence principle--for only in total-abstinence, is there safety for one like me."

There was something so solemn and earnest in the manner of her husband, that Mrs. Martin's drooping spirits began to revive. Again did her eye brighten, and her cheek kindle. Then came a gush of tears attesting the power of a new impulse. The failing hope was renewed!

And day after day, week after week, and month after month, did that hope strengthen and gain confidence. Years have passed, since that total-abstinence resolution was taken, and not once during the time has Martin been tempted to violate it. Yet, is he vividly conscious, that only in total-abstinence from everything that can intoxicate is there safety for him.

TAKING TOLL.

MR. SMITH kept a drug shop in the little village of Q--, which was situated a few miles from Lancaster. It was his custom to visit the latter place every week or two, in order to purchase such articles as were needed from time to time in his business. One day, he drove off towards Lancaster, in his wagon, in which, among other things, was a gallon demijohn. On reaching the town, he called first at a grocer's with the inquiry,

"Have you any common wine?"

"How common?" asked the grocer.

"About a dollar a gallon. I want it for antimonial wine."

"Yes; I have some just fit for that, and not much else, which I will sell at a dollar."

"Very well. Give me a gallon," said Mr. Smith. The demijohn was brought in from the wagon and filled. And then Mr. Smith drove off to attend to other business. Among the things to be done on that day, was to see a man who lived half a mile from Lancaster. Before going out on this errand, Mr. Smith stopped at the house of his particular friend, Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones happened not to be in, but Mrs. Jones was a pleasant woman, and he chatted with her for ten minutes, or so. As he stepped into his wagon, it struck him that the gallon demijohn was a little in his way, and so, lifting it out, he said to Mrs. Jones,

"I wish you would take care of this until I come back."

"O! certainly," replied Mrs. Jones, "with the greatest pleasure."

And so the demijohn was left in the lady's care.

Some time afterwards Mr. Jones came in, and among the first things that attracted his attention, was the strange demijohn.

"What is this?" was his natural inquiry.

"Something that Mr. Smith left."

"Mr. Smith from Q--?"

"Yes."

"I wonder what he has here?" said Mr. Jones, taking hold of the demijohn. "It feels heavy."

The cork was unhesitatingly removed, and the mouth of the vessel brought in contact with the smelling organ of Mr. Jones.

"Wine, as I live!" fell from his lips. "Bring me a glass."

"O! no, Mr. Jones. I wouldn't touch his wine," said Mrs. Jones.

"Bring me a glass. Do you think I'm going to let a gallon of wine pass my way without exacting toll? No--no! Bring me a glass."

The glass, a half-pint tumbler, was produced, and nearly filled with the execrable stuff--as guiltless of grape juice as a dyer's vat--which was poured down the throat of Mr. Jones.

"Pretty fair wine, that; only a little rough," said Mr. Jones, smacking his lips.

"It's a shame!" remarked Mrs. Jones, warmly, "for you to do so."

"I only took toll," said the husband, laughing. "No harm in that, I'm sure."

"Rather heavy toll, it strikes me," replied Mrs. Jones.

Meantime, Mr. Smith, having completed most of his business for that day, stopped at a store where he wished two or three articles put up. While these were in preparation he said to the keeper of the store,

"I wish you would let your lad Tom step over for me to Mr. Jones's. I left a demijohn of common wine there, which I bought for the purpose of making it into antimonial wine.

"O! certainly," replied the store-keeper. "Here, Tom!" and he called for his boy.

Tom came, and the store-keeper said to him,

"Run over to Mr. Jones's and get a jug of antimonial wine which Mr. Smith left there. Go quickly, for Mr. Smith is in a hurry."

"Yes, sir," replied the lad, and away he ran.

After Mr. Jones had disposed of his half a pint of wine, he thought his stomach had rather a curious sensation, which is not much to be wondered at, considering the stuff with which he had burdened it.

"I wonder if that really is wine?" said he, turning from the window at which he had seated himself, and taking up the demijohn again. The cork was removed, and his nose applied to the mouth of the huge bottle.

"Yes, it's wine; but I'll vow it's not much to brag of." And the cork was once more replaced.

Just then came a knock at the door. Mrs. Jones opened it, and the store-keeper's lad appeared.

"Mr. Smith says, please let me have the jug of antimonial wine he left here."

"Antimonial wine!" exclaimed Mr. Jones, his chin falling, and a paleness instantly overspread his face.

"Yes, sir," said the lad.

"Antimonial wine!" fell again, but huskily, from the quivering lips of Mr. Jones. "Send for the doctor, Kitty, quick! Oh! How sick I feel! Send for the doctor, or I'll be a dead man in half an hour!"

"Antimonial wine! Dreadful!" exclaimed Mrs. Jones, now as pale and frightened as her husband. "Do you feel sick?"

"O! yes. As sick as death!" And the appearance of Mr. Jones by no means belied his words. "Send for the doctor instantly, or it may be too late."

Mrs. Jones ran first in one direction and then in another, and finally, after telling the boy to run for the doctor, called Jane, her single domestic, and started her on the same errand.

Off sprung Jane at a speed outstripping that of John Gilpin. Fortunately, the doctor was in his office, and he came with all the rapidity a proper regard to the dignity of his profession would permit, armed with a stomach pump and a dozen antidotes. On arriving at the house of Mr. Jones he found the sufferer lying upon a bed, ghastly pale, and retching terribly.

"O! doctor! I'm afraid it's all over with me!" gasped the patient.

"How did it happen? what have you taken?" inquired the doctor, eagerly.

"I took, by mistake, nearly a pint of antimonial wine."

"Then it must be removed instantly," said the doctor; and down the sick man's throat went one end of a long, flexible, India rubber tube, and pump! pump! pump! went the doctor's hand at the other end. The result was very palpable. About a pint of reddish fluid, strongly smelling of wine, came up, after which the instrument was withdrawn.

"There," said the doctor, "I guess that will do. Now let me give you an antidote." And a nauseous dose of something or other was mixed up and poured down, to take the place of what had just been removed.

"Do you feel any better now?" inquired the doctor, as he sat holding the pulse of the sick man, and scanning, with a professional eye,

his pale face, that was covered with a clammy perspiration.

"A little," was the faint reply. "Do you think all danger is past?"

"Yes, I think so. The antidote I have given you will neutralize the effect of the drug, as far as it has passed into the system."

"I feel as weak as a rag," said the patient. "I am sure I could not bear my own weight. What a powerful effect it had!"

"Don't think of it," returned the doctor. "Compose yourself. There is now no danger to be apprehended whatever."

The wild flight of Jane through the street, and the hurried movements of the doctor, did not fail to attract attention. Inquiry followed, and it soon became noised about that Mr. Jones had taken poison.

Mr. Smith was just stepping into his wagon, when a man came up and said to him,

"Have you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"Mr. Jones has taken poison!"

"What?"

"Poison!"

"Who! Mr. Jones?"

"Yes. And they say he cannot live."

"Dreadful! I must see him." And without waiting for further information, Mr. Smith spoke to his horse and rode off at a gallop for the residence of his friend. Mrs. Jones met him at the door, looking very anxious.

"How is he?" inquired Mr. Smith, in a serious voice.

"A little better, I thank you. The doctor has taken it all out of his stomach. Will you walk up?"

Mr. Smith ascended to the chamber where lay Mr. Jones, looking as white as a sheet. The doctor was still by his side.

"Ah! my friend," said the sick man, in a feeble voice, as Mr. Smith took his hand, "that antimonial wine of yours has nearly been the death of me."

"What antimonial wine?" inquired Mr. Smith, not understanding his

friend.

"The wine you left here in the gallon demijohn."

"That wasn't antimonial wine!"

"It was not?" fell from the lips of both Mr. and Mrs. Jones.

"Why, no! It was only wine that I had bought for the purpose of making antimonial wine."

Mr. Jones rose up in bed.

"Not antimonial wine?"

"No!"

"Why the boy said it was."

"Then he didn't know any thing about it. It was nothing but some common wine which I had bought."

Mr. Jones took a long breath. The doctor arose from the bedside, and Mr. Jones exclaimed,

"Well, I never!"

Then came a grave silence, in which one looked at the other, doubtfully.

"Good-day;" said the doctor, and went down stairs.

"So you have been drinking my wine, it seems," laughed Mr. Smith, as soon as the man with the stomach pump had retired.

"I only took a little toll," said Mr. Jones, back into whose pale face the color was beginning to come, and through whose almost paralyzed nerves was again flowing from the brain a healthy influence. "But don't say any thing about it! Don't for the world!"

"I won't, on one condition," said Mr. Smith, whose words were scarcely coherent, so strongly was he convulsed with laughter.

"What is that?"

"You must become a teetotaller."

"Can't do that," replied Mr. Jones.

"Give me a day or two to make up my mind."

"Very well. And now, good bye; the sun is nearly down, and it will be night before I get home."

And Mr. Smith shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Jones and hurriedly retired, trying, but in vain, to leave the house in a grave and dignified manner. Long before Mr. Jones had made up his mind to join the teetotallers, the story of his taking toll was all over the town, and for the next two or three months he had his own time of it. After that, it became an old story.

"THOU ART THE MAN!"

"HOW can you reconcile it to your conscience to continue in your present business, Mr. Muddler?" asked a venerable clergyman of a tavern-keeper, as the two walked home from the funeral of a young man who had died suddenly.

"I find no difficulty on that score," replied the tavern-keeper, in a confident tone: "My business is as necessary to the public as that of any other man."

"That branch of it, which regards the comfort and accommodation of travellers, I will grant to be necessary. But there is another portion of it which, you must pardon me for saying, is not only uncalled for by the real wants of the community, but highly detrimental to health and good morals."

"And pray, Mr. Mildman, to what portion of my business do you allude?"

"I allude to that part of it which embraces the sale of intoxicating drinks."

"Indeed! the very best part of my business. But, certainly, you do not pretend to say that I am to be held accountable for the unavoidable excesses which sometimes grow out of the use of liquors as a beverage?"

"I certainly must say, that, in my opinions a very large share of the responsibility rests upon your shoulders. You not only make it a business to sell liquors, but you use every device in your power to induce men to come and drink them. You invent new compounds with new and attractive names, in order to induce the indifferent or the lovers of variety, to frequent your bar-room. In this way, you too often draw the weak into an excess of self-indulgence, that ends, alas! in drunkenness and final ruin of body and soul. You are not

only responsible for all this, Mr. Muddler, but you bear the weight of a fearful responsibility!"

"I cannot see the subject in that light, Mr. Mildman," the tavern-keeper said, rather gravely. "Mine is an honest and honourable calling, and it is my duty to my family and to society, to follow it with diligence and a spirit of enterprise."

"May I ask you a plain question, Mr. Muddler?"

"Oh yes, certainly! as many as you please."

"Can that calling be an honest and honourable one which takes sustenance from the community, and gives back nothing in return?"

"I do not know that I understand the nature of your question, Mr. Mildman."

"Consider then society as a man in a larger form, as it really is. In this great body, as in the lesser body of man, there are various functions of use and a reciprocity between the whole. Each function receives a portion of life from the others, and gives back its own proper share for the good of the whole. The hand does not act for itself alone--receiving strength and selfishly appropriating it without returning its quota of good to the general system. And so of the heart, and lungs, and every other organ in the whole body. Reverse the order--and how soon is the entire system diseased! Now, does that member of the great body of the people act honestly and honourably, who regularly receives his portion of good from the general social system, and gives nothing back in return?"

To this the landlord made no reply, and Mr. Mildman continued--

"But there is still a stronger view to be taken. Suppose a member of the human body is diseased--a limb, for instance, in a partial state of mortification. Here there is a reception of life from the whole system into that limb, and a constant giving back of disease that gradually pervades the entire body; and, unless that body possesses extraordinary vital energy, in the end destroys it. In like manner, if in the larger body there be one member who takes his share of life from the whole, and gives back nothing but a poisonous principle, whose effect is disease and death, surely he cannot be called a good member--nor honest, nor honourable."

"And pray, Mr. Mildman," asked the tavern-keeper, with warmth, "where will you find, in society, such an individual as you describe?"

The minister paused at this question, and looked his companion steadily in the face. Then raising his long, thin finger to give force to his remark, he said with deep emphasis--

"Thou art the man!"

"Me, Mr. Mildman! me!" exclaimed the tavern-keeper, in surprise and displeasure. "You surely cannot be in earnest."

"I utter but a solemn truth, Mr. Muddler: such is your position in society! You receive food, and clothing, and comforts and luxuries of various kinds for yourself and family from the social body, and what do you give back for all these? A poison to steal away the health and happiness of that social body. You are far worse than a perfectly dead member--you exist upon the great body as a moral gangrene. Reflect calmly upon this subject. Go home, and in the silence of your own chamber, enter into unimpassioned and solemn communion with your heart. Be honest with yourself. Exclude the bias of selfish feelings and selfish interests, and honestly define to yourself your true position.'

"But, Mr. Mildman--"

The two men had paused nearly in front of Mr. Muddler's splendid establishment, and were standing there when the tavern-keeper commenced a reply to the minister's last remarks. He had uttered but the first word or two, when he was interrupted by a pale, thinly-dressed female, who held a little girl by the hand. She came up before him and looked him steadily in the face for a moment or two.

"Mr. Muddler, I believe," she said.

"Yes, madam, that is my name," was his reply.

"I have come, Mr. Muddler," the woman then said, with an effort to smile and affect a polite air, "to thank you for a present I received last night."

"Thank me, madam! There certainly must be some mistake. I never made you a present. Indeed, I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance."

"You said your name was Muddler, I believe?"

"Yes, madam, as I told you before, that is my name."

"Then you are the man. You made my little girl, here a present also, and we have both come with our thanks."

"You deal in riddles, madam, Speak out plainly."

"As I said before," the woman replied, with bitter irony in her tones, "I have come with my little girl to thank you for the present we received last night;--a present of wretchedness and abuse."

"I am still as far from understanding you as ever," the tavern-keeper said--I never abused you, madam. I do not even know

you."

"But you know my husband, sir! You have enticed him to your bar, and for his money have given him a poison that has changed him from one of the best and kindest of men, into a demon. To you, then, I owe all the wretchedness I have suffered, and the brutal treatment I shared with my helpless children last night. It is for this that I have come to thank you."

"Surely, madam, you must be beside yourself. I have nothing to do with your husband."

"Nothing to do with him!" the woman exclaimed, in an excited tone.

"Would to heaven that it were so! Before you opened your accursed gin palace, he was a sober man, and the best and kindest of husbands--but, enticed by you, your advertisement and display of fancy drinks, he was tempted within the charmed circle of your bar-room. From that moment began his downfall; and now he is lost to self-control--lost to feeling--lost to humanity!"

As the woman said this, she burst into tears, and then turned and walked slowly away.

"To that painful illustration of the truth of what I have said," the minister remarked, as the two stood once more alone, "I have nothing to add. May the lesson sink deep into your heart. Between you and that woman's husband existed a regular business transaction. Did it result in a mutual benefit? Answer that question to your own conscience."

How the tavern-keeper answered it, we know not. But if he received no benefit from the double lesson, we trust that others may; and in the hope that the practical truth we have endeavoured briefly to illustrate, will fall somewhere upon good ground, we cast it forth for the benefit of our fellow-men.

THE TOUCHING REPROOF.

"HERE, Jane," said a father to his little girl not over eleven years of age, "go over to the shop and buy me a pint of brandy."

At the same time he handed her a quarter of a dollar. The child took the money and the bottle, and as she did so, looked her father in the face with an earnest, sad expression. But he did not seem to

observe it, although he perceived it, and felt it; for he understood its meaning. The little girl lingered, as if reluctant, from some reason, to go on her errand.

"Did you hear what I said?" the father asked, angrily, and with a frowning brow, as he observed this.

Jane glided from the room and went over to the shop, hiding, as she passed through the street, the bottle under her apron. There she obtained the liquor, and returned with it in a few minutes. As she reached the bottle to her father, she looked at him again with the same sad, earnest look, which he observed. It annoyed and angered him.

"What do you mean by looking at me in that way? Ha!" he said, in a loud, angry tone.

Jane shrunk away, and passed into the next room, where her mother lay sick. She had been sick for some time, and as they were poor, and her husband given to drink, she had sorrow and privation added to her bodily sufferings. As her little girl came in, she went up to the side of her bed, and, bending over it, leaned her head upon her hand. She did not make any remark, nor did her mother speak to her, until she observed the tears trickling through her fingers.

"What is the matter, my dear?" she then asked, tenderly.

The little girl raised her head, endeavouring to dry up her tears as she did so.

"I feel so bad, mother," she replied.

"And why do you feel bad, my child?"

"Oh, I always feel so bad when father sends me over to the shop for brandy; and I had to go just now. I wanted to ask him to buy you some nice grapes and oranges with the quarter of a dollar--they would taste so good to you--but he seemed to know what I was going to say, and looked at me so cross that I was afraid to speak. I wish he would not drink any more brandy. It makes him cross; and then how many nice things he might buy for you with the money it takes for liquor."

The poor mother had no words of comfort to offer her little girl, older in thought than in years; for no comfort did she herself feel in view of the circumstances that troubled her child. She only said--aying her hand upon the child's head--

"Try and not think about it, my dear; it only troubles you, and your trouble cannot make it any better."

But Jane could not help thinking about it, try as hard as she would. She went to a Sabbath school, in which a Temperance society had been

formed, and every Sabbath she heard the subject of intemperance discussed, and its dreadful consequences detailed. But more than all this, she had the daily experience of a drunkard's child. In this experience, how much of heart-touching misery was involved!--how much of privation--how much of the anguish of a bruised spirit. Who can know the weight that lies, like a heavy burden, upon the heart of a drunkard's child! None but the child--for language is powerless to convey it.

On the next morning, the father of little Jane went away to his work, and she was left alone with her mother and her younger sister. They were very poor, and could not afford to employ any one to do the house-work, and so, young as she was, while her mother was sick, Jane had everything to do--the cooking, and cleaning, and even the washing and ironing--a hard task, indeed, for her little hands. But she never murmured--never seemed to think that she was overburdened; How cheerfully would all have been done, if her father's smiles had only fallen like sunshine upon her heart! But that face, into which her eyes looked so often and so anxiously, was ever hid in clouds--clouds arising from the consciousness that he was abusing his family while seeking his own base gratification, and from perceiving the evidences of his evil works stamped on all things around him.

As Jane passed frequently through her mother's room during the morning, pausing almost every time to ask if she wanted anything; she saw, too plainly, that she was not as well as on the day before--that she had a high fever, indicated to her by her hot skin and constant request for cool water.

"I wish I had an orange," the poor woman said, as Jane came up to her bed-side, for the twentieth time, "it would taste so good to me."

She had been thinking about an orange all the morning; and notwithstanding her effort to drive the thought from her mind, the form of an orange would ever picture itself before her, and its grateful flavour ever seem about to thrill upon her taste. At last she uttered her wish--not so much with the hope of having it gratified, as from an involuntary impulse to speak out her desire.

There was not a single cent in the house, for the father rarely trusted his wife with money--he could not confide in her judicious expenditure of it!

"Let me go and buy you an orange, mother," Jane said; "they have oranges at the shop."

"I have no change, my dear; and if I had, I should not think it right to spend four or five cents for an orange, when we have so little. Get me a cool drink of water; that will do now."

Jane brought the poor sufferer a glass of cool water, and she drank

it off eagerly. Then she lay back upon her pillow with a sigh, and her little girl went out to attend to the household duties that devolved upon her. But all the while Jane thought of the orange, and of how she should get it for her mother.

When her father came home to dinner, he looked crosser than he did in the morning. He sat down to the table and eat his dinner in moody silence, and then arose to depart, without so much as asking after his sick wife, or going into her chamber. As he moved towards the door, his hat already on his head, Jane went up to him, and looking timidly in his face, said, with a hesitating voice--

"Mother wants an orange so bad. Won't you give me some money to buy her one?"

"No, I will not! Your mother had better be thinking about something else than wasting money for oranges!" was the angry reply, as the father passed out, and shut the door hard after him.

Jane stood for a moment, frightened at the angry vehemence of her father, and then burst into tears. She said nothing to her mother of what had passed, but after the agitation of her mind had somewhat subsided, began to cast about in her thoughts for some plan by which she might obtain an orange. At last it occurred to her, that at the shop where she got liquor for her father, they bought rags and old iron.

"How much do you give a pound for rags?" she asked, in a minute or two after the idea had occurred to her, standing at the counter of the shop.

"Three cents a pound," was the reply.

"How much for old iron?"

"A cent a pound."

"What's the price of them oranges?"

"Four cents apiece."

With this information, Jane hurried back. After she had cleared away the dinner-table, she went down into the cellar and looked up all the old bits of iron that she could find. Then she searched the yard, and found some eight or ten rusty nails, an old bolt, and a broken hinge. These she laid away in a little nook in the cellar. Afterwards she gathered together all the old rags that she could find about the house, and in the cellar, and laid them with her old iron. But she saw plainly enough that her iron would not weigh over two pounds, nor her rags over a quarter of a pound. If time would have permitted, she would have gone into the street to look for old iron, but this she could not do; and disappointed at not being able to get the orange for her mother, she went about her work during the

afternoon with sad and desponding thoughts and feelings.

It was summer time, and her father came home from his work before it was dark.

"Go and get me a pint of brandy," he said to Jane, in a tone that sounded harsh and angry to the child, handing her at the same time a quarter of a dollar. Since the day before he had taken a pint of brandy, and none but the best would suit him.

She took the money and the bottle, and went over to the shop. Wistfully she looked at the tempting oranges in the window, as she gave the money for the liquor,--and thought how glad her poor mother would be to have one.

As she was hurrying back, she saw a thick rusty iron ring lying in the street: she picked it up, and kept on her way. It felt heavy, and her heart bounded with the thought that now she could buy the orange for her mother. The piece of old iron was dropped in the yard, as she passed through. After her father had taken a dram, he sat down to his supper. While he was eating it, Jane went into the cellar and brought out into the yard her little treasure of scrap iron. As she passed backwards and forwards before the door facing which her father sat, he observed her, and felt a sudden curiosity to know what she was doing. He went softly to the window, and as he did so, he saw her gathering the iron, which she had placed in a little pile, into her apron. Then she rose up quickly, and passed out of the yard-gate into the street.

The father went back to his supper, but his appetite was gone. There was that in the act of his child, simple as it was, that moved his feelings, in spite of himself. All at once he thought of the orange she had asked for her mother; and he felt a conviction that it was to buy an orange that Jane was now going to sell the iron she had evidently been collecting since dinner-time.

"How selfish and wicked I am!" he said to himself, almost involuntarily.

In a few minutes Jane returned, and with her hand under her apron, passed through the room where he sat into her mother's chamber. An impulse, almost irresistible, caused him to follow her in a few moments after.

"It is so grateful!" he heard his wife say, as he opened the door.

On entering her chamber, he found her sitting up in bed eating the orange, while little Jane stood by her looking into her face with an air of subdued, yet heartfelt gratification. All this he saw at a glance, yet did not seem to see, for he pretended to be searching for something, which, apparently obtained, he left the room and the house, with feelings of acute pain and self-upbraidings.

"Come, let us go and see these cold-water men," said a companion, whom he met a few steps from his own door. "They are carrying all the world before them."

"Very well, come along."

And the two men bent their steps towards Temperance Hall.

When little Jane's father turned from the door of that place, his name was signed to the pledge, and his heart fixed to abide by it. On his way home, he saw some grapes in a window,--he bought some of them, and a couple of oranges and lemons. When he came home, he--went into his wife's chamber, and opening the paper that contained the first fruits of his sincere repentance, laid them before her, and said, with tenderness, while the moisture dimmed his eyes--

"I thought these would taste good to you, Mary, and so I bought them."

"O, William!" and the poor wife started, and looked up into her husband's face with an expression of surprise and trembling hope.

"Mary,"--and he took her hand, tenderly--"I have signed the pledge to-night, and I will keep it, by the help of Heaven!"

The sick wife raised herself up quickly, and bent over towards her husband, eagerly extending her hands. Then, as he drew his arm around her, she let her head fall upon his bosom, with an emotion of delight, such as had not moved over the surface of her stricken heart for years.

The pledge taken was the total-abstinence pledge, and it has never been violated by him, and what is better, we are confident never will. How much of human hope and happiness is involved in that simple pledge!

THE TEMPERANCE SONG.

"DEAR father," said Mary Edwards, "don't go out this evening!" and the young girl, who had scarcely numbered fourteen years, laid her hand upon the arm of her parent.

But Mr. Edwards shook her off impatiently, muttering, as he did so,

"Can't I go where I please?"

"O! yes, father!" urged Mary, drawing up to him again, notwithstanding her repulse. "But there is going to be a storm, and I wouldn't go out."

"Storm! Nonsense! That's only your pretence. But I'll be home soon--long before the rain, if it comes at all."

And, saying this, Mr. Edwards turned from his daughter and left the house. As soon as she was alone, Mary sat down and commenced weeping. There had been sad changes since she was ten years old. In that time, her father had fallen into habits of intemperance, and not only wasted his substance, but abused his family; and, sadder still, her mother had died broken-hearted, leaving her alone in the world with a drunken father.

The young girl's trials, under these painful circumstances, were great. Night after night her father would come home intoxicated, and it was so rare a thing for her to get a kind word from him, that a tone of affection from his lips would move her instantly to tears. Daily the work of declension went on. Drunkenness led to idleness, and gradually Mr. Edwards and his child sunk lower and lower in the scale of comfort. The pleasant home where they had lived for years was given up, and in small, poorly furnished rooms, in a narrow street, they hid themselves from observation. After this change, Mr. Edwards moved along his downward way, more rapidly; earning less and drinking more.

Mary grew old fast. Under severe trials and afflictions, her mind rapidly matured; and her affection for her father, grew stronger and stronger, as she realized more and more fully the dreadful nature and ultimate tendency of the infatuation by which he was led.

At last, in the anguish of her concern, she ventured upon remonstrance. This brought only angry repulse, adding bitterness to her cup of sorrow. The appearance of a storm, on the evening to which we have alluded, gave Mary an excuse for urging her father not to go out. How her remonstrance was received has been seen. While the poor girl sat weeping, the distant rolling of thunder indicated the approach of the storm to which she had referred. But she cared little for it now. Her father had gone out. She had spoken of it only with the hope that he might have been induced to remain with her. Now that he was away, the agitation within was too great to leave any concern for the turbulent elements without.

On leaving his home, Mr. Edwards, who had not taken any liquor for three or four hours, and whose appetite was sharp for the accustomed stimulus, walked quickly in the direction of a drinking-house where he usually spent his evenings. On entering, he found that there was a little commotion in the bar-room. A certain individual, not over friendly to landlords, had intruded himself; and, his character

being known, the inmates were disposed to have a little sport with him.

"Come now, old fellow!" said one, just as Edwards came in,--"mount this table and make us a first rate temperance speech."

"Do; and I'll treat you to the stiffest glass of whisky toddy the landlord can mix," added another. "Or perhaps you'd like a mint julep or gin cocktail better? Any thing you please. Make the speech and call for the liquor. I'll stand the treat."

"What d'ye say, landlord? Shall he make the speech?" said another, who was eager for sport.

"Please yourselves," replied the landlord, "and you'll please me."

"Very well. Now for the speech, old fellow! Here! mount this table." And two or three of the most forward took hold of his arms.

"I'm not just in the humor for making a speech," said the temperance man, "but, if it will please you as well, I'll sing you a song."

"Give us a song then. Any thing to accommodate. But come, let's liquor first."

"No!" said the other firmly, "I must sing the song first, if I sing it at all."

"Don't you think your pipes will be clearer for a little drink of some kind or other."

"Perhaps they would," was replied. "So, provided you have no objection, I'll take a glass of cold water--if such a thing is known in this place."

The glass of water was presented, and then the man, who was somewhat advanced in years, prepared to give the promised song. All stood listening attentively, Edwards among the rest. The voice of the old man was low and tremulous, yet every word was uttered distinctly, and with a pathos which showed that the meaning was felt. The following well-known temperance song was the one that he sung; and while his voice filled the bar-room every other sound was hushed.

"Where are the friends that to me were so dear,
Long, long ago--long, long ago?
Where are the hopes that my heart used to cheer,
Long, long ago--long ago!
Friends that I loved in the grave are laid low,
Hopes that I cherished are fled from me now,
I am degraded, for rum was my foe
Long, long ago--long ago!

"Sadly my wife bowed her beautiful head,

Long, long ago--long, long ago.
Oh! how I wept when I knew she was dead!
Long, long ago--long ago.
She was an angel! my love and my guide!
Vainly to save me from ruin she tried;
Poor, broken-hearted! 'twas well that she died
Long, long ago--long ago.

"Let me look back on the days of my youth,
Long, long ago--long, long ago,
I was no stranger to virtue and truth,
Long, long ago--long ago.
Oh! for the hopes that were pure as the day!
Oh! for the joys that were purer than they!
Oh! for the hours that I've squandered away
Long, long ago--long ago."

The silence that pervaded the room when the old man's voice died, or might rather be said, sobbed away, was as the silence of death. His own heart was touched, for he wiped his eyes, from which tears had started. Pausing scarcely a moment, he moved slowly from the room, and left his audience to their own reflections. There was not one of them who was not more or less affected; but the deepest impression had been made on the heart of Edwards. The song seemed as if it had been made for him. The second verse, particularly, went thrilling to the very centre of his feelings.

"Sadly my wife bowed her beautiful head!"

How suddenly arose before him the sorrow-stricken form of the wife of his youth at these words! and when the old man's voice faltered on the line--

"Poor, broken-hearted! 'twas well that she died!"

the anguish of his spirit was so great, that he only kept himself from sobbing aloud by a strong effort at self-control. Ere the spell was broken, or a word uttered by any one, he arose and left the house.

For many minutes after her father's departure, Mary sat weeping bitterly. She felt hopeless and deserted. Tenderly did she love her parent; but this love was only a source of the keenest anguish, for she saw him swiftly passing along the road to destruction without the power to save him.

Grief wastes itself by its own violence. So it was in this instance. The tears of Mary were at length dried; her sobs were hushed, and she was about rising from her chair, when a blinding flash of lightning glared into the room, followed instantly by a deafening jar of thunder.

"Oh, if father were home!" she murmured, clasping her hands

together.

Even while she stood in this attitude, the door opened quietly, and Mr. Edwards entered.

"I thought you would be afraid, Mary; and so I came home," said he in a kind voice.

Mary looked at him with surprise. This was soon changed to joy as she perceived that he was perfectly sober.

"Oh, father!" she sobbed, unable to control her feelings, and leaning her face against his breast as she spoke--"if you would never go away!"

Tenderly the father drew his arm around his weeping child, and kissed her pure forehead.

"Mary," said he, as calmly as he could speak, "for your mother's sake--" but he could not finish the sentence. His voice quivered, and became inarticulate.

Solemnly, in the silence of his own heart, did the father, as he stood thus with his child in his arms, repeat the vows he had already taken. And he kept his vows.

Wonderful is the power of music! It is the heart's own language, and speaks to it in a voice of irresistible persuasion. It is a good gift from heaven, and should ever be used in a good cause.

THE DISTILLER'S DREAM.

FROM the time Mr. Andrew Grim opened a low grogshop near the Washington Market, until, as a wealthy distiller, he counted himself worth a hundred thousand dollars, every thing had gone on smoothly; and now he might be seen among the money-lords of the day, as self-complacent as any. He had stock, houses, and lands: and, in his mind, these made up life's greatest good. And had he not obtained them in honest trade? Were they not the reward of persevering industry? Mr. Grim felt proud of the fact, that he was the architect of his own fortunes. "How many had started in life side by side with him; and yet scarcely one in ten of them had risen above the common level."

Thoughts like these often occupied the mind of Mr. Grim. Such were his thoughts as he sat in his luxurious parlor, one bleak December evening, surrounded by every external comfort his heart could desire, when a child not over seven or eight years of age was brought into the room by a servant, who said, as he entered--

"Here's a little girl that says she wants to see you."

Mr. Grim, turned, and looked for a moment or two at the visitor. She was the child of poor parents; that was evident from her coarse and meager garments.

"Do you wish to see me?" he inquired, in a voice that was meant to be repulsive.

"Yes, sir," timidly answered the child.

"Well, what do you want?"

"My mother wants you."

"Your mother! Who's your mother?"

"Mrs. Dyer."

The manner of Mr. Grim changed instantly; and he said--

"Indeed! What does your mother want?"

"Father is sick; and mother says he will die."

"What ails your father?"

"I don't know. But he's been sick ever since yesterday; and he screams out so, and frightens us all."

"Where does your mother live?"

The child gave the street and number.

Mr. Grim walked about the room uneasily for some time.

"Didn't your mother say what she wanted with me?" he asked again, pausing before the little girl, whose eyes had been following all his movements.

"No, sir. But she cried when she told me to go for you."

Mr. Grim moved about the room again for some time. Then stopping suddenly, he said--

"Go home and tell your mother I'll be there in a little while."

The child retired from the room, and Mr. Grim resumed his perambulations, his eyes upon the floor, and a shadow resting on his countenance. After the lapse of nearly half an hour he went into the hall, and drawing on a warm overcoat, started forth in obedience to what was evidently an unwelcome summons--for he muttered to himself as he descended to the pavement--

"I wish people would take care of what they get, and learn to depend on themselves."

Mr. Grim took an omnibus and rode as far as Canal street. Down Canal street he walked to West Broadway, and along West Broadway for a couple of blocks, when he stopped before an old brick house that looked as if it had seen service for at least a hundred years, and examined the number.

"This is the place, I suppose," said he, fretfully. And he stepped back and looked up at the house. Then he approached the door, and searched for a bell or knocker; but of neither of these appendages could the dwelling boast. First, he rapped with his knuckles, then with his cane. But no one responded to the summons. He looked up and saw lights in the window. So he knocked again, and louder. After waiting several minutes, and not being admitted, Mr. Grim tried the door and found it unfastened; but the passage into which he stepped was dark as midnight. After knocking on the floor loudly with his cane, a door opened above, a gleam of light fell on an old stairway, and a rough voice called out,

"Who's there?"

"Does Mr. Dyer live here?"

"Be sure he does!" was roughly answered.

"Will you be kind enough to show me his room?"

"You'll find it in the third story back," said the voice, impatiently. The door was shut again, and all was dark as before.

Mr. Grim stood irresolute for a few moments, and then commenced groping his way up stairs, slowly and cautiously. Just as he gained the landing on the second flight, a stifled scream was heard in one of the rooms on the third floor, followed by a sudden movement, as if two persons were struggling in a murderous conflict. He stopped and listened, while a chill went over him. A long shuddering groan followed, and then all was still again. Mr. Grim was about retreating, when a door opened, and the child who had called for him came out with a candle in her hand. The light fell upon his form and the child saw him.

"Oh! mother! mother!" she cried, "Mr. Grim is here!"

Instantly the form of a woman was seen in the door. Her look was

wild and distressed, and her hair, which had become loosened from the comb, lay in heavy masses upon her shoulders.

"For heaven's sake, Mary! what is the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Grim, as he approached the woman.

"The matter!" She looked sternly at the visitor. "Come and see!" And she pointed into the room.

A cry of unutterable distress broke upon the air, and the woman sprang back quickly into the room. Mr. Grim hurried after her. By the feeble light of a single poor candle, he saw a half-clothed man crouching fearfully in a corner of the room, with his hands raised in the attitude of defence.

"Keep off! Keep off, I say!" he cried, despairingly. "Oh! oh! oh! It's on me, Mary! Mary! Oh! Lord, help me! help me!"

And as these broken sentences fell from his lips, he shrunk closer and closer into the corner, and then fell forward, writhing upon the floor. By this time, his wife was bending down over him, and with her assuring voice she soon succeeded in quieting him.

"They've all gone now, Henry," said she, in a tone of cheerful confidence, assumed at what an effort! "I've driven them away. Come! lie down upon the bed."

"They're under the bed," replied the sufferer, glancing fearfully around. "Yes, yes! There! I see that blackest devil with the snake in his hand. He's grinning at me from behind the bed post. Now he's going to throw his horrible snake at me! There! oh-oh-oh-oh!"

The fearful, despairing scream that issued from the poor creature's lips, as he clung to his wife, curdled the very blood in the veins of Mr. Grim, who now comprehended the meaning of the scene. Dyer and his wife were friends of other days. With the latter he had grown up from childhood, and there were many reasons why he felt an interest in her. Her husband had learned drinking and idleness in his bar-room, many years before; and more than once during the time of his declension, had she called upon Mr. Grim, and earnestly besought him to do something to save the one she loved best on earth from impending ruin. But, he had entered the downward way, and it seemed that nothing could stop his rapid progress. Now he met him, after the lapse of ten years, and found him mad with the drunkard's madness.

The scene was too painful for Mr. Grim. He could not bear it. So, hurriedly drawing his purse from his pocket, he threw it upon the floor, and turning from the room made his way out of the house, trembling in every nerve. When he arrived at home, the perspiration stood cold and clammy on every part of his body. His mind was greatly excited. Most vividly did he picture, in imagination, the horrible fiend, striking the poor drunken wretch with his serpent

spear, or blasting him with his terrific countenance. For an hour he walked the floor of his chamber, and then, exhausted in body and mind, threw himself on a bed, and tried to find oblivion in sleep. But, though he wooed the gentle goddess, she came not with her soothing poppies. Too vivid was the impression of what he had seen, and too painful were the accompanying reflections, to admit of sweet repose. At last, however, exhaustion came, and he fell into that half sleeping and waking state--in which the imagination remains active, so painful to endure. In this state, one picture presented by imagination was most vivid of all; it was the picture of poor Dyer, shrinking from the fiend with the serpent, which latter was now as plainly visible to him as it had been to the unhappy drunkard. Presently the fiend began to turn his eyes upon him with a malignant expression; then it glanced from him to the drunkard, and pointing at the latter, said Grim heard the voice distinctly--

"_It is your work!_"

The distiller closed his eyes to hide from view the grinning phantom. But it did not shut out the vision. The fiend was before him still; and now it swung around its head a horrid serpent with distended jaws, and seemed about to dash it upon him. He covered and groaned in fear. As he still gazed upon the dreadful form, it slowly changed into a female of stern yet beautiful aspect. In one hand she held a naked sword, and in the other a balance. Her knew her, and trembled still more intensely.

"I am JUSTICE," said the figure. "You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The world is sustained by mutual benefits. No man can live wholly for himself. Each must serve the others. What one man produces another enjoys. You have enjoyed, in abundance, the good things produced by others; but what has been your return? Let me show you the work of your hands. Look!"

Suddenly there was a murmur of voices; the sound came nearer and nearer, and a crowd of men and women came eagerly toward the prostrate distiller--all eyes upon him, and all countenances expressive of anger, rebuke, or despair. One poor mother held towards him her ragged, starving child, and cried--

"Your cursed trade has murdered his father. Give him back to us!"

Another marred and degraded wretch called, with clenched hand--

"Where is my money, my good name, my all?" You have robbed me of every thing!"

By his side was a poor drunkard, supporting the pale form of his sick wife, while their starving children stood weeping before them--

"Look at us?" said he. "It is _your_ handy-work!"

And there were dozens of others in the squalid crowd who called to

him with bitter execrations, or pointed to their ruined homes and cried--

"It is your work! Your work! Rum--rum has cursed us!"

"Yes, this is your work," said Justice, sternly. "For the good things of life you received on all hands from your fellow-men, you gave them back a stream of fire to consume them. Wealth is the representative of use to society. It comes, or should come, as a reward for serving the common good. So earned, it is a blessing; and he who thus gains it has a right to its possession. But, in your eager pursuit of gain you have cursed every man who brought you a blessing; and now your ill-gotten wealth must be given up. See!"

And, as she spoke, she pointed to an immense bag of gold.

"It is all there!" continued Justice. "Your houses and lands, your stocks and your merchandise, have been converted into gold; and I now distribute it once more among the people, to be gathered by those more worthy to possess it than thou!"

Then a troop of fiends came rushing down through the air, and, seizing the bag, were bearing it off in triumph, when the agonized sleeper sprang towards his gold, and in the effort threw off the terrible nightmare that was almost crushing out his life.

There was no sleep for him during the hours that intervened until the daylight broke. The images he had seen, and the words he had heard, were before him all the time, crushing his heart like the pressure of heavy footsteps. As soon as the day had dawned he started forth and sought the dwelling he had so hastily left on the night before. All was silent as he ascended the stairway. The door of the room where he had been stood partly open. He listened a moment--all was silent. He moved the door, but nothing stirred within. Then he entered. His purse lay upon the floor where he had thrown it; that was the first object which met his sight. The next was the ghastly face of death! The wretched drunkard had passed to his account; and his body lay upon the bed. Close beside was the form of her who had been to Mr. Grim, in early years, as a tender sister. She was in a profound sleep; and on the floor lay the child, also wrapped in deep forgetfulness of the misery with which she was surrounded.--

"And this is the work I have been doing!" sighed the distiller; whose mind could not lose the vivid impression made by his dream.

A little while he contemplated the scene around him, and then taking up his purse he silently withdrew. But ere returning home he made known to a benevolent person the fact of the unhappy death which had occurred, and, placing money in his hand, asked him to do all that humanity required, and to do it at his expense.

Few men went about their daily business with a heavier heart than

Mr. Andrew Grim. He felt that he was the possessor of ill-gotten gain; and felt, besides, a sense of insecurity.

"_Wealth is the representative of use to society. It comes, or should come, as a reward for serving the common good_" he repeated to himself, in the words he had heard in his dream. "And how have I served the common good? What good have I performed that corresponds to the blessings I have received and enjoy? Ah, me! I wish it were otherwise."

With such thoughts, how could the man be happy! When night came round again he feared to trust himself in the arms of sleep; and when exhausted nature yielded, painful dreams haunted him until morning. Weeks elapsed before the vivid impression he had received wore off, and before he enjoyed any thing like a quiet slumber. But, though he had a better sleep, his waking thoughts ceased to be peaceful and self-satisfying. A year went by, and then, fretted beyond endurance at his position of manufacturer of death and destruction, both natural and spiritual, for his fellow men, he broke up his distillery, and invested his money in a business that could be followed with benefit to all.

THE RUINED FAMILY.

PART FIRST.

"HOW beautiful!" ejaculated Mary Graham, as she fixed her eyes intently on the western sky, rich with the many-coloured clouds of a brilliant sunset in June.

"Beautiful indeed!" responded her sister Anna.

"I could gaze on it for ever!" Ellen, a younger and more enthusiastic sister remarked, with fervent admiration. "Look, Ma! was ever anything more gorgeous than that pure white cloud, fringed with brilliant gold, and relieved by the translucent and sparkling sky beyond?"

"It is indeed very beautiful, Ellen," Mrs. Graham replied. But there was an abstraction in her manner, that indicated, too plainly, that something weighed upon her mind.

"You don't seem to enjoy a rich sunset as much as you used to do, Ma," Anna said, for she felt the tone and manner in which her mother

had expressed her admiration of the scene.

"You only think so, perhaps," Mrs. Graham rejoined, endeavouring to arouse herself, and to feel interested in the brilliant exhibition of nature to which her daughter had alluded. "The scene is, indeed, very beautiful, Anna, and reminds me strongly of some of Wordsworth's exquisite descriptions, so full of power to awaken the heart's deepest and purest emotions. You all remember this:

"Calm is the evening air, and loth to lose
Day's grateful warmth, though moist with falling dews
Look for the stars, you'll say that there are none;
Look up a second time, and, one by one,
You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
And wonder how they could elude the sight."

"And this:

"No sound is uttered,--but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues
Whate'er it strikes with gem-like hues!
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain-side;
And glistening antlers are descried;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine!
From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won."

"How calm and elevating to the heart, like the hour he describes," Ellen said, in a musing tone, as she sat with her eyes fixed intently on the slow-fading glories of the many-coloured clouds.

The influence of the tranquil hour gradually subdued them into silence; and as the twilight began to fall, each sat in the enjoyment of a pure and refined pleasure, consequent upon a true appreciation of the beautiful in nature, combined with highly cultivated tastes, and innocent and elevated thoughts.

"There comes Pa, I believe," Anna remarked, breaking the silence, as the hall door opened and then closed with a heavy jar; and the well-known sound of her father's footsteps was heard along the passage and on the stairs.

None of her children observed the hushed intensity with which Mrs.

Graham listened, as their father ascended to the chamber. But they noticed that she became silent and more thoughtful than at first. In about ten minutes she arose and left the room.

"Something seems to trouble Ma, of late," Ellen observed, as soon as their mother had retired.

"So I have thought. She is certainly, to all appearance, less cheerful," Mary replied.

"What can be the cause of it?"

"I hardly think there can be any very serious cause. We are none of us always in the same state of mind."

"But I have noticed a change, in Ma, for some months past--and particularly in the last few weeks," Anna said. "She is not happy."

"I remember, now, that I overheard her, about six weeks ago, talking to Alfred about something--the company he kept, I believe--and that he seemed angry, and spoke to her, I thought, unkindly. Since that time she has not seemed so cheerful;" Ellen said.

"That may be the cause; but still I hardly think that it is," Anna replied. "Alfred's principal associates are William Gray and Charles Williams; and they belong to our first families. Pa, you know, is very intimate with both Mr. Gray and Mr. Williams."

"It was to William Gray and Charles Williams, I believe, however, that Ma particularly objected."

"Upon what ground?"

"Upon the ground of their habits, I think, she said."

"Their habits? What of their habits, I wonder?"

"I do not know, I am sure. I only remember having heard Ma object to them on that account."

"That is strange!" was the remark of Anna. "I am sure that I have never seen anything out of the way, in either of them; and, as to William Gray, I have always esteemed him very highly."

"So have I," Mary said. "Both of them are intelligent, agreeable young men; and such, as it seems to me, are in every way fitted to be companions for our brother."

But Mrs. Graham had seen more of the world than her daughters, and knew how to judge from appearances far better than they. Some recent circumstances, likewise, had quickened her perceptions of danger, and made them doubly acute. In the two young men alluded to, now about the ages of eighteen and twenty, she had been pained to

observe strong indications of a growing want of strict moral restraints, combined with a tendency towards dissipation; and, what was still more painful, an exhibition of like perversions in her only son, now on the verge of manhood,--that deeply responsible and dangerous period, when parental authority and control subside in a degree, and the individual, inexperienced yet self-confident, assumes the task of guiding himself.

When Mrs. Graham left the room, she proceeded slowly up to the chamber into which her husband had gone, where all had been silent since his entrance. She found him lying upon the bed, and already in a sound sleep. The moment she bent over him, she perceived the truth to be that which her trembling and sinking heart so much dreaded. He was intoxicated!

Shrinking away from the bed-side, she retired to a far corner of the room, where she seated herself by a table, and burying her face in her arms, gave way to the most gloomy, heart-aching thoughts and feelings. Tears brought her no relief from these; for something of hopelessness in her sorrow, gave no room for the blessing of tears.

Mr. Graham was a merchant of high standing in Philadelphia, where, for many years, he had been engaged extensively in the East India trade. Six beautiful ships floated for years upon the ocean, returning at regular intervals, freighted with the rich produce of the East, and filling his coffers, until they overflowed, with accumulating wealth. But it was not wealth alone that gave to Mr. Graham the elevated social position that he held. His strong intelligence, and the high moral tone of his character, gave him an influence and an estimation far above what he derived from his great riches. In the education of his children, four in number, he had been governed by a wise regard to the effect which that education would have upon them as members of society. He early instilled into their minds a desire to be useful to others, and taught them the difference between an estimation of individuals, founded upon their wealth and position in society, and an estimation derived from intrinsic excellence of character. The consequence of, all this was, to make him beloved by his family--purely and tenderly beloved, because there was added to the natural affection for one in his position, the power of a deep respect for his character and principles.

At the time of his introduction to the reader, Mr. Graham was forty-five years old. Alfred, his oldest child, was twenty-one; Mary, nineteen; Ellen, eighteen; and Anna just entering her sixteenth year. Up to this time, or nearly to this time, a happier family circled no hearth in the city. But now an evil wing was hovering over them, the shadow from which had already been perceived by the mother's heart, as it fell coldly and darkly upon it, causing it to shrink and tremble with gloomy apprehensions. From early manhood up, it had been the custom of Mr. Graham to use wines and brandies as liberally as he desired, without, the most remote suspicion once crossing his mind that any danger to him could attend

the indulgence. But to the eye of his wife, whose suspicions had of late been aroused, and her perceptions rendered, in consequence, doubly acute, it had become apparent that the habit was gaining a fatal predominance over him. She noted, with painful emotions, that as each evening returned, there were to her eye too evident indications that he had been indulging so freely in the use of liquors, as to have his mind greatly obscured. His disposition, too, was changing; and he was becoming less cheerful in his family, and less interested in the pleasures and pursuits of his children. Alfred, whom he had, up to this time, regarded with an earnest and careful solicitude, was now almost entirely left to his own guidance, at an age, too, when he needed more than ever the direction of his father's matured experience.

All these exhibitions of a change so unlooked for, and so terrible for a wife and mother to contemplate, might well depress the spirits of Mrs. Graham, and fill her with deep and anxious solicitude. For some weeks previous to the evening on which our story opens, Mr. Graham had shown strong symptoms almost every day--symptoms apparent, however, in the family, only to the eye of his wife--of drunkenness. Towards the close of each day, as the hour for his return from business drew near her feelings would become oppressed under the fearful apprehension that when he came home, it would be in a state of intoxication. This she dreaded on many accounts. Particularly was she anxious to conceal the father's aberrations from his children. She could not bear the thought that respect for one now so deeply honoured by them, should be diminished in their bosoms. She felt, too, keenly, the reproach that would rest upon his name, should the vice that was now entangling, obtain full possession of him, and entirely destroy his manly, rational freedom of action. Of consequences to herself and children, resulting from changed external circumstances, she did not dream. Her husband's wealth was immense; and, therefore, even if he should so far abandon himself as to have to relinquish business, there would be enough, and more than enough, to sustain them in any position in society they might choose to occupy.

On the occasion to which we have already referred, her heart was throbbing with suspense as the hour drew nigh for his return, when, sooner than she expected him, Mr. Graham opened the hall-door, and instead of entering the parlour, as usual, proceeded at once to his chamber. The quick ear of his wife detected something wrong in the sound of his footsteps--the cause she knew too well. Oh, how deeply wretched she felt, though she strove all in her power to seem unmoved while in the presence of her children! Anxious to know the worst, she soon retired, as has been seen, from the parlours, and went up to the chamber above. Alas! how sadly were her worst fears realized! The loved and honoured partner of many happy years, the father of her children, lay before her, slumbering, heavily, in the sleep of intoxication. It seemed, for a time, as if she could not bear up under the trial. While seated, far from the bed-side, brooding in sad despondency over the evil that had fallen upon them--an evil of such a character that it had never been feared--it

seemed to her that she could not endure it. Her thoughts grew bewildered, and reason for a time seemed trembling. Then her mind settled into a gloomy calmness that, was even more terrible, for it had about it something approaching the hopelessness of despair.

Thoughts of her children at last aroused her, as the gathering night darkened the chamber in which she sat, and she endeavoured to rally herself, and to assume a calmness that she was far from feeling. A reason would have to be given for the father's non-appearance at the tea-table. That could easily be done. Fatigue and a slight indisposition had caused him to lie down: and as he had fallen asleep, it was thought best not to awaken him. Such a tale was readily told, and as readily received. The hardest task was to school her feelings into submission, and so control the expression of her face, and the tone of her voice, as to cause none to suspect that there was anything wrong.

To do this fully, however, was impossible. Her manner was too evidently changed; and her face wore too dreamy and sad an expression to deceive her daughters, who inquired, with much tenderness and solicitude, whether she was not well, or whether anything troubled her.

"I am only a little indisposed," was her evasive reply to her children's kind interrogatories.

"Can't I do something for you?" inquired Ellen, with an earnest affection in her manner.

"No, dear," was her mother's brief response; and then followed a silence, oppressive to all, which remained unbroken until the tea things were removed.

"Alfred is again away at tea-time," Mrs. Graham at length said, as they all arose from the table.

"He went out this afternoon with Charles Williams," Mary replied.

"Did he?" the mother rejoined quickly, and with something of displeasure in her tone.

"Yes. Charles called for him in his buggy about four o'clock, and they rode out together. I thought you knew it."

"No. I was lying down about that time."

"You do not seem to like Charles Williams much."

"I certainly do not, Anna, as a companion for Alfred. He is too fond of pleasure and sporting, and I am very much afraid will lead your brother astray."

"I never saw anything wrong about him, Ma."

"Perhaps not. But I have learned to be a much closer observer in these matters than you, Mary. I have seen too many young men at Alfred's age led away, not to feel a deep and careful solicitude for him."

As the subject seemed to give their mother pain, her daughters did not reply; and then another, and still more troubled silence followed.

A chill being thrown thus over the feelings of all, the family separated at an early hour. But Mrs. Graham did not retire to bed. She could not, for she was strangely uneasy about her son. It was about twelve o'clock when Alfred came in. His mother opened her door as he passed it, to speak to him--but her tongue refused to give utterance to the words that trembled upon it. He, too, was intoxicated!

Brief were the hours given to sleep that night, and troubled the slumber that locked her senses in forgetfulness. On the next morning, the trembling hand of her husband, as he lifted his cup to his lips, and the unrefreshed and jaded appearance of her son, told but too plainly their abuse of nature's best energies. With her husband, Mrs. Graham could not bring herself to speak upon the subject. But she felt that her duty as a mother was involved in regard to her son, and therefore she early took occasion to draw him aside, and remonstrate against the course of folly upon which he was entering.

"You were out late last night, Alfred," she said, in a mild tone.

"I was in at twelve, Ma."

"But that was too late, Alfred."

"I don't know, Ma. Other young men are out as late, and even later, every night," the young man said, in a respectful tone. "I rode out with Charles Williams in the afternoon, and then went with him to a wine party at night."

"I must tell you frankly, Alfred, that I like neither your companion in the afternoon, nor your company in the evening."

"You certainly do not object to Charles Williams. He stands as high in society as I do."

"His family is one of respectability and standing. But his habits, I fear, Alfred, are such as will, ere long, destroy all of his title to respectful estimation."

"You judge harshly," the young man said, colouring deeply.

"I believe not, Alfred. And what is more, I am convinced that you

stand in imminent danger from your association with him."

"How?" was the quick interrogatory.

"Through him, for instance, you were induced to go to a wine party last night."

"Well?"

"And there induced to drink too much."

"Mother!"

"I saw you when you came in, Alfred. You were in a sad condition."

For a few moments the young man looked his mother in the face, while an expression of grief and mortification passed over his own.

"It is true," he at length said, in a subdued tone, "that I did drink to excess, last evening. But do not be alarmed on that account. I will be more guarded, in future. And let me now assure you, most earnestly, that I am in no danger: that I am not fond of wine. I was led to drink too much, last evening, from being in a company where wine was circulated as freely as water. I thought you looked troubled, this morning, but did not dream that it was on my account. Let me, then, urge you to banish from your mind all fears in regard to me."

"I cannot banish such fears, my son, so long as I know that you have dangerous associates. No one is led off, no one is corrupted suddenly."

"But I do not think that I have dangerous associates."

"I am sure you have, Alfred. If they had not been such, you would not have been led astray, last night. Go not into the way of temptation. Shun the very beginnings of evil. Remember Pope's warning declaration:--

"'Vice, to be hated, needs but to be seen,' &c."

"Indeed, indeed, Ma, you are far too serious about this matter."

"No, my son, I cannot be!"

"Well, perhaps not. But, as I know the nature of my associations far better than you possibly can, you must pardon me for thinking that they involve no danger. I have arrived to years of discretion, and certainly think that I am, or at least ought to be, able to judge for my self."

There was that in the words and tone of the young man, that made the mother feel conscious that it would be no use for her to urge the

matter further, at that time. She merely replied--

"For your mother's sake, Alfred, guard yourself more carefully, in future."

It is wonderful, sometimes, how rapidly a downward course is run. The barrier, against which the waters have been driven for years, is rapidly washed away, so soon as even the smallest breach is made. A breach had been made in Mr. Graham's resolution to be only a sober drinker of intoxicating liquors; and the consequence was, that he had less power to resist the strong inclination to drink, that had become almost like a second nature to him. A few weeks only elapsed, before he came home so drunk as to expose himself in the street, and before his children and servants, in a most disgusting and degrading manner.

Terrible indeed was the shock to his children--especially to Mary, Ellen and Anna. His sudden death could not have been a more fearful affliction. Then, they would have sorrowed in filial respect and esteem, made sacred by an event that would embalm the memory of their father in the permanent regard of a whole community: now, he stood degraded in their eyes; and they felt that he was degraded in the eyes of all. In his presence they experienced restraint, and they looked for his coming with a shrinking fear. It was, indeed, an awful affliction--such as few can realize in imagination; and especially for them, as they occupied a conspicuous position in society, and were conscious that all eyes were upon them, and that all tongues would be busy with the story of their father's degradation.

It is wonderful, we have said, how rapidly a downward course is sometimes run. In the case of Mr. Graham, many circumstances combined to hasten his ruin. It was nearly a year after he had given way to the regular indulgence of drink, so far as to be kept almost constantly in a state of half-intoxication through the business hours of almost every day, that he received news of the loss of a vessel richly laden with teas from China. At the proper time he presented the requisite documents to his underwriters, and claimed the loss, amounting, on ship and cargo, to one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. On account of alleged improper conduct on the part of the captain, united with informality in the papers, the underwriters refused to pay the loss. A suit at law was the consequence, in which the underwriters were sustained. An appeal was made, but the same result followed--thus sweeping away, at a single blow, property to the amount of over one hundred thousand dollars. During the progress of the trial, Mr. Graham was much excited, and drank more freely than ever. When the result was finally ascertained, he sank down into a kind of morose inactivity for some months, neglecting his large and important business, and indulging, during the time, more deeply than ever in his favourite potatoes. It was in vain that his distressed family endeavoured to rouse him into activity. All their efforts were met by an irritability and a moroseness of temper so unlike what he had been used to exhibit

towards them, that they gave up all idea of influencing him in despair.

A second heavy loss, of nearly equal amount, altogether consequent upon this neglect of business, seemed to awaken up the latent energies of his character, and he returned to himself with something of his former clear-sighted energy of character. But his affairs had already become, to him, strangely entangled. The machinery of his extensive operations had been interrupted; and now, in attempting to make the wheels move on again, it was too apparent that much of it had become deranged, and the parts no longer moved in harmonious action with the whole. The more these difficulties pressed upon him, the deeper did he drink, as a kind of relief, and, in consequence, the more unfit to extricate himself from his troubles did he become. Every struggle, like the efforts of a large animal in a quagmire, only tended to involve him deeper and deeper in inextricable embarrassment.

This downward tendency continued for about three years, when his family was suddenly stunned by the shock of his failure. It seemed impossible for them to realize the truth--and, indeed, almost impossible for the whole community to realize it. It was only three or four years previous that his wealth was estimated, and truly so, at a million and a half. He was known to have met with heavy losses, but where so much could have gone, puzzled every one. It seems almost incredible that any man could have run through such an estate by mismanagement, in so brief a period. But such was really the case. Accustomed to heavy operations, he continued to engage in only the most liberal transactions, every loss in which was a matter of serious moment. And towards the last, as his mind grew more and more bewildered in consequence of his drinking deeper and deeper, he scarcely got up a single voyage, that did not result in loss; until, finally, he was driven to an utter abandonment of business--but not until he had involved his whole estate in ruin.

The beautiful family mansion on Chestnut-street had to be given up--the carriage and elegant furniture sold under the hammer, while the family retired, overwhelmed with distress, to an humble dwelling in an obscure part of the city.

Seven years from the day on which Mrs. Graham and her children were thus thrown suddenly down from their elevation, and driven into obscurity, that lady sat alone, near the window of a meanly-furnished room in a house on the suburbs of the city, overlooking the Schuylkill. It was near the hour of sunset. Gradually the day declined, and the dusky shadows of evening fell gloomily around. Still Mrs. Graham sat leaning her head upon her hand, in deep abstraction of mind. Alas! seven years had wrought a sad change in her appearance, and a sadder one in her feelings. Her deeply-sunken eye, and pale, thin face, told a tale of wretchedness and suffering, whose silent appeal made the very heart ache. Her garments, too, were old and faded, and antiquated in style.

She sat thus for about half-an-hour, when the door of the room was opened slowly, and a young woman entered, carrying on her arm a small basket. She seemed, at first sight, not over twenty-three or four years of age; but, when observed more closely, her hollow cheek, pale face, and languid motions, indicated the passage of either many more years over her head, or the painful inroads of disease and sorrow. Mrs. Graham looked up, but did not speak, as the young woman entered, and, after placing her basket on a table, laid aside her bonnet and faded shawl.

"How did you find Ellen, to-day?" she at length said.

"Bad enough!" was the mournful reply. "It makes my heart ache, Ma, whenever I go to see her."

"Was her husband at home?"

"Yes, and as drunk and ill-natured as ever."

"How is the babe, Mary?"

"Not well. Dear little innocent creature! it has seen the light of this dreary world in an evil time. Ellen has scarcely any milk for it; and I could not get it to feed, try all I could. It nestles in her breast, and frets and cries almost incessantly, with pain and hunger. Although it is now six weeks old, yet Ellen seems to have gained scarcely any strength at all. She has no appetite, and creeps about with the utmost difficulty. With three little children hanging about her, and the youngest that helpless babe, her condition is wretched indeed. It would be bad enough, were her husband kind to her. But cross, drunken and idle, scarcely furnishing his family with food enough to sustain existence, her life with him is one of painful trial and suffering. Indeed, I wonder, with her sensitive disposition and delicate body, how she can endure such a life for a week."

A deep sigh, or rather moan, was the mother's only response. Her daughter continued,

"Bad as I myself feel with this constant cough, pain in my side, and weakness, I must go over again to-morrow and stay with her. She ought not to be left alone. The dear children, too, require a great deal of attention that she cannot possibly give to them."

"You had better bring little Ellen home with you, had you not, Mary? I could attend to her much better than Ellen can."

"I was thinking of that myself, Ma. But you seemed so poorly, that I did not feel like saying anything about it just now."

"O yes. Bring her home with you to-morrow evening, by all means. It will take that much off of poor Ellen's hands."

"Then I will do so, Ma; at least if Ellen is willing," Mary said, in a lighter tone--the idea of even that relief being extended to her overburdened sister causing her mind to rise in a momentary buoyancy.

"Anna is late to-night," she remarked, after a pause of a few moments.

As she said this, the door opened, and the sister of whom she spoke entered.

"You are late to-night, Anna," her mother said.

"Yes, rather later than usual. I had to take a few small articles home for a lady, after I left the store, who lives in Sixth near Spring Garden."

"In Sixth near Spring Garden!"

"Yes. The lad who takes home goods had gone, and the lady was particular about having them sent home this evening."

"Do you not feel very tired?"

"Indeed I do," the poor girl said, sinking into a chair. "I feel, sometimes, as if I must give up. No one in our store is allowed to sit down from morning till night. The other girls don't appear to mind it much; but before evening, it seems as if I must drop to the floor. But I won't complain," she added, endeavouring to rally herself, and put on a cheerful countenance. "How have you been to-day, Ma?"

"If you won't complain, I am sure that I have no right to, Anna."

"You cannot be happy, of course, Ma; that I know too well. None of us, I fear, will ever be again happy in this world!" Anna said, in a tone of despondency, her spirits again sinking.

No one replied to this; and a gloomy silence of many minutes followed--a quiet almost as oppressive as the stillness that reigns in the chamber of death. Then Mary commenced busying herself about the evening meal.

"Tea is ready, Ma and Anna," she at length said, after their frugal repast had been placed upon the table.

"Has not Alfred returned yet?" Anna asked.

"No," was the brief answer.

"Hadn't we better wait for him?"

"He knows that it is tea-time, and ought to be here, if he wants

any," the mother said. "You are tired and hungry, and we will not, of course, wait."

The little family, three in number, gathered around the table, but no one eat with an appetite of the food that was placed before them. There were two vacant places at the board. The husband and son--the father and brother--where were they?

In regard to the former, the presentation of a scene which occurred a few weeks previous will explain all. First, however, a brief review of the past seven years is necessary. After Mr. Graham's failure in business, he gave himself up to drink, and sunk, with his whole family, down into want and obscurity with almost unprecedented rapidity. He seemed at once to become strangely indifferent to his wife and children--to lose all regard for their welfare. In fact, he had become, in a degree, insane from the sudden reverses which had overtaken him, combined with the bewildering effects of strong drinks, under whose influence he was constantly labouring.

Thus left to struggle on against the pressure of absolute want, suddenly and unexpectedly brought upon them, and with no internal or external resources upon which to fall promptly back, Mrs. Graham and her daughters were for a time overwhelmed with despair. Alfred, to whom they should have looked for aid, advice, and sustenance, in this hour of severe trial, left almost entirely to himself, as far as his father had been concerned, for some two years, had sunk into habits of dissipation from which even this terrible shock had not the power to arouse him. Having made himself angry in his opposition to, and resistance of, all his mother's admonitions, warnings, and persuasions, he seemed to have lost all affection for her and his sisters. So that a sense of their destitute and distressed condition had no influence over him--at least, not sufficient to arouse him into active exertions for their support. Thus were they left utterly dependent upon their own resources--and what was worse, were burdened with the support of both father and brother.

The little that each had been able to save from the general wreck, was, as a means of sustenance, but small. Two or three gold watches and chains, with various articles of (sic) jewelery, fancy work-boxes, and a number of trifles, more valued than valuable, made up, besides a remnant of household furniture, the aggregate of their little wealth. Of course, the mother and daughters were driven, at once, to some expedient for keeping the family together. A boarding-house, that first resort of nearly all destitute females, upon whom families are dependent, especially of those who have occupied an elevated position in society, was opened, as the only means of support that presented itself. The result of this experiment, continued for a year and a half, was a debt of several hundred dollars, which was liquidated by the seizure of Mrs. Graham's furniture. But worse than this, a specious young man, one of the boarders, had won upon the affections of Ellen, and induced her to marry him. He, too soon, proved himself to have neither a true affection for her, nor to have sound moral principles. He was,

moreover, idle, and fond of gay company.

On the day that Mrs. Graham broke up her boardinghouse, Markland, her daughter's husband, was discharged from his situation as clerk, on account of inefficiency. For six months previous, the time he had been married, he had paid no boarding, thus adding himself as a dead weight to the already overburdened family. As he had no house to which he could take Ellen, he very naturally felt himself authorized to share the house to which the distressed family of her mother retired, seemingly regardless of how or by whom the food he daily consumed was provided.

But Mrs. Graham was soon reduced to such extremities, that he was driven off from her, with his wife, and forced to obtain employment by which to support himself and her. As for the old man, he had managed, in the wreck of affairs, to retain a large proportion of his wines, and other choice liquors; and these, which no pressure of want in his family could drive him to sell, afforded the means of gratifying his inordinate love of drink. His clothes gradually became old and rusty--but this seemed to give him no concern. He wandered listlessly in his old business haunts, or lounged about the house in a state of half stupor, drinking regularly all through the day, at frequent periods, and going to bed, usually, at nights, in a state of stupefaction.

When the boarding-house was given up, poor Mrs. Graham, whose health and spirits had both rapidly declined in the past two years, felt utterly at a loss what to do. But pressing necessities required immediate action.

"Anna, child, what are we to do," she said, rousing herself, one evening, while sitting alone with her daughters in gloomy abstraction.

"Indeed, Ma, I am as much at a loss as you are. I have been thinking and thinking about it, until my mind--has become beclouded and bewildered."

"I have been thinking, too," said Mary, "and it strikes me that Anna and I might do something in the way of ornamental needlework. Both of us, you know, are fond of it."

"Do you think that we can sell it, after it is done?" Anna asked, with a lively interest in her tone.

"I certainly do. We see plenty of such work in the shops; and they must buy it, of course."

"Let us try, then, Mary," her sister said with animation.

A week spent in untiring industry, produced two elegantly wrought capes, equal to the finest French embroidery.

"And, now, where shall we sell them?" Anna inquired, in a tone of concern.

"Mrs.--would, no doubt, buy them; but I, for one, cannot bear the thought of going there."

"Nor I. But, driven by necessity, I believe that I could brave to go there, or anywhere else, even though I have not been in Chestnut-street for nearly two years."

"Will you go, then, Mary?" Anna asked, in an earnest, appealing tone.

"Yes, Anna, as you seem so shrinkingly reluctant, I will go."

And forthwith Mary prepared herself; and rolling up the two elegant capes, proceeded with them to the store of Mrs.--, in Chestnut-street. It was crowded with customers when she entered, and so she shrunk away to the back part of the store, until Mrs.--should be more at leisure, and she could bargain with her without attracting attention. She had stood there only a few moments,--when her ear caught the sound of a familiar voice--that of Mary Williams, one of her former most intimate associates. Her first impulse was to spring forward, but a remembrance of her changed condition instantly recurring to her, she turned more away from the light, so as to effectually conceal herself from the young lady's observation. This she was enabled to do, although Mary Williams came once or twice so near as to brush her garments. How oppressively did her heart beat, at such moments! Old thoughts and old feelings came rushing back upon her, and in the contrast they occasioned between the past and the present, she was almost overwhelmed with despondency. Customer after customer came in, as one and another retired, many of whose faces were familiar to Mary as old friends and acquaintances. At last, however, after waiting nearly two hours, she made out to get an interview with Mrs.--.

"Well, Miss, what do you want?" asked that personage, as Mary came up before her where she still stood at the counter, for she had observed her waiting in the store for some time. Mrs.--either did not remember, or cared not to remember, her old customer, who had spent, with her sisters, many hundreds of dollars in her store, in times past.

"I have a couple of fine wrought capes that I should like to sell," Mary said, in a timid, hesitating voice, unrolling, at the same time, the articles she named.

"Are they French?" asked Mrs.--, without pausing in her employment of rolling up some goods, to take and examine the articles proffered her.

"No, ma'am; they are some of my own and sister's work."

"They won't do, then, Miss. Nothing in the way of fine collars and capes will sell, unless they are French."

Mary felt chilled at heart as Mrs.--said this, and commenced slowly rolling up her capes, faint with disappointment. As she was about turning from the counter, Mrs.--said, in rather an indifferent tone,

"Suppose you let me look at them."

"I am sure you will think them very beautiful," Mary replied, quickly unrolling her little bundle. "They have been wrought with great care."

"Sure enough, they are quite well done," Mrs.--said, coldly, as she glanced her eyes over the capes. "Almost equal in appearance to the French. But they are only domestic; and domestic embroidered work won't bring scarcely anything. What do you ask for these?"

"We have set no price upon them; but think that they are richly worth five or six dollars apiece."

"Five or six dollars!" ejaculated Mrs.--, in well feigned surprise, handing back; suddenly, the capes. "O! no, Miss;--American goods don't bring arty such prices."

"Then what will you give for them, Madam?"

"If you feel like taking two dollars apiece for them, you can leave them. But I am not particular," Mrs.--said, in a careless tone.

"Two dollars!" repeated Mary, in surprise. "Surely, Mrs.--, they are worth more than two dollars apiece!"

"I'm not at all anxious to give you even that for them," said Mrs.--. "Not at all; for I am by no means sure that I shall ever get my money back again."

"You will have to take them, then, I suppose," Mary replied, in a disappointed and desponding tone.

"Very well, Miss, I will give you what I said." And Mrs.--took the capes, and handed Mary Graham four dollars in payment.

"If we should conclude to work any more, may we calculate on getting the same money for them?"

"I can't say positively, Miss; but I think that you may calculate on that price for as many as you will bring."

Mary took the money, and turned away. It was only half an hour after, that Mrs.--sold one of them, as "French," for twelve dollars!

Sadly, indeed, were the sisters disappointed at this result. But nothing better offering that they could do, they devoted themselves, late and early, to their needles, the proceeds of which rarely went over five dollars per week; for two years they continued to labour thus.

At the end of that period, Anna sunk under her self-imposed task, and lay ill for many weeks. Especially forbidden by the physician, on her recovery, to enter again upon sedentary employments, Anna cast earnestly about her for some other means whereby to earn something for the common stock. Necessity, during the past two years, had driven her frequently into business parts of the city for the purchase of materials such as they used. Her changed lot gave her new eyes, and her observations were necessarily made upon a new class of facts. She had seen shop-girls often enough before, but she had never felt any sympathy with them, nor thought of gaining any information about them. They might receive one dollar a week, or twenty, or work for nothing--it was all the same to her. Even if any one had given her correct information on the subject, she would have forgotten it in ten minutes. But now, it was a matter of interest to know how much they could make--and she had obtained a knowledge of the fact, that they earned from three to six and seven dollars a week, according to their capacities or the responsibility of their stations.

When, therefore, her shattered health precluded her from longer plying her needle, much as she shrank from the publicity and exposure of the position, she resolutely set about endeavouring to obtain a situation as saleswoman in some retail dry-goods store. One of the girls in Mrs.--'s store, who knew all about her family, and deeply commiserated her condition, interested herself for her, and succeeded in getting her a situation, at four dollars a week, in Second-street. To enter upon the employment that now awaited her, was indeed a severe trial; but she went resolutely forward, in the way that duty called.

The sudden change from a sedentary life to one of activity, where she had to be on her feet all day, tried her feeble strength severely. It was with difficulty that she could sometimes keep up at all, and she went home frequently at night in a burning fever. But she gradually acquired a kind of power of endurance, that kept her up. She did not seem to suffer less, but had more strength, as it were, to bear up, and hold on with unflinching resolution.

Thus she had gone on for two or three years, at the time she was again introduced, with her mother and sister, to the reader.

As for their father, his whole stock of liquors had been exhausted for nearly two years, and, during that time, he had resorted to many expedients to obtain the potatoes he so much loved. Finally, he became so lost to all sense of right or feeling, that he would take money, or anything he could carry off from the house, for the

purpose of obtaining liquor. This system had stripped them of many necessary articles, as well as money, and added very greatly to their distress, as well as embarrassments.

At last, everything that he could take had been taken, and as neither his wife nor daughters would give him any money, his supply of stimulus was cut off, and he became almost mad with the intolerable desire that was burning within him for the fiery poison which had robbed him of rationality and freedom.

"Give me some money!" he said, in an excited tone, to his wife, coming in hurriedly from the street, one day about this time. His face was dark and red, as if there were a congestion of the blood in the veins of the skin, while his hands trembled, and his whole frame was strongly agitated. Those who had been familiar with that old man, years before, would hardly have recognized him now, in his old worn and faded garments.

"I have no money for you," his wife replied. "You have already stripped us of nearly everything."

"Buy me some brandy, then."

"No. I cannot do that either. Brandy has cursed you and your family. Why do you not abandon it for ever?"

"I must have brandy, or die! Give me something to drink, in the name of heaven!"

The wild look that her husband threw upon her, alarmed Mrs. Graham, and she hesitated no longer, but handed him a small piece of money. Quick as thought, he turned away and darted from the house.

It was, perhaps, after the lapse of about half an hour that he returned. He opened the door, when he did so, quietly, and stood looking into the room for a few moments. Then he turned his head quickly from the right to the left, glancing fearfully behind him once or twice. In a moment or two afterwards he started forward, with a strong expression of alarm upon his countenance, and seated himself close beside Mrs. Graham, evidently in the hope of receiving her protection from some dreaded evil.

"What is the matter?" quickly exclaimed Mrs. Graham, starting up with a frightened look.

"It is really dreadful!" he said. "What can it all mean?"

"What is dreadful?" asked his wife, her heart throbbing with an unknown terror.

"There! Did you ever see such an awful sight? Ugh!" and he shrunk behind her chair, and covered his eyes with his hands.

"I see nothing, Mr. Graham," his wife said, after a few moments of hurried thought, in which she began to comprehend the fact that her husband's mind was wandering.

"There is nothing here that will hurt you, father," Mary added, coming up to him, as her own mind arrived at a conclusion similar to her mother's.

"Nothing to hurt me!" suddenly screamed the old man, springing to his feet, and throwing himself backwards half across the room; "and that horrible creature already twining himself about my neck, and strangling me! Take it off! take it off!" he continued, in a wild cry of terror, making strong efforts to tear something away from his throat.

"Take it off! Why don't you take it off! Don't you see that it is choking me to death! Oh! oh! oh!" (uttered in a terrific scream.)

Panting, screaming and struggling, he continued in this state of awful alarm, vainly endeavouring to extricate himself from the toils of an imaginary monster, that was suffocating him, until he sank exhausted to the floor.

Happily for his alarmed and distressed family, two or three neighbours, who had been startled by the old man's screams,--came hurriedly in, and soon comprehended the nature of his aberration. A brief consultation among themselves determined them, understanding, as they did perfectly, the condition of the family, and his relation to them, to remove him at once to the Alms-House, where he could get judicious medical treatment, and be out of the sight and hearing of his wife and children.

One of them briefly explained to Mrs. Graham, and Mary, the nature of his mental affection, and the absolute necessity that there was for his being placed where the most skilful and judicious management of his case could be had. After some time, he gained their reluctant consent to have him taken to the Alms-House. A carriage was then obtained, and he forced into it, amid the tears and remonstrances of the wife and daughter, who had already repented of their acquiescence in what their judgment had approved. Old affection had rushed back upon their hearts, and feelings became stronger than reason.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when this occurred. Early on the next morning, Mrs. Graham, with Mary and Anna, went out to see him. Their inquiries about his condition were vaguely answered, and with seeming reluctance, or as it appeared to them, with indifference. At length the matron of the institution asked them to go with her, and they followed on, through halls and galleries, until they came to a room, the door of which she opened, with a silent indication for them to enter.

They entered alone. Everything was hushed, and the silence that of

the chamber of death. In the centre of the room lay the old man. A single glance told the fearful tale. He was dead! Dead in the pauper's home! Seven years before, a millionaire--now sleeping his last sleep in the dead-room of an Alms-House, and his beggared wife and children weeping over him in heart-broken and hopeless sorrow.

From that time the energies of Mary and Anna seemed paralyzed; and it was only with a strong effort that Mrs. Graham could rouse herself from the stupor of mind and body that had settled upon her.

Mrs. Graham and her two daughters had nearly finished their evening meal, at the close of the day alluded to some pages back, when the sound of rapidly hurrying footsteps was heard on the pavement. In a moment after, a heavy blow was given just at their door, and some one fell with a groan against it. The weight of the body forced it open, and the son and brother rolled in upon the floor, with the blood gushing from a ghastly wound in his forehead. His assailant instantly fled. Bloated, disfigured, in coarse and worn clothing, how different, even when moving about, was he from the genteel, well-dressed young man of a few years back! Idleness and dissipation had wrought as great a change upon him as it had upon his father, while he was living. Now he presented a shocking and loathsome appearance.

The first impulse of Mary was to run for a physician, while the mother and Anna attempted to stanch the flow of blood, that had already formed a pool upon the floor. Assistance was speedily obtained, and the wound dressed; but the young man remained insensible. As the physician turned from the door, Mrs. Graham sank fainting upon her bed. Over-tried nature could bear up no longer.

"Doctor, what do you think of him?" asked the mother, anxiously, three days after, as the physician came out of Alfred's room. Since the injury he had received, he had lain in a stupor, but with much fever.

"His case, Madam, is an extremely critical one. I have tried in vain to control that fever."

"Do you think him very dangerous, Doctor?" Mary asked, in a husky voice.

"I certainly do. And, to speak to you the honest truth, have, myself, no hope of his recovery. I think it right that you should know this."

"No hope, Doctor!" Mrs. Graham said, laying her hand upon the physician's arm, while her face grew deadly pale. "No hope!--My only son die thus!--O! Doctor, can you not save him?"

"I wish it were in my power, Madam. But I will not flatter you with false hopes. It will be little less than a miracle should he survive."

The mother and sisters turned away with an air of hopelessness from the physician, and he retired slowly, and with oppressed feelings.

When they returned to the sick chamber, a great change had already taken place in Alfred. The prediction of the physician, it was evident to each, as all bent eagerly over him, was about to be too surely and too suddenly realized. His face, from being slightly flushed with fever, had become sunken, and ghastly pale, and his respiration so feeble that it was almost imperceptible.

The last and saddest trial of this ruined family had come. The son and brother, for whom now rushed back upon their hearts the tender and confiding affection of earlier years, was lingering upon life's extremest verge. It seemed that they could not give him up. They felt that, even though he were neglectful of them, they could not do without him. He was a son and brother; and, while he lived, there was still hope of his restoration. The strength of that hope, entertained by each in the silent chambers of affection, was unknown before--its trial revealed its power over each crushed and sinking heart.

But the passage of each moment brought plainer and more palpable evidence of approaching dissolution. For about ten minutes he had lain so still, that they were suddenly aroused by the fear that he might be already dead. Softly did the mother lay her hand upon his forehead. Its cold and clammy touch sent an icy thrill to her heart. Then she bent her ear to catch even the feeblest breath--but she could distinguish none.

"He is dead!" she murmured, sinking down and burying her face in the bed-clothes.

The cup of their sorrow was, at last, full--full and running over!

THE RUINED FAMILY

PART SECOND.

STUNNED by this new affliction, which seemed harder to bear than any of the terrible ones that had gone before, Mrs. Graham sunk into a state of half unconsciousness; but Anna still lingered over the insensible body of her brother, and though reason told her that the spirit had taken its everlasting departure, her heart still hoped

that it might not be so,--that a spark yet remained which would rekindle.

The pressure of her warm hand upon his cold, damp forehead, mocked her hopes. His motionless chest told of the vanity of her fond anticipations of seeing his heart again quicken into living activity. And yet, she could not give him up. She could not believe that he was dead. As she still hung over him, it seemed to her that there was a slight twitching of the muscles about the neck. How suddenly did her heart bound and throb until its strong pulsations pained her! Eagerly did she bend down upon him, watching for some more palpable sign of returning animation. But nothing met either her eye or her ear that strengthened the newly awakened hope.

After waiting, vainly, for some minutes, until the feeble hope she had entertained began to fail, Anna stepped quickly to the mantelpiece, and lifted from it a small looking-glass, with which she returned to the bedside. Holding this close to the face of her brother, she watched the surface with an eager anxiety that almost caused the beating of her heart to cease. As a slight mist slowly gathered upon the glass and obscured its surface, Anna cried out with a voice that thrilled the bosoms of her mother and sister--

"He lives! he lives!" and gave way to a gush of tears.

This sudden exclamation, of course, brought Mrs. Graham and Mary to the bedside, who instantly comprehended the experiment which Anna had been making and understood the result. The mother, in turn, with trembling hands, lifted the mirror, and held it close to the face of her son. In a moment or two, its surface was obscured, plainly indicating that respiration, though almost imperceptible, was still going on,--that life still lingered in the feeble body before them.

Gradually, now, the flame that had well-nigh gone out, kindled up again, but so slowly, that for many hours the mother and sisters were in doubt whether it were really brightening or not. The fever that had continued for several days, exhausting the energies of the young man's system, had let go its hold, because scarcely enough vital energy remained for it to subsist upon. In its subsidence, life trembled on the verge of extinction. But there was yet sufficient stamina for it to rally upon; and it did rally, and gradually, but very slowly, gained strength.

In an earnest spirit of thankfulness for this restoration of Alfred, did the mother and sisters look up to the Giver of all good, and with tearful devotion pray that there might ensue a moral as well as a physical restoration. For years, they had not felt towards him the deep and yearning tenderness that now warmed their bosoms. They longed to rescue him, not for their sakes, but for his own, from the horrible pit and the miry clay into which he had fallen.

"O, if we could but save him, sister!" Anna said, as she sat conversing with Mary, after all doubt of his recovery had been

removed. "If we could only do some. thing to restore our brother to himself, how glad I should be!"

"I would do anything in my power," Mary replied, "and sacrifice everything that it was right to sacrifice, if, by so doing, I could help Alfred to conquer his besetting evils. I cannot tell you how I feel about it. It seems as if it would break my heart to have him return again into his old habits of life: and yet, what have we to found a hope upon, that he will not so return?"

"I feel just as you do about it, Mary," her sister said. "The same yearning desire to save him, and the same hopelessness as to the means."

"There is one way, it seems to me, in which we might influence him."

"What is that, Mary?"

"Let us manifest towards him, fully, the real affection that we feel; perhaps that may awaken a chord in this own bosom, and thus lead him, for our sakes, to enter upon a new course of life."

"We can at least try, Mary. It can do no harm, and may result in good."

With the end of his reformation in view, the two sisters, during his convalescence, attended him with the most assiduous and affectionate care. The moment Anna would come home from the store at night, she would repair with a smiling countenance to his bedside, and although usually so fatigued as to be compelled to rally her spirits with an effort, she would seem so interested and cheerful and active to minister in some way to his pleasure, that Alfred began to look forward every day as the evening approached, with a lively interest, for her return. This Mary observed, and it gave her hope.

Three weeks soon passed away, when Alfred was so far recovered as to be able to walk out.

"Do not walk far, brother," Mary said, laying her hand gently upon his arm, and looking him with affectionate earnestness in the face. "You are very weak, and the fatigue might bring on a relapse."

"I shall only walk a little way, Mary," he replied, as he opened the door and went out.

Neither the mother nor sister could utter the fear that each felt, lest Alfred should meet with and fall in temptation before he returned. This fear grew stronger and stronger, as the minutes began to accumulate, and lengthen to an hour. A period of ten or fifteen minutes was as long as they had any idea of his remaining away. Where could he be? Had he been taken sick; or was he again yielding to the seductions of a depraved and degrading appetite? The suspense became agonizing to their hearts, as not only one, but two, and even

three hours passed, bringing the dim twilight, and yet he returned not.

In the meantime, the young man, whose appearance the careful hand of Mary and her sister had been rendered far superior to what it had been for years past, went out from his mother's humble dwelling, and took his way slowly down one of the streets, leading to the main portion of the city, with many thoughts of a painful character passing through his mind. The few weeks that he had been confined to the house, and in constant association with his mother, and one or both of his sisters, who were at home, had startled his mind into reflection. He could not but contrast their constant and affectionate devotion to him, with his own shameful and criminal neglect of them. Conceal her real feelings as she would, it did not escape his notice, that when Anna came home at night, she was so much exhausted as to be hardly able to sit up; and as for Mary, often when she dreamed not that he was observing her, had he noticed her air of languor and exhaustion, and her half-stifled expression of pain,--as she bent resolutely over her needle-work. Never before had he felt so indignant towards Ellen's husband for his neglect and abuse of her, his once favourite sister; and, indeed, the favourite of the whole family.

It was, to his own mind, a mystery how he ever could have sunk so low, and become so utterly regardless of his mother and sisters.

"Wretch! wretch! miserable wretch that I am!" he would, sometimes, mentally exclaim, turning his face to the wall as he lay reviewing, involuntarily, his past life. Uniformly it happened, that following such a crisis in his feelings, would be some affectionate word or kind attention from Mary or his mother, smiting upon his heart with emotions of the keenest remorse.

It was under the influence of such feelings that he went out on the afternoon just alluded to. Still, no settled plan of reformation had been formed in his mind, for the discouraging question would constantly arise while pondering gloomily over his condition and the condition of the family.

"What can I do?" To this, he could find no satisfactory answer. Three or four years of debasing drunkenness, had utterly separated him from those who had it in their power to encourage and strengthen his good desires,--and to put him in the way of providing for himself and his family, by an industrious application to some kind of business.

He had walked slowly on, in painful abstraction, for about five minutes, when a hand was laid on his arm, and a familiar voice said--

"Is this you, Graham! Where in the name of Pluto have you been, for the last three weeks? Why, how blue you look about the gills! Haven't been sick, I hope?"

"Indeed I have, Harry," Alfred replied, in a feeble voice. "It came very near being all over with me."

"Indeed! Well, what was the matter?"

Raising his hat, and displaying a long and still angry-looking wound on the side of his head, from which the hair had been carefully cut away, he said--

"Do you see that?"

"I reckon I do."

"Well, that came very near doing the business for me."

"How did it happen?"

"I hardly know, myself. I was drunk, I suppose, and quarrelled with some one, or insulted some one in the street--and this was the consequence."

"Really, Graham, you have made a narrow escape."

"Havn't I? It kept me in bed for nearly three weeks, and now, I can just totter about. This is the first time I have been outside of the house since it happened."

"You certainly do look weak and feeble enough," replied his old friend and crony, who added, in a moment after,

"But come! take a drink with me at the tavern across here. You stand in need of something."

"No objection, and thank you," Alfred rejoined, at once moving over towards a well-known, low tavern, quenching in imagination a morbid thirst that seemed instantly created, by a draught of sweetened liquor.

"What will you take?" asked his friend, as the two came up to the counter.

"I'll take a mint sling," Alfred replied.

"Two mint slings," said his companion, giving his orders to the bar-keeper.

"Hallo, Graham! Is this you?" exclaimed one or two loungers, coming forward, and shaking him heartily by the hand. "We had just made up our minds that you had joined the cold-water army."

"Indeed!" suddenly ejaculated Graham, an instant consciousness of what he was, where he was, and what he was about to do, flashing

over his mind. "I wish to heaven your conclusion had been true!"

This sudden change in his manner, and his earnestly, indeed solemnly expressed wish, were received with a burst of laughter.

"Here Dan," said one, to the bar-keeper, "havn't you a pledge for him to sign."

"O, yes! Bring a pledge! Bring a pledge! Has no one a pledge?" rejoined another, in a tone of ridicule.

"Yes, here is one," said a man in a firm tone, entering the shop at the moment. "Who wants to sign the pledge?"

"I do!" Graham said, in a calm voice.

"Then here it is," the stranger replied, drawing a sheet of paper from his pocket, and unrolling it.

"Give me a pen Dan," Alfred said, turning to the barkeeper.

"Indeed, then, and I won't," retorted that individual, "I'm not going to lend a stick to break my own head."

"O, never mind, young man, I can supply pen and ink," said the stranger, drawing forth a pocket inkstand.

Alfred eagerly seized the pen that was offered to him, and instantly subscribed the total abstinence pledge.

"Another fool caught!" sneered one.

"Ha! ha! ha! What a ridiculous farce!" chimed in another.

"He'll be rolling in the gutter before three days, feeling upwards for the ground," added a third.

"Why, I don't believe he can see through a ladder now;" the first speaker said, with his contemptuous sneer. "Look here, mister," to the stranger who had appeared so opportunely. "This is all gammon! He's been fooling you."

"Come along, my friend," was all the stranger said, drawing his arm within that of the penitent young man, as he did so,--"this is no place for you."

And the two walked slowly out, amid the laughter, sneers, and open ridicule of the brutal company. Once again in the open air, Alfred breathed more freely.

"O, sir," he said, grasping the hand of the individual who had appeared so opportunely--"you have saved me from my last temptation, into which I was led so naturally, that I had not an idea of danger.

If I had fallen then, as I fear I should have fallen but for you, I must have gone down, rapidly, to irretrievable ruin. How can I express to you the grateful emotions that I now feel?"

"Express them not to me, young man," the stranger said, in a solemn voice; "but to him, who in his merciful providence, sent me just at the right moment to meet your last extremity. Look up to him, and, whenever tempted, let your conscious weakness repose in his strength, and no evil power can prevail against you. Be true to the resolution of this hour--_to your pledge--to those who have claims upon you, for such, I know there must be, and you shall yet fill that position of usefulness in society, which no one else but you can occupy. And now let me advise you to go home, and ponder well this act, and your future course. No matter how dark all may now seem, light will spring up. If you are anxious to walk in a right path, and to minister to those who have claims upon you, the way will be made plain. This encouragement I can give you with confidence; for twelve months ago, _I_ trembled on the brink of ruin, as _you_ have just been trembling. _I_ was once a slave to the same wild infatuation that has held you in bondage. Hope, then, with a vigorous hope, and that hope will be a guarantee for your future elevation!"

And so saying, the stranger shook the hand of Alfred heartily, and, turning, walked hastily away.

The young man had proceeded only a few paces when he observed his old friend and companion, Charles Williams, driving along towards him. No one had done so much towards corrupting his morals, and enticing him away from virtue, as that individual. But he had checked himself in his course of dissipation, long before, while Alfred had sunk rapidly downward. Years had passed since any intercourse had taken place between them, for their condition in life had long been as different as their habits. Charles had entered into business with his father, and was now active and enterprising, increasing the income of the firm by his energy and industry.

His eye rested upon Graham, the moment he came near enough to observe him. There was something familiar about his gait and manner, that attracted the young man's attention. At first, he did not distinguish, through the disguise that sickness and self-imposed poverty had thrown over Alfred, his old companion. But, suddenly, as he was about passing, he recognised him, and instantly reined up his horse.

"It is only a few minutes since I was thinking about you, Alfred," he said. "How are you? But you do not look well. Have you been sick?"

"I have been very ill, lately," Alfred Graham replied, in a mournful tone; former thoughts and feelings rushing back upon him in consequence of this unexpected interview, and quite subduing him.

"I am really sorry to hear it," the young man said, sympathizingly.

"What has been the matter?"

"A slow fever. This is the first time I have been out for weeks."

"A ride, then, will be of use to you. Get up, and let me drive you out into the country. The pure air will benefit you, I am sure."

For a moment or two, Alfred stood irresolute. He could not believe that he had heard aright.

"Come," urged Williams. "We have often ridden before, and let us have one more ride, if we should never go out again together. I wish to have some talk with you."

Thus urged, Alfred, with the assistance of Charles Williams, got up into the light wagon, in which the latter was riding, and in a moment after was dashing off with him behind a spirited horse.

It was on the morning of a day, nearly a week previous to this time, that Mary Williams, or rather Mrs. Harwood,--for Anna and Mary Graham's old friend had become a married woman--entered the store of Mrs.--on Chestnut-street, for the purchase of some goods.

While one of the girls in attendance was waiting upon her, she observed a young woman, neatly, but poorly clad, whom she had often seen there before, come in, and go back to the far end of the store. In a little while, Mrs.--joined her, and received from her a small package, handing her some money in return, when the young woman retired, and walked quickly away. This very operation Mrs. Harwood had several times seen repeated before, and each time she had felt much interested in the timid and retiring stranger, a glance at whose face she had never been able to gain.

"Who is that young woman?" she asked of the individual in attendance.

"She's a poor girl, that Mrs.--buys fine work from, out of mere charity, she says."

"Do you know her name?"

"I have heard it, ma'am, but forget it."

"Have you any very fine French worked capes, Mrs.--," asked Mrs. Harwood, as the individual she addressed came up to that part of the counter where she was standing, still holding in her hand the small package which had been received from the young woman. This Mrs. Harwood noticed.

"O, yes, ma'am, some of the most beautiful in the city."

"Let me see them, if you please."

A box was brought, and its contents, consisting of a number of very rich patterns of the article asked for, displayed.

"What is the price of this?" asked Mrs. Harwood, lifting one, the pattern of which pleased her fancy.

"That is a little damaged," Mrs.--replied. "But here is one of the same pattern," unrolling the small parcel she had still continued to hold in her hand, "which has just been returned by a lady, to whom I sent it for examination, this morning."

"It is the same pattern, but much more beautifully wrought," Mrs. Harwood said, as she examined it carefully. "These are all French, you say?"

"Of course, ma'am. None but French goods come of such exquisite fineness."

"What do you ask for this?"

"It is worth fifteen dollars, ma'am. The pattern is a rich one, and the work unusually fine."

"Fifteen dollars! That is a pretty high price, is it not, Mrs.--?"

"O, no, indeed, Mrs. Harwood! It cost me very nearly fourteen dollars--and a dollar is a small profit to make on such articles."

After hesitating for a moment or two, Mrs. Harwood said--

"Well, I suppose I must give you that for it, as it pleases me."

And she took out her purse, and paid the price that Mrs.--had asked. She still stood musing by the side of the counter, when the young woman who had awakened her interest a short time before, re-entered, and came up to Mrs.--, who was near her.

"I have a favour to ask, Mrs.--," she overheard her say, in a half tremulous, and evidently reluctant tone.

"Well, what is it?" Mrs.--coldly asked.

"I want six dollars more than I have got, for a very particular purpose. Won't you advance me the price of three capes, and I will bring you in one a week, until I have made it up."

"No, miss," was the prompt and decisive answer--"I never pay any one for work not done. Pay beforehand, and never pay, are the two worst kinds of pay!"

All this was distinctly heard by Mrs. Harwood, and her very heart ached, as she saw the poor girl turn, with a disappointed air, away,

and walk slowly out of the store.

"That's just the way with these people," ejaculated Mrs.--, in affected indignation, meant to mislead Mrs. Harwood, who, she feared, had overheard what the young woman had said. "They're always trying in some way or other, to get the advantage of you."

"How so?" asked Mrs. Harwood, wishing to learn all she could about the stranger who had interested her feelings.

"Why, you see, I pay that girl a good price for doing a certain kind of work for me, and the money is always ready for her, the moment her work is done. But, not satisfied with that, she wanted me, just now, to advance her the price of three weeks' work. If I had been foolish enough to have done it, it would have been the last I ever should have seen of either money, work, or seamstress."

"Perhaps not," Mrs. Harwood ventured to remark.

"You don't know these kind of people as well as I do, Mrs. Harwood. I've been tricked too often in my time."

"Of course not," was the quiet reply. Then after a pause,

"What kind of sewing did she do for you, Mrs.--?"

"Nothing very particular; only a little fine work. I employ her, more out of charity, than anything else."

"Do you know anything about her?"

"She's old Graham's daughter, I believe. I'm told he died in the Alms-house, a few weeks ago."

"What old Graham?" Mrs. Harwood asked, in a quick voice.

"Why, old Graham, the rich merchant that was, a few years ago. Quite a tumble-down their pride has had, I reckon! Why, I remember when nothing in my store was good enough for them. But they are glad enough now to work for me at any price I choose to pay them."

For a few moments, Mrs. Harwood was so shocked that she could not reply. At length she asked--

"Which of the girls was it that I saw here, just now?"

"That was Mary."

"Do you know anything of Anna?"

"Yes. She stands in a store in Second-street."

"And Ellen?"

"Married to a drunken, worthless fellow, who abuses and half starves her. But that's the way; pride must have a fall!"

"Where do they live?" pursued Mrs. Harwood.

"Indeed, and that's more than I know," Mrs.--replied, tossing her head.

Unable to gain any further information, Mrs. Harwood left the store, well convinced that the richly-wrought cape, for which she had paid Mrs.--fifteen dollars, had been worked by the hands of Mary Graham, for which she received but a mere pittance.

Poor Mary returned home disappointed and deeply troubled in mind. She had about three dollars in money, besides the two which Mrs.--had paid her. If the six she had asked for had only been advanced, as she fondly hoped would be the case, the aggregate sum, eleven dollars, added to three which Anna had saved, would have enabled them to purchase a coat and hat for their brother, who would be ready in a few days to go out. They were anxious to do, this, under the hope, that by providing him with clothes of a more respectable appearance than he had been used to wearing, he would be led to think more of himself, seek better company, and thus be further removed from danger. At her first interview with Mrs.--, Mary's heart had failed her--and it was only after she had left the store and walked some squares homeward, that she could rally herself sufficiently to return and make her request. It was refused, as has been seen.

"Did Mrs.--grant your request?" was almost the first question that Anna asked of her sister that evening, when she returned from the store.

"No, Anna, I was positively refused," Mary replied, the tears rising and almost gushing over her cheeks.

"Then we will only have to do the best we can with what little we have. We shall not be able to get him a new coat; but we can have his old one done up, with a new collar and buttons,--I priced a pair of pantaloons at one of the clothing-stores, in Market-street, as I came up this evening, and the man said three dollars and a half. They looked pretty well. There was a vest, too, for a dollar. I heard one of the young men in the store say, two or three days ago, that he had sold his old hat, which was a very good one, to the hatter, from whom he had bought a new one--or rather, that the hatter had taken the old one on account, valued at a dollar. I asked him a question or two, and learned that many hatters do this, and sell the old hats at the same that they have allowed for them. One of these I will try to get,--even if a good deal worn; it will look far better than the one he has at present."

"In that case, then," Mary said, brightening up, "we can still get

him fitted up respectably. O, how glad I shall be! Don't you think, sister, that we have good reason to hope for him?"

"I try to think so, Mary. But my heart often trembles with fearful apprehensions when I think of his going out among his old associates again. It will be little less than a miracle if he should not fall."

"Don't give way to desponding thoughts, sister. Let us hope so strongly for the best, that our very hope shall compass its own fruition. He cannot, he must not, go back!"

Anna did not reply. Her own feelings were inclined to droop and despond, but she did not wish to have her sister's droop and despond likewise. One reason for her saddened feelings arose from the fact, that she had a painful consciousness that she should not long be able to retain her present situation. Her health was sinking so rapidly, that it was only by the aid of strong resolutions, which lifted her mind up and sustained her in spite of bodily weakness, that she was at all enabled to get through with her duties. This she was conscious could not last long.

On the next morning, when she attempted to rise from her bed, she became so faint and sick that she was compelled to lie down again. The feeling of alarm that instantly thrilled through her bosom, lest she should no longer be able to minister to the wants of her mother, and especially of her brother at this important crisis in his life, acted as a stimulant to exhausted nature, and endowed her with a degree of artificial strength that enabled her to make another and more successful effort to resume her wearying toil.

But so weak did she feel, even after she had forced herself to take a few mouthfuls of food at breakfast time, that she lingered for nearly half an hour longer than her usual time of starting in order to allow her system to get a little braced up, so that she could stand the long walk she had to take.

"Good by, brother," she said in a cheerful tone, coming up to the bed upon which Alfred lay, and stooping down and kissing him. "You must try and sit up as much as you can to-day."

"Good by, Anna. I wish you didn't have to go away and stay so long."

To this, Anna could not trust herself to reply. She only pressed tightly the hand she held in her own, and then turned quickly away.

It was nearly three quarters of an hour later than the time the different clerks were required to be at the store, when Anna came in, her side and head both paining her badly, in consequence of having walked too fast.

"It's three quarters of an hour behind the time," the storekeeper said, with a look and tone of displeasure, as he drew out his watch. "I can't have such irregularity in my store, Miss Graham. This is

the third time within a few days, that you have come late."

A reply instantly rose to Anna's tongue, but she felt that it would be useless--and would, perhaps, provoke remarks deeply wounding to her feelings. She paused, therefore, only a moment, with a bowed head, to receive her rebuke, and then passed quickly, and with a meek, subdued air, to her station behind the counter. There were some of her fellow-clerks who felt for and pitied Anna--there were others who experienced a pleasure in hearing her reproved.

All through that day, with only the respite of some ten or fifteen minutes, when she retired to eat alone the frugal repast of bread and cold meat that she had brought with her for her dinner, did Anna stand behind the shop-man's counter, attending to his customers with a cheerful air and often a smiling countenance. She spoke to no one of the pain in her breast, back, and side; and none of those around her dreamed that, from extreme lassitude, she could scarcely stand beside the counter.

To her, suffering as she did, the hours passed slowly and heavily away. It seemed as if evening would never come--as if she would have to yield the struggle, much as she strove to keep up for the sake of those she loved.

But even to the weary, the heavy laden, and the prisoner, the slow lingering hours at length pass on, and the moment of respite comes. The shadows of evening at last began to fall dimly around, and Anna retired from her position of painful labour, and took her way homeward. But not even the anticipation of speedily joining those she loved, had power so to buoy up her spirits, that her body could rise above its depressed and weakened condition. Her weary steps were slowly taken, and it seemed to her that she should never be able to reach home. Many, very many depressing thoughts passed through her mind as she proceeded slowly on her homeward way. The condition of her sister Ellen troubled her exceedingly. About one-third of her own and Mary's earnings were required to keep her and her little ones from absolute suffering; and Mary, like herself, she too plainly perceived to be rapidly sinking under her burdens.

"What is to be done when we fail, heaven only knows!" she murmured, as a vivid consciousness of approaching extremity arose in her mind.

As she said this, the idea of her brother presented itself, with the hope that he would now exert for them a sustaining and supporting energy--that he would be to them at last a brother. But this thought, that made her heart leap in her bosom, she put aside with an audible--

"No,--no,--Do not rest on such a feeble hope!"

At last her hand was upon the latch, and she lifted it and entered.

"I am glad to see you home again, Anna," Alfred said, with an

expression of real pleasure and affection; as she came in.

"And I am glad to see you sitting up and looking so well, brother," Anna replied, her gloomy thoughts at once vanishing. "How do you feel now?"

"O, I feel much better, sister. In a few days I hope I shall be able to go out. But how are you? It seems to me that you do not look well."

"I do feel very much fatigued, Alfred," Anna said, while her tone, in spite of her effort to make it appear cheerful, became sad. "We are not permitted in our store to sit down for a moment, and I get so tired by night that I can hardly keep up."

"But surely, Anna, you do not stand up all day long."

"Yes. Since I left this morning, I have been standing every moment, with the exception of the brief period I took to eat my dinner."

This simple statement smote upon the heart of the young man, and made him silent and thoughtful. He felt that, but for his neglect of duty--but for his abandonment of himself to sensual and besotting pleasures, this suffering, this self-devotion need not be.

Anna saw that what she had said was paining the mind of her brother, and she grieved that she had been betrayed into making any allusion to herself. To restore again the pleased expression to Alfred's countenance, she dexterously changed the subject to a more cheerful one, and was rewarded for her effort by seeing his eye again brighten and the smile again playing about his lips.

Instead of sitting down after tea and assisting Mary with her embroidery, as she usually did, Anna took a book and read aloud for the instruction and amusement of all; but most for the sake of Alfred--that he might feel with them a reciprocal pleasure, and thus be enabled to perceive that there was something substantial to fall back upon, if he would only consent to abandon the bewildering and insane delights to which he had given himself up for years. The effect she so much desired was produced upon the mind of her brother. He did, indeed, feel, springing up within him, a new-born pleasure--and wondered to himself how he could so long have strayed away from such springs of delight, to seek bitter waters in a tangled and gloomy wilderness.

When the tender good-night was at last said, and Mary stretched her wearied limbs in silent thoughtfulness beside her sister, there was a feeble hope glimmering in the dark and gloomy abyss of doubt and despondency that had settled upon her mind--a hope that her brother would go forth from his sick chamber a changed man. On this hope, fancy conjured up scenes and images of delight, upon which her mind dwelt in pleased and dreamy abstraction, until sleep stole upon her, and locked up her senses.

When she awoke, it was with the same sinking sensation that she had experienced on the morning previous, and, indeed, on every morning for many months past. The remembrance of the rebuke she had received on the day before for being late at her place of business, acted as a kind of stimulant to arouse her to exertion, so as to be able to get off in time. It was, however, a few minutes past the hour when she entered the store, the owner of which looked at his watch, significantly, as she did so.

This day passed, as the previous one had, in pain and extreme weariness--and so did the next, and the next, the poor girl's strength failing her too perceptibly. During this time, Alfred's coat had been repaired, a pair of pantaloons and a vest bought for him, and also a second-hand hat of very respectable appearance--all ready so soon as he should be strong enough to venture out. How anxiously, and yet in fear and trembling, did the sisters look forward to that period, which was to strengthen their feeble hopes, or scatter them to the winds!

"I do really feel very ill," Anna said, sinking back upon her pillow, after making an attempt to rise, one morning some four or five days after that on which Mary has been represented as endeavouring to get an advance from Mrs.--.

"What is the matter?" Mary inquired kindly.

"My head aches most violently--and grows confused so soon as I attempt to rise."

"Then I would lie still, Anna."

"No, I must be up, and getting ready to go to the store."

"I wouldn't go down to the store, if I were you, Anna. You had better rest for a day."

"I cannot afford to lose a day," Anna said, again rising in bed, and sitting upright, until the swimming in her head, that commenced upon the least motion, had subsided. Then she got out upon the floor, and stood for a few moments, while her head seemed reeling, and she every instant about to sink down. In a little while this dizziness went off, but her head throbbed and ached with aggravated violence.

At breakfast, she forced herself to swallow a small portion of food, although her stomach loathed it; and then, with trembling limbs and a feeling of faintness, she went out into the open air, and took her way to the store. The fresh breeze, as it fell coolingly on her fevered forehead, revived her in a degree; but long ere she had reached the store her limbs were sinking under her with excessive fatigue.

"Late again, miss--" said her employer, as she came in, with a look

of stern reproof.

"I have not been very well, sir," Anna replied, lifting her pale, languid face, and looking appealingly into the countenance of the store-keeper.

"Then you should stay at home altogether, Miss," was his cold response, as he turned away, leaving her to proceed to her accustomed station at the counter.

The day happening to be one of unusual activity in business, Anna was kept so constantly busy, that she could not find a moment in which to relieve the fatigue she felt by even leaning on the counter. Customer after customer came and went, and box after box was taken from, and replaced again upon the shelves, in what seemed to her an endless round. Sometimes her head ached so violently, that it was with difficulty she could see to attend correctly to her business. And sometimes she was compelled to steady herself by holding to the counter to prevent sinking to the floor, from a feeling of faintness, suddenly passing over her. Thus she held bravely on, under the feeble hope that her indisposition, as she tried mentally to term it, would wear off.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon that the fever which had been very high all through the day, began to subside. This symptom she noticed with an emotion of pleasure, as indicating a healthy reaction in her system.

It was but half an hour after, that she sunk, fainting, to the floor, at her place beside the counter. When the fever abated, exhausted nature gave way.

For nearly an hour she remained insensible. And it was nearly two hours before she had so far recovered as to be able to walk, when she was suffered to go away unattended. It was seven o'clock, when, with a face almost as white as ashes, and nearly sinking to the ground with weakness, she arrived at home, and opening the door, slowly entered.

"O, Anna! What ails you?" exclaimed her mother.

"I feel very sick," the poor girl replied, sinking into a chair.

"But where is Alfred?" she asked, in a quicker tone, in which was a strong expression of anxiety, as she glanced her eye about the room, in a vain search for him.

"He has walked out," Mary said.

"Has he!" ejaculated Anna. "How long has he been away?"

"It is now nearly four hours," Mary said, endeavouring to conceal the distress she felt, in pity for her sister, who was evidently quite ill.

"Four hours!" exclaimed Anna, her face blanching to still whiter hue. "Four hours! And do you not know where he is?"

"Indeed we do not, Anna. He went out to take a short walk, and said he would not be gone more than ten or twenty minutes."

Anna did not reply, but turned slowly away, and entering her chamber, threw herself exhausted upon her bed, feeling so utterly wretched, that she breathed an audible wish that she might die. In about ten minutes a carriage stopped at the door; and in a moment after, amid the rattling of departing wheels, Alfred entered, looking better and happier than he had looked for a long, long time. A single glance told the mother and sister that all was right.

"O, brother! How could you stay away so long?" Mary said, springing to his side, and grasping tightly his arm.

"I did not expect, when I walked out, that it would be so long before I returned, Mary," he replied, kissing her cheek affectionately. "But I met with an old, though long estranged friend, who seeing that I had been ill, and needed fresh air, insisted on taking me out into the country in his carriage. I could not consent. I was, however, so weak, as to be obliged to go to bed, when about three miles from the city, and lie there for a couple of hours. But I feel well, very well now; and have some good news to tell you. But where is Anna?"

"She has just come in, and gone up to her chamber. I do not think her at all well to-night," Mary said.

"Poor girl! She is sacrificing herself for the good of others," Alfred remarked, with tenderness and interest.

"Shall I call her down?" Mary asked.

"O, yes,--by all means."

Mary went up and found her sister lying across the bed, with her face buried in a pillow.

"Anna! Anna!" she said, taking hold of her and shaking her gently.

Anna immediately arose, and looking wildly around her, muttered something that her sister could not comprehend.

"Anna, brother's come home."

But she did not seem to comprehend her meaning.

The glaring brightness of Anna's eyes, and her flushed cheeks, convinced Mary that all was not right. Stepping to the head of the stairs, she called to Alfred, who instantly came up.

"Here is Alfred, Anna," she said, as she re-entered the chamber, accompanied by her brother.

For a moment or two, Anna looked upon him with a vacant stare, and then closing her eyes, sunk back upon the bed, murmuring

"It is all over--all over."

"What is all over, Anna?" her sister asked.

"What is all over?" the sick girl responded, in a sharp, quick tone, rising suddenly, and staring at Mary with a fixed look. "Why, it's all over with him! Haven't I drained my heart's blood for him? Haven't I stood all day at the counter for his sake, when I felt that I was dying? But it's all over now! He is lost, and I shall soon be out of this troublesome world!"

And then the poor half-conscious girl, covered her face with her hands and sobbed aloud.

"Don't do so, dear sister!" Alfred said, pressing up to the bedside, and drawing his arm around her. "Don't give way so! You won't have to stand at the counter any longer. I am Alfred--your brother--your long lost, but restored brother, who will care for you and work for you as you have so long cared for and worked for him. Take courage, dear sister! There are better and happier days for you. Do not give up now, at the very moment when relief is at hand."

Anna looked her brother in the face for a few moments, steadily, as her bewildered senses gradually returned, and she began to comprehend truly what he said, and that it was indeed her brother who stood thus before her, and thus appealed to her with affectionate earnestness.

"O, Alfred," the almost heart-broken creature, said--as she bent forward, and leaned her head upon his bosom--"Heaven be praised, if you are really and truly in earnest in what you say!"

"I am most solemnly in earnest, dear sister!" the young man said, with fervency and emphasis. "Since I saw you this morning, I have signed my name to the total abstinence pledge, and I will die before that pledge shall be broken! And that is not all. I met Charles Williams immediately after that act, and have had a long interview with him. He confessed to me that he had often felt that he was much to blame for having first introduced me into dissipated company, and that he now desired to aid me in reforming and assisting my mother and sisters, if I would only try and abandon my past evil courses. I responded most gladly to his generous interest, and he then told me, that if I would enter his and his father's store as a clerk, he would make my salary at once a thousand dollars per annum. Of course I assented to the arrangement with thankfulness. Dear mother! Dear sisters! There is yet, I trust, a brighter day in store for you."

"May our Heavenly Father cause these good resolutions to abide for ever, my son!" Mrs. Graham, who had followed her children up stairs, said, with tearful earnestness.

"He will cause them to abide, mother, I know that he, will," Alfred replied.

Just at that moment some one entered below--immediately after quick feet ascended the stairs, and Ellen bounded into the room.

"O, I have such good news to tell!" she exclaimed, panting for breath as she entered. "My husband has joined the reformers! I felt so glad that I had to run over and let you know. O, aint it good news, indeed!" And the poor creature clapped her hands together in an ecstasy of delight.

"It is truly good news, my child," Mrs. Graham said, as she drew her arm about the neck of Ellen. "And we too have glad tidings. Alfred has joined them also, and has got a situation at a thousand dollars a year."

Ellen, who had always loved her brother, tenderly, notwithstanding his vile habit of life, turned quickly towards him, and flinging her arms about his neck, said while the tears gushed from her eyes,

"Dear brother! I have never wholly despaired of this hour. Truly, my cup of joy is full and running over!"

It was about eleven o'clock on the next day, as Mary and her mother sat conversing by the side of the bed upon which lay Anna, now too ill to sit up, that a knock was heard below. Mrs. Graham went down and opened the door, when an elegantly dressed lady entered, calling her by name as she did so, at the same time asking for Anna and Mary.

She was shown up stairs by the mother, who did not recognise her, although both voice and face seemed familiar. On entering the chamber, Mary turned to her and exclaimed--

"Mary Williams! Is it possible!"

"And Mary Graham, is it indeed possible that I see you thus!--(kissing her)" And Anna--is that pale, worn face, the face of my old friend and companion, Anna Graham?" And she bent down over the bed and kissed the lips and cheek of the sick girl, tenderly, while her eyes grew dim with tears. "How changed in a few short years!" she added, as she took a proffered chair. "Who could have dreamed, seven years ago, that we should ever meet thus!"

In a short time, as the first shock and surprise of meeting passed off, Mary Williams, or rather Mrs. Harwood, entered into a serious conversation with Mrs. Graham, and her daughters, in reference to

the past, the present, and the future. After learning all that she could of their history since their father's failure, which was detailed without disguise by Mary--Anna was too feeble to converse--Mrs. Harwood turned to Mary and asked suddenly--

"Do you know this cape, Mary?" alluding to one she had on.

"O, yes--very well."

"You worked it, did you not?"

"Yes."

"For what price?"

"Two dollars."

"Is it possible! I bought it of Mrs.--for French, and paid her for it fifteen dollars."

"Fifteen dollars!" ejaculated Mary, in surprise. "How shamefully that woman has imposed upon me! During the last two years, I have worked at least one hundred capes for her, each of which brought me in only two dollars. No doubt she has regularly sold them for French goods, at from ten to fifteen dollars apiece."

"No doubt of it. I, myself, have bought several from her during that time at high prices, all of which may have been worked by you. I saw you in her store a few days ago, but did not recognise you, although your appearance, as it did several times here before, attracted my attention. I had my suspicions, after I had learned from Mrs.--who you were, that you had wrought this cape, and from having overheard you ask her for an advance of six dollars, as the price of three capes, was pretty well satisfied that two dollars was all you received for it. I at once determined to seek you out, and try to aid you in your severe struggle with the world. It was only last evening that I learned from my brother where you lived--and I also learned, what rejoiced my heart, that there was about occurring a favourable change in your circumstances. If, however, your health should permit, and your inclination prompt you to do so, I will take care that you get a much better price for any capes that you may hereafter work. They are richly worth ten and twelve dollars apiece, and at that price, I have no doubt but that I can get sales for many."

"Bless you, Mary! Bless you!" Anna said, smiling through gushing tears, as she rose up in the bed, and bent over towards her old friend and companion. "Your words have fallen upon my heart like a healing balsam!"

Mrs. Harwood came forward, and received the head of Anna upon her bosom, while she drew an arm round her waist, and bent down and pressed her with tenderness and affection.

A better day had truly dawned upon this ruined and deeply afflicted family. Mrs. Harwood and her brother continued to be their steady friends. For a year Alfred remained in his new situation as an efficient clerk, and at the end of that time had his salary advanced. During that period, Mary, and Anna, whose health had become measurably restored, employed all their spare time in embroidery, which, at the excellent prices which, through the aid of Mrs. Harwood, they were enabled to get for their really beautiful work, brought in a handsome addition to their brother's earnings, and this enabled them to live in independence, comfort and respectability. As for Ellen, her husband had become truly a reformed man, and provided for her comfortably.

It is now nearly two years since this happy change took place, and there is every appearance that another and a still happier one is about to occur in reference to Anna. Charles Williams is seen very often, of late, riding out with her and attending her to public places. The reader can easily guess the probable result. If there is not a wedding-party soon, then appearances, in this case at least, are very deceptive.

THE RUM-SELLER'S DREAM.

"HOW much have you taken in to-day, Sandy?" asked a modern rum-seller of his bar-tender, after the doors and windows of his attractive establishment were closed for the night.

"Only about a dollar, Mr. Graves. I never saw such dull times in my life."

"Only about a dollar! Too bad! too bad! I shall be ruined at this rate."

"I really don't know what ails the people now. But 'spose it's these blamation temperance folks that's doin' all the mischief."

"We must get up something new, Sandy;--something to draw attention to our house."

"So I've been a thinkin'. Can't we get George Washington Dixon to walk a plank for us? That would draw crowds, you know; and then every feller almost that we got in here would take a drink."

"We can't get him, Sandy. He's secured over at the--. But, any how, the people are getting up to that kind of humbuggery; and I'm afraid, that, like the Indian's gun, it would cost in the end more than it came to."

"Couldn't we get a maremaid?"

"A mermaid?"

"Yes, a maremaid. You know they had one in town t'other day. It would be a prime move, if we could only do it. We might fix her up here, just back of where I stand, so that every feller who called to see it would have to come up to the bar, front-face. There'd be no backing out then, you know, without ponying up for a drink. No one would be mean enough, after seeing a real maremaid for nothing, to go away without shelling out a fip for a glass of liquor."

"Nonsense, Sandy! Where are we to get a mermaid?"

"Where did they get that one from?"

"That was brought from Japan; and was a monkey's head and body sewed on to a fish's tail,--so they say;"

"Well, can't we send to Japan as well as any one? And as to its being a monkey's head on a fish's tail, that's no concern. It would only make a better gull-trap."

"And wait some two years before it arrived? Humph! If that's the only thing that will save me, I shall go to the dogs in spite of the--"

"Don't swear, Mr. Graves. It's a bad habit, though I am guilty of it myself,"--the bar-tender said, with vulgar familiarity. "But, why need we wait two years for a maremaid?"

"Did you ever study geography, Sandy?"

"Jografy?"

"Yes."

"What's that?"

"Why, the maps, at school."

"I warn't never to school."

"Then you don't know how far Japan is from here?"

"Not exactly. But 'spose it's some twenty or thirty miles."

"Twenty or thirty miles! It's t'other side of the world!"

"O, dear! Then we can't get a maremaid, after all. But 'spose we try and get a live snake."

"That won't do."

"Why not?"

"A live snake is no great curiosity."

"Yes, but you know we could call it some outlandish name; or say that it was dug up fifty feet below the ground, out of a solid rock, and was now all alive and doin' well."

"It wouldn't do, Sandy."

"Now I think it would, prime."

"It might if these temperance folks were not so confounded thick about here, interfering with a man and preventing him making an honest living. If it wasn't for them, I should be clearing five or ten dollars a day, as easy as nothing."

"Confound them! I say," was Sandy's hearty response; while he clenched his fist, and ground his teeth together. "If I had a rope round the necks of every mother's son of 'em, wouldn't I serve 'em as old Julius Cesar did the Hottentots? Wouldn't I though! But what could they say or do about it, Mr. Graves."

"They'd pretty quick put it on to us in their temperance papers about the good device we had. They'd talk pretty fast about the serpent that seduced Eve, and all that. No, blast 'em! A snake won't do, Sandy."

"How will a monkey do?"

"A monkey might answer, if he was a little cuter than common. But we can't get one handy."

"Try a band of music."

"That would soon wear out; and then we should have to get up something else, and the people would suspect us of trying to gull them."

"Then what is to be done, Mr. Graves? We can never stand it at this rate."

"I'm sure I don't know." And the rum-seller leaned upon his bar, and looked quite sad and dejected.

"I wonder what has become of Bill Riley?" he at length asked, rising up with a sigh. "He hasn't been here for a week."

"Dick Hilton told me to-day that he believed he had joined the teetotallers."

"I feared as much. He was one of my very best customers; worth a clear dollar and a half a week to me, above the cost of the liquors, the year round. And Tom Jones? Where can he be?"

"Gone, too."

"Tom Jones?" in surprise.

"It's a fact. They got him on the same night Bill Riley was caught."

"Foolish fellow, to go and throw himself away in that style! Them temperance men will get from him every dollar he can earn, to build Temperance Halls, and get up processions, and buy clothes for lazy, loafing vagabonds, that had a great sight better be sent to the poorhouse. It is too bad. My very blood boils when I think what fools men are."

"And there's Harry Peters,--Dick Hilton told me that he'd gone, too."

"Not Harry Peters, surely!"

"Yes. He hasn't been near our house for several days."

"Well, something must be done to get up a new set of customers, or we are gone. We must invent some new drink."

"What shall it be?"

"O, that's no consequence. The name must be taking."

"Have you thought of one?"

"No, Can't you think of something?"

"Well--Let me see. But I'm sure I don't know what would do."

"What do you think of 'Bank Stock?' That would attract attention."

"I can't say that I like it."

"Or 'Greasers?'"

"Most too vulgar."

"So I think myself. Suppose we call it a 'Mummy?'"

"I'm afraid it wouldn't go. It ought to have 'Imperial,' or 'Nectar,' or something like that about it."

"O, yes, I see your notion. But they've all been used up long ago. It must be some entirely new name, which, at the same time, will hit a popular idea. As 'Tariff,' or 'Compromise.'"

"I see now. Well, can't you hammer out something?"

"I must try. Let me see. How will 'Sub-Treasury' do?"

"Capital! 'Graves' Sub-Treasury' will be just the thing. You see, the young-fellows will say--'Why, what kind of a new drink is this they've been getting up, down at the Harmony House?'

"I don't know--What is it?"

"The Sub-Treasury, they call it.'

"Have you tried it yet?"

"No.'

"Well, come, let's give him a call. Novelty, you know, is the order of the day.'

"That's the way these matters work, Mr. Graves. But how are you going to make it?"

"I've not thought of that. But anything will do. Liquor tastes good to 'em any way you choose to fix it."

"True enough. You can leave that part to me. I'll hatch up something that will tickle as it goes down, and make 'em wish their throats were a mile long, that they might taste it all the way."

"Have you tried Graves' new drink yet, Joe?" asked one young man of another, a day or two after the conversation just noted took place.

"No.--What is it?"

"Sub-Treasury."

"Sub-Treasury? That must be something new. I wonder what it is?"

"I've just been wondering the same thing. Suppose we go down and try it."

"I was about swearing off from ever tasting another drop of liquor. But, I believe I will try a 'Sub-Treasury' with you, just for the fun of the thing."

"Well, come along then."

And so the two started off for the Harmony House.

"Give us a couple of Sub-Treasuries," said one of them as they entered; and forthwith a couple of glasses filled with mixed liquors, crushed ice, lemonpeel, and snow-white sugar, were prepared, and a straw placed in each, through which the young men "imbibed" the new compound.

"Really, this is fine, Nelson!" said the one, called Joe, smacking his lips.

"It is, indeed. You'll make your fortune out of this, Graves."

"Do you think so?" the pleased liquor-seller responded, with a broad smile of satisfaction.

"I've not the least doubt of it," Joe, or Joseph Bancroft, said,--"I had half resolved to join the temperance society this day. But your 'Sub-Treasury' has shaken my resolution. I shall never be able to do it now in this world, nor in the next, either, if I can only get you in the same place with me to make 'Sub-Treasury!' Ha! ha! ha!"

"A Sub-Treasury," said another young man, coming up to the bar.

"Here, landlord, let us have one of your--what do you call 'em? O, Sub-Treasuries!" was the request of another.

"Hallo, Sandy! What new-fangled stuff is this you've got?" broke in a half-drunken creature, staggering up, and holding on to the bar-railing. "Let us have one, will you?"

Both Sandy and Graves were now kept as busy as they could be, mixing liquors and serving customers. The advertisement which had been inserted in two or three of the morning papers, in the following words, had answered fully the rum-sellers' expectations.

"Drop in at the HARMONY HOUSE, and try a 'Sub-Treasury.' 'What is a Sub-Treasury?' you ask. Come and see for yourself, and taste for yourself. Old Graves' word for it, you'll never want anything else to wet your whistle with, as long as you live."

All through the forenoon the run was kept up steadily, dozens of new faces appearing at the bar, and cheering the heart of the tavern-keeper with the prospect of a fresh set of customers. About two o'clock, succeeded a pause.

"That works admirably,--don't it, Sandy?" said Mr. Graves, as soon as the bar-room was perfectly clear, for the first time, since morning.

"Indeed, it does. They havn't given me time to blow. But aint some folks easily gulled?"

"Easily enough, Sandy. This Sub-Treasury they think something

wonderful. But it's only rum after all, by another name, and in a little different form. A 'cobbler,' or a 'julep' has lost its attractions; but get up some new name for an old compound, and you go all before the wind again."

"I think we might tempt some of the new converts to temperance with this. Bill Riley, for instance."

"No doubt. I'll see if I can't come across Bill; he is too good a customer to lose."

And so saying, Mr. Graves retired from the bar-room, to get his dinner, feeling better satisfied with himself than he had been for a long time. After eating heartily, and drinking freely, he went into his handsomely furnished parlour, and reclined himself upon a sofa, thinking still, and with a pleasurable emotion that warmed his bosom, of the success of his expedient to draw custom. He had been lying down, it seemed to him, but a few moments, when a tap at the door, to which he responded with a loud "come in," was followed by the entrance of a thin, pale, haggard-looking creature, her clothes soiled, and hanging loosely, and in tatters about her attenuated body. By the hand she held a little girl, from whose young face had faded every trace of childhood's happy expression. She, too, was thin and pale, and had a fixed, stony look, of hopeless suffering. They came up to where he still lay upon the sofa, and stood looking down upon him in silence.

"Who are you? What do you want?" the rum-seller ejaculated, raising himself up with a strange feeling about his heart.

"The wife and child of one of your victims! He is dying, and wishes to see you."

"Who is he? What is his name?" asked the tavern-keeper, while his face grew pale, and his lips quivered.

"William Riley," was the mournful reply.

"Go home, woman! Go home! I cannot go with you! What good can I do your husband?"

"You must go! You shall go!" shrieked the wretched being, suddenly grasping the arm of Mr. Graves, with a tight grip, while her hand seemed to burn his arm, as if it were a hand of fire.

A sudden and irresistible impulse to obey the call of the dying man came over him, and as he arose mechanically, the mother and her child turned towards the door, and he followed after them. On emerging into the street, he became conscious of a great and sudden change in external nature. On retiring from his bar an hour before, the sun was shining in a sky of spotless beauty. Now the heavens were shrouded in dense masses of black clouds that were whirling here and there in immense eddies, or careering across the sky as if

driven by a fierce and mighty wind. But below, all was hushed and pulseless as the grave; and the stagnant air felt like the hot vapour over an immense furnace. The tavern-keeper would have paused and returned so soon as he became conscious of this fearful change, portending the approach of a wild storm; but his conductors seemed to know his thoughts; and turning, each fixed upon him a stern and threatening look, whose strange power he could neither resist nor understand.

"Come," said the mother in a hollow, husky voice; and then turned and moved on again, while the tavern-keeper followed impulsively. They had proceeded thus, for only a few paces, when a fierce light glanced through half the sky, followed by a deafening crash, under the concussion of which the earth trembled as if shaken to its very centre. The tavern-keeper again paused in shrinking irresolution, and again the woman's emphatic,

"Come!" caused him to follow his guides mechanically.

Soon the storm burst over their heads, and raged with a wild fury, such as he had never before witnessed. The wind howled through the streets and alleys of the city, with the roar of thunder; while the deep reverberations following every broad sheet of lightning that blazed through the whole circle of the heavens, was as the roar of a dissolving universe. Amid all this, the rain fell like a deluge. But the rum-seller's guides paused not, and he kept steadily onwards after them, shrinking now into the shelter of the houses, and now breasting the fierce storm with a momentary desperate resolution.

Through street after street, lined on either side with wretched tenements that seemed tottering and just ready to fall, and through alley after alley, where squalid misery had hid itself from the eye of general observation, did they pass, in what seemed to Mr. Graves an interminable succession; At last the woman and her child paused at the door of an old, wretched-looking frame house, that appeared just ready to sink to the ground with decay.

"This is the place, sir. Come in! Your victim would see you before he dies," the woman said in a deep voice that made a chill run through every nerve, at the same time that she looked him sternly and with an expression of malignant triumph in the face.

Unable to resist the impulse that drove him onward, the rum-seller entered the house.

"See there, sir! Look! Behold the work of your own hands!" exclaimed the woman with startling emphasis, as he found himself in a room, with a few old rags in one corner of it for a bed, upon which lay, in the last sad agonies of dissolution, his old customer, Bill Riley, who, he had been that day informed by his bar-keeper, had joined the temperance society.

"There, sir! See there!" she continued, grasping his arm, and

dragging him up to where the miserable wretch lay. "Look at him!--Bill--Bill!" she continued, stooping down, while she still held tightly the rum-seller's arm, and shaking the dying man. "Bill--Bill! Here he is. You said you wanted to see him! Now curse him, Bill! Curse him with your dying breath!" And the woman's voice rose to a wild shriek.

The wretch, thus rudely and suddenly called back from the brink of death into a painful consciousness of existence, half rose up, and stared wildly around him for a moment or two.

"Here he is, Bill! Here he is!" resumed his wife, again shaking him violently.

"Who? Who?" inquired the dying man.

"Why, the rum-seller, who robbed you of your hard earnings, that he might roll in wealth and feast daily on luxuries, while your wife and children were starving! Here he is. Curse him now, with your dying breath! Curse him, I say, Bill Riley! Curse him!"

"Who? Who?" eagerly asked the wretched being, a thrill of new life seeming to flash through his exhausted frame--"Old Graves? Where is he?"

"Here he is, Bill! Here he is! Don't you see him?"

"Ah, yes! I see him now!" And Riley fixed his eyes, that seemed, to the rum-seller, to burn and flash like balls of fire, sending off vivid scintillations, upon him with a long and searching stare.

"Ah, yes," he continued, "this is old Graves, the rum-seller, who has sent more men to hell, and more widows and orphans to the poor-house, than any other man living. How do you do, sir?" rising up still more in his bed, and grasping the unwilling hand of the tavern-keeper, which he clenched hard, and shook with superhuman strength. "How are you, old fellow? I'm glad to see you once more in this world. We shall have a jolly time in the next, though, shan't we?"

A smile of malignant triumph flitted for a moment over the livid face of Riley. Then its expression brightened into one of intelligence.

"Look here," he said, and brought his lips close to the ear of Graves. Then in a deep whisper, he breathed the words,

"Sub-Treasury!"

The rum-seller started, suddenly, and grew paler than ever.

Instantly a loud, unearthly laugh rang through the room, causing the blood to curdle about his heart.

"Ha! ha! ha! I thought that chord could be touched! Ha! ha! That was a capital idea, wasn't it, old fellow? But you were too late for Bill Riley. You thought the temperance men had him. But that was a little mistake."

The sweat already stood in large drops on the pale face of the tavern-keeper, and his limbs trembled like the quivering aspen.

"Horrible!" he murmured, closing his eyes, to shut out the scene.

"Not half so horrible as the place where I was, just before you came in, Mr. Graves," said Riley in a calmer voice. "And where do you think that was?"

"In hell, I suppose," replied the rum-seller, with the energy of desperation.

"Exactly," was the calm reply. "And what do you think I heard and saw there? Let me tell you. I was dead for a little while, and found myself in strange quarters, as you will say, when you get there. I always thought devils had long tails, and cloven feet, horns, and all that kind of thing. But that's a vulgar error. They are nothing but wicked men like you, who in this world have taken delight in injuring others. You will make a first-rate devil! Ha! ha! I heard 'em say so, and wishing you were only there to help them work out their evil intentions."

"There are a great many little hells there, all grouped into one immense hell, like societies here, grouped into one larger society or nation. And there, as here, every smaller society is engaged in doing some particular thing, and all are in one society who love to do that thing. As for instance, all who, while here, have taken delight in theft, are there associated together, and are all the while busy in inventing reasons to put into the heads of thieves here to justify them in stealing. Murderers, in like manner; and so rum-sellers. They have a hell all filled with rum-sellers there! I was let into it for a little while to see what was going on, and who do you think I saw there. Why, old Adams, that died about a month ago. The old fellow was as lively as a cricket, and as busy as a bee."

"How is that prime old chap, Graves?' he asked of me, as soon as he found out I was there."

"I haven't seen him for a week,' I replied. 'I have been sick for that time.'

"But he's a rum 'un, though, ain't he?' chuckled Adams. 'Many a scheme he and I have laid to get money out of the grog-drinkers. But he was always ahead of me. I used, in my early days, to feel a little compunction when I saw a clever fellow going to ruin. But it never affected him in the least. All was fish that came into his

net. I wish we had him with us. We want just such scheming devils as he to help us devise ways and means to circumvent these temperance men. They'll ruin us, if we don't look out. How were they coming on when you left?'

"Carrying everything before them,' I said. 'The rum-sellers are almost driven to their wit's ends for devices to get customers.'

"Too bad! Too bad!' ejaculated old Adams. 'I'll turn hell upside down, but what I'll beat them out.'

"You'll have to do your prettiest, then, let me tell you, old fellow,' I rejoined, 'for the temperance cause is going with a perfect rush. It is a mighty torrent whose course, neither men nor devils can stay. It moves onward with a power and majesty that astonishes the world,--and onward it will move, until your hell of rum-makers and rum-sellers will not be able to find a single point through which to flow into the world and tempt men with your infernal devices!'

"O, if you had heard the horrid yell of malignancy which arose, and echoed through the black chamber of that region of wickedness and misery, it would have made you shrink into nothingness with terror. They fairly gnashed on me with their teeth in impotent rage. At length old Adams got upon a whiskey-still--they have such things in hell--the pattern was got from there when introduced here, and made a speech to his associates. From what he said, I found that he had minute information of all that was going on in this region.

"Old Graves,' he said--'our very best man, has already been so reduced in his business by this accursed temperance movement, that he has recently thought seriously of giving up. This must not be. We cannot lose him. No mind receives our suggestions more readily than his.--If he gives up, we lose a host. You all know, that our influence on earth is powerless, unless we have men to carry out our plans. If they will not listen to our suggestion--if they will not become our agents, we can do nothing there. As spiritual existences, we cannot affect that which is corporeal, except through the spiritual united with the corporeal--that is, through spiritual bodies in material bodies. In other words, we can act on men's minds, and they can do our works on earth for us. Now, seeing that we can do nothing to stop this temperance movement, except through the self-love of the rum-sellers and rum-makers, it will never do to let old Graves fall. We must help him to some new scheme by which to bring back his diminished custom. Now what shall it be?'

"Some device that will call attention to his bar-room, is what is wanted,' remarked one.

"Yes, that is plain enough,' replied old Adams, who seemed to be a kind of head devil there--'but what shall it be? That's the question!'

"Suppose we put him up to getting a woman to walk a plank,' suggested one.

"No. That has been tried already; and if it is tried again so soon, these temperance men will cry, humbug!"

"How would it do for him to get a pretty girl behind his bar?"

"That might do. But then, his wife is a sort of religious woman, and wouldn't let him do it."

"Couldn't we induce him to poison her, and so get her out of the way?"

"No--That's out of the question. He kind of likes the woman too well for that."

"What, then, do you suggest?"

"Some new drink will be the thing. Something that will tickle the ear at the same time that it tickles the palate. It will be a great thing, if, in this matter, we can kill two birds with one stone. Bring back by some new attraction the wavering ones, and turn the tide of custom in the direction of our very particular friend Mr. Graves."

"Have you thought of a name for it?"

"No."

"How would Ambrosia do?" suggested one.

"Not at all," replied old Adams. "It aint the thing to catch gulls now-a-days. And more than that, it isn't something new."

"What do you think of Harlequinade?"

"That might answer; but it's been used, already."

"Fiscal agent?"

"The same objection."

"Mummy?"

"The same."

"Cobbler?"

"Good, but stale."

"Greaser?"

"No'--And Adams shook his head emphatically.

"Sam Weller?'

"Been used already.'

"Veto?'

"That too.'

"Hardware?'

"Likewise.'

"What do you think of Elevator?'

"That might do; but still I can't exactly say that I like it. It should be something to strike the popular idea.'

"Sub-Treasury, then?'

"That's it, exactly! Sub-Treasury--Sub-Treasury. Let it be called Sub-Treasury! And now, as I have more power over Graves than any of you, let me have the managing of him.' And so saying, Adams seemed to go away, and remain, for a day or two. When he came back, all the devils gathered around him full of interest to hear of his success. They greeted him, first, with three wild, infernal cheers, full of malignant pleasure, and then asked,

"What news? What news from earth?'

"Glorious!' was his response. And then another wild yell of triumph went up.

"I found Graves,' he went on, 'just the same pliant fool that he has ever been. He fell into my suggestions at once, and on the very next day advertised his 'Sub-Treasury.' It took like a charm. I could tell you of a dozen young fellows just about being caught by the teetotalers, who couldn't withstand the new temptation. There was one in particular. His name is Joe Bancroft. Only married about three years, and almost at the bottom of the hill already. On the day before 'Sub-Treasury' was announced, he came home sober, for the first time in six months. His wife, a beautiful young girl when he married her, but now a thin, pale, heart-broken creature, sat near a window sewing when he entered. But she did not look up. She heard him come in--but she could not turn her eyes towards him, for her heart always grew sicker whenever she saw the sad changes that drink had wrought upon him.

"For a few moments Joe stood gazing at his young wife, with a tenderer interest than he had felt for a long time. He saw that she did not look up, and was conscious of the reason.

"Sarah,' he at last said, in a voice of affection, coming to her side.

"What do you want?' she replied, still without looking up.

"Look up at me, Sarah,' he said, in a voice that slightly trembled.

"Instantly her work dropped from her hands, and she lifted her eyes to the face of her husband, and murmured in a low, sad tone,

"What is it you wish, Joseph?"

"You look very pale, and very sorrowful, Sarah,' her husband said, with increasing tenderness of tone and manner.

"It had been so very long since he had spoken to her kindly, or since he had appeared to take any interest in her, that the first tenderly uttered word melted down her heart, and she burst into tears, and leaning her head against him, sobbed long and passionately.

"With many a kind word, and many a solemn promise of reformation did the husband soothe the stricken heart of his wife, into which a new hope was infused.

"I will be a changed man, after this, Sarah,' he said--
'And then it must go well with us. It seems as if I had been, for the last year, the victim of insanity. I cannot realize how it is possible for any one to abandon himself as I have done; to the neglect of all the most sacred ties and duties that can appertain to us. How deeply--O, how deeply you must have suffered!"

"Deeply, indeed, dear husband!--More than tongue can utter,' the young wife replied, in a solemn tone. 'It has seemed, sometimes, as if I must die. Day after day, week after week, and month after month, to see you coming in and going out, as you have done, for ever intoxicated. To have no kind word or look. No rational intercourse with one to whom I had yielded up my heart so confidently. O, my husband! you know not how sad a trial you have imposed upon your wife!"

"Sad--sad, indeed, I am sure it has been, Sarah! But let us try and forget the past. There is bright sunshine yet for us, and it will soon, I trust, fall warmly and cheerily on our pathway."

"All that day Bancroft remained at home with his wife, renewing his assurances of reformation, and laying his plans for the future. I saw all this, and began to fear lest Joe would really get freed from the toils we had, through the rum-sellers, thrown around him--toils, that I had felt, sure would soon cause him to fall headlong down amongst us. I, of course, suggested nothing to him then; for it would have been of little use. Towards night, his wife proposed that he should sign the pledge. I was at his ear in a moment--

"That would be too degrading!" I whispered. 'You have not got quite so low as that yet.'

"No, Sarah, I do not wish to sign the pledge,' he at once replied.

"Why not, dear?'

"Because, I have always despised this way of binding oneself down by a written contract, not to do a thing. It is unmanly. My resolution is sufficient. If I say that I will never drink another drop, why I won't. But if I were to bind myself by a pledge not to touch liquor again, I should, never feel a moment's peace, until I had broken it.'

"These objections I readily infused into his mind, and he at once adopted them as his own. I had power to do so, because I now perceived that his love of drink was so strong, that he did not wish to cut off all chance of ever tasting it again. He, therefore, wanted specious reasons for not signing the pledge, and with these I promptly furnished him!

"It was in vain that his wife urged him, even with tears and eager entreaties to take the pledge: I was too much for her, and made him firm as a rock in his determination not to sign.

"On the next morning, he parted with his wife, strong in his resolution to be a reformed man. The pleasant thrill of her parting kiss, the first he had received for more than a year, lingered in his memory and encouraged him to abide by his promise. He passed his accustomed places of resort for liquor, on his way to business, but without the first desire to enter. I noted all this, and kept myself busy about him to detect a moment of weakness. Our friend Graves advertised his 'Sub-Treasury' on that morning. I calculated largely on the novelty of the idea to win him off. But, somehow or other, he did not see it. Another young man, one of his companions, did, however:

"Have you tried Graves' new drink, yet?' he asked of him about eleven o'clock, while he was under the influence of a pretty strong thirst.

"No, what is it?' he replied, with a feeling of lively interest.

"Sub-Treasury,' replied his friend.

"Sub-Treasury! That must be something new! I wonder what it can be?'

"Into this feeling of interest in knowing what the new drink could be, I infused a strong desire to taste it.

"Suppose we go and try some,' suggested his friend.

"There'll not be the least danger,' I whispered in his ear. 'You can try it, and refrain from drinking to excess. The evil has been your drinking too much. There is no harm in moderate drinking. This decided him, and I retired. I knew, if he tasted, that he was gone.'

"Down he went to the Harmony House;--I was there when he came in. It would have done your hearts good to have seen with what delight he sipped the new beverage,--and to have heard him say, as I did, to Graves;--'I had half resolved to join the temperance society this day,--but your Sub-Treasury has entirely shaken my resolution. I shall never be able to do it now in this world, nor in the next either, if I can only get you in the same place with me to make Sub-Treasury.' And then he laughed with great glee. One, of course, did not satisfy him, nor two, nor three. Before dinner-time he was gloriously drunk, and went staggering home as usual. I could not resist the inclination to see a little of the fun when he presented himself to his wife, whose fond hopes were all in the sky again. Like a bird, she had sung about the house during the morning, her heart so elated that she could not prevent an outward expression of the delight she felt. As the hour drew near for her husband's return, a slight fear would glance through her mind, quickly dismissed, however;--for she could not entertain the idea for a moment that his newly-formed resolution could possibly be so soon broken.

"At last the hour for his accustomed return arrived. She heard him open the door--and sprung to meet him. One look sufficed to break her heart. Statue-like she stood for a moment or two, and then sunk senseless to the floor.

"Other matters calling me away, I staid only to see this delightful little scene, and then hurried back to the Harmony House, to see if the run was kept up. Customers came in a steady stream, and crowded the bar of our worthy friend, whose heart was as light as a feather. I saw at least half a dozen come in and sip a glass of Sub-Treasury, who I knew had not tasted liquor for months. I marked them; and shall be about their path occasionally. But the best thing of all that I saw, was a reformer break his pledge. He was, years ago, a noted drunkard, but had been a reformed man for four years. In that time he had broken up several grog-shops, by reforming all their customers, and had got, I suppose, not less than five or six hundred persons to sign the pledge. I had, of course, a particular grudge against him. It was an exceedingly warm day, and he was uncommonly thirsty. He was reading the paper, and came across the 'Sub-Treasury' advertisement.

"Ha! ha! What is this, I wonder?' he said, laughing; some new trick of the enemy, I suppose.'

"Look here, what is this Sub-Treasury stuff, that Graves advertises this morning?' he said, to a young fellow, a protege of mine, who was more than a match for him.

"A kind of temperance beverage.' I put it into the fellow's head to say.

"Temperance beverage?"

"Yes. It's made of lemonpeel, and one stuff or other, mixed up with pounded ice. He's got a tremendous run for it. I know half a dozen teetotallers who get it regularly. I saw three or four there to-day, at one time.'

"Indeed!"

"It's a fact. Come, won't you go down and try a glass? It's delightful.'

"Are you in earnest about it?"

"Certainly I am. It's one of the most delicious drinks that has been got up this season.'

"I don't like to be seen going into such a place.'

"O, as to that, there is a fine back entrance leading in from another street, that no one suspects, and a private bar into the bargain. We can go in and get a drink, and nobody will ever see us.'

"Well, I don't care if I do,' said the temperance man, 'for I am very dry.'

"You're a gone gozzling, my old chap,' I said, as I saw him moving off. 'I thought I'd get you before long.' Sure enough, the moment he took the first draught his doom was sealed. His former desire for liquor came back on him with irresistible power; and before nightfall, he was so drunk that he went staggering along the street, to the chagrin and consternation of the teetotallers; but to the infinite delight of your humble servant.

"And so saying, that malignant fiend, who, while he inhabited a material body, was called old Billy Adams, stepped down from the still. Then there arose three loud and long cheers, for Graves, and his 'Sub-Treasury,' that echoed and re-echoed wildly through that gloomy prison-house.

"You're much thought of down there, you see," continued Riley, with a cold grin of irony.--"Adams says, that if this temperance movement aint stopped soon, they will have to get you among them, and make you head devil in that department. How would you like that, old chap, say? How would you like to go now?"

As Riley said this, he threw himself forward, and clasped his thin, bony fingers around the neck of the rum-seller, with a strong grip.

"How would you like to go now, ha?" he screamed fiercely in his ear, clenching his hand tighter and still tighter, while his hot breath melted over the face of Graves in a suffocating vapour. The struggles of the rum-seller were vigorous and terrible--but the dying man held on with a superhuman strength. Soon everything around grew confused, and though still distinctly conscious, it was a consciousness in the mind of the tavern-keeper of the agonies of death. This became so terrible to him that he resolved on one last and more vigorous effort for life. It was made, and the hands of the dying man broke loose. Instantly starting to his feet, the wretched dealer in poison for both the bodies and souls of men, found himself standing in the centre of his own parlour, with the sweat rolling from his face in large drops.

"Merciful Heaven! And is it indeed a dream?" he ejaculated, panting with terror and exhaustion.

"A dream--and yet not all a dream," he added, in a few moments, in a sad, low tone.--"In league with hell against my fellow-men! Can it indeed be true? But away! away such thoughts!"

Such thoughts, however, could not be driven away. They crowded upon his mind at every avenue, and pressed inward to the exclusion of every other idea.

"But I am not in league with evil spirits to do harm to my fellow-men. I do not wish evil to any one," he argued.

"You _are_ in such evil consociation," whispered a voice within him.

"There are but two great parties in the world--the evil and the good. No middle ground exists. You are with one of these--working for the good of your fellow-men, or for their injury. One of these great parties acts in concert with heaven, the other with hell. On the side of one stand arrayed good spirits--on the side of the other evil spirits. Can good spirits be on your side? Would they, for the sake of gain, take the food out of the mouths of starving children? Would they put allurements in a brother's way to entice him to ruin? No! Only in such deeds can evil spirits take delight."

"Then I am on the side of hell?"

"There are but two parties. You cannot be on the side of heaven, and do evil to your neighbour."

"Dreadful thought! In league with infernal spirits to curse the human race! Can it be possible Am I really in my senses?"

For nearly half an hour did Graves pace the floor backwards and forwards, his mind in a wild fever of excitement. In vain did he try, over and over again, to argue the point against the clearest and strongest convictions of reason. Look at it as he would, it all resolved itself into that one bold and startling position, that he was in league with hell against his fellow-men.

"And now, what shall I do?" was the question that arose in his mind.
"Give up my establishment?"

At that moment, Sandy, the bar-tender, opened the parlour door, and said with a broad smile--

"The Sub-Treasury is working wonders again! I'm overrun, and want help."

"I can't come down, just now, Sandy. I'm not very well. You will have to get along the best you can," Graves replied.

"I don't know what I shall do then, sir: I can't make 'em half as fast as they are called for."

"Let half of the people go away then," was the cold reply. "I can't help you any more to-day."

Sandy thought, as he withdrew, that the "old man" must have suddenly lost his senses. He was confirmed in this idea before the next morning.

It was past twelve o'clock when the run of custom was over, and Sandy closed up for the night. As soon as this was done, Mr. Graves came in for the first time since dinner.

"It's been a glorious day for business," Sandy said, rubbing his hands. "I've taken in more, than thirty dollars. Lucifer himself must have put the idea into your head."

"No doubt he did," was the grave reply.

Sandy stared at this.

"Didn't you tell me that Bill Riley had joined the temperance society?"

"Yes, I did," replied the bar-keeper.

"Are you sure?"

"I am sure, I was told so by one that knew."

"I only wish I was certain of it," was the reply, made half abstractedly. And then the dealer leaned down upon the bar and remained in deep thought for a very long time, to the still greater surprise of Sandy, who could not comprehend what had come over his employer.

"Aint you well, Mr. Graves," he at length asked, breaking in upon the rum-seller's painful reverie.

"Well!" he ejaculated, rousing up with a start. "No, I am not well."

"What is the matter, sir?"

"I'm sick," was the evasive response.

"How, sick?" was Sandy's persevering inquiry.

"Sick at heart! O, dear! I wish I'd been dead before I opened a grog-shop!"--And the countenance of Mr. Graves changed its quiet, sad expression, to one of intense agony.

Sandy looked at the tavern-keeper with an air of stupid astonishment for some moments, unable to comprehend his meaning. It was evident to his mind that Mr. Graves had suddenly become crazed about something. This idea produced a feeling of alarm, and he was about retiring for counsel and assistance, when the tavern-keeper roused himself and said:

"When did you see Bill Riley, Sandy?"

"I saw him yesterday."

"Are you certain?" in a quick, eager tone.

"O yes. I saw him going along on the other side of the street with two or three fellows that didn't look no how at all like rum-bruizers."

"I was afraid he was dead," Mr. Graves responded to this, breathing more freely.

"Dead! Why should you think that?" inquired Sandy, still more (sic) mistified.

"I had reason for thinking so," was the evasive reply. A pause of some, moments ensued, when the bar-keeper said--

"I shall have to be stirring bright and early to-morrow morning."

"Why so?"

"We're out of sugar and lemons both. That Sub-Treasury runs on them 'ere articles strong."

"Confound the Sub-Treasury!" Mr. Graves ejaculated, with a strong and bitter emphasis. Sandy stood again mute with astonishment, staring into the tavern-keeper's face.

"Sandy," Mr. Graves at length said in a calm, resolute tone, "my mind is made up to quit selling liquor."

"Quit selling liquor, sir!" exclaimed Sandy, more astonished than

ever. "Quit selling liquor just at this time, when you have made such a hit?"

"Yes, Sandy, I'm going to quit it. I'm afraid that we rum-sellers are on the side of hell."

"I never once supposed that we were on the side of heaven," the bar-keeper replied, half smiling.

"Then what side did you suppose we were on?"

"O, as to that, I never gave the matter a thought. Only, it never once entered my head that we could claim much relationship with heaven. Heaven feeds the hungry and clothes the naked. But we take away both food and clothing, and give only drink. There is some little difference in this, now one comes to think about it."

"Then I am right in my notion."

"I'm rather afraid you are, sir. But that's a strange way of thinking."

"Aint it the true way?"

"Perhaps so."

"I am sure so, Sandy! And that's what makes me say that I'm done selling rum."

The tavern-keeper did not tell all that was in his mind. He said nothing of his dream, nor of that horrible idea of going to the rum-seller's hell, and becoming a devil, filled with the delight of rendering mankind wretched by deluging the land with drunkenness.

"What are you going to do then?" asked Sandy.

"Why, the first thing is to quit rum-selling."

"But what then?"

"I'm not decided yet;--but shall enter into some kind of business that I can follow with a clear conscience."

"You'll sell out this stands I suppose. The goodwill is worth three or four hundred dollars."

"No, Sandy, I will not!" was the tavern-keeper's positive, half indignant reply. "I'll have nothing more to do with the gain of rum-selling. I have too much of that sin on my conscience already."

"Somebody will come right in, as soon as you move out. And I don't see why you should give any one such an advantage for nothing."

"I'm not going to move out, Sandy."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"Why, one thing--I'm going to shut up this devil's man-trap. And while I can keep possession of the property, it shall never be opened as a dram-shop again."

"What are you going to do with your liquors, Mr. Graves? Sell 'em?"

"No."

"What then?"

"Burn 'em. Or let 'em run in the gutter."

"That I should call a piece of folly."

"You may call it what you please. But I'll do it notwithstanding. I've received my last dollar for rum. Not another would I touch for all the world!"

A slight shudder passed through the tavern-keeper's body, as he said this, occasioned by the vivid recollection of some fearful passage in his late dream.

"You'd better give the liquors to me, Mr. Graves. It would be a downright sin to throw 'em in the gutter, when a fellow might make a good living out of 'em."

"No, Sandy. Neither you nor anybody else shall ever make a man drunk with the liquor now in this house. It shall run in the gutter. That's settled!"

When the sun arose next morning, Harmony House was shorn of its attractions as a drinking establishment. All the signs, with their deceptive and alluring devices, were taken down--the shutters closed, and everything indicating its late use removed, excepting a strong smell of liquor, great quantities of which had been poured into the gutters.

In the course of a few weeks, the house was again re-opened as a hatter-shop, Mr. Graves having resumed his former honest business, which he still follows, well patronized by the temperance men, among whom are Joseph Randolph, and William Riley, the former reclaimed through his active instrumentality.

HOW TO CURE A TOPER.

[THE following story, literally true in its leading particulars, was told by a reformed man, who knew W--very well. In repeating it, I do so in the first person, in order to give it more effect.]

I was enjoying my glass of flip, one night, at the little old "Black Horse" that used to stand a mile out of S-- (I hadn't joined the great army of teetotallers then,) when a neighboring farmer came in, whose moderation, at least in whisky toddies, was not known unto all men. His name was W--. He was a quiet sort of a man when sober, lively and chatty under the effect of a single glass, argumentative and offensively dogmatic after the second toddy, and downright insulting and quarrelsome after getting beyond that number of drinks. We liked him and disliked him on these accounts.

On the occasion referred to, he passed through all these changes, and finally sunk off to sleep by the warm stove. Being in the way, and also in danger of tumbling upon the floor, some of us removed him to an old settee, where he slept soundly, entertaining us with rather an unmusical serenade. There were two or three mischievous fellows about the place, and one of them suggested it would be capital fun to black W--'s face, and "make a darkey of him." No sooner said than done. Some lamp-black and oil were mixed together in an old tin cup, and a coat of this paint laid over the face of W--, who, all unconscious of what had been done, slept on as soundly and snored as loudly as ever. Full two hours passed away before he awoke. Staggering up to the bar, he called for another glass of whisky toddy, while we made the old bar-room ring again with our peals of laughter.

"What are you all laughing at?" he said, as he became aware that he was the subject of merriment, and turning his black face around upon the company as he spoke.

"Give us Zip Coon, old fellow!" called out one of the "boys" who had helped him to his beautiful mask.

"No! no! Lucy Long! Give us Lucy Long!" cried another.

"Can't you dance Jim Crow? Try it. I'll sing the 'wheel about and turn about, and do jist so.' Now begin."

And the last speaker commenced singing Jim Crow.

W--neither understood nor relished all this. But the more angry and mystified he became, the louder laughed the company and the freer became their jests. At last, in a passion, he swore at us lustily, and leaving the barroom, in high dudgeon, took his horse from the stable and rode off.

It was past eleven o'clock. The night was cold, and a ride of two miles made W--sober enough to understand that he had been rather drunk, and was still a good deal "in for it;" and that it wouldn't exactly do for his wife to see him just as he was. So he rode a mile past his house,--and then back again, at a slow trot, concluding that by this time the good woman was fast asleep. And so she was. He entered the house, crept silently up stairs, and got quietly into bed, without his better half being wiser therefor.

On the next morning, Mrs. W--awoke first. But what was her surprise and horror, upon rising up, to see, instead of her lawful husband, what she thought a strapping negro, as black as charcoal, lying at her side. Her first impulse was to scream; but her presence of mind in this trying position, enabled her to keep silence. You may be sure that she didn't remain long in such a close contact with Sir Darkey. Not she! For, slipping out of bed quickly, but noiselessly, she glided from the room, and was soon down stairs in the kitchen, where a stout, two-fisted Irish girl was at work preparing breakfast.

"Oh! dear! Kitty!" she exclaimed, panting for breath, and looking as pale as a ghost, "have you seen any thing of Mr. W--, this morning?"

"Och! no. But what ails ye? Ye're as white as a shate?"

"Oh! mercy! Kitty. You wouldn't believe it, but there's a monstrous negro in my room!"

"Gracious me! Mrs. W--, a nager?"

"Yes, indeed, Kitty!" returned Mrs. W--, trembling in every limb. "And worse and worse, he's in my bed! I just 'woke up and thought it was Mr. W--by my side. But, when I looked over, I saw instead of his face, one as black as the stove. Mercy on me! I was frightened almost to death."

"Is he aslape?" asked Kitty.

"Yes, sound asleep and snoring. Oh! dear! What shall we do? Where in the world is Mr. W--? I'm afraid this negro has murdered him."

"Och! the blasted murtherin' thafe!" exclaimed Kitty, her organ of combativeness, which was very large, becoming terribly excited. "Get into mistress's bed, and the leddy there herself, the omadhoun! The black, murtherin' thafe of a villain!"

And Kitty, thinking of no danger to herself, and making no calculation of consequences, seized a stout hickory clothes pole that stood in one corner of the kitchen, and went up stairs like a whirlwind, banging the pole against the door, balusters, or whatever came in its way. The noise roused W--from his sleep, and he raised

up in bed just as Kitty entered the room.

"Oh! you murtherin' thafe of a villain!" shouted Kitty, as she caught sight of his black face, pitching into him with her pole, and sweeping off his night-cap, at the imminent risk of taking his head with it.

"Hallo!" he cried, not at all liking this strange proceeding, "are you mad?"

"Mad is it, ye thafe!" retorted Kitty, who did not recognize the voice, and taking a surer aim this time with her pole, brought him a tremendous blow alongside of the head, which knocked him senseless.

Mrs. W--who was at the bottom of the stairs, heard her husband's exclamation, and, knowing his voice, came rushing up, and entered the room in time to see Kitty's formidable weapon come with terrible force against his head. Before the blow could be repeated, for Kitty, ejaculating her "murtherin' thafe of a villain!" had lifted the pole again, Mrs. W--threw her arms around her neck, and cried, "Don't, don't, Kitty, for mercy's sake!" It's Mr. W--, and you've killed him!"

"Mr. W--indade!" retorted Kitty, indignantly, struggling to free herself. "Is Mr. W--a thafe of a nager, ma'am?"

But even Kitty's eyes, as soon as they took the pains to look more closely, saw that it was indeed all as the mistress had said. W--had fallen over on his face, and his head and white neck were not to be mistaken.

The pole dropped from Kitty's hands, and, with the exclamation, "Och! murder!" she turned and shot from the room, with as good a will as she had entered it.

The blow which W--received was severe, breaking through the flesh and bruising and lacerating his ear badly. He recovered very soon, however, and, as he arose up, caught sight of himself in a looking glass that hung opposite. We may be sure that it took all parties, in this exciting and almost tragical affair, some time to understand exactly what was the matter. W--'s recollection of the loud merriment that had driven him from the "Black Horse" on the previous night, when it revived, as it did pretty soon, explained all to him, and set him to talking in a most unchristian manner.

Poor Kitty was so frightened at what she had done that she gathered up her "duds" and fled instanter, and was never again seen in that neighborhood.

As for W--, he was cured of his nocturnal visits to the "Black Horse," and his love of whisky toddy. Some months afterwards he espoused the temperance cause, and I've heard him tell the tale myself, many a time, and laugh heartily at the figure he must have

cut, when Kitty commenced beating him for a "thafe of a nager."

THE BROKEN PLEDGE.

"It is two years, this very day, since I signed the pledge," remarked Jonas Marshall, a reformed drinker, to his wife, beside whom he sat one pleasant summer evening, enjoying the coolness and quiet of that calm hour.

"Two years! And is it, indeed, so long?" was the reply. "How swiftly time passes, when the heart is not oppressed with care and sorrow!"

"To me, they have been the happiest of my life," resumed the husband. "How much do we owe to this blessed reformation!"

"Blessed, indeed, may it be called!" the wife said, with feeling.

"It seems scarcely possible, Jane, that one, who, like me, had become such a slave to intoxication, could have been reclaimed. I often think of myself, and wonder. A little over two years ago, I could no more control the intolerable desire for liquor that I felt, than I could fly. Now I have not the least inclination to touch, taste, or handle it."

"And I pray Heaven you may never again have!"

"That danger is past, Jane. Two years of total abstinence have completely changed the morbid craving once felt for artificial stimulus, into a natural and healthy desire for natural and healthy aliments."

"It would be dangerous for you even now, Jonas, to suffer a drop of liquor to pass your lips; do you not think so?"

"There would be no particular danger in my tasting liquor, I presume. The danger would be, as at first, in the use of it, until an appetite was formed." Marshall replied, in a tone of confidence.

"Then you think that old, inordinate craving for drink, has been entirely eradicated?"

"O yes, I am confident of it."

"And heartily glad am I to hear you say so. It doubles the guarantee

for our own and children's happiness. The pledge to guard us on one side, and the total loss of all desire on the other, is surely a safe protection. I feel, that into the future I may now look, without a single painful anxiety on this account."

"Yes, Jane. Into the future you may look with hope. And as to the past, let it sink, with all its painful scenes,--its heart-aching trials, into oblivion."

Jonas Marshall and his young wife had, many years before the period in which the above conversation took place, entered upon the world with cheerful hopes, and a flattering promise of happiness. They were young persons of cultivated tastes, and had rather more of this world's goods than ordinarily falls to the lot of those just commencing life. A few years sufficed to dash all their hopes to the ground, and to fill the heart of the young wife with a sorrow that it seemed impossible for her to bear. Marshall, from habitual drinking of intoxicating liquors, found the taste for them fully confirmed before he dreamed of danger, and he had not the strength of character at once and for ever to abandon their use. Gradually he went down, down, slowly at first, but finally with a rapid movement, until he found himself stripped of everything, and himself a confirmed drunkard. For nearly two years longer, he surrendered himself up to drink--his wife and children suffering more than my pen can describe, or any but the drunkard's wife and drunkard's children realize.

Then came a new era. A friend of humanity sought out the poor, degraded wretch, in his misery and obscurity, and prevailed upon him to abandon his vile habits, and pledge himself to total abstinence. Two years from the day that pledge was signed, found him again rising in the world, with health, peace, and comfort, the cheerful inmates of his dwelling. Here is the brief outline of a reformed drinker's history. How many an imagination can fill in the dark shadows, and distinct, mournful features of the gloomy picture!

On the day succeeding the second anniversary of Jonas Marshall's reformation, he was engaged to dine with a few friends, and met them at the appointed hour. With the dessert, wine was introduced. Among the guests were one or two persons with whom Marshall had but recently become acquainted. They knew little or nothing of his former life. One of them sat next to him at table, and very naturally handed him the wine, with a request to drink with him.

"Thank you," was the courteous, but firm reply. "I do not drink wine."

Another, who understood the reason of this refusal, observing it, remarked--

"Our friend Marshall belongs to the tee-totallers."

"Ah, indeed! Then we must, of course, excuse him," was the

gentlemanly response.

"Don't you think, Marshall," remarked another, "that you temperance men are a little too rigid in your entire proscription of wine?"

"For the reformed drinker," was the reply, "it is thought to be the safest way to cut off entirely everything that can, by possibility, inflame the appetite. Some argue, that when that morbid craving, which the drunkard acquires, is once formed, it never can be thoroughly eradicated."

"Do you think the position a true one?" asked a member of the party.

"I have my doubts of it," Marshall said. "For instance: Most of you know that for some years I indulged to excess in drink. Two years ago I abandoned the use of wine, brandy, and everything else of an intoxicating nature. For a time, I felt the cravings of an intense desire for liquor; but my pledge of total abstinence restrained me from any indulgence. Gradually, the influence of my old appetite subsided, until it ceased to be felt. And it is now more than a year since I have experienced the slightest inclination to touch a drop. Your wine and brandy are now, gentlemen, no temptation to me."

"But if that be the case," urged a friend, "why need you restrict yourself, so rigidly, from joining in a social glass? Standing, as you evidently do, upon the ground you occupied, before, by a too free indulgence, you passed, unfortunately, the point of self-control: you may now enjoy the good things of life without abusing them. Your former painful experience will guard you in that respect."

"I am not free to do so," replied Marshall.

"Why?"

"Because I have pledged myself never again to drink anything that can intoxicate, and confirmed that pledge by my sign-manual--thus giving it a double force and importance."

"What end had you in view in making that pledge?"

"The emancipation of myself from the horrible bondage in which I had been held for years."

"That end is accomplished."

"True. But the obligations of my pledge are perpetual."

"That is a mere figure of speech. You fully believed, I suppose, that perpetual total-abstinence was absolutely necessary for your safety?"

"I certainly did."

"You do not believe so now?"

"No. I have seen reason, I think, to change my views in that respect. The appetite which I believed would remain throughout life, and need the force of a solemn bond to restrain it, has, under the rigid discipline of two years, been destroyed. I now feel myself as much above the enslaving effects of intoxicating liquors, as I ever did in my life."

"Then, it is clear to my mind, that all the obligations of your pledge are fulfilled; and that, as a matter of course, it ceases to be binding."

"I should be very unwilling to violate that pledge."

"It would be, virtually, no violation."

"I cannot see it in that light," Marshall said, "although you may be perfectly correct. At any rate, I am not now willing to act up to your interpretation of the matter."

This declaration closed the argument, as his friends did not feel any strong desire to see him drink, and argued the matter with him as much for argument sake as anything else. In this they acted with but little true wisdom; for the particular form in which the subject was presented to the mind of Marshall, gave him something to think about and reason about. And the more he thought and reasoned, the more did he become dissatisfied with the restrictions under which he found himself placed. Not having felt, for many months, the least desire for liquor, he imagined that even the latent inclination which existed, as he readily supposed, for some time, had become altogether extinguished. There existed, therefore, in his estimation, now that he had begun to think over the matter, no good reason why he should abstain, totally, from wine, at least, on a social occasion.

The daily recurrence of such thoughts, soon began to worry his mind, until the pledge, that had for two years lain so lightly upon him, became a burden almost too intolerable to be borne.

"Why didn't I bind myself for a limited period?" he at last said, aloud, thus giving a sanction and confirmation by word of the thoughts that had been gradually forming themselves into a decision in his mind. No sooner had he said this, than the whole subject assumed a more distinct form, and a more imposing aspect in his view. He now saw clearly, what had not before seemed perfectly plain--what had been till then encompassed by doubts. He was satisfied that he had acted blindly when he pledged himself to total-abstinence.

"Three hundred signed the pledge last night," said his wife to him, a few weeks after the occurrence of the dinner-party, just

mentioned.

"Three hundred! We are carrying everything before us."

"Who can tell," resumed the wife, "the amount of happiness involved in three hundred pledges to total-abstinence? There were, doubtless, many husbands and fathers among the number who signed. Now, there is joy in their dwellings. The fire, that long since went out, is again kindled upon their hearths. How deeply do I sympathize with the heart-stricken wives, upon whom day as again arisen, with a bright sun shining down from an unclouded sky!"

"It is, truly, to them, a new era--or the dawning of a new existence.--Most earnestly do I wish that the day had arrived, which I am sure will come, when not a single wife in the land will mourn over the wrong she suffers at the hand of a drunken husband."

"To that aspiration, I can utter a most devout amen," Mrs. Marshall rejoined, fervently.

"A few years of perseverance and well-directed energy, on our part, will effect all this, I allow myself fondly to hope, if we do not create a reaction by over-doing the matter."

"How, over-doing it?" asked the wife.

"There is a danger of over-doing it in many ways. And I am by no means sure that the pledge of perpetual abstinence is not an instance of this."

"The pledge of perpetual abstinence! Why, husband, what do you mean?"

"My remark seems to occasion surprise. But I think that I can make the truth of what I say apparent to your mind. The use of the pledge, you will readily admit, is to protect a man against the influence of a morbid thirst for liquor, which his own resolution is not strong enough to conquer."

"Well."

"So soon, then, as this end is gained, the use of the pledge ceases."

"Is it ever gained? Is a man who has once felt this morbid thirst, ever safe from it?"

"Most certainly do I believe that he is. Most certainly do I believe that a few years of total abstinence from everything that intoxicates, will place him on the precise ground that he occupied before the first drop of liquor passed his lips."

"I cannot believe this, Jonas. Whatever is once confirmed by habit,

it seems to me, must be so incorporated into the mental and physical organization, as never to be eradicated. Its effect is to change, in a degree, the whole system, and to change it so thoroughly, as to give a bias to all succeeding states of mind and body--thus transmitting a tendency to come under the influence of that bias."

"You advance a thing, Jane, which will not hold good in practice. As, for instance, it is now two years since I tasted a drop of wine, brandy, or anything else of a like nature. If your theory were true, I should still feel a latent desire, at times, to drink again. But this is not the case. I have not the slightest inclination. The sight, or even the smell of wine, does not produce the old desire, which it would inevitably do, if it were only quiescent--not extirpated--as I am confident that it is."

"And this is the reason why you think the pledge should not be perpetual?"

"It is. Why should there be an external restraint imposed upon a mere nonentity? It is absurd!"

"Granting, for the sake of argument, the view you take, in regard to the extirpation of the morbid desire, which, however, I cannot see to be true," Mrs. Marshall said, endeavouring to seem unconcerned, notwithstanding the position assumed by her husband troubled her instinctively,--"it seems to me, that there still exists a good reason why the pledge should be perpetual."

"What is that, Jane?"

"If a man has once been led off by a love of drink, when no previous habit had been formed, there exists, at least, the same danger again, if liquor be used;--and if it should possibly be true that the once formed desire, if subdued, is latent--not eradicated--the danger is quadrupled."

"I do not see the force of what you say," the husband replied. "To me, it seems, that the very fact that he had once fallen, and the remembrance of its sad consequences, would be a sure protection against another lapse from sobriety."

"It may all be so," Mrs. Marshall said, in a voice that conveyed a slight evidence of the sudden shadow that had fallen upon her heart. And then ensued a silence of more than a minute. The wife then remarked in an inquiring tone--

"Then, if I understand you rightly, you think that the pledge should be binding only for a limited time?"

"I do."

"How long?"

"From one to two years. Two, at the farthest, would be sufficient, I am fully convinced, to restore any man, to the healthy tone of mind and body that he once possessed. And then, the recollection of the past would be an all-sufficient protection for the future."

Seeing that the husband was confirming himself more and more in the dangerous position that he had assumed, Mrs. Marshall said no more. Painfully conscious was she, from a knowledge of his peculiar character, that, if the idea now floating in his mind should become fixed by a rational confirmation, it would lead to evil consequences. From that moment, she began eagerly to cast about in her mind for the means of setting him right,--means that should fully operate, without her apparent agency. But one way presented itself,--(argument, she was well aware, as far as it was possible for her to enter into it with him, would only set his mind the more earnestly in search of reason, to prove the correctness of his assumed positions,)--and that was to induce him to attend more frequently the temperance meetings, and listen to the addresses and experiences there given.

"Come, dear," she said to him, after tea, a few evenings subsequent to the time Marshall had begun to urge his objections to the pledge. "I want you to go with me to-night to this great temperance meeting. Mr.--is going to make an address, and I wish to hear him very much."

"It will be so crowded, Jane, that you will not have the least satisfaction," objected her husband--"and, besides, the evening is very warm."

"But I don't mind that, Jonas. I am very anxious to hear Mr.--speak."

"I am sorry, Jane," Marshall said, after the silence of a few moments. "But I recollect, now, that I promised Mr. Patton to call down and see him this evening. There are to be a few friends there, and he wished me, particularly, to meet them."

Poor Mrs. Marshall's countenance fell at this, and the tears gathered in her eyes.

"So, then, you won't go with me to the temperance meeting," she said, in a disappointed tone.

"I should like to do so, Jane," was the prevaricating reply, "but you see that it is out of my power, without breaking my promise, which you would not, of course, have me do."

"O, no, of course not."

"You can go, Jane. I will leave you at the door, and call for you when the meeting is out."

"No, I do not feel like going, now I should have enjoyed it with you by my side. But to go alone would mar all the pleasure."

"But surely that need not be, Jane. You know that I cannot be always with you."

"No, of course not," was uttered, mechanically; and then followed a long silence.

"So you will not go," Marshall at length said.

"I should not enjoy the meeting, and therefore do not wish to go," his wife replied.

"I am sorry for it, but cannot help it now, for I should not feel right were I not to comply with my promise."

"I do not wish you to break it, of course. For a promise should ever be kept sacred," Mrs. Marshall said, with a strong emphasis on the latter sentence.

This emphasis did not escape the notice of her husband, who felt that it was meant, as it really was, to apply to his state of mind in regard to the pledge. For it was a fact, which the instinctive perception of his wife had detected, that he had begun, seriously, to argue in his own mind, the question, whether, under the circumstances of the case, seeing, that, in taking the pledge, the principle of protection was alone considered, he was any longer bound by it. He did not, however, give expression to the thoughts that he had at the time. The subject of conversation was changed, and, in the course of half an hour, he left to fulfil his engagement, which had not, in reality, been a positive one. As he closed the door after him, Mrs. Marshall experienced a degree of loneliness, and a gloomy depression of feeling, that she could not fully account for, though she could not but acknowledge that, for a portion of it, there existed too certain a cause, in the strange and dangerous position her husband had taken in regard to the pledge.

As Marshall emerged from his dwelling, and took his way towards the friend's house, where he expected to meet a select company, his mind did not feel perfectly at ease. He had partly deceived his wife in reference to the positive nature of the engagement, and had done so in order to escape from an attendance on a temperance meeting. This did not seem right. There was, also, a consciousness in his mind that it would be extremely hazardous to throw off the restraints of his pledge, at the same time that a resolution was already half formed to do so. The agitation of mind occasioned by this conflict continued until he arrived at his friend's door, and then, as he joined the pleasant company within, it all subsided.

"A hearty welcome, Marshall!" said the friend, grasping his hand and shaking it warmly. "We were really afraid that we should not have the pleasure of your good society. But right glad am I, that, with

your adherence to temperance men and temperance principles, you do not partake of the exclusive and unsocial character that so many assume."

"I regard my friends with the same warm feelings that I ever did," Marshall replied,--"and love to meet them as frequently."

"That is right. We are social beings, and should cultivate reciprocal good-feelings. But don't you think, Marshall, that some of you temperance folks carry matters too far?"

"Certainly I do. As, for instance, I consider this binding of a man to perpetual total-abstinence, as an unnecessary infringement of individual liberty. As I look upon it, the use of the pledge, is to enable a man, by the power of an external restraint, to gain the mastery over an appetite that has mastered him. When that is accomplished, all that is wanted is obtained: of what use is the pledge after that?"

"Very true," was the encouraging reply.

"A man," resumed Marshall, repeating the argument he had used to his wife, which now seemed still more conclusive, "has only to abstain for a year or two from liquor to have the morbid craving for it which over-indulgence had created, entirely eradicated. Then he stands upon safe ground, and may take a social glass, occasionally, with his friends, without the slightest danger. To bind himself up, then, to perpetual abstinence, seems not only useless, but a real infringement of individual liberty."

"So it presents itself to my mind," rejoined one of the company.

"I feel it to be so in my case," was the reply of the reformed man to this, thus going on to invite temptation, instead of fleeing from it.

"Certainly, if I were the individual concerned," remarked one of the company, "I should not be long in breaking away from such arbitrary restrictions."

"How would you get over the fact of having signed the pledge?" asked Marshall, with an interest that he dared not acknowledge to himself.

"Easy enough," was the reply.

"How?"

"On the plea that I was deceived into signing such a pledge."

"How deceived?"

"Into a belief that it was the only remedy in my case. There is no moral law binding any man to a contract entered into ignorantly. The

fact of ignorance, in regard to the fundamental principles of an agreement, vitiates it. Is not that true?"

"It certainly is," was the general reply to this question.

"Then you think," said Marshall, after reflecting for a few moments, "that no moral responsibility would attach to me, for instance, if I were to act independently of my pledge?"

"Certainly none could attach," was the general response; "provided, of course, that the end of that pledge was fully attained."

"Of that there can be no doubt," was the assumption of the reformed man. "The end was, to save me from the influence of an appetite for drink, against which, in my own strength, I could not contend. That end is now accomplished. Two years of total abstinence has made me a new man. I now occupy the same ground that I occupied before I lost my self-control."

"Then I can see no reason why you should be denied the social privilege of a glass with your friends," urged one of the company.

"Nor can I see it clearly," Marshall said. "Still I feel that a solemn pledge, made more solemn and binding by the subscription of my name, is not a thing to be lightly broken. The thought of doing so troubles me, when I seriously reflect upon it."

"It seems to me that, were I in your place," gravely remarked one of the company, heretofore silent, "I would not break my pledge without fully settling two points--if it is possible for you, or any other man, under like circumstances, to settle them."

"What are they?" asked Marshall, with interest.

"They are the two most prominent points in your case;--two that have already been introduced here to-night. One involves the question, whether you are really free from the influence of your former habits?"

"I have not a single doubt in regard to that point," was the positive reply.

"I do not see, Mr. Marshall, how it is possible for you to settle it beyond a doubt," urged the friend. "To me, it is not philosophically true that the power of habit is ever entirely destroyed. All subsequent states of body or mind, I fully believe, are affected and modified by what has gone before, and never lose the impression of preceding states,--and more particularly of anything like an overmastering habit--or rather, I should say, in this case, of an overmastering affection. The love, desire, or affection, whichever you may choose to call it, which you once felt for intoxicating drinks, or for the effects produced by them, never could have existed in the degree that they did, without leaving on your

mind--which is a something far more real and substantial than this material body, which never loses the marks and scars of former abuse--ineradicable impressions. The forms of old habits, if this be true, and that it so, _I_ fully believe, still remain; and these forms are in the endeavour, if I may so speak, to be filled with the affections that once made them living and active. Rigidly exclude everything that can excite these, and you are safe;--but, to me it seems, that no experiment can be so dangerous, as one which will inevitably produce in these forms a vital activity."

"That, it seems to me," was the reply of one of the company, "is a little too metaphysical--or rather, I should say, transcendental--for, certainly, it transcends my powers of reasoning to be able to see how any permanent forms, as you call them, can be produced in the mind, as in the body--the one being material, and the other immaterial, and, therefore, no more susceptible of lasting impressions, than the air around us."

"You have not, I presume, given much thought to this subject," the previous speaker said, "or you would not doubt, so fully, the truth of my remark. The power of habit, a fact of common observance, which is nothing but a fixed form of the mind, illustrates it. And, certainly, if the mind retained impressions no better than the air around us, we should remember but little of what we learned in early years."

"I see," was the reply to this, "that my remark was too broad. Still, the memory of a thing is very different from a permanent and inordinate desire to do something wrong, remaining as a latent principle in the mind, and ready to spring into activity years afterwards, upon the slightest provocation."

"It certainly is a different thing; and if it be really so, its establishment is a matter of vital importance. In regard to reformed drinkers, there has been much testimony in proof of the position. I have heard several men relate their experiences; and all have said that time and again had they resolved to conquer the habit that was leading them on headlong to destruction; and that they had, on more than one occasion, abstained for months. But that, so soon as they again put liquor to their lips, the old desire came back for it, stronger and more uncontrollable than before."

"That was, I presume," Marshall remarked, "because they had not abstained long enough."

"One man, I remember to have heard say, that he did not at one period of his life use any kind of intoxicating drink for three years. He then ventured to take a glass of cider, and was drunk and insensible before night! And what was worse, did not again rise superior to his degradation for years."

"I should call that an, extreme case," urged the infatuated man.

"There must have been with him a hereditary propensity. His father

was, doubtless, a drunkard before him."

"As to that, I know nothing, and should not be willing to assume the fact as a practical principle,"--the friend replied. "But there is another point that ought to be fully settled."

"What is that?"

"No one can, without seriously injuring himself, morally, violate a solemn pledge--particularly, as you have justly said, a pledge made more binding and solemn, by act and deed, in the sign-manual. A man may verbally pledge himself to do or not to do a thing. To violate this pledge deliberately, involves moral consequences to himself that are such as almost any one would shrink from incurring. But when a man gives to any pledge or contract a fulness and a confirmation by the act of subscribing his name to it, and then deliberately violates that pledge or contract, he necessarily separates himself still further from the saving power of good principles and influences than in the other case, and comes more fully under the power of evil principles and evil influences. After such an act, that man's state is worse, far worse than it was before. I speak strongly and earnestly on this subject, because I feel deeply its importance. And I would say to our friend Marshall here, as I would say to my own brother, let these two points be fully settled before you venture upon dangerous ground. Be sure that the latent desire for stimulating drinks is fully eradicated--and be certain that your pledge can be set aside without great moral injury to yourself, before you take the first step towards its violation, which may be a step fraught with the most fatal consequences to yourself and family."

This unlooked-for and serious turn which the discussion assumed, had the effect to make Marshall hesitate to do what he had too hastily made his mind up that he might venture upon without the slightest danger. It also furnished reasons to the company why they should not urge him to drink. The result was, that he escaped through all the temptations of the evening, which would have overcome him, inevitably, had his own inclination found a general voice of encouragement.

But none of the strong arguments why he should not again run madly into the way of evil, which had been so opportunely and unexpectedly urged, had the effect to keep his eye off of the decanters and brim-full glasses that circulated far too freely;--nor to prevent the sight of them from exciting in his mind a strong, almost unconquerable desire, to join with the rest. This very desire ought to have warned him--it should have caused him to tremble and flee away as if a raging wild beast had stood in his path. But it did not. He deceived himself by assuming (sic) that the desire which he felt to drink with his friends arose from his love of sociality, not of wine.

The evening was lonely and long to Mrs. Marshall, and there was a

shadow over her feelings that she endeavoured in vain to dispel. Her husband's knock, which came between ten and eleven o'clock, and for which she had been listening anxiously for at least an hour, made her heart bound and tremble, producing a feeling of weakness and oppression. As she opened the door for him, it was with a vague fear. This was instantly dispelled by his first affectionate word uttered in steady tones. He was still himself! Still as he had been for the blessed two years that had just gone by!

"What is the matter, Jane? You look troubled," the husband remarked, after he had seated himself, and observed his wife's appearance.

"Do I?--If so, it is because I have felt troubled this evening."

"Why were you troubled, Jane?"

"That question I can hardly answer, either to your satisfaction or my own," Mrs. Marshall said. "From some cause or other, my feelings have been strangely depressed this evening; and I have experienced, besides, a consciousness of coming misery, that has cast a shadow over my spirits, even now but half dispelled."

"But why is all this, Jane? There must be some cause for such a change in your feelings."

"I know but one cause, dear husband!" Mrs. Marshall said, in a voice of deep tenderness, laying her hand upon her husband's arm as she spoke, and looking him in the face with an expression of earnest affection.

"Speak out plainly, Jane. What is the cause?"

"Do not be offended, Jonas, when I tell you, that I have not been so overcome by such gloomy feelings since that happy day when you signed the pledge, as I have been this evening. The cause of these feelings lies in the fact of your having become dissatisfied with that pledge. I tremble, lest, in some unguarded moment, under the assurance that old habits are conquered, you may be persuaded to cast aside that impassable barrier, which has protected your home and little ones for so long and happy a time."

"You are weak and foolish, Jane," her husband said, in a half-offended tone.

"In many things I know that I am," was Mrs. Marshall's reply, "but not in this. A wife who loves her husband and children as tenderly as I do mine, cannot but tremble when fears are suddenly awakened that the footsteps of a deadly enemy are approaching her peaceful dwelling."

"Such an enemy is not drawing nigh to your dwelling, Jane."

"Heaven grant that it may not be so!" was the solemn ejaculation.

"To this, Marshall felt no inclination to reply. He had already said enough in regard to his pledge to awaken the fears of his wife, and to call forth from her expressions of strong opposition to his views of the nature of his obligation. His silence tended, in no degree, to quiet her troubled feelings.

On the next morning, Marshall was thoughtful and silent. After breakfast, he went out to attend to business, as usual. As he closed the door after him, his wife heaved a deep sigh, lifted her eyes upwards, and prayed silently, but fervently, that her husband might be kept from evil. And well might she thus pray, for he needed support and sustenance in the conflict that was going on in his bosom--a conflict far more vigorous than was dreamed of by the wife. He had invited temptation, and now he was in the midst of a struggle, that would end in a more perfect emancipation of himself from the demon-vice that had once ruled him with a rod of iron, or in his being cast down to a lower depth of wretchedness and misery than that out of which he had arisen. In this painful struggle he stood not alone. Good spirits clustered around him, anxiously interested in his fate, and endeavouring to sustain his faltering purposes; and evil spirits were also nigh, infusing into his mind reasons for the abandonment of his useless pledge. It was a period in his history full of painful interest. Heaven was moving forward to aid and rescue him, and hell to claim another victim. But neither the one nor the other could act upon him for good or for evil, except through his own volition. It was for him to turn himself to the one, and live, or to the other, and die.

So intense was this struggle, that, after he had entered his place of business, he remained there for only a short time, unable to fix his mind upon anything out of himself, or to bid the tempest in his mind "be still." Going out into the street, he turned his steps he knew not whither. He had moved onwards but a few paces, when the thought of home and his children came up in his mind, accompanied by a strong desire to go back to his dwelling--a feeling that required a strong effort to resist. The moment he had effectually resisted it, and resolved not to go home, his eye fell upon the tempting exposure of liquors in a bar-room, near which he happened to be passing. At the same instant, it seemed as if a strong hand were upon him, urging him towards the open door.

"No--no--no!" he said, half aloud, hurrying forward, "I am not prepared for that. And yet, what a fool I am," he continued, "to suffer myself thus to be agitated! Why not come to some decision, and end this uncertain, painful state at once? But what shall I do? How shall I decide?"

"To keep your pledge," a voice, half audible, seemed to say.

"And be for ever restless under it,--for ever galled by its slavish chains," another voice urged, instantly.

"Yes," he said, "that is the consequence which makes me hesitate. Fool--fool--not to have taken a pledge for a limited period! I was deceived--tricked into an act that my sober reason condemns! And should I now be held by that act? No!--no!--no! The voice of reason says no! And I will not!"

As he said this, he turned about, and walked with a firm, deliberate step, towards the bar-room he had passed but a few moments before, entered it, called for a glass of wine, and drank it off.

"Now I am a free man!" he said, as he turned away, and proceeded towards his place of business, with an erect bearing.

He had not gone far, however, before he felt a strong desire for another glass of wine, unaccompanied by any thought or fear of danger. From the moment he had placed the forbidden draught to his lips, the struggle in his mind had ceased, and a great calm succeeded to a wild conflict of opposite principles and influences. He felt happy, and doubly assured that he had taken a right step. A second glass of wine succeeded the first, and then a third, before he returned to his place of business. These gave to the tone of his spirits a very perceptible elevation, but threw over his mind a veil of confusion and obscurity, of which, however, he was not conscious. An hour only had passed after his return to business, before he again went out, and seeking an obscure drinking-house, where his entrance would not probably be observed, he called for a glass of punch, and then retired into one of the boxes, where it was handed to him. Its fragrance and flavour, as he placed it to his lips, were delightful--so delightful, that it seemed to him a concentration of all exquisite perceptions of the senses.

Another was soon called for, and then another and another, each one stealing away more and more of distinct consciousness, until at last he sunk forward on the table before which he had seated himself, perfectly lost to all consciousness of external things!

Gladly would the writer draw a veil over all that followed that insane violation of a solemn pledge, sealed as it had been by the hand-writing of confirmation. But he cannot do it. The truth, and the whole truth needs to be told,--the beacon-light must be raised on the gloomy shores of destruction, as a warning to the thoughtless or careless navigator.

Sadder and more wretched was the heart of Mrs. Marshall during the morning of that day, than it had been on the evening before. There was an overwhelming sense of impending danger in her mind, that she could not dissipate by any mode of reasoning with herself. As her children came about her, she would look upon them with an emotion of yearning tenderness, while her eyes grew dim with tears. And then she would look up, and breathe a heart-felt prayer that He who tempereth the winds to the shorn lamb, would regard her little ones.

The failure of her husband to return at the dinner hour, filled her

with trembling anxiety. Not once during two years had he been absent from home without her being perfectly aware of the cause. Its occurrence just at this crisis was a confirmation of her vague fears, and made her sick at heart. Slowly did the afternoon pass away, and at last the hour came for his return in the evening. But though she looked for his approaching form, and listened for the well-known sound of his footsteps, he did not come.

Anxiety and trembling uncertainty now gave way to an overwhelming alarm. Hurriedly were her children put to bed, and then she went out to seek for him, she knew not whither. To the store in which he had become a partner, she first turned her steps. It was closed as she had feared. Pausing for a few moments to determine where next to proceed, she concluded to go to the house of his partner, and learn from him if he had been to the store that day, and at what time. On her way to his dwelling, she passed down a small street, in which were several drinking-houses, hid away there to catch the many who are not willing to be seen entering a tavern.

In approaching one of these, loud voices within, and the sound of a scuffle, alarmed her. She was about springing forward to run, when the door was suddenly thrown open, and a man dashed out, who fell with a violent concussion upon the pavement, close by her feet. Something about his appearance, dark as it was, attracted her eye. She stooped down, and laid her hand upon him. It was her husband!

A wild scream, that rung upon the air,--a scream which the poor heart-stricken creature could not have controlled if her life had been the forfeit--brought instant assistance. Marshall was taken into a neighbouring house, and a physician called, who, on making an examination, said that a serious injury might, or might not have taken place--he could not tell. One thing, however, was certain, the man was beastly drunk.

O, with what a chill did that last sentence fall upon the ear of his wife! It was the death-knell to all the fond hopes she had cherished for two peaceful years. For a moment she leaned her head against the wall near which she was standing, and wished that she could die. But thoughts of her children, and thoughts of duty roused her.

A carnage was procured and her husband conveyed home, and then, after he had been laid upon a bed, she was left alone with him, and her own sad reflections. It was, to her, a sleepless night--but full of waking dreams, whose images of fear made her heart tremble and shrink, and long for the morning.

Morning at last came. How eagerly did the poor wife bend over the still unconscious form of her husband, reading each line of his features, as the pale light that came in at the windows gave distinctness to every object! He still breathed heavily, and there was an expression of pain on his countenance. A double cause for anxiety and alarm, pressed upon the heart of Mrs. Marshall. She knew not how serious an injury his fall might have occasioned,--nor how

utter might be his abandonment of himself, now that he had broken his solemn pledge. As she bent over him in doubt, pain, and anxiety, he suddenly awoke, and, without moving, looked her for a moment steadily in the face, with a glance of earnest inquiry. Then came a distinct recollection of his violated pledge; but all after that was only dimly seen, or involved in wild confusion. His bodily sensations told him but too plainly how deep had been his fall: and the intolerable desire, that seemed as if it were consuming his very vitals, was to him a sad evidence that he had fallen, never, he feared, to rise again. All this passed through his mind in a moment, and he closed his eyes, and turned his face away from the earnest, and now tearful gaze of his wife.

"How do you feel, Jonas?" Mrs. Marshall inquired, tenderly, modifying her tones, so as not to permit them to convey to his ear the exquisite pain that she felt. But he made no reply.

"Say, dear, how do you feel?" she urged, laying her hand upon him, and pausing for an answer.

"As if I were in hell!" he shouted, springing suddenly from the bed, and beginning to dress himself, hurriedly.

"O, husband, do not speak so!" Mrs. Marshall said, in a soothing tone. "All may be well again. One sin need not bring utter condemnation. Let this be the last, as it has been the first, violation of your pledge. Let this warn you against the removal of that salutary restraint, which has been as a wall of fire around you for years."

"Jane!" responded the irritated man, pausing, and looking at his wife, fixedly, while there sat upon his face an expression of terrible despair; "that pledge can never be renewed! It would be like binding a giant with a spider's web. I am lost! lost! lost! The eager, inexpressible desire that now burns within me, cannot be controlled. The effort to do so would drive me mad. I must drink, or die. And you, my poor wife!--and you, my children! what will become of you? Who will give you sufficient strength to bear your dreadful lot?"

As he said this, his voice fell to a low and mournful, despairing expression--and he sunk into a chair, covering his face with his hands.

"Dear husband!" urged his wife, coming to his side, and drawing her arm around his neck, "do not thus give way! Let the love I have ever borne you, and which is stronger and more tender at this moment than it has ever been--let the love you feel for your dear little ones, give you strength to conquer. Be a man! Nerve yourself, and look upwards for strength, and you must conquer."

"No--no--no--Jane!" the poor wretch murmured, shaking his head, mournfully. "Do not deceive your heart by false hopes, for they will

all be in vain. I cannot look up. The heavens have become as brass to me. I have forfeited all claim to success from above. As I lifted the fatal glass to my lips, I heard a voice, whose tones were as distinct as yours--'Let us go hence!' and from that moment, I have been weak and unsustained in the hands of my enemies. I am a doomed man!"

As he said this, a shrinking shudder passed through his frame, and he groaned aloud. The silence that then reigned through the chamber was as appalling as the silence of death to the heart of Mrs. Marshall. It was broken at length by her husband, who looked up with an expression of tenderness in her face, as she still stood with her hand upon him, and said--

"Jane, my dear wife! let me say to you now, while I possess my full senses, which I know not that I ever shall again, that you have been true and kind to me, and that I have ever loved you with an earnest love. Bear with me in my infirmity;--if, amid the grief, and wrong, and suffering, which must fall upon you and your children, you can bear with the miserable cause of all your wretchedness. I shall not long remain, I feel, to be a burden and a curse to you. My downward course will be rapid, and its termination will soon come!"

A gush of tears followed this, and then came a stern silence, that chilled the heart of Mrs. Marshall. She longed to urge still further upon her husband to make an effort to restrain the intense desire he felt, but could not. There seemed to be a seal upon her lips. Slowly she turned away to attend to her little ones, upon whom she now looked with something of that hopelessness which the widow feels, as she turns from the grave of her husband, and looks upon her fatherless children.

With a strong effort, Marshall remained in the house until breakfast was on the table. But he could only sip a little coffee, and soon arose, and lifted his hat to go out. His wife was by his side, as he laid his hand on the door.

"Jonas," she said, while the tears sprang to her eyes, "remember me--remember your children!" She could say no more; sobs choked her utterance--and she leaned her head, weak and desponding, upon his shoulder.

Her husband made no reply, but gently placed her in a chair, kissed her cheek, and then turned hastily away, and left the house.

It was many minutes before Mrs. Marshall found strength to rise, and then she staggered across the room, like one who had been stunned by a blow. We will not attempt the vain task of describing her feelings through that terrible day;--of picturing the alternate states of hope and deep despondency, that now made her heart bound with a lighter emotion,--and now caused it to sink low, and almost pulseless, in her bosom. It passed away at last, and brought the gloomy night--fall--but not her husband's return. Eight, nine, ten,

eleven, and twelve o'clock came, and went, and still he was absent.

For an hour she had been seated by the window, listening for the sound of his approaching footsteps. As the clock struck twelve, she started, listened for a moment still more intently, and then arose with a deep sigh, her manner indicating a state of irresolution. First she went softly to the bed, and stood looking down for some moments upon the faces of her little ones, sleeping calmly and sweetly, all unconscious of the anguish that swelled their mother's heart almost to bursting. Then she raised her head, and again assumed a listening attitude. An involuntary sigh told that she had listened in vain. A few moments after she was aroused from a state of deep abstraction of thought, by a strong shudder passing through her frame, occasioned by some fearful picture which her excited imagination had conjured up. She now went hastily to a wardrobe, and took out her bonnet and shawl. One more glance at her children, told her that they were sleeping soundly. In the next minute she was in the street, bending her steps she knew not whither, in search of her husband.

Almost involuntarily, Mrs. Marshall took her way towards that portion of the city where she had, on the night previous, unexpectedly found him. It was not longer before she paused by the door at the same drinking-house from which her husband had been thrust, when he fell, almost lifeless, at her feet. Although it was past twelve o'clock, the sound of many voices came from within, mingled with wild excitement, and boisterous mirth.

Now came a severe trial for her shrinking, sensitive feelings. How could she, a woman, and alone, enter such a place, at such an hour, on such an errand? The thought caused a sensation of faintness to pass over her, and she leaned for a moment against the side of the door to keep from falling. But affection and thoughts of duty quickly aroused her, and resolutely keeping down every weakness, she placed her hand upon the door, which yielded readily to even her light hand, and in the next moment found herself in the presence of about a dozen men, all more or less intoxicated. Their loud, insane mirth was instantly checked by her entrance. They were all men who were in the habit of mingling daily in good society, and more than one of them knew Marshall, and instantly recognised his wife. No rudeness was, of course, offered her. On the contrary, two or three came forward, and kindly inquired, though they guessed too well, her errand there at such an hour.

"Has my husband been here to-night, Mr.--?" she asked, in a choking voice, of one whose countenance she instantly recognised.

"I have not met with him, Mrs. Marshall," was the reply, in a kind, sympathizing tone, "but I will inquire if any one here has seen him."

These inquiries were made, and then Mr.--came forward again, and said, in a low tone,

"Come with me, Mrs. Marshall."

As the two emerged into the street, Mr.--said,

"I would not, if I were you, madam, attempt to look further for your husband. I have just learned that he is safe and well, only a little overcome, by having, accidentally, I have no doubt, drunken a little too freely. In the morning he will come home, and all will, I trust, be right again."

"What you say, I know, is meant in kindness, Mr.--," Mrs. Marshall replied, in a firmer tone, the assurance that her husband was at least safe from external danger, being some relief to her, "but I would rather see my husband, and have him taken home. Home is the best place for him, under any circumstances--and I am the most fitting one to attend to him. Will you, then, do me the favour to procure a hack, and go with me to the place where he is to be found?"

Mr.--saw that in the manner and tone of Mrs. Marshall which made him at once resolve to do as she wished him. The hack was procured, into which both entered. Directions were given, in a low tone, to the driver, and then they rattled away over the resounding pavement, for a space of time that seemed very long to the anxious wife. At last the hack stopped, the door was opened, and the steps thrown down. When Mrs. Marshall descended, she found herself in a narrow, dark street, before a low, dirty-looking tavern, the windows and doors of which had been closed for the night.

While Mr.--was knocking loudly for admission, her eyes, growing familiar with the darkness, saw something lying partly upon the street and partly upon the pavement a few yards from her, that grew more and more distinct, the more intently she looked at it. Advancing a few steps, she saw that it was the body of a man,--a few paces further, revealed to her eyes the form of her husband. An exclamation of surprise and alarm brought both Mr.--and the hack-driver to her side.

In attempting to raise Marshall to his feet, he groaned heavily, and writhed with a sensation of pain. Something dark upon the pavement attracted the eye of his wife. She touched it with her hand, to which it adhered, with a moist, oily feeling. Hurrying to the lamp in front of the hack, with a feeling of sudden alarm, she lifted her hand so that the light could fall upon it. It was covered with blood!

With a strong effort, she kept down the sudden impulse that she felt to utter a wild scream, and went back to Mr.--and communicated to him the alarming fact she had discovered. Marshall was at once laid gently down upon the pavement, and a light procured, which showed that his pantaloons, above, below, and around the knees, were saturated with blood.

"O, Mr.--! what can be the matter?" Mrs. Marshall said, in husky tones, looking up, with a face blanched to an ashy paleness.

"Some passing vehicle has, no doubt, run over him--but I trust that he is not much hurt. Remain here with him, until I can procure assistance, and have him taken home."

"O, sir, go quickly!" the poor wife replied, in earnest tones.

In a short time, four men, with a litter, were procured, upon which Marshall, now groaning, as if acutely conscious of pain, was placed, and slowly conveyed home. A surgeon reached the house as soon as the party accompanying the injured man. An examination showed that his legs had been broken just above the knees. And one of them had the flesh dreadfully torn and bruised, and both were crushed as if run over by some heavy vehicle. A still further examination showed the fracture to be compound, and extensive; but, fortunately, the knee joint had entirely escaped. Already the limbs had swollen very considerably, exhibiting a rapidly increasing inflammation. This was a natural result flowing from the large quantity of alcohol which he had evidently been taking through the day and evening.

Fortunately, notwithstanding the morbid condition of his body, and the nature and extent of the injury he had sustained, the vital system of Marshall, unexhausted by a long-continued series of physical abuse from drinking, rallied strongly against the violent inflammation that followed the setting of the bones, and dressing of the wounds, and threw off the too apparent tendency to mortification that continued, much to the anxiety of the surgeon, for many days. During this time, he suffered almost incessant pain--frequently of an excruciating character. The severity of this pain entirely destroyed all desire for intoxicating drink. This desire, however, gradually began to return, as the pain, which accompanied the knitting of the bones, subsided. But he did not venture to ask for it, and, of course, it was not offered to him.

With the most earnest attentions, and the tenderest solicitude, did Mrs. Marshall wait and watch by the bedside of her husband, both day and night, wearing down her own strength, and neglecting her children.

At the end of three weeks, he had so far recovered, as to be able to sit up, and to bear a portion of his weight. As fear for the consequences of the injury her husband had received, began to fade from the mind of Mrs. Marshall, another fear took possession of it--a heart-sickening fear, under which her spirit grew faint. There was no pledge to bind him, and his newly-awakened desire for liquor, she felt sure would bear him away inevitably, notwithstanding the dreadful lesson he had received.

About this time, however, two or three of his temperance friends, who had heard of his fall, came to see him. This encouraged her,

especially as they soon began to urge him again to sign the pledge;--but he would not consent.

"It is useless," was his steady reply, to all importunities, and made usually, in a mournful tone, "for me to sign another pledge. Having broken one, wilfully and deliberately, I have no power to keep another. I am conscious of this--and, therefore, am resolved not to stain my soul with another sin."

"But you can keep it. I am sure you can," one friend, more importunate than the rest, would repeatedly urge. "You broke your first pledge, deliberately, because you believed that you were freed from the old desire, even in a latent form. Satisfied, from painful experience, that this is not the case, you will not again try so dangerous an experiment."

But Marshall would shake his head, sadly, in rejection of all arguments and persuasions.

"It may all seem easy enough for you," he would sometimes say, "who have never broken a solemn pledge; but you know not how utter a destruction of internal moral power such an act, deliberately done, effects. I am not the man I was, before I so wickedly violated that solemn compact made between myself and heaven--for so I now look upon it. While I kept my pledge, I had the sustaining power of heaven to bear me safely up against all temptations;--but since the very moment it was broken, I have had nothing but my own strength to lean upon, and that has proved to be no better than a broken reed, piercing me through with many sorrows."

To such declarations, in answer to arguments, and sometimes earnest entreaties made by his friends to induce him to renew his pledge, Mrs. Marshall would listen in silence, but with a sinking, sickening sensation of mind and body. All and more than she could say, was said to him, but he resisted every appeal--and what good could her weak persuasions and feeble admonitions do?

Day after day passed on, and Marshall gradually gained more use of his limbs. In six weeks, he could walk without the aid of his crutches.

"I think I must try and get down to the store to-morrow," he said, to his wife, about this time. "This is a busy season, and I can be of some use there for two or three hours, every day."

"I don't think I would venture out yet," Mrs. Marshall said, looking at him, with an anxious, troubled expression of countenance, that she tried in vain to conceal.

"Why not, Jane?"

"I don't think you are strong enough, dear."

"O, yes, I am. And, besides, it will do me good to go out and take the fresh air. You know that it is now six weeks since I have been outside of the front door."

"I know it has. But--"

"But what, Jane?"

"You know what I would say, Jonas. You know the terrible fear that rests upon my heart like a night-mare."

And Mrs. Marshall covered her face with her hands, and gave way to tears.

A long silence followed this. At length Marshall said,

"I hope, Jane, that I shall be able to restrain myself. I am, at least, resolved to try."

"O, husband, if you will only try!" Mrs. Marshall ejaculated eagerly, lifting her tearful eyes, and looking him with an appealing expression in the face--"If you will only try!"

"I will try, Jane. But do not feel too much confidence in my effort. I am weak--so weak that I tremble when I think of it--and remember what an almost irresistible influence I have to contend with."

"Why not take the pledge, again, Jonas?" said his wife, for the first time she had urged that recourse upon him.

"You have heard my reasons given for that, over and over again."

"I know I have. But they never satisfied me."

"You would not have me add the sin of a double violation of a solemn pledge to my already overburdened conscience?"

"No, Jonas. Heaven forbid!"

"The fear of that restrains me. I dare not again take it."

"Do you not deeply repent of your first violation?" the wife asked, after a few moments of earnest thought. "Heaven knows how deeply."

"And Heaven, that perceives and knows the depth and sincerity of that repentance, accepts it according to its quality. And just so far as Heaven accepts the sincere offering of a repentant heart, conscious of its own weakness, and mourning over its derelictions, is strength given for combat in future temptations. The bruised reed he will not break, nor quench the smoking flax. Hope, then, dear husband! you are not cast off--you are not rejected by Heaven."

"O, Jane, if I could feel the truth of what you say, how happy I

should be!--For the idea of sinking again into that hopeless, abandoned, wretched condition, out of which this severe affliction has lifted me, as by the hair of the head, is appalling!" was the reply, to his wife's earnest appeal.

"Trust me, dear husband,--there is truth in what I say. He who came down to man's lowest, and almost lost condition, that he might raise him up, and sustain him against the assaults of his worst enemies, has felt in his own body all the temptations that ever can assail his children, and not only felt them, but successfully resisted and conquered them; so that, there is no state, however low, in which there is an earnest desire to rise out of evil, to which he does not again come down, and in which he does not again successfully contend with the powers of darkness. Look to Him, then, again, in a fixed resolution to put away the evils into which you have fallen, and you must, you will be sustained!"

"O, if I could but believe this, how eagerly would I again fly to the pledge!" Marshall said, in an earnest voice.

"Fly to it then, Jonas, as to a city of refuge; for it is true. You have felt the power of the pledge once--try it again. It will be strength to you in your weakness, as it has been before."

Still Marshall hesitated. While he did so, his wife brought him pens, ink and paper.

"Write a pledge and sign it, dear husband!" she urged, as she placed them before him. "Think of me--of the joy that it will bring to my heart--and sign."

"I am afraid, Jane."

"Can you stand alone?"

"I fear not."

"Are you not sure, that the pledge will restrain you some?"

"O, yes. If I ever take it again, I shall tremble under the fearful responsibility that rests upon me."

"Come with me, a moment," Mrs. Marshall said, after a thoughtful pause.

Her husband followed, as she led the way to an adjoining room, where two or three bright-eyed children were playing in the happiest mood.

"For their sakes, if not for mine, Jonas, sign the pledge again," she said, while her voice trembled, and then became choked, as she leaned her head upon his shoulder.

"You have conquered! I will sign!" he whispered in her ear.

Eagerly she lifted her head, and looked into his face with a glance of wild delight.

"O, how happy this poor heart will again be!" she ejaculated, clasping her hands together, and looking upwards with a joyous smile.

In a few minutes, a pledge of total abstinence from all kinds of intoxicating drinks, was written out and signed. While her husband was engaged in doing this, Mrs. Marshall stood looking down upon each letter as it was formed by his pen, eager to see his name subscribed. When that was finally done; she leaned forward on the table at which he wrote, swayed to and fro for a moment or two, and then sank down upon the floor, lost to all consciousness of external things.

From that hour to this, Jonas Marshall has been as true to his second pledge, even in thought, as the needle to the pole. So dreadful seems the idea of its violation, that the bare recollection of his former dereliction, makes him tremble.

"It was a severe remedy," he says, sometimes, in regard to his broken legs; "and proved eminently successful. But for that, I should have been utterly lost."

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

A THANKSGIVING STORY.

A MAN, who at first sight, a casual observer would have thought at least forty or fifty years of age, came creeping out of an old, miserable-looking tenement in the lower part of Cincinnati, a little while after night-fall, and, with bent body and shuffling gait, crossed the street an angle; and, after pausing for a few moments before a mean frame building, in the windows of which decanters of liquor were temptingly displayed, pushed open the door and entered.

It was early in November. Already the leaves had fallen, and there was, in the aspect of nature, a desolateness that mirrored itself in the feelings. Night had come, hiding all this, yet by no means obliterating the impression which had been made, but measurably increasing it; for, with the darkness had begun to fall a misty rain, and the rising wind moaned sadly among the eaves.

A short time after sundown the man, to whom we have just referred, came home to the comfortless-looking house we have seen him leaving. All day he had turned a wheel in a small manufactory; and when his work was done, he left, what to him was a prison-house, and retired to the cheap but wretched boarding-place he had chosen, where were congregated about a dozen men of the lowest class. He did not feel happy. That was impossible. No one who debases himself by intemperance can be happy; and this man had gone down, step by step, until he attained a depth of degradation most sad to contemplate. And yet he was not thirty years old! After supper he went out, as usual, to spend the evening in drinking.

The man, fallen as he was, and lost to all the higher and nobler sentiments of the heart, had experienced during the day a pressure upon his feelings heavier than usual, that had its origin in some reviving memories of earlier times.

The sound of his mother's voice had been in his ears frequently through the day; and images of persons, places, and scenes, the remembrance of which brought no joy to his heart, had many times come up before him. At the supper-table, amid his coarse, vulgar-minded companions, his laugh was not heard as usual; and, when spoken to, he answered briefly and in monosyllables.

The tippling-house to which the man went to spend his day's earnings and debase himself with drink, was one of the lowest haunts of vice in the city. Gambling with cards, dominoes, and dice, occupied the time of the greater number who made it a place of resort, and little was heard there except language the most obscene and profane. For his daily task at the wheel, the man was paid seventy-five cents a day. His boarding and lodging cost him thirty-one and a quarter cents,—and this had to be paid every night under penalty of being expelled from the house. He was a degraded drunkard, and not therefore worthy of confidence nor credit beyond a single day, and he received none. What remained of the pittance earned, was invariably spent in drink, or gambled away before he retired from the grogshop for the night; when, staggering home, he groped his way to his room, too helpless to remove his clothes, and threw himself upon a straw pallet, that could scarcely be dignified with the name of bed. This in outline, was the daily history of the man's life; and daily the shadows of vice fell more and more darkly upon his path.

The drinking-house had two rooms on the first floor. In front was a narrow counter, six or eight feet in length, and behind this stood a short, bloated, vice-disfigured image of humanity, ready to supply the wants of customers. Two or three roughly-made pine tables, and some chairs, stood around the room. The back apartment contained simply chairs and tables, and was generally occupied by parties engaged in games of chance, for small sums. Tobacco-smoke, the fumes of liquor, and the polluted breaths of the inmates, made the atmosphere of these rooms so offensive, that none but those who had

become accustomed to inhale it, could have endured to remain there for a minute.

The man, on entering this den of vice, went to the counter and called for whisky. A decanter was set before him, and from this he poured into a glass nearly a gill of the vilest kind of stuff and drank it off, undiluted. About half the quantity of water was sent down after the burning fluid, to partially subdue its ardent qualities; and then the man turned slowly from the bar. As he did so, an individual who had seen him enter, and who had kept his eyes upon him from the moment he passed through the door, came towards him with a smile of pleasure upon his countenance, and reaching out his hand, said, in an animated voice--

"How are you, Martin, my good fellow! How are you?"

And he grasped the poor wretch's hand with a hearty grip and shook it warmly. Something like a smile lighted up the marred and almost expressionless face of the miserable creature, as he gave to the hand that had taken his a responsive pressure, and replied,

"Oh! very well, very well, considering all things."

"Bad night out," said the man, as he sat down near a stove, that was sending forth a genial heat.

"Yes, bad enough," returned Martin. A thought of the damp and chilly air without caused him to shiver suddenly, and draw a little nearer to the stove.

"Which makes us prize a comfortable place like this, where we can spend a pleasant evening among pleasant friends, so much the more."

"Yes. It's very pleasant," said Martin, spreading himself out before the stove, with a hand upon each knee, and looking with an absent-minded air, through the opening in the door, which had once been closed by a thin plate of mica, and seeing strange forms in the glowing coals.

"Pleasant after a hard day's work," remarked the man, with an insinuating air.

"I don't know what life would be worth, if seasons of recreation and social intercourse did not come, nightly, to relieve both body and mind from their wearisomeness and exhaustion."

"Yes--yes. It's tiresome enough to have to sit and turn a wheel all day," said Martin.

"And a relief to get into a place like this at night," returned the man, rubbing his hands with animation.

"It's a great deal better than sitting at the wheel," sighed Martin.

"I should think it was! Come! won't you liquor."

"Thank you! I've just taken something."

"No matter. Come along, my good fellow, and try something more." And he arose, as he spoke, and moved towards the bar.

Martin was not the man to refuse a drink at any time, so he followed to the counter.

"What'll you take? Whisky, rum, gin, brandy, or spirits? Any thing, so it's strong enough to drink to old acquaintanceship. Ha! my boy?" And he leered in Martin's face with a sinister expression, and slapped him familiarly on the shoulder.

"Brandy," said Martin. "Brandy let it be! Nothing like brandy! Set out your pure old Cogniac! Toby. A drink for the gods!"

"Prime stuff! that. It warms you to the very soles of your feet!" added the man after he had turned off his glass. "Don't you say so, Martin?"

"Yes! and through your stockings, to your very shoes!"

"Hat ha! ha! He! he!" laughed the man with a forced effort. "Why, Bill Martin, you're a wit!"

"It ain't Bill, it's the brandy," said the bar-keeper, with more truth than jest.

"That brandy would put life into a grindstone!"

"It's put life into our friend here, without doubt." And as the very disinterested companion of Martin said this, he slapped him again upon the shoulder.

The two men turned from the bar and sat down again by the stove, both getting more and more familiar and chatty.

"Suppose we try a game of dominoes or chequers?" at length suggested the friend.

"No objection," replied Martin. "Any thing to make the time pass agreeably. Suppose we say chequers?"

"Very well. Here's a board. We'll go into the backroom where it's more quiet."

The two men retired into the little den in the rear of the bar-room, where were several parties engaged at cards or dice.

"Here's a cozy little corner," said the pleasant friend of Martin.

"We can be as quiet as kittens."

"What's the stake?" he next inquired, as soon as the board was opened and the pieces distributed. "Shall we say a bit?"

Martin received, at the close of each day, his earnings. Of his seventy-five cents, he had already paid out for board thirty-one and a quarter cents; and for a glass of liquor and some tobacco, six cents more. So he had but thirty-seven and a half cents. This sum he drew from his pocket, and counted over with scrupulous accuracy, so as to be sure of the amount. While he was doing so, his companion's eyes were fixed eagerly upon the small coins in his hands, in order, likewise, to ascertain their sum.

"A bit let it be." And the man laid down a twelve-and-a-half-cent piece.

"No! We'll start with a picayune," said Martin, selecting the smaller coin and placing it on the table.

"That's too trifling. Say a bit," returned the man, but half concealing the eager impatience he felt to get hold of the poor wretch's money.

"Well, I don't care! Call it a bit, then," said Martin. And the coin was staked.

An observer would have been struck with the change that now came over Martin. His dull eyes brightened; something like light came flashing into his almost expressionless face, and his lips arched with the influx of new life and feeling. He moved his pieces on the board with the promptness and skill of one accustomed to the game, and, though he played with an opponent whose clearer head gave him an advantage, he yet held his own with remarkable pertinacity, and was not beaten until after a long and well-balanced struggle. But beaten he was; and one-third of all he possessed in the world passed from his hand.

Another twelve-and-a-half-cent piece was staked, and, in like manner, lost.

"I can't go but a picayune this time," said Martin, when the pieces were arranged for the third game. "My funds are getting too low."

"Very well, a picayune let it be. Any thing just to give a little interest to the game. I'm sure you'll win this time."

And win Martin did. This elated him. He played another game and lost. The next was no more successful. Only a single picayune now remained. For a short time he hesitated about risking this. He wanted more liquor; and, if he lost, there would be no means left to gratify the ever burning thirst that consumed him. Not until the close of the next day would he receive any money; and, without

money, he could get nothing. There were unpaid scores against him in a dozen shops.

"Try again. Don't be afraid. You're a better player than I am. You'll be sure to win. Luck lies in the last sixpence. Don't you know that?"

Thus urged, Martin put down the last small remnant of his day's earnings. The interest taken in the games had nearly counteracted the effects of the liquor, and he was, therefore, able to play with a skill nearly equal to that of his companion. Slowly and thoughtfully he made his moves, and calculated the effect of every change in the board with as much intelligence as it was possible for him to summon to his aid. But luck, so called, was against him. His three last pieces, kings, were swept from the board by a single play of his adversary, at a moment when he believed himself sure of the game. A bitter imprecation fell from his lips, as he turned from the table, and thrusting his hands nearly to his elbows in his pockets, stalked into the bar-room, leaving the man who had won from him the remnant of his day's earnings for the twentieth time, to enjoy the pleasures of success. This man was too much occupied in kind attentions to others who were to be his victims, to even see Martin again during the evening.

After having lost his last farthing, the latter, feeling miserable enough, sat down at a table on which were three or four newspapers, and tried to find in them something to interest his mind. He was nearer to being sober than he had been for many weeks. On the night before, he had gambled away his last penny, and the consequence was, that he had been obliged to do without liquor all day. The effects of the two glasses he had taken since nightfall had been almost entirely obliterated by the excitement of the petty struggle through which he had passed, and his mind was, therefore, in a more than usually disturbed state. The day had been one of troubled feelings; and the night found him less happy than he had been through the day.

As he ran his eye over the newspaper he was trying to read, pausing now and then at a paragraph, and seeking to find in it something of interest, the words, "Thanksgiving in Massachusetts," arrested his attention. He read over the few lines that followed this heading. They were a simple statement of the fact, that a certain day in November had been appointed as a thanksgiving day by the Governor of Massachusetts, followed by these brief remarks by some editor who had recorded the fact:--"How many look forward to this day as a time of joyful re-union! And such it is to thousands of happy families. But, somehow, we always think of the vacant places that death or absence leaves at many tables; and of the shadows that come over the feelings of those who gather in the old homestead. Of the absent, how many are wanderers, like the poor prodigal! And how gladly would they be received if they would only return, and let all the unhappy past be forgotten and forgiven! Does, by any chance, such a wanderer's eye fall upon these few sentences? If so, we do earnestly and tenderly entreat him, by the love of his mother, that is still

with him, no matter how far he has gone from the right path, to come back on this blessed day; and thus make the thanksgiving of that mother's heart complete."

Every word of this appeal, which seemed as if it were addressed directly to himself, touched a responsive feeling in the bosom of Martin. One after another, images of other days passed before him--innocent, happy days. His mother's face, his mother's voice, her very words were present with unwonted vividness. Then came the recollection of blessed re-unions on the annual Thanksgiving festival. The rush of returning memories was too strong for the poor, weak, depressed wanderer from home and happiness. He felt the waters of repentance gathering in his eyes; and he drew his hand suddenly across them, with an instinctive effort to check their flow. But a fountain, long sealed, had been touched; and, ere he was more than half aware of the tendency of his feelings, a tear came forth and rested on his cheek. It was brushed away quickly. Another followed, and another. The man had lost his self-control. Into one of the lowest haunts of vice and dissipation the voice of his mother had come, speaking to him words of hope. Even here had her image followed him, and he saw her with the old smile of love upon her face. And he saw the smile give way to looks of sorrow, and heard the voice saying, in tones of the tenderest entreaty, "William! my poor wanderer! come home! Come home!"

Oh! with what deep, heart-aching sincerity did the poor wretch wish that he had never turned aside into the ways of folly. "If I could but go home and die!" he said, mentally.

"If I could but feel my mother's hand upon my forehead, and hear her voice again!"

He had remained sitting at the table with the newspaper before his face, to hide from other eyes all signs of emotion. But, the new feelings awakened were, in no degree, congenial to the gross, depraved, and sensual sphere by which he was surrounded; and, as he had no money left, and, therefore, no means of gratifying his thirst for liquor, there was no inducement for him longer to breathe the polluted atmosphere. Rising, therefore, he quietly retired; no one asking him to stay or expressing surprise at his departure. He had no money to spend at the bar, nor to lose at the gaming table; and was not, therefore, an object of the slightest interest to any.

As Martin stepped into the street, the cold rain struck him in the face, and the chilly air penetrated his thin, tattered garments. The driving mist of the early evening had changed to a heavy shower, and the street was covered with water. Through this he plunged as he crossed over, and entered his boarding-house, dripping from head to foot. He did not stop to speak with any one, but groped his way, in the dark to the attic. Removing a portion of his wet clothing, he threw himself upon his bed. He had not come to sleep, but to be alone that he might think. But thought grew so painful that he would fain have found relief in slumber, had that been possible.

"If I had never strayed from the right path!" he murmured, as he tossed himself uneasily. "Oh! if I had never strayed!"

"Go back?" he said, aloud, after some minutes' silence, answering to his own thoughts. "No--no! I will not blast them by my presence. Let them be happy."

But the wish to return, once felt, grew every moment stronger, and he struggled against it until, at last, after hours of bitter remorse and repentance, weary nature yielded, and he fell off into a more quiet sleep than he had known for weeks. In this sleep came many dreams, all of home, the old pleasant home, around which clustered every happy memory of his life; and when morning came, it found him longing to return to that home with an irrepressible desire.

"I will go back," said he, in a firm voice, as he arose at day's dawn, his mind clear and calm. "I will go home. Home--home!"

This proved no mere effervescence of the mind. The idea, once fully entertained, kept possession of his thoughts. His first resolution was to save his earnings until he had enough to procure decent clothing and pay his passage back. A week he kept to this resolution, not once tasting a drop of any intoxicating liquor. But by that time he was so impatient of delay, that he changed his purpose, and procured a situation as deck-hand on board a steamboat that was about leaving for Pittsburg. For this service, he was to receive three dollars for the trip, besides being furnished with his meals. During his week of sobriety, he had been able to save two dollars. With this money he got an old pair of boots mended which his employer at the manufactory had given him, and had his clothes repaired and washed, all of which materially improved his appearance, and gave occasion for several of his fellow-workmen to speak encouragingly, which strengthened him greatly in his good purpose.

During the passage up the river, Martin was subjected to many temptations, and once or twice came near falling into his old ways. But thoughts of home came stealing into his mind at the right moment, and saved him.

With three dollars in his pocket, the wages he had received from the steamboat captain, Martin started for Philadelphia on foot. He was eight days on the journey. When he arrived, his boots were worn through, his money all expended, and himself sick with fatigue, sad and dispirited. Luckily he met an old acquaintance, who was a hand on board a schooner loading with coal for Boston. The vessel was to pass through the canal, and then go by the way of Long Island Sound. Martin told his story to this old crony, who had once been a hard drinker but was now reformed, and he persuaded the captain to give him a passage.

Just two weeks from the time of his leaving Cincinnati, Martin saw the sails expand above him, and felt the onward movement of the vessel that was to bear him homeward. His heart swelled with sad yet pleasant emotions. It was a long time since he had heard from home; and longer still since he had seen the face of any member of his family. For years he had been a wanderer. Now returning, a mere wreck, so marred in every feature, and so changed, that even love would almost fail to recognize him, the eyes of his mind were bent eagerly forward. And, as the distance grew less and less, and he attempted to realize more and more perfectly the meeting soon to take place, his heart would beat heavily in his bosom, and a dimness come before his mental vision.

Thanksgiving, that day of days in New England, had come round again. Among the thousands by whom it was celebrated as a festive occasion, were the Martins, who resided in a village only a few miles from Boston. Old Mr. and Mrs. Martin had four children, two sons and two daughters. One of the daughters remained at home. Rachel, the oldest of the daughters, was in her twenty-third year; and Martha was nineteen. The former was married and lived in the village. Thomas, next older than Rachel, was also married. He resided ten miles away. The oldest of them all, William, was a wanderer; or, for ought they knew to the contrary, had long since passed to his great account. As many as five years had gone by since there had come from him any tidings; and nearly eight years since his place had been vacant at the Thanksgiving re-unions.

The day rose calm and bright on happy thousands. Perhaps no family in all New England would have experienced a purer delight on this occasion, than that of the Martins, had not the vacant place of an absent member reminded them of the wandering, it might be the lost. Thomas was there with his gentle wife and three bright children; Rachel with her husband and babe; and Martha with her sweet young face, that was hardly ever guiltless of a smile. But William was away; and the path in which he was treading, if he were yet alive, was hidden from their view by clouds and darkness.

Dinner, that chiefest event of every Thanksgiving day, was served immediately after the return of the family from church. It had been prepared by the hands of Martha, and she was in the act of taking an enormous turkey from the oven, when a man came to the door, and, without speaking a word, stood and looked at her attentively. She noticed him as she turned from the oven. He was a sad looking object for a New England village on Thanksgiving day. His eyes were sunken, his face thin and pale, and his old tattered garments hung loosely on his meager limbs. He looked like one just from a bed of sickness, and he bent, leaning upon a rough stick, like an old man yielding to the weight of years. Yet, poor and weak as he seemed, his clothes were clean, and his face had been recently shaven.

Struck with his appearance, Martha paused and looked at him earnestly.

"Will you let me rest here for a little while?" said the stranger, as soon as he had attracted Martha's attention.

"Oh! yes. Sit down," replied Martha, whose sympathies were instantly awakened by the man's appearance. And she handed him a chair.

Just then, Rachel, who had taken off her things on returning from church, came into the kitchen to assist Martha with the dinner. She merely glanced at the man; but he fixed upon her a most earnest look, and followed her about with his eyes as she moved from one part of the room to another.

"Martha!" called Mrs. Martin from the adjoining room. Neither of the sisters saw the start which the man gave, nor observed the quick flush that went over his face, as he turned his head in the direction from which the sound came.

Martha ran in to see what her mother wanted. In a little while she came back, and, as she entered the kitchen, she could not help remarking the strange earnestness with which the man looked at her.

Presently, Mrs. Martin herself came in. She was surprised at seeing the miserable looking object who had intruded himself upon them at a time that seemed so inopportune.

"Who is that, Martha?" she asked in a low voice, aside.

"I don't know," was answered in the same low tone--not so low, however, as to be inaudible to the quick ears of the stranger.

"What is he doing here?"

"He asked me if I would let him rest for a little while; and I couldn't say no."

"He looks sick; and he must be very poor."

"Yes, poor, indeed!" returned Mrs. Martin with a sigh; a thought of her own poor wanderer crossing her mind. This thought caused her to turn to the man and say to him,

"Have you been sick, my friend?"

The man who had been looking at her intently from the moment that she entered the room, now turned his face partly away as he replied--

"Yes. I've been sick for a number of days, but I am better now."

"You look very poor."

"I am poor--poor indeed!"

"You do not belong to these parts?"

"I do not deserve to," replied the man, low and evasively.

"Where do your friends live?"

"I don't know that I have any friends," said the man. There was a slight tremor in his voice, that thrilled, answeringly, a chord in the heart of his questioner.

"No friends!"

"There still live those who were once my friends."

"And why not your friends now?"

The man shook his head, sadly.

"I have proved myself unworthy, and, doubtless, they have long since cast me forth from their regard."

"Then you have no mother," said Mrs. Martin, quickly. "A mother's love cannot die."

"I have a mother, and I have sisters," replied the man, after a pause. "Feel kindly towards me for their sakes. I have wandered long; but I am repentant; and, now returning to my old home, I seek--"

The voice that had been low and unsteady at the beginning, sunk sobbing into silence, and the stranger's head drooped upon his bosom. At that moment, Mr. Martin entered, and seeing the man, he exclaimed--

"Who in the world is this?"

"William?" fell half joyfully, half in doubting inquiry, from the mother's lips.

"My mother!" ejaculated the stranger, starting forward, and falling into her open arms.

"William--William!" said Mr. Martin. "Oh! no! It cannot be!"

"It is! Yes! It is my poor, poor boy!" replied the mother, disengaging herself from his clasping arms, and pushing him off so that she could get a full view of his face. "Oh! William! My son! my son!" And again she hugged him wildly to her bosom.

How freely the tears of joy mingled on that happy Thanksgiving day, need not be told. There was no longer a vacant place at the board; and thought turned not away, doubtingly, in a vain search for the absent and the wandering. The long lost had been found; the straying

member had come home. There was, indeed, a Thanksgiving festival. Such joy as is felt in heaven over a sinner that repenteth, made glad the mother's heart that day. And it has been glad ever since, for, though Thanksgiving days have come again and again, there has been no absent member since William's return.

JIM BRADDOCK'S PLEDGE.

"YOU'LL sign it, I'm sure," said a persevering Washingtonian, who had found his way into a little village grogshop, and had there presented the pledge to some three or four of its half-intoxicated inmates. The last man whom he addressed, after having urged the others to no effect, was apparently about thirty years of age, and had a sparkling eye, and a good-humoured countenance, that attracted rather than repelled. The marks of the destroyer were, however, upon him, showing themselves with melancholy distinctness.

"You'll sign, I'm sure, Jim."

"O, of course," replied the individual addressed, winking, as he did so to the company, as much as to say--"Don't you want to see fun?"

"Yes, but you will, I know?"

"Of course I will. Where's the document?"

"Here it is,"--displaying a sheet of paper with sundry appropriate devices, upon which was printed in conspicuous letters,

"We whose names--," &c.

"That's very pretty, aint it, Ike?" said Jim, or James Braddock, with a mock seriousness of tone and manner.

"O, yes--very beautiful."

"Just see here," ran on Jim, pointing to the vignette over the pledge.--"This spruce chap, swelled out with cold-water until just ready to burst, and still pouring in more, is our friend Malcom here, I suppose."

A loud laugh followed this little hit, which seemed to the company exceedingly humorous. But Malcom took it all in good part, and retorted by asking Braddock who the wretched looking creature was

with a bottle in his hand, and three ragged children, and a pale, haggard, distressed woman, following after him.

"Another cold-water man, I suppose," Jim Braddock replied; but neither his laugh nor the laugh of his cronies was so hearty as before.

"O, no. That's a little mistake into which you have fallen," Malcom said, smiling. "He is one of your firewater men. Don't you see how he has been scorched with it, inside and out. Now, did you ever see such a miserable looking creature? And his poor children--and his wife! But I will say nothing about them. The picture speaks for itself."

"Here's a barrel, mount him up, and let us have a temperance speech!" cried the keeper of the grog-shop, coming from behind his counter, and mingling with the group.

"O, yes.--Give us a temperance speech!" rejoined Jim Braddock, not at all sorry to get a good excuse for giving up his examination of the pledge, which had revived in his mind some associations of not the pleasantest character in the world.

"No objection at all," replied the ready Washingtonian, mounting the rostrum which the tavern-keeper had indicated, to the no small amusement of the company, and the great relief of Jim Braddock, who began to feel that the laugh was getting on the wrong side of his mouth, as he afterwards expressed it.

"Now for some rare fun!" ejaculated one of the group that gathered around the whiskey-barrel upon which Malcom stood.

"This is grand sport!" broke in another.

"Take your text, Mr. Preacher!" cried a third.

"O yes, give us a text and a regular-built sermon!" added a fourth, rubbing his hands with great glee.

"Very well," Malcom replied, with good humour. "Now for the text."

"Yes, give us the text," ran around the circle.

"My text will be found in Harry Arnold's grog-shop, Main street, three doors from the corner. It is in these words:--'Whiskey-barrel.' Upon this text I will now, with your permission, make a few remarks."

Then holding up his pledge and laying his finger upon the wretched being there represented as the follower after strong drink, he went on--

"You all see this poor creature here, and his wife and

children--well, as my text and his fall from happiness and respectability are inseparably united, I will, instead of giving you a dry discourse on an empty whiskey-barrel, narrate this man's history, which involves the whiskey-barrel, and describes how it became empty, and finally how it came here. I will call him James Bradly--but take notice, that I call him a little out of his true name, so as not to seem personal.

"Well, this James Bradly was a house-carpenter--I say _was_--for although still living, he is no longer an industrious house-carpenter, but a very industrious grog-drinker,--he has changed his occupation. About five years ago, I went to his house on some business. It was about dinner-time, and the table was set, and the dinner on it.

"Come, take some dinner with me,' Mr. Bradly said, in such a kind earnest way, that I could not resist, especially as his wife looked so happy and smiling, and the dinner so neatly served, plentiful and inviting. So I sat down with Mr. and Mrs. Bradly, and two fat, chubby-faced children; and I do not think I ever enjoyed so pleasant a meal in my life.

"After dinner was over, Mr. Bradly took me all through his house, which was new. He had just built it, and furnished it with every convenience that a man in moderate circumstances could desire. I was pleased with everything I saw, and praised everything with a hearty good will. At last he took me down into the cellar, and showed me a barrel of flour that he had just bought--twenty bushels of potatoes and turnips laid in for the winter, five large fat hogs, and I can't remember what all. Beside these, there was a barrel of something lying upon the cellar floor.

"What is this?' I asked.

"O, that is a barrel of whiskey that I have laid in also.'

"A barrel of whiskey!' I said, in surprise.

"Yes. I did some work for Harry Arnold, and the best I could do was to take this barrel of good old 'rye' in payment. But it is just as well. It will be a saving in the end.'

"How so?' I asked.

"Why, because there are more than twice as many drams in this barrel of whiskey, as I could get for what I paid for it. Of course, I save more than half.'

"But have you taken into your calculation the fact, that, in consequence of having a barrel of whiskey so handy, you will drink about two glasses to one that you would want if you had to go down to Harry Arnold's for it every time!'

"O yes, I have,' Bradly replied. 'But still I calculate on it being a saving, from the fact that I shall not lose so much time as I otherwise would do. A great deal of time, you know, is wasted in these dram-shops.'

"All true. But have you never considered the danger arising from the habitual free use of liquor--such a free use as the constant sight of a whole barrel of whiskey may induce you to make?"

"Danger!' ejaculated Mr. Bradly in surprise.

"Yes, danger,' I repeated.

"Of what?' he asked.

"Of becoming too fond of liquor,' I replied.

"I hope you do not wish to insult me in my own house, Mr. Malcom,' the carpenter said, rather sternly.

"O no,' I replied. 'Of course I do not. I only took the liberty that a friend feels entitled to use, to hint at what seemed to me a danger that you might be running into blindly.'

"Mrs. Bradly, who had gone through the house with us, enjoying my admiration of all their comfortable arrangements, seemed to dwell with particular interest on what I said in reference to the whiskey-barrel. She was now leaning affectionately upon her husband's arm--her own drawn through his, and her hands clasped together--looking up into his face with a tender and confiding regard. I could not help noticing her manner, and the expression of her countenance. And yet it seemed to me that something of concern was on her face, but so indistinct as to be scarcely visible. Of this I was satisfied, when she said,

"I don't think there is much use in drinking liquor, do you, Mr. Malcom?"

"I cannot see that there is,' I replied, of course.

"Nor can I. Of one thing I think I am certain, and that is, that James would be just as comfortable and happy without it as with it.'

"You don't know what you are talking about, Sally,' her husband replied good-humouredly, for he was a man of excellent temper, and a little given to jesting. 'But I suppose you thought it good for you last christmas, when you got boozy on egg-nog.'

"O James, how can you talk so!' his wife exclaimed, her face reddening. 'You know that you served me a shameful trick then.'

"What do you think he did, Mr. Malcom?' she added, turning to me, while her husband laughed heartily at what she said. 'He begged me

to let him make me a little wine egg-nog, seeing that I wouldn't touch that which had brandy in it, because liquor always flies to my head. To please him, I consented, though I didn't want it. And then, the rogue fixed me a glass as strong again with brandy as that which I had refused to take. I thought while I was drinking it, that it did not taste like wine, and told him so. But he declared that it was wine, and that it was so sweet that I could not clearly perceive its flavour. Of course I had to go to bed, and didn't get fairly over it for two or three days. Now, wasn't that too bad, Mr. Malcom!

"Indeed it was, Mrs. Bradly,' I said in reply.

"It was a capital joke, though, wasn't it?' rejoined her husband, laughing immoderately.

"I'll tell you a good way to retort on him,' I said, jestingly.

"How is that, Mr. Malcom?'

"Pull the tap out of his whiskey-barrel.'

"I would, if I dared.'

"She'd better not try that, I can tell her.'

"What would you do, if I did?' she asked.

"Buy two more in its place, and make you drink one of them.'

"O dear! I must beg to be excused from that. But, indeed, James, I wish you would let it run. I'm really ashamed to have it said, that my husband keeps a barrel of whiskey in the house.'

"Nonsense, Sally! you don't know what you are talking about.'

"Well, perhaps I don't,' the wife said, and remained silent, for there was a half-concealed rebuke in her husband's tone of voice.

"I saw that I could say no more about the whiskey-barrel, and so I dropped the subject, and, in a short time, after having finished my business with Mr. Bradly, went away.

"Well, how comes on the whiskey-barrel?' I said to him, about a month after, as we met on the road.

"First-rate,' was his reply. 'It contains a prime article of good old 'rye,' I can tell you. The best I have ever tasted. Come, won't you go home with me and try some?'

"No, I believe not."

"Do now--come along,' and he took me by the button, and pulled me

gently. 'You don't know how fine it is. I am sure there is not another barrel like it in the town.'

"You must really excuse me, Bradley,' I replied, for I found that he was in earnest, and what was more, had a watery look about the eyes, that argued badly for him, I thought.

"Well, if you won't, you won't,' he said. 'But you always were an unsocial kind of a fellow.'

"And so we parted. Six months had not passed before it was rumoured through the neighbourhood, that Bradley had begun to neglect his business; and that he spent too much of his time at Harry Arnold's. I met his wife one day, about this time, and, really, her distressed look gave me the heart ache. Something is wrong, certainly, I said to myself. It was only a week after, that I met poor Bradley intoxicated.

"Ah, Malcom--good day--How are you?' he said, reeling up to me and offering his hand.--'You haven't tried that good old rye of mine yet. Come along now, it's most gone.'

"You must excuse me today, Mr. Bradley,' I replied, trying to pass on.

"But he said I should not get off this time--that home with him I must go, and take a dram from his whiskey-barrel. Of course, I did not go. If there had been no other reason, I had no desire, I can assure you, to meet his wife while her husband was in so sad a condition. After awhile I got rid of him, and right glad was I to do so."

"Come, that'll do for one day!" broke in Harry Arnold, the grog-shop-keeper, at this point, not relishing too well the allusions to himself, nor, indeed, the drift of the narrative, which he very well understood.

"No--no--go on! go on!" urged two or three of the group. But Jim Braddock said nothing, though he looked very thoughtful.

"I'll soon get through," replied the Washingtonian, showing no inclination to abandon his text. "You see, I did not, of course, go home with poor Bradley, and he left me with a drunken, half-angry malediction. That night he went down into his cellar, late, to draw some whiskey, and forgot his candle, which had been so carelessly set down, that it set fire to a shelf, and before it was discovered the fire had burned through the floor above.

"Nearly all their furniture was saved, whiskey-barrel and all, but the house was burned to the ground. Since that time, Bradley will tell you that luck has been against him. He has been going down, down, down, every year, and now does scarcely anything but lounge about Harry Arnold's grog-shop and drink, while his poor wife and

children are in want and suffering, and have a most wretched look, as you may see by this picture on the pledge. As for the whiskey-barrel, that was rolled down here about a month ago, and sold for half a dollar's worth of liquor, and here I now stand upon it, and make it the foundation of a temperance speech.

"Now, let me ask you all seriously, if you do not think that James Bradly owes his rapid downfall, in a great measure, to the fact that Harry Arnold would not pay him a just debt in anything but whiskey? And against Harry Arnold really your friend, that you are so willing to beggar your wives and children to put money in his till? I only ask the questions. You can answer then at your leisure. So ends my speech."

"You are an insulting fellow, let me tell you!" the grog-shop-keeper said, as he turned away, angrily, and went behind his counter.

The Washingtonian took no notice of this, but went to Jim Braddock, who stood in a musing attitude near the door, and said--

"You will sign now, won't you, Jim?"

"No, I will not!" was his gruff response.

"I am not going to sign away my liberty for you or anybody else. So long as I live, I'll be a free man."

"That's right, Jim! Huzza for liberty!" shouted his companions.

"Yes, huzza for liberty! say I," responded Braddock, in the effort to rally himself, and shake off the thoughts and feelings that Malcom's narrative had conjured up a narrative that proved to be too true a history of his own downfall.

"It was a shame for you to do what you did down at Harry Arnold's," Braddock said to the Washingtonian about half an hour afterwards, meeting him on the street.

"Do what, Jim!"

"Why, rake up all my past history as you did, and insult Harry in his own house into the bargain."

"How did I insult Harry Arnold?"

"By telling about that confounded whiskey-barrel that I have wished a hundred times had been in the bottom of the sea, before it ever fell into my hands."

"I told the truth, didn't I?"

"O yes--it was all true enough, and a great deal too true."

"He owed you a bill?"

"Yes."

"And you wanted your money?"

"Yes."

"But Harry wouldn't pay you in anything but whiskey?"

"No, he would not."

"And so you took a barrel of whiskey, that you did not want, in payment?"

"I did."

"But would much rather have had the money?"

"Of course, I would."

"And yet, you are so exceedingly tender of Harry Arnold's feelings, notwithstanding his agency in your ruin, that you would not have him reminded of his original baseness--or rather his dishonesty in not paying you in money, according to your understanding with him, for your work?"

"I don't see any use in raking up these old things."

"The use is, to enable you to see your folly so clearly as to cause you to abandon it. I am sure you not only see it now, but feel it strongly."

"Well, suppose I do?--what then?"

"Why, sign the pledge, and become a sober man."

"I've made up my mind never to sign a pledge," was the emphatic answer.

"Why?"

"Because, I am determined to live and die a free man. I'll never sign away my liberty. My father was a free man before me, and I will live and die a free man!"

"But you're a slave now."

"It is not true! I am free.--Free to drink, or free to et it alone, as I choose."

"You are mistaken, Jim. You have sold yourself into slavery, and the marks of the chains that still bind you, are upon your body. You are

the slave of a vile passion that is too strong for your reason."

"I deny it. I can quit drinking if I choose."

"Then why don't you quit?"

"Because I love to drink."

"And love to see your wife's cheek growing paler and paler every day--and your children ragged and neglected?"

"Malcom!"

"I only asked the question, Jim."

"But you know that I don't love to see them in the condition they are."

"And still, you say that you can quit drinking whenever you choose, but will not do so, because you love the taste, or the effect of the liquor, I don't know which?"

Braddock's feelings were a good deal touched, as they had been, ever since Malcom's temperance speech in the grog-shop. He stood silent for some time, and then said--

"I know it's too bad for me to drink as I do, but I will break off."

"You had better sign the pledge then."

"No, I will not do that. As I have told you, I am resolved never to sign away my liberty."

"Very well. If you are fixed in your resolution, I suppose it is useless for me to urge the matter. For the sake, then, of your wife and children, break away from the fetters that bind you, and be really free. Now you are not only a slave, but a slave in the most debasing bondage."

The two then separated, and Jim Braddock--in former years it was Mr. Braddock--returned to his house; a very cheerless place, to what it had once been. Notwithstanding his abandonment of himself to drink and idleness, Braddock had no ill-nature about him. Though he neglected his family, he was not quarrelsome at home. She might, and talked hard to him, he never retorted, but always turned the matter off with a laugh or a jest. With his children, he was always cheerful, and frequently joined in their sports, when not too drunk to do so. All this cool indifference, as it seemed to her, frequently irritated his wife, and made her scold away at him with might and main. He had but one reply to make whenever this occurred, and that was--

"There--there--Keep cool, Sally! It will all go in your lifetime,

darling!"

As he came into the house after the not very pleasant occurrence that had taken place at Harry Arnold's, he saw by Sally's excited face and sparkling eyes that something was wrong.

"What's the matter, Sally?" he asked.

"Don't ask me what's the matter, if you please!" was her tart reply.

"Yes, but I want to know? Something is wrong."

"Something is always wrong, of course," Sally rejoined--"and something always will be wrong while you act as you do: It's a burning shame for any man to abuse his family as you are abusing yours. Jim--"

"There--there. Keep cool, Sally! It will all go in your lifetime, darling!" Jim responded, in a mild, soothing tone.

"O yes!--It's very easy to say 'keep cool!' But I'm tired of this everlasting 'keep cool!' Quit drinking and go to work, and then it'll be time to talk about keeping cool. Here I've been all the morning scraping up chips to make the fire burn. Not a stick in the wood-pile, and you lazing it down to Harry Arnold's. I wish to goodness he was hung! It's too bad! I'm out of all manner of patience!"

"There--there. Keep cool, Sally! It'll all go--"

"Hush, will you!" ejaculated Sally, stamping her foot, all patience having left her over-ried spirit. "Keep away from Harry Arnold's! Quit drinking, and then it'll be time for you to talk to me about keeping cool!"

"I'm going to quit, Sally," Jim replied, altogether unexcited by her words and manner.

"Nonsense!" rejoined Sally. "You've said that fifty times."

"But I'm going to do it now."

"Have you signed the pledge?"

"No. I'm not going to sign away my liberty, as I have often said. But I'm going to quit."

"Fiddle-de-de! Sign away your liberty! You've got no liberty to sign away! A slave, and talk of liberty!"

"Look here, Sally," her husband said, good-humouredly, for nothing that she could say ever made him get angry with her--"you're a hard-mouthed animal, and it would take a strong hand to hold you in.

But as I like to see you go at full gallop, darling, I never draw a tight rein. Aint you most out of breath yet?"

"You're a fool, Jim!"

"There's many a true word spoken in jest, Sally," her husband responded in a more serious tone; "I have been a most egregious fool--but I'm going to try and act the wise man, if I havn't forgotten how. So now, as little Vic. said to her mother--

'Pray, Goody, cease and moderate
The rancour of your tongue.'"

Suddenly his wife felt that he was really in earnest, and all her angry feelings subsided--

"O James!" she said--"if you would only be as you once were, how happy we might all again be!"

"I know that, Sally. And I'm going to try hard to be as I once was. There's a little job to be done over at Jones', and I promised him that I would do it for him today. but I got down to Harry Arnold's, and there wasted my time until I was ashamed to begin a day's work. But to-morrow morning I'll go over, and stick at it until it's done. It'll be cash down, and you shall have every cent it comes to, my old girl!" patting his wife on the cheek as he said so.

Mrs. Braddock, of course, felt a rekindling of hope in her bosom. Many times before had her husband promised amendment, and as often had he disappointed her fond expectations. But still she suffered her heart to hope again.

On the next morning, James Braddock found an early breakfast ready for him when he got up. His hand trembled a good deal as he lifted his cup of coffee to his lips, which was insipid without the usual morning-dram to put a taste in his mouth. He did not say much, for he felt an almost intolerable craving for liquor, and this made him serious. But his resolution was strong to abandon his former habits.

"You won't forget, James?" his wife said, laying her hand upon his arm, and looking him earnestly and with moistened eyes in the face, as he was about leaving the house.

"No, Sally, I won't forget. Take heart, my good girl. Let what's past go for nothing. It's all in our lifetime."

And so saying, Braddock turned away, and strode off with a resolute bearing. His wife followed with her eyes the form of her husband until it was out of sight, and then closed the door with a long-drawn sigh.

The way to Mr. Jones' house was past Arnold's grogshop, and as Braddock drew nearer and nearer to his accustomed haunt, he felt a

desire, growing stronger and stronger every moment, to enter and join his old associates over a glass of liquor. To this desire, he opposed every rational objection that he could find. He brought up before his mind his suffering wife and neglected children, and thought of his duty to them. He remembered that it was drink, and drink alone, that had been the cause of his downfall. But with all these auxiliaries to aid him in keeping his resolution, it seemed weak when opposed to desires, which long continued indulgence had rendered inordinate. Onward he went with a steady pace, fortifying his mind all the while with arguments against drinking, and yet just ready at every moment to yield the contest he was waging against habit and desire. At last the grog-shop was in sight, and in a few minutes he was almost at the door.

"Hurrah! Here's Jim Braddock, bright and early!" cried one of his old cronies, from among two or three who were standing in front of the shop.

"So the cold-water-men haven't got you yet!" broke in another. "I thought Jim Braddock was made of better stuff."

"Old birds aint caught with chaff!" added a third.

"Come! Hallo! Where are you off to in such a hurry, with your tools on your back?" quickly cried the first speaker, seeing that Braddock was going by without showing any disposition to stop.

"I've got a job to do that's in a hurry," replied Braddock, pausing--"and have no time to stop. And besides, I've sworn off."

"Sworn off! Ha! ha! Have you taken the pledge?"

"No, I have not. I'm not going to bind myself down not to drink any thing. I'll be a free man. But I won't touch another drop, see if I do."

"O yes--we'll see. How long do you expect to keep sober?"

"Always."

"You'll be drunk by night."

"Why do you say so?"

"I say so--that's all; and I know so."

"But why do you say so? Come, tell me that."

"O, I've seen too many swear off in my time--and I've tried it too often myself. It's no use. Not over one in a hundred ever sticks to it; and I'm sure, Jim Braddock's not that exception."

"There are said to be a hundred reformed men in this town now. I am

sure, I know a dozen," Braddock replied.

"O yes. But they've signed the pledge."

"Nonsense! I don't believe a man can keep sober any the better by signing the pledge, than by resolving never again to drink a drop."

"Facts are stubborn things, you know. But come, Jim, as you haven't signed the pledge, you might as well come in and take a glass now, for you'll do it before night, take my word for it."

It was a fact, that Braddock began really to debate the question with himself, whether he should or not go in and take a single glass, when he became suddenly conscious of his danger, turned away, and hurried on, followed by the loud, jeering laugh of his old boon companions.

"Up-hill work," he muttered to himself, as he strode onward.

An hour's brisk walking brought him to the residence of Mr. Jones, nearly four miles away from the little town in which he lived, where he entered upon his day's work, resolved that, henceforth, he would be a reformed man. At first he was nervous, from want of his accustomed stimulus, and handled his tools awkwardly. But after awhile, as the blood began to circulate more freely, the tone of his system came up to a healthier action.

About eleven o'clock Mr. Jones came out to the building upon which Braddock was at work, and after chatting a little, said--

"This is grog time, aint it, Jim?"

"Yes sir, I believe it is," was the reply.

"Well, knock off then for a little while, and come into the house and take a dram."

Now Mr. Jones was a very moderate drinker himself, scarcely touching liquor for weeks at a time, unless in company. But he always kept it in the house, and always gave it to his workmen, as a matter of course, at eleven o'clock. Had he been aware of Braddock's effort to reform himself, he would as soon have thought of offering him poison to drink as whiskey. But, knowing his habits, he concluded, naturally, that the grog was indispensable, and tendered it to him as he had always done before, on like occasions.

"I've signed the pledge," were the words that instantly formed themselves in the mind of Braddock--but were instantly set aside, as that reason for not drinking would not have been the true one. Could he have said that, all difficulty would have vanished in a moment.

"No objection, Mr. Jones," was then uttered, and off he started for the house, resolutely keeping down every reason that struggled in

his mind to rise and be heard.

The image of Mr. Jones, standing before him, with a smiling invitation to come and take a glass, backed by his own instantly aroused inclinations, had been too strong an inducement. He felt, too, that it would have been rudeness to decline the proffered hospitality.

"That's not bad to take, Mr. Jones," he said, smacking his lips, after turning off a stiff glass.

"No, it is not, Jim. That's as fine an article of whiskey as I've ever seen," Mr. Jones replied, a little flattered at Braddock's approval of his liquor. "You're a good judge of such matters."

"I ought to be." And as Jim said this, he turned out another glass.

"That's right--help yourself," was Mr. Jones' encouraging remark, as he saw this.

"I never was backward at that, you know, Mr. Jones." After eating a cracker and a piece of cheese, and taking a third drink, Braddock went back and resumed his work, feeling quite happy.

After dinner Mr. Jones handed him the bottle again, and did the same when he knocked off in the evening. Of course, he was very far from being sober when he started for home. As he came into town, his way was past Harry Arnold's, whose shop he entered, and was received with a round of applause by his old associates, who saw at a glance that Jim was "a little disguised." Their jokes were all received in good part, and parried by treating all around.

When her husband left in the morning, Mrs. Braddock's heart was lightened with a new hope, although a fear was blended with that hope, causing them both to tremble in alternate preponderance in her bosom. Still, hope would gain the ascendancy, and affected her spirits with a degree of cheerfulness unfelt for many months. As the day began to decline towards evening, after putting everything about the house in order, she took her three children, washed them clean, and dressed them up as neatly as their worn and faded clothes would permit. This was in order to make home present the most agreeable appearance possible to her husband when he returned. Then she killed a chicken and dressed it, ready to broil for his supper--made up a nice short-cake, and set the table with a clean, white table-cloth. About sundown, she commenced baking the cake, and cooking the chicken, and at dusk had them all ready to put on the table the moment he came in.

Your father is late," she remarked to one of the children, after sitting in a musing attitude for about five minutes, after everything was done that she could do towards getting supper ready. As she said this, she got up and went to the door and looked long and intently down the street in the direction that she expected him,

calling each distant, dim figure, obscured by the deepening twilight, his, until a nearer approach dispelled the illusion. Each disappointment like this, caused her feelings to grow sadder and sadder, until at length, as evening subsided into night, with its veil of thick darkness, she turned into the house with a heavy oppressive sigh, and rejoined the children who were impatient for their supper.

"Wait a little while," was her reply to their importunities. "Father will soon be here now."

She was still anxious that their father should see their improved appearance.

"O no"--urged one. "We want our supper now."

"O yes. Give us our supper now. I'm so sleepy and hungry," whined another.

And to give force to these, the youngest began to fret and cry. Mrs. Braddock could delay no longer, and so she set them up to the table and gave them as much as they could eat. Then she undressed each in turn, and in a little while, they were fast asleep.

When all was quiet, and the mother sat down to wait for her husband's return, a feeling of deep despondency came over her mind. It had been dark for an hour, and yet he had not come home. She could imagine no reason for this, other than the one that had kept him out so often before--drinking and company. Thus she continued to sit, hour after hour, the supper untasted. Usually, her evenings were spent in some kind of work--in mending her children's clothes, or knitting them stockings. But now she had no heart to do anything. The state of gloomy uncertainty that she was in, broke down her spirits, for the time being.

Bedtime came; and still Braddock was away. She waited an hour later than usual, and then retired, sinking back upon her pillow as she did so, in a state of hopeless exhaustion of mind and body.

In the meantime, her husband had spent a merry evening at Harry Arnold's, drinking with more than his accustomed freedom. He was the last to go home, the thought of meeting his deceived and injured wife, causing him to linger. When he did leave, it was past eleven o'clock. Though more than half-intoxicated on going from the grog-shop, the cool night air, and the thought of Sally, sobered him considerably before he got home. Arrived there, he paused with his hand on the door for some time, reluctant to enter. At last he opened the door, and went quietly in, in the hope of getting up to bed without his wife's discovering his condition. The third step into the room brought his foot in contact with a chair, and over he went, jarring the whole house with his fall. His wife heard this--indeed her quick ear had detected the opening of the door--and it caused her heart to sink like a heavy weight in her bosom.

Gathering himself up, Braddock moved forward again as steadily as he could, both hands extended before him. A smart blow upon the nose from an open door, that had insinuated itself between his hands, brought him up again, and caused him, involuntarily, to dash aside the door which shut with a heavy slam. Pausing now, to recall his bewildered senses, he resolved to move forward with more caution, and so succeeded in gaining the stairs, up which he went, his feet, softly as he tried to put them down, falling like heavy lumps of lead, and making the house echo again. He felt strongly inclined to grumble about all the lights being put out, as he came into the chamber--but a distinct consciousness that he had no right to grumble, kept him quiet, and so he undressed himself with as little noise as possible,--which was no very small portion, for at almost every moment he stepped on something, or ran against something that seemed endowed for the time with sonorous power of double the ordinary capacity,--and crept softly into bed.

Mrs. Braddock said nothing, and he said nothing. But long before her eyelids closed in sleep, he was loudly snoring by her side. When he awoke in the morning, Sally had arisen and gone down. A burning thirst caused him to get up immediately and dress himself. There was no water in the room, and if there had been, he could not have touched it while there was to be had below a cool draught from the well. So he descended at once, feeling very badly, and resolving over again that he would never touch another drop of liquor as long as he lived. Having quenched his thirst with a large bowl of cool water drawn right from the bottom of the well, he went up to his wife where she was stooping at the fire, and said--

"Sally, look here--"

"Go 'way, Jim," was her angry response.

"No, but Sally, look here, I want to talk to you," persisted her husband.

"Go 'way, I say--I don't care if I never see you again!"

"So you've said a hundred times, but I never believed you, or I might have taken you at your word."

To this his wife made no reply.

"I was drunk last night, Sally," Jim said, after a moment's silence.

"You needn't take the trouble to tell me that."

"Of course not. But an open confession, you know, is good for the soul. I was drunk last night, then--drunk as a fool, after all I promised--but I'm not going to get drunk again, so--"

"Don't swear any more false oaths, Jim: you've sworn enough

already."

"Yes, but Sally, I am going to quit now, and I want you to talk to me like a good wife, and advise with me."

"If you don't go away and let me alone now, I'll throw these tongs at you!" the wife rejoined, angrily, rising up and brandishing the article she had named. "You are trying me beyond all manner of patience!"

"There--there--keep cool, Sally. It'll all go into your lifetime, darlin'," Jim replied, good-humouredly, taking hold of her hand, and extricating the tongs from them, and then drawing his arm around her waist, and forcing her to sit down in a chair, while he took one just beside her.

"Now, Sally, I'm in dead earnest, if ever I was in my life," he began, "and if you'll tell me any way to break off from this wretched habit into which I have fallen, I'll do it."

"Go and sign the pledge, then;" his wife said promptly, and somewhat sternly.

"And give up my liberty?"

"And regain it, rather. You're a slave now."

"I'll do it, then, for your sake."

"Don't trifle with me, any more, James; I can't bear it much longer, I feel that I can't--" poor Mrs. Braddock said in a plaintive tone, while the tears came to her eyes.

"I wont deceive you any more, Sally. I'll sign, and I'll keep my pledge. If I could only have said--'I've signed the pledge,' yesterday, I would have been safe. But I've got no pledge, and I'm afraid to go out to hunt up Malcom, for fear I shall see a grog-shop."

"Can't you write a pledge?"

"No. I can't write anything but a bill, or a label for one of your pickle-pots."

"But try."

"Well, give me a pen, some ink, and a piece of paper."

But there was neither pen, ink, nor paper, in the house. Mrs. Braddock, however, soon mustered them all in the neighbourhood, and came and put them down upon the table before her husband.

"There, now, write a pledge," she said.

"I will." And Jim took up the pen and wrote--"Blister my feathers if ever I drink another drop of Alcohol, or anything that will make drunk come, sick or well, dead or alive!"

JIM BRADDOCK."

"But that's a queer pledge, Jim."

"I don't care if it is. I'll keep it."

"It's just no pledge at all."

"You're an old goose! Now give me a hammer and four nails."

"What do you want with a hammer and four nails?"

"I want to nail my pledge up over the mantelpiece."

"But it will get smoky."

"So will your aunty. Give me the hammer and nails."

Jim's wife brought them as desired, and he nailed his pledge up over the mantelpiece, and then read it off with a proud, resolute air.

"I can keep that pledge, Sally, my old girl! And what's more, I will keep it, too!" he said, slapping his wife upon the shoulder. "And now for some breakfast in double quick time, for I must be at Jones's early this morning."

Mrs. Braddock's heart was very glad, for she had more faith in this pledge than she had ever felt in any of his promises. There was something of confirmation in the act of signing his name, that strengthened her hopes. It was not long before she had a good warm breakfast on the table, of which her husband eat with a better appetite than usual, and then, after reading his pledge over, Jim started off.

As before, he had to go past Harry Arnold's, and early as it was, there were already two or three of his cronies there for their morning dram. He saw them about the door while yet at a distance, but neither the grog-shop nor his old companions had now any attraction for him. He was conscious of standing on a plain that lifted him above their influence. As he drew near, they observed him, and awaited his approach with pleasure, for his fine flow of spirits made his company always desirable. But as he showed no inclination to stop, he was hailed, just as he was passing, with,

"Hallo, Jim! Where are you off to in such a hurry?"

"Off to my work like an honest, sober man," Jim replied, pausing to return his answer. "I've taken the pledge, my hearties, and what's

more, I'm going to keep it. It's all down in black and white, and my name's to it in the bargain,--so there's an end of the matter, you see! Good bye, boys!--I'm sorry to leave you,--but you must go my way if you want my company. Good bye, Harry! You've got the old whiskey-barrel, and that's the last you'll ever get of mine. I never had any good luck while it was in my house, and I am most heartily glad it's out, and in your whiskey-shop, where I hope it will stay. Good bye, old cronies!"

And so saying, Jim turned away, and walked off with a proud, erect bearing. His old companions raised a feeble shout, but according to Jim's account, the laugh was so much on the wrong side of their mouths, that it didn't seem to him anything like a laugh.

At eleven o'clock, Mr. Jones came out as usual, and said--

"Well, Jim, I suppose you begin to feel a little like it was grog-time?"

"No, sir," Jim replied. "I'm done with grog."

"Done with grog!" ejaculated Mr. Jones, in pleased surprise.

"Why, you didn't seem at all afraid of it, yesterday?"

"I did drink pretty hard, yesterday; but that was all your fault."

"My fault! How do you make that out?"

"Clear enough. Yesterday morning, seeing what a poor miserable wretch I had got to be, and how much my wife and children were suffering, I swore of from ever touching another drop. I wouldn't sign a pledge, though, because that, I thought, would be giving up my freedom. In coming here, I got past Harry Arnold's grog-shop pretty well, but when you came out so pleasantly at eleven o'clock, and asked me to go over to the house and take a drink, I couldn't refuse for the life of me--especially as I felt as dry as a bone. So I drank pretty freely, as you' know, and went home, in consequence, drunk at night, notwithstanding I had promised Sally, solemnly, in the morning, never to touch another drop again as long as I lived. Poor soul! Bad enough, and discouraged enough, she felt last night, I know.

"So you see--when I got up this morning, I felt half-determined to sign the pledge, at all hazards. Still I didn't want to give up my liberty, and was arguing the points over again, when Sally took me right aback so strongly that I gave up, wrote a pledge, signed it, and nailed it up over the mantelpiece, where it has got to stay."

"I am most heartily glad to hear of your good resolution," Mr. Jones said, grasping warmly the hand of Braddock--"and heartily ashamed of myself for having tempted you, yesterday. Hereafter, I am resolved not to offer liquor to any man who works for me. If my money is not

enough for him, he must go somewhere else. Well," he continued--"you have signed away your liberty, as you called it. Do you feel any more a slave than you did yesterday?"

"A slave? No, indeed! I'm a free man now! Yesterday I was such a slave to a debased appetite, that all my good resolutions were like cobwebs. Now I can act like an honest, rational man. I am in a state of freedom. You ask me to drink. I say 'no'--yesterday I could not say no, because I was not a free man. But now I am free to choose what is right, and to reject what is wrong. I don't care for all the grog-shops and whiskey-bottles from here to sun-down! I'm not afraid to go past Harry Arnold's--nor even to go in there and make a temperance speech, if necessary. Hurrah for freedom!"

It cannot be supposed that Jim's wife, after her many sad disappointments, could feel altogether assured that he would stand by his pledge, although she had more confidence in its power over him than in anything else, and believed that it was the only thing that would save him, if he could be saved at all. She was far more cheerful, however, for her hope was stronger than it had ever been; and went about her house with a far lighter step than usual.

Towards evening, as the time began to approach for his return, she proceeded, as she had done on the day before, to make arrangements for his comfortable reception. The little scene of preparation for supper, and dressing up the children, was all acted over again, and with a feeling of stronger confidence. Still, her heart would beat at times oppressively, as a doubt would steal over her mind.

At last, the sun was just sinking behind a distant hill. It was the hour to expect him. The children were gathered around her in the door, and her eyes were afar off, eagerly watching to descry his well-known form in the distance. As minute after minute passed away, and the sun at length went down below the horizon, her heart began to tremble. Still, though she strained her eyes, she could see nothing of him,--and now the twilight began to fall, dimly around, throwing upon her oppressed heart a deeper shadow than that which mantled, like a thin veil, the distant hills and valleys. With a heavy sigh, she was about returning into the house, when a slight noise within caused her to turn quickly, and with a start.

"Back again, safe and sound, old girl!" greeted her glad ear, as the form of her husband caught her eye, coming in at the back door.

"O, Jim!" she exclaimed, her heart bounding with a wild, happy pulsation. "How glad I am to see you!"

And she flung herself into his arms, giving way, as she did so, to a gush of joyful tears.

"And I'm glad enough to see you, too, Sally! I've thought about you and the children all day, and of how much I have wronged you. But it's all over now. That pledge has done it!" pointing up as he spoke

to his pledge nailed over the mantelpiece. "Since I signed that, I've not had the first wish to touch the accursed thing that has ruined me. I'm free, now, Sally! Free to do as I please. And that's what I haven't been for a long time. As I told Mr. Jones, I don't care now for all the grog-shops, whiskey-bottles, and Harry Arnolds, from here to sun-down."

"I told you it was all nonsense, Jim, about signing away your liberty!" Sally said, smiling through her tears of joy.

"Of course it was. I never was free before. But now I feel as free as air. I can go in and come out and care no more for the sight of a grog-shop, than for a hay-stack. I can take care of my wife and children, and be just as kind to them as I please. And that's what I couldn't do before. Huzza for the pledge, say!!

"Blister my feathers if ever I drink another drop of Alcohol, or anything that will make drunk come, sick or well, dead or alive!"

That evening Jim Braddock sat down to a good supper with a smiling wife, and three children, all cleanly dressed, and looking as happy as they could be. The husband and father had not felt so light a heart bounding in his bosom for years. He was free,--and felt that he was free to act as reason dictated,--to work for and care for his household treasures.

Nearly a year has passed, and Mr. James Braddock has built himself a neat little frame house, which is comfortably furnished, and has attached to it a well-cultivated garden. In his parlour, there hangs, over the mantelpiece, his original pledge, handsomely framed. Recently in writing to a friend, he says--

"You will ask, where did I get them?" (his new house, furniture, &c.) "I'll tell you, boy. These are part payment for my _liberty_, that I signed away. Didn't I sell it at a bargain? But this is not all. I've got my shop back again, with a good run of custom--am ten years younger than I was a year ago--have got the happiest wife and the smartest boy in all creation--and don't care a snap for anybody! So now, S. come down here; bring your wife, and all the _responsibilities_, and I'll tell you the whole story--but I can't write. _Hurrah for slavery!_ Good bye!

JIM BRADDOCK."

THE FAIR TEMPTER

OR, WINE ON THE WEDDING-NIGHT.

"WHAT will you take, Haley?"

"A glass of water."

"Nonsense! Say, what will you take?"

"A glass of water. I don't drink anything stronger."

"Not a teetotaller? Ha! ha! ha!" rejoined the young man's companion, laughing in mingled mirth and ridicule.

"Yes, a teetotaller, if you please," replied the one called Haley.--"Or anything else you choose to denominate me."

"You're a member of a temperance society, then? ha! ha!"

"No, I am not."

"Don't belong to the cold-water men?"

"No."

"Then come along and drink with me! Here, what will you take?"

"Nothing at all, unless it be a glass of water. As I have just said, I drink nothing stronger."

"What's the reason?"

"I feel as well--indeed, a great deal better without it."

"That's all nonsense! Come, take a julep, or a brandy-punch with me."

"No, Loring, I cannot."

"I shall take it as an offence, if you do not."

"I mean no offence, and shall be sorry, if you construe into one an act not so intended. Drink if you wish to drink, but leave me in freedom to decline tasting liquor if I choose."

"Well, you are a strange kind of a genius, Haley--, but I believe I like you too well to get mad with you, although I generally take a refusal to drink with one as an insult, unless I know the person to have joined a temperance society,--and then I should deem the insult on my part, were I to urge him to violate his pledge. But I wonder you have never joined yourself to some of these ultra reformers--these teetotallers, as they call themselves."

"I have never done so,--and never intend doing so. It is sufficient for me to decline drinking, because I do not believe that stimulating beverages are good for the body or mind. I act from principle in this matter, and, therefore, want no external restraints."

"Then you are determined not to drink with me?"

"O, yes, I will drink with you."

"Cold-water?"

"Of course."

"One julep, and a glass of Adam's-ale," said Loring, turning to the bar-keeper.

They were soon presented, glasses touched, heads bobbed, and the contents of the two tumblers poured down their respective gullets.

"It makes a chill go over me to see you drinking that stuff," Loring said, with an expression of disgust on his face.

"Every one to his taste, you know," was Haley's half-indifferent response.

"You'll be over to-night, I suppose?" said a young man, stepping up to him, as the two emerged from the "Coffee"-house--precious little coffee was ever seen there.

"O, yes,--of course."

"You'd better not come."

"Why?"

"Clara's got a bottle of champagne that she says she's going to make you taste this very night."

A slight shade flitted quickly over the face of Haley, as the young man said this. But it was as quickly gone, and he replied with a smile,

"Tell Clara it's no use. I'm an incorrigible cold-water man."

"She'll be too much for you."

"I'm not afraid."

"You'd be, if you were as well acquainted with her as I am. I never knew that girl to set her head about anything in my life that she didn't accomplish it. And she says that she will make you drink a

glass of wine with her, in spite of all your opposition."

"She'll find herself foiled once in her life," was the laughing reply; "and so you may as well tell her that all her efforts will be in vain, and thus save further trouble."

"No, I won't, though. I'll tell her to go on, while I stand off and look at the fun. I'll bet on her, into the bargain, for I know she'll beat."

"So will I, two to one!" broke in Loring--

"Don't be so certain of that."

"We'll see," was the laughing response, and then the young men separated.

Manley, the individual who had met Loring and Haley at the coffee-house door, was the brother of Clara, and Haley was her accepted lover. The latter had removed to the city in which all the parties resided, some two years before, from the east, and had commenced business for himself. Nothing was known of his previous life, or connections. But the pure gold of his character soon became apparent, and guaranteed him a reception into good society. All who came into association with him, were impressed in his favour. Steadily, however, during that time, had he persisted in not tasting any kind of stimulating drinks. All kinds of stimulating condiments at table, were likewise avoided. The circle of acquaintances which had gradually formed around him, or into which, rather, he had been introduced, was a wine and brandy-drinking set of young men, and he was frequently urged to partake with them; but neither persuasion, ridicule, nor pretended anger, could, in the least, move him from his fixed resolution. Such scenes as that just presented, were of frequent occurrence, particularly with recent acquaintances, as was the case with Loring.

Within a year he had been paying attention to Clara Manley, a happy-hearted young creature, over whose head scarce eighteen bright summers had yet passed. Esteem and admiration of her mind and person, had gradually changed into a pure and permanent affection, which was tenderly and truly reciprocated.

Wine, in the house of Mr. Manley, was used almost as freely as water. It was, with brandy, an invariable accompaniment of the dinner-table, and no evening passed without its being served around. Haley's refusal to touch it, was at first thought singular by Clara; but she soon ceased to observe the omission, and the servant soon learned in no case to present him the decanter. George Manley, however, could not tolerate Haley's temperate habits, because he thought his abstinence a mere whim, and bantered him upon it whenever occasion offered. At last, he aroused Clara's mind into opposition, and incited her to make an effort to induce her lover to drink.

"What's the use of my doing it, brother?" she asked, when he first alluded to it. "His not drinking does no harm to any one."

"If it don't, it makes him appear very singular. No matter who is here--no matter on what occasion, he must adhere to his foolish resolution. People will begin to think, after awhile, that he's some reformed drunkard, and is afraid to taste a drop of any kind of liquor."

"How can you talk so, George?" Clara said, with a half-offended air.

"So it will appear, Clara; and you can't help it, unless you laugh him out of his folly."

"I don't wish to say anything to him about it."

"You're afraid."

"No, I am not, George."

"Yes, you are."

"What am I afraid of?"

"Why, you're afraid that you won't succeed."

"Indeed, then, and I am not. A mere notion like that I could easily prevail on him to give up. I should be sorry, indeed, if I had not that much influence over him."

"You'll find it a pretty hard notion to beat out of him, I can tell you. I've seen half a dozen young men try for an hour by all kinds of means to induce him to taste wine; but it was no use. He was immovable."

"I don't care;--he couldn't refuse me, if I set myself about it."

"He could, and he would, Clara."

"I don't believe a word of it."

"Try him, then."

"I don't see any use in it. Let him enjoy his total-abstinence! if he wishes to."

"I knew you were afraid."

"Indeed, I am not, then."

"Yes, you are."

"It's no such thing."

"Try him, then."

"I will, then, since it's come to that."

"He'll be too much for you."

"Don't flatter yourself. I'll manage him."

"How?"

"Why, I'll insist on his taking a glass of that delightful champaign with me, which you sent home yesterday."

"Suppose he declines?"

"I won't take his refusal. He shall take a glass with me."

"We'll see, little sis'. I'll bet on Haley."--And so saying, the young man turned away laughing at the success of his scheme.

That evening, towards nine o'clock, as Haley sat conversing with Clara, a servant entered the room as usual with bottles and glasses. George Manley was promptly on his feet, to cut the cork and "pop" the champaign, which he did, while the servant stood just before Clara and her lover.

"You must take a glass of this fine champaign with me, Mr. Haley," the young tempter said, turning upon him a most winning smile.

"Indeed, Clara--"

"Not a word now. I shall take no refusal."

"I must be--"

"Pour him out a glass, George."

And George filled two glasses, one of which Clara lifted, with the sparkling liquor at the height of its effervescence.

"There's the other; take it quick, before it dies," she said, holding her own glass near her lips.

"You must excuse me, Clara. I do not drink wine," Mr. Haley said, as soon as he was permitted to speak, in a tone and with a manner that settled the question at once.

"Indeed, it is too bad, Mr. Haley!" Clara responded, with a half-offended air, putting her untasted glass of wine back upon the waiter,--"to deny me so trifling a request. I must say, that your refusal is very ungallant. Whoever heard of a gentleman declining to

take wine with a lady?"

"There certainly is an exception to the rule to-night, Clara," the young man said. "Still, I can assure you, that nothing ungallant was meant. But that you know to be out of the question. I could not be rude to any lady, much less to you."

"O, as to that, it's easy to make fine speeches--but acts, you know, speak louder than words"--Clara said, half-laughing--half-serious.

The servant had, by this time, passed on with the untasted wine; and, of course, no further effort could be made towards driving the young man from his position. His positive refusal to drink, however, under the circumstances, very naturally disappointed Clara. He observed the sudden revulsion of feeling that took place in her mind, and it pained him very much.

As for her, she felt herself positively offended. She had set her heart upon proving to her brother her power over Haley, but had signally failed in the effort. He had proved to her immovable in his singular position.

From that time, for many weeks, there was a coldness between him and Clara. She did not receive him with her accustomed cordiality; but seemed both hurt and offended. To take a simple glass of champagne with her was so small a request, involving, as she reasoned, no violation of principle, that for him to refuse to do so, under all the circumstances, was almost unpardonable.

Affection, however, at last triumphed over wounded pride, but not until he had begun, seriously, to debate the question of proposing to her a dissolution of the contract existing between them.

Everything again went on smoothly enough, for there was no further effort on the part of Clara to drive her lover from his resolution. But she still entertained the idea of doing so--and still resolved that she would conquer him.

At last the wedding-day was set, and both looked forward to its approach with feelings of pure delight. Their friends, without an exception, approved the match; and well they might, for he was a man of known integrity, fine intellect, and cultivated tastes; and she a young woman in every way fitted to unite with him in marriage bonds.

Finally came the long anticipated evening. Never before was there assembled in the old mansion of Mr. Manley a happier company than that which had gathered to witness the marriage of his daughter, whose young heart trembled in the fulness of its delight, as she uttered the sealing words of her union with one who possessed all her heart.

"May kind heaven bless you, my child!" murmured the mother, as she pressed her lips to those of her happy child.

"And make your life glide on as peacefully as a quiet stream," added the father, kissing her in turn, scarcely refraining, as he did so, from taking her in his arms and folding her to his bosom.

Then came crowding upon her the sincere congratulations of friends. O, how happy she felt Joy seemed to have reached a climax. The cup was so full, that a drop more would have overflowed the brim.

A few minutes sufficed to restore again the order that had reigned through the rooms, and the servants appeared with the bride's cake. All eyes were upon the happy couple.

"You won't refuse me now, James?" the bride said, in a low tone; but with an appealing look, as she reached out her hand and lifted a glass of wine.

There was a hesitation in the manner of Haley, and Clara saw it. She knew that all eyes were upon them, and she knew that all had observed her challenge. Her pride was roused, and she could not bear the thought of being refused her first request after marriage.

"Take it, James, for my sake, even if you only place it to your lips without tasting it," she said, in a low, hurried whisper.

The young husband could not stand this. He took the glass, while the heart of Clara bounded with an exulting throb. Of course, having gone thus far, he had to go through the form of drinking with her. In doing so, he sipped but a few drops. These thrilled on the nerve of taste with a sensation of exquisite pleasure. Involuntarily he placed the glass to his lips again, and took a slight draught.

Then a sudden chill passed through his frame as consciousness returned, and he would fain have dashed the glass from him as a poisoning serpent that was preparing to sting him, but for the company that crowded the rooms. From this state he was aroused by the sweet voice of his young wife, saying, in happy tones--

"So it has not poisoned you, James."

He smiled an answer, but did not speak. The peculiar expression of that smile, Clara remembered for many years afterwards.

"Come! you must empty your glass with me," she said, in a moment after. "See! you have scarcely tasted it yet. Now--"

And she raised her glass, and he did the same. When he withdrew his own from his lips, it was empty.

"Bravo!"--exclaimed Clara, in a low, triumphant tone.

"Now, isn't that delightful wine?"

"Yes, very."

"Did you ever taste wine before, James?" the bride laughingly said--

"O, yes, many a time. But none so exquisitely flavoured as this."

"Long abstinence has sweetened it to your taste."

"No doubt."

"Clara has been too much for you to-night, Haley," George Manley said, coming up at this moment, and laughing in great glee.

"He couldn't refuse me on such an occasion"--the bride gaily responded. "I set my heart on making him drink wine with me on our wedding-night, and I have succeeded."

"Are you sure he hasn't poured it slyly upon the floor?"

"O, yes! I saw him take every drop. And what is more; he smacked his lips, and said it was exquisitely flavoured."

"Here comes the servant again," George said, at this moment. "Come, James! let me fill your glass again. You must drink with me to-night. You've never given me that pleasure yet. Come!--As well be hung for a sheep as a lamb." Thus importuned, Haley held up his glass which George Manley filled to the brim.

"Health and happiness!" the young man said, bowing.

Haley bowed in return, placed the glass to his lips, and took its contents at a draught.

"Bravely done! Why, it seems to go down quite naturally. You were not always a total-abstinence man?"

"No, I was not."--While a slight shadow flitted over his face.

"Welcome back again, then, to a truly social, and convivial spirit! After this, don't let me ever see you refuse a generous glass."

"What! An empty wine-glass in the hand of young Mr. Incurable! Upon my word!" ejaculated old Mr. Manley, coming up at this moment.

"O, yes, pa! I've conquered him to-night! He couldn't refuse to take a glass of wine with me on this occasion!" the daughter said, in great glee.

"He must take one with me, too, then."

"You must excuse me, indeed, sir," Haley replied--rallying himself, and bracing up into firmness his broken and still wavering resolutions.

"Indeed, then, and I won't."

"O, no. Don't excuse him at all, pa! He drank with me, and then with brother, and now to refuse to drink with you would be a downright shame."

"He has taken a glass with George, too, has he? And now wants to be excused when I ask him. Upon my word! Here, George, tell the servant to come over this way."

The servant came, of course, in a moment or two, with the wine.

"Fill up his glass, George," the father said.

Haley's glass was, of course, filled again.

"Now, my boy!--Here's a health to my children! May this night's happiness be but as a drop to the ocean of delight in reserve for them." Drinking.

"And here's to our father! May his children never love him less than they do now." Drinking in turn.

"Thank you, my boy!"

"And thank you in return, for your kind wishes."

"That wine didn't seem to taste unpleasantly, James?"

"O, no, sir. It is rich and generous."

"How long is it since you tasted wine?"

"About three years."

"Are you not fond of it?"

"O, yes. I like a good glass of wine."

"Then what in the world has made you act so singularly about it?"

"A mere whim of mine, I suppose you will call it. And perhaps it was. I thought I was just as well without it."

"Nonsense! Don't let me ever again hear of this foolishness."

And then the old man mingled with the happy company.

"Come, James, you must drink with me, too," the mother said, a little while afterward.

Haley did not seem unwilling, but turned off a glass of wine with an

air of real pleasure.

"You must drink with me, too," went through the room. Every little while some one, with whom the young man had on former occasions refused to drink, finding out that he had been driven from his cold-water resolutions, insisted upon taking a glass with him. Such being the case, it is not to be wondered at that a remark like this should be made before the passage of an hour.

"See! As I live, Haley's getting lively!"

"I think that 'rich and generous wine' is beginning to brighten you up a little," Mr. Manley said, about this time, slapping his son-in-law familiarly upon the shoulder?

"I feel very happy, sir," was Haley's reply.

"That's right. This is a happy occasion."

"I never was so happy in my life! I hardly know what to do with myself. Come! Won't you take some wine with me. I drank with you a little while ago."

"Certainly! Certainly! My boy! Or, perhaps you would try a little brandy."

"No objection," said the young man. And then the two went to the side-board, and each took a stiff glass of brandy.

"That's capital! It makes me feel good!" ejaculated Haley, as he set his empty glass down.

Cotillions were now formed, and the bride and groom took the floor in the first set. Clara felt very proud of her husband as she leaned upon his arm, waiting for the music to begin, and glanced around upon her maiden companions with a look of triumph. But she soon had cause to abate her exultation, for when the music struck up, and the dancers commenced their intricate movements, she found that her husband blundered so as to throw all into confusion. The reason of this instantly flashed upon her mind, for she knew him to be a correct and graceful dancer. _He was too much intoxicated to dance! _ Her woman's pride caused her to make the effort to guide him through the figures. But it was of no use. The second attempt failed signally by his breaking the figures, and reeling with a loud, drunken laugh, through and through, and round and round the astonished group of dancers, thrown thus suddenly into confusion.

Poor Clara, overwhelmed with mortification, retired to a seat, while her husband continued his antics, ending them finally with an Indian whoop, such as may often be heard late at night in the streets, from a company of drunken revellers,--when he sought her out, and came and took a seat by her side.

"Aint you happy to-night, Clara! Aint you, old girl!" he said, in a loud voice, striking her with his open hand upon the shoulder. "I'm so happy that I feel just ready to jump out of my skin! Whoop!--Now see how beautifully I can cut a pigeon's-wing."

And he sprang from his seat, and commenced describing the elegant figure he had named, with industrious energy, much to the amusement of one portion of the company, but to the painful mortification of another. A circle was soon formed around him, to witness his graceful movements, which strongly reminded those present who had witnessed the performances, of a corn-field negro's Juba, or the double-shuffle.

"Come," old Mr. Manley said, interrupting the young man in his evolutions, by laying his hand upon his arm.

"Come! I want you a moment."

"Hel-l-el-l-el-lo, o-o, there! What's wanting? ha!" he said, pausing, and then staggering forwards against Mr Manley. "Who are you, sir?"

"For shame, sir!" the old man replied in a stern voice. "Come with me, I wish to speak to you."

"Speak here, then, will you? I've no se-se-secrets. I'm open and above board! Jim Haley's the boy that knows what he's about! Who-o-o-ooop! Clear the track there!"

And starting away from the old man, he ran two or three paces, and then sprang clear over the head of a young lady, frightening her almost out of her wits.

"There! Who'll match me that? Jim Haley's the boy what's hard to beat! Whoo-oo-ooop, hurrah! But where's Clara? Where's my dear little wifie? Ah! there--No, that isn't her, neither. Wh-wh-where is the little jade?"

The whole of this passed in a few moments, with all the drunken gestures required to give it the fullest effect.

Poor Clara, at first mortified, when she saw what a perfect madman her husband had become, was so shocked that her feelings overcame her, and she was carried fainting from the room. O, how bitter was her momentary repentance of her blind folly, ere her bewildered senses forsook her.

As for Haley, he grew worse and worse, until the brandy which he continued to pour down, had completely stupified him, when he was carried off to bed in a state of drunken insensibility; after which, the company retired in oppressive and embarrassed silence.

Sad and lonely was the bridal chamber that night, and the couch of the young bride was wet with bitter, but unavailing tears.

On the next morning, those who first entered the room where Haley had slept, found it empty. Towards the middle of the day, a letter was left for Clara by an unknown hand. It ran thus:

"DEAR CLARA--For you are still dear to me, although you have robbed me of happiness for ever, and crushed your own hopes with mine. For years before I came to this place, I had been a slave to intoxication--a slave held in a fearful bondage. At last, I resolved to break loose from my thralldom. One vigorous effort, and I was free. There yet remained to me a small remnant of a wrecked fortune. With this I abandoned my early home, and fixed my residence here, determined once more to be a man. Temptations beset me on every hand; but while I touched not, tasted not, handled not, I knew that I was safe. But alas for the hour when you became my tempter! O, that the remembrance of it could be blotted from my memory for ever! When, for your sake, I raised that fatal glass to my lips, and the single drop of wine that touched them thrilled wildly through every nerve, I felt that I was lost. Horrible were my sensations, but your tempting voice lured me to sip the scarcely tasted poison; I did so, and my resolution was gone! All that occurred after that is only dimly written on my memory. But I was a madman. That I can realize. When drunk, I have always acted the madman. And now we part for ever! I am a proud man, and cannot remain in the scene of my disgrace. My property I leave for you, and go I know not, and care not, whither--perhaps to die, unlamented, and unknown, and sink into a drunkard's grave. Farewell!"

This letter bore neither name nor date. But they were not needed.

Five years from that sorrowful morning Clara sat by a window in her father's house, near the close of day, looking dreamily up into the serene and cloudless sky. Her face was pale, and had a look of hopeless suffering. Five years!--It seemed as if twenty must have passed over her head, each burdening her with a heavy weight of affliction. O, what a wreck did she present! Five years of such a life! Who can tell their history? She was alone; and sat with her head upon her hand, and her eyes fixed, as if upon some object. But, evidently, no image touched the nerve of vision. Presently her lips moved, and a few mournful words were uttered aloud, almost involuntarily.

"O, that I knew where he was! O, that I could but find him, if alive!"

A slight noise startled her, and she turned quickly. Was it a vision? Or did her long-lost husband stand before her, the shadow of what he had been?

"Clara! Dear Clara!"

In a moment she was clinging to him with a trembling, eager, convulsive grasp. Tenderly did he fold her in his arms, and press

his lips to hers fervently.

"Clara! Dear Clara!"

"My own dear husband!" was all she could utter, as she sank like a helpless child on his bosom.

For four years from the night of his wedding, Haley had been a common drunkard, with no power over himself. On the brink of the grave, he was rescued, signed a pledge of total abstinence, and set himself eagerly to work to elevate his condition. One year had sufficed to efface many sad tokens of his degradation, but time could not restore the freshness to his cheek, nor the light to his eye. Then he returned and sought his bride, who still mourned him with an inconsolable grief. A few months produced a happy change in both. But they cannot look back. Over the past they throw a veil,--the future is theirs, and it is growing brighter and brighter. May its clear sky never be darkened!

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Is there a good fire in the little spare room Jane?" said Mr. Wade, a plain country farmer, coming into the kitchen where his good wife was busy preparing for supper.

"Oh, yes, I've made the room as comfortable as can be," replied Mrs. Wade; "but I wish you would take up a good armful of wood now, so that we won't have to disturb Mr. N--, by going into the room after he gets here."

"If he should come this evening," remarked the husband. "But it is getting late, and I am afraid he won't be here before the morning."

"Oh, I guess he will be along soon. I have felt all day as if he were coming."

"They say he is a good man, and preaches most powerfully. Mr. Jones heard him preach in New York at the last conference, and tells me he never heard such a sermon as he gave them. It cut right and left, and his words went home to every heart like arrows of conviction."

"I hope he will be here this evening," remarked the wife as she put some cakes in the oven.

"And so do I." remarked Mr. Wade, as he turned away, and went out to the wood pile for an armfull of wood for the expected minister's room.

It was Saturday afternoon, and nearly sundown. Mr. N--, who was expected to arrive, and for whose comfort every preparation in their power to make, had been completed by the family at whose house he was to stay, was the new Presiding Elder of B--District, in the New Jersey Conference. Quarterly meeting was to be held on the next day, which was Sunday, when Mr. N--was to preach, and administer the ordinances of the church. Being his first visit to that part of the District, the preacher was known to but few, if any, of the members, and they all looked forward to his arrival with interest, and were prepared to welcome him with respect and affection.

The house of Mr. Wade was known as the 'minister's home.' For years, in their movements through the circuit, the preachers, as they came round to this part in the field of their appointed labor, were welcomed by Brother and Sister Wade, and the little spare chamber made comfort. able for their reception. It was felt by these honest-hearted people, more a privilege than a duty, thus to share their temporal blessings with the men of God who ministered to them in holy things. They had their weaknesses, as we all have. One of their weaknesses consisted in a firm belief that they were deeply imbued with the genuine religion, and regarded things spiritual above all worldly considerations. They were kind, good people, certainly, but not as deeply read in the lore of their own hearts, not as familiar with the secret springs of their own actions, as all of us should desire to be. But this was hardly to be wondered at, seeing that their position in the church was rather elevated as compared with those around them, and they were the subjects of little distinguishing marks flattering to the natural man.

While Mr. Wade was splitting a log at the wood-pile, his thoughts on the new Presiding Elder, and his feelings warm with the anticipated pleasure of meeting and entertaining him, a man of common appearance approached along the road, and when he came to where the farmer was, stood still and looked at him until he had finished cutting the log, and was preparing to lift the cleft pieces in his arms.

"Rather a cold day this," said the man.

"Yes, rather," returned Mr. Wade, a little indifferently, and in a voice meant to repulse the stranger, whose appearance did not impress him very favorably.

"How far is it to D--?" inquired the man.

"Three miles," replied Mr. Wade, who having filled his arms with wood, was beginning to move off towards the house.

"So far!" said the man in a tone that was slightly marked with hesitation. "I thought it was but a little way from this." Then with

an air of hesitation, and speaking in a respectful voice, he added, "I would feel obliged if you would let me go in and warm myself. I have walked for two miles in the cold, and--as D--is still three miles off, I shall be chilled through before I get there."

So modest and natural a request as this, Mr. Wade could not refuse, and yet, in the way he said--"Oh, certainly"--there was a manner that clearly betrayed his wish that the man had passed on and preferred his request somewhere else. Whether this was noticed or not, is of no consequence; the wayfarer on this assent to his request, followed Mr. Wade into the house.

"Jane," said the farmer as he entered the house with the stranger, and his voice was not as cordial as it might have been; "let this man warm himself by the kitchen fire. He has to go all the way to D--this evening and says he is cold."

There is a kind of magnetic intelligence in the tones of the voice. Mrs. Wade understood perfectly, by the way in which this was said, that the husband did not feel much sympathy for the stranger, and only yielded the favor asked because he could not well refuse to grant it. Her own observation did not correct the impression her husband's manner had produced. The man's dress, though neither dirty nor ragged, was not calculated to impress any one very favorably. His hat was much worn, and the old gray coat in which he was buttoned up to the chin, had seen so much service that it was literally threadbare from collar to skirt, and showed numerous patches, darns, and other evidences of needlework, applied long since to its original manufacture. His cow-hide boots, though whole, had a coarse look; and his long dark beard gave his face, not a very prepossessing one at best, a no very attractive aspect.

"You can sit down there," said Mrs. Wade, a little ungraciously, for she felt the presence of the man, just at that particular juncture, as an intrusion; and she pointed to an old chair that stood near the fire-place, in front of which was a large Dutch oven containing some of her best cream short cakes, prepared especially for Mr. N--, the new Presiding Elder now momentarily expected.

"Thank you, Ma'am," returned the stranger, as he took the chair, and drew close up to the blazing hearth, and removing his thick woolen gloves, spread his hands to receive the genial warmth.

Nothing more was said by either the stranger or Mr. Wade, for the space of three or four minutes. During this time, the good house-wife passed in and out, once or twice, busy as could be in looking after supper affairs. The lid of the ample Dutch oven had been raised once or twice, and both the eyes and nose of the traveller greeted with a pleasant token of the good fare soon to be served up in the family. He was no longer cold; but the sight and smell of the cakes and other good things in preparation by the lady, awakened a sense of hunger, and made it keenly felt. But, as the comfort of a little warmth had been bestowed so reluctantly, he

could not think of trespassing on the farmer and his wife for a bite of supper, and so commenced drawing on his heavy woolen gloves, and buttoning up his old gray coat. While occupied in doing this, Mr. Wade came into the kitchen, and said--

"I'm afraid Jane, that the minister won't be along this evening. It's after sun-down, and begins to grow duskish."

"He ought to have been here an hour ago," returned Mrs. W., in a tone of disappointment.

"It's getting late, my friend, and D--'s a good distance ahead," remarked the farmer, after standing with his back to the fire, and regarding for some moments the stranger, who had taken off his gloves, and was slowly unbuttoning his coat again.

"It's three miles you say?"

"Yes, good three miles, if not more; and it will be dark in half an hour."

"What direction must I take?" required the stranger.

"You keep along the road until you come to the meeting house on the top of the hill, half a mile beyond this, and then you strike off to the right, and keep straight on."

"What meeting house is it?"

"The D--Methodist Meeting House."

"You are expecting the minister, I think you just now said?"

"Yes. Mr. N--, our new Presiding Elder, is to preach to-morrow, and he was to have been here this afternoon."

"He is to stay with you?"

"Certainly he is. The ministers all stay at my house."

The man got up, and went to the door and looked out.

"Couldn't you give me a little something to eat before I go," he said, returning. "I haven't tasted food since this morning, and feel a little faint."

"Jane, can't you give him some cold meat and bread?" Mr. Wade turned to his wife, and she answered, just a little fretfully, "Oh, yes, I suppose so;" and going to the cupboard, brought out a dish containing a piece of cold fat bacon that had been boiled with cabbage for dinner, and half a loaf of bread, which she placed on the kitchen table and told the man to help himself. The stranger did not wait for another invitation; but set to work in good earnest

upon the bread and bacon, while the farmer stood with his hands behind him, and his back to the fire, whistling the air of "Auld Lang Syne," while he mentally repeated the words of the hymn of "When I can read my title clear," and wished that his visitor would make haste and get through with his supper. The latter, after eating for a short time with the air of a man whose appetite was keen, began to discuss the meat and bread with more deliberation, and occasionally to ask a question, or make a remark, the replies to which were not very gracious, although Mr. Wade forced himself to be as polite as he could be.

The homely meal at length concluded, the man buttoned up his old coat and drew on his coarse woolen gloves again, and thanking Mr. and Mrs. Wade for their hospitality, opened the door and looked out. It was quite dark, for there was no moon, and the sky was veiled in clouds. The wind rushed into his face, cold and piercing. For a moment or two, he stood with his hand upon the door, and then closing it he turned back into the house, and said to the farmer

"You say it is still three miles to D--?"

"I do," said Mr. Wade coldly.

"I said so to you when you first stopped, and you ought to have pushed on like a prudent man. You could have reached there before it was quite dark."

"But I was cold and hungry, and might have fainted by the way."

The manner of saying this touched the farmer's feelings a little, and caused him to look more narrowly into the stranger's face than he had yet done. But he saw nothing more than he had already seen.

"You have warmed and fed me, for which I am thankful. Will you not bestow another act of kindness upon one who is in a strange place, and if he goes out in the darkness may lose himself and perish in the cold?"

The peculiar form in which this request was made, and the tone in which it was uttered, put it almost out of the power of the farmer to say no.

"Go in there and sit down," he (sic) answered, pointing to the kitchen, "and I will see my wife, and hear what she has to say."

And Mr. Wade went into the parlor where the supper table stood, covered with a snow-white cloth, and displaying his wife's set of bluesprigged china, that was only brought out on special occasions. Two tall mould candles were burning thereon, and on the hearth blazed a cheerful hickory fire.

"Hasn't that old fellow gone yet?" asked Mrs. Wade. She had heard his voice as he returned from the door.

"No. And what do you suppose? He wants us to let him stay all night."

"Indeed, and we'll do no such thing! We can't have the likes of him in the house, no how. Where could he sleep?"

"Not in the best room, even if Mr. N--shouldn't come."

"No, indeed!"

"But I really don't see, Jane how we can turn him out of doors. He doesn't look like a very strong man, and it's dark and cold, and full three miles to D--."

"It's too much! He ought to have gone on while he had daylight, and not lingered here as he did until it got dark."

"We can't turn him out of doors, Jane; and it's no use to think of it. He'll have to stay now."

"But what can we do with him?"

"He seems like a decent man, at least; and don't look as if he had anything bad about him. We might make him a bed on the floor somewhere."

"I wish he had been to Guinea before he came here," said Mrs. Wade, fretfully. The disappointment, the conviction that Mr. N--would not arrive, and the intrusion of so unwelcome a visitor as the stranger, completely unhinged her mind.

"Oh, well, Jane," replied her husband in a soothing voice, "never mind. We must make the best of it. Poor man! He came to us tired and hungry, and we have warmed him and fed him. He now asks shelter for the night, and we must not refuse him, nor grant his request in a complaining reluctant spirit. You know what the Bible says about entertaining angels unawares."

"Angels! Did you ever see an angel look like him?"

"Having never seen an angel," said the husband smiling, "I am unable to speak as to their appearance."

This had the effect to call an answering smile to the face of Mrs. Wade, and a better feeling to her heart. And it was finally agreed between them, that the man, as he seemed like a decent kind of a person, should be permitted to occupy the minister's room, if that individual did not arrive, an event to which they both now looked with but small expectancy. If he did come, why the man would have put up with poorer accommodations.

When Mr. Wade returned to the kitchen where the stranger had seated

himself before the fire, he informed him, that they had decided to let him stay all night. The man expressed in a few words his grateful sense of their kindness, and then became silent and thoughtful. Soon after, the farmer's wife, giving up all hopes of Mr. N--'s arrival, had supper taken up, which consisted of coffee, warm cream short cakes, and sweet cakes, broiled ham, and broiled chicken. After all was on the table, a short conference was held, as to whether it would do not to invite the stranger to take supper. It was true, they had given him as much bread and bacon as he could eat; but then, as long as he was going to stay all night, it looked too inhospitable to sit down to the table and not ask him to join them. So, making a virtue of necessity, he was kindly asked to come in to supper, an invitation which he did not decline. Grace was said over the meal by Mr. Wade, and then the coffee was poured out, the bread helped, and the meat served.

There was a fine little boy of some five or six years old at the table, who had been brightened up, and dressed in his best, in order to grace the minister's reception. Charley was full of talk, and the parents felt a natural pride in showing him off, even before their humble guest, who noticed him particularly, although he had not much to say.

"Come, Charley," said Mr. Wade, after the meal was over, and he sat leaning back in his chair, "can't you repeat the pretty hymn mamma learned you last Sunday?"

Charley started off, without further invitation, and repeated, very accurately, two or three verses of a new camp-meeting hymn, that was just then very popular.

"Now let us hear you say the Commandments, Charley," spoke up the mother, well pleased at her child's performance. And Charley repeated them with only the aid of a little prompting.

"How many commandments are there?" asked the father.

The child hesitated, and then looking up at the stranger, near whom he sat, said, innocently,--

"How many are there?"

The man thought for some moments, and said, as if in doubt--

"Eleven, are there not?"

"Eleven!" ejaculated Mrs. Wade, looking towards the man in unfeigned surprise.

"Eleven!" said her husband, with more of rebuke than astonishment in his voice. "Is it possible, sir, that you do not know how many Commandments there are? How many are there, Charley? Come! Tell me; you know, of course."

"Ten," said the child.

"Right, my son," returned Mr. Wade, with a smile of approval.

"Right. Why, there isn't a child of his age within ten miles who can't tell you that there are ten Commandments. "Did you never read the Bible, sir?" addressing the stranger.

"When I was a little boy, I used to read in it sometimes. But I'm sure I thought there were eleven Commandments. Are you not mistaken about there being only ten?"

Sister Wade lifted her hands in unfeigned astonishment, and exclaimed--

"Could any one believe it? Such ignorance of the Bible!"

Mr. Wade did not reply, but he arose, and going to one corner of the room, where the Good Book lay upon a small mahogany stand, brought it to the table, and pushing away his plate, cup and saucer, laid the volume before him, and opened that portion in which the Commandments are recorded.

"There!" he said, placing his finger upon a proof of the man's error. "There! Look for yourself!"

The man came round from his side of the table, and looked over the farmer's shoulder.

"There! Ten;--d'ye see!"

"Yes, it does say ten," replied the man. "And yet it seems to me there are eleven. I'm sure I have always thought so."

"Doesn't it say ten, here?" inquired Mr. Wade, with marked impatience in his voice.

"It does certainly."

"Well, what more do you want? Can't you believe the Bible?"

"Oh, yes I believe in the Bible, and yet, somehow, it strikes me that there must be eleven Commandments. Hasn't one been added somewhere else?"

Now this was too much for Brother and Sister Wade to bear. Such ignorance on sacred matters they felt to be unpardonable. A long lecture followed, in which the man was scolded, admonished and threatened with Divine indignation. At its close, he modestly asked if he might have the Bible to read for an hour or two, before retiring to rest. This request was granted with more pleasure than any of the preceding ones. Shortly after supper the man was

conducted to the little spare room accompanied by the Bible. Before leaving him alone, Mr. Wade felt it his duty to exhort him on spiritual things, and he did so most earnestly for ten or fifteen minutes. But he could not see that his words made much impression, and he finally left his guest, lamenting his ignorance and obduracy.

In the morning, the man came down, and meeting Mr. Wade, asked him if he would be so kind as to lend him a razor, that he might remove his beard, which did not give his face a very attractive aspect. His request was complied with.

"We will have family prayer in about ten minutes," said Mr. Wade, as he handed him a razor and a shaving-box.

In ten minutes the man appeared and behaved himself with due propriety at family worship. After breakfast he thanked the farmer and his wife for their hospitality, and departing, went on his journey.

Ten o'clock came, and Mr. N--had not yet arrived. So Mr. and Mrs. Wade started off for the meeting house, not doubting that they would find him there. But they were disappointed. A goodly number of people were inside the meeting house, and a goodly number outside, but the minister had not yet arrived.

"Where is Mr. N--?" inquired a dozen voices, as a little crowd gathered around the farmer.

"He hasn't come yet. Something has detained him. But I still look for him; indeed, I fully expected to find him here."

The day was cold, and Mr. Wade, after becoming thoroughly chilled, concluded to go in, and keep a look-out for the minister from the window near which he usually sat. Others, from the same cause, followed his example, and the little meeting house was soon filled, and still one after another came dropping in. The farmer, who turned towards the door each time it opened, was a little surprised to see his guest of the previous night enter, and come slowly along the aisle, looking from side to side as if in search of a vacant seat, very few of which were now left. Still advancing, he finally passed within the little enclosed altar, and ascending to the pulpit, took off his old gray overcoat and sat down.

By this time Mr. Wade was by his side, and with his hand upon his arm.

"You mustn't sit here. Come down, and I'll show you a seat," he said in an excited tone.

"Thank you," returned the man, in a composed tone. "It is very comfortable here."

"But you are in the pulpit! You are in the pulpit, sir!"

"Oh, never mind. It is very comfortable here." And the man remained immovable.

Mr. Wade, feeling much embarrassed, turned away, and went down, intending to get a brother official in the church to assist him in making a forcible ejection of the man from the place he was desecrating. Immediately upon his doing so, however, the man arose, and standing up at the desk, opened the hymn book. His voice thrilled to the very finger ends of Brother Wade, as, in a distinct and impressive manner, he gave out the hymn beginning--

"Help us to help each other, Lord,
Each other's cross to bear;
Let each his friendly aid afford,
And feel a brother's care."

The congregation arose after the stranger had read the entire hymn, and he then repeated the two first lines for them to sing. Brother Wade usually started the tune. He tried it this time, but went off on a long metre tune. Discovering his mistake at the second word, he balked, and tried it again, but now he stumbled on short metre. A musical brother here came to his aid, and let off with an air that suited the measure in which the hymn was written. After the singing, the congregation kneeled, and the minister, for no one now doubted his real character, addressed the Throne of Grace with much fervor and eloquence. The reading of a chapter from the Bible succeeded to these exercises. Then there was a deep pause throughout the room in anticipation of the text, which the preacher prepared to announce.

Brother Wade looked pale, and his hands and knees trembled;--Sister Wade's face was like crimson, and her heart was beating so loud that she wondered whether the sound was not heard by the sister who sat beside her. There was a breathless silence. The dropping of a pin might almost have been heard. Then the fine, emphatic tones of the preacher filled the crowded room.

"_A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another_"

Brother Wade had bent to listen, but he now sank back in his seat. This was the ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT!

The sermon was deeply searching, yet affectionate and impressive. The preacher uttered nothing that could in the least wound, the brother and sister of whose hospitality he had partaken, but he said much that smote upon their hearts, and made them painfully conscious that they had not shown as much kindness to the stranger as he had been entitled to receive on the broad principles of humanity. But they suffered most from mortification of feeling. To think that they should have treated the Presiding Elder of the District after such a fashion, was deeply humiliating; and the idea of the whole affair getting abroad, interfered sadly with their devotional feelings throughout the whole period of the service.

At last the sermon was over, the ordinance administered, and the benediction pronounced. Brother Wade did not know what it was best for him now to do. He never was more at a loss in his life. Mr. N--descended from the pulpit, but he did not step forward to meet him. How could he do that? Others gathered around and shook hands with him, but he still lingered and held back.

"Where is Brother Wade?" he at length heard asked. It was in the voice of the minister.

"Here he is," said two or three, opening the way to where the farmer stood.

The preacher advanced, and extending his hand, said--

"How do you do, Brother Wade? I am glad to see you. And where is Sister Wade?"

Sister Wade was brought forward, and the preacher shook hands with them heartily, while his face was lit up with smiles.

"I believe I am to find my home with you?" he said, as if that were a matter understood and settled.

Before the still embarrassed brother and sister could reply, some one asked--

"How came you to be detained so late? You were expected last night. And where is Brother R--?"

"Brother R--is sick," replied Mr. N--, "and so I had to come alone. Five miles from this my horse gave out, and I had to come the rest of the way on foot. But I became so cold and weary that I found it necessary to ask a farmer not far away from here to give me a night's lodging, which he was kind enough to do. I thought I was still three miles off, but it happened that I was much nearer my journey's end than I had supposed."

This explanation was satisfactory to all parties, and in due time the congregation dispersed; and the Presiding Elder went home with Brother and Sister Wade. How the matter was settled between them, we do not know. One thing is certain, however,--the story which we have related did not get out for some years after the worthy brother and sister had rested from their labors, and it was then related by Mr. N--himself, who was rather (sic) excentric in his character, and, like numbers of his ministerial brethren, fond of a good joke, and given to relating good stories.

THE IRON WILL.

"FANNY! I've but one word more to say on the subject. If you marry that fellow, I'll have nothing to do with you. I've said it; and you may be assured that I'll adhere to my determination."

Thus spoke, with a frowning brow and a stern voice, the father of Fanny Crawford, while the maiden sat with eyes bent upon the floor.

"He's a worthless, good-for-nothing fellow," resumed the father; "And if you marry him, you wed a life of misery. Don't come back to me, for I will disown you the day you take his name. I've said it, and my decision is unalterable."

Still Fanny made no answer, but sat like a statue.

"Lay to heart what I have said, and make your election, girl." And with these words, Mr. Crawford retired from the presence of his daughter.

On that evening Fanny Crawford left her father's house, and was secretly married to a young man named Logan, whom, spite of all his faults, she tenderly loved.

When this fact became known to Mr. Crawford, he angrily repeated his threat of utterly disowning his child; and he meant what he said--for he was a man of stern purpose and unbending will. When trusting to the love she believed him to bear for her, Fanny ventured home, she was rudely repulsed, and told that she no longer had a father. These cruel words fell upon her heart and ever after rested there, an oppressive weight.

Logan was a young mechanic, with a good trade and the ability to earn a comfortable living. But Mr. Crawford's objection to him was well founded, and it would have been better for Fanny if she had permitted it to influence her; for the young man was idle in his habits, and Mr. Crawford too clearly saw that idleness would lead to dissipation. The father had hoped that his threat to disown his child would have deterred her from taking the step he so strongly disapproved. He had, in fact, made this threat as a last effort to save her from a union that would, inevitably, lead to unhappiness. But having made it, his stubborn and offended pride caused him to adhere with stern inflexibility to his word.

When Fanny went from under her father's roof, the old man was left alone. The mother of his only child had been many years dead. For her father's sake, as well as for her own, did Fanny wish to return. She loved her parents with a most earnest affection, and thought of

him as sitting gloomy and companionless in that home so long made light and cheerful by her voice and smile. Hours and hours would she lie awake at night, thinking of her father, and weeping for the estrangement of his heart from her. Still there was in her bosom an ever living hope that he would relent. And to this she clung, though he passed her in the street without looking at her, and steadily denied her admission, when, in the hope of some change in his stern purpose, she would go to his house and seek to gain an entrance.

As the father had predicted, Logan added, in the course of a year or two, dissipation to idle habits and neglect of his wife to both. They had gone to housekeeping in a small way, when first married, and had lived comfortably enough for some time. But Logan did not like work, and made every excuse he could find to take a holiday, or be absent from the shop. The effect of this was, an insufficient income. Debt came with its mortifying and (sic) harrassing accompaniments, and furniture had to be sold to pay those who were not disposed to wait. With two little children, Fanny was removed by her husband into a cheap boarding-house, after their things were taken and sold. The company into which she was here thrown, was far from being agreeable; but this would have been no source of unhappiness in itself. Cheerfully would she have breathed the uncongenial atmosphere, if there had been nothing in the conduct of her husband to awaken feelings of anxiety. But, alas! there was much to create unhappiness here. Idle days were more frequent; and the consequences of idle days more and more serious. From his work, he would come home sober and cheerful; but after spending a day in idle company, or in the woods gunning, a sport of which he was fond, he would meet his wife with a sullen, dissatisfied aspect, and, too often, in a state little above intoxication.

"I'm afraid thy son-in-law is not doing very well, friend Crawford," said a plain-spoken Quaker to the father of Mrs. Logan, after the young man's habits began to show themselves too plainly in his appearance.

Mr. Crawford knit his brows, and drew his lips closely together.

"Has thee seen young Logan lately?"

"I don't know the young man," replied Mr. Crawford, with an impatient motion of his head.

"Don't know thy own son-in-law! The husband of thy daughter!"

"I have no son-in-law! No daughter!" said Crawford, with stern emphasis.

"Frances was the daughter of thy wedded wife, friend Crawford."

"But I have disowned her. I forewarned her of the consequences if she married that young man. I told her that I would cast her off for ever; and I have done it."

"But, friend Crawford, thee has done wrong."

"I've said it, and I'll stick to it."

"But thee has done wrong, friend Crawford," repeated the Quaker.

"Right or wrong, it is done, and I will not recall the act. I gave her fair warning; but she took her own course, and now she must abide the consequences. When I say a thing, I mean it; I never eat my words."

"Friend Crawford," said the Quaker, in a steady voice and with his calm eyes fixed upon the face of the man he addressed. "Thee was wrong to say what thee did. Thee had no right to cast off thy child. I saw her to-day, passing slowly along the street. Her dress was thin and faded; but not so thin and faded as her pale, young face. Ah! if thee could have seen the sadness of that countenance. Friend Crawford! she is thy child still. Thee cannot disown her."

"I never change," replied the resolute father.

"She is the child of thy beloved wife, now in heaven, friend Crawford."

"Good morning!" and Crawford turned and walked away.

"Rash words are bad enough," said the Quaker to himself, "but how much worse is it to abide by rash words, after there has been time for reflection and repentance!"

Crawford was troubled by what the Quaker said; but more troubled by what he saw a few minutes afterwards, as he walked along the street, in the person of his daughter's husband. He met the young man, supported by two others--so much intoxicated that he could not stand alone. And in this state he was going home to his wife--to Fanny!

The father clenched his hands, set his teeth firmly together, muttered an imprecation upon the head of Logan, and quickened his pace homeward. Try as he would, he could not shut out from his mind the pale, faded countenance of his child, as described by the Quaker, nor help feeling an inward shudder at the thought of what she must suffer on meeting her husband in such a state.

"She has only herself to blame," he said, as he struggled with his feelings. "I forewarned her; I gave her to understand clearly what she had to expect. My word is passed. I have said it; and that ends the matter. I am no childish trifler. What I say, I mean."

Logan had been from home all day, and, what was worse, had not been, as his wife was well aware, at the shop for a week. The woman with whom they were boarding, came into her room during the afternoon, and, after some hesitation and embarrassment, said--

"I am sorry to tell you, Mrs. Logan that I shall want you to give up your room, after this week. You know I have had no money from you for nearly a month, and, from the way your husband goes on, I see little prospect of being paid any thing more. If I was able, for your sake, I would not say a word. But I am not, Mrs. Logan, and therefore must, in justice to myself and family, require you to get another boarding-house."

Mrs. Logan answered only with tears. The woman tried to soften what she had said, and then went away.

Not long after this, Logan came stumbling up the stairs, and opening the door of his room, staggered in and threw himself heavily upon the bed. Fanny looked at him a few moments, and then crouching down, and covering her face with her hands, wept long and bitterly. She felt crushed and powerless. Cast off by her father, wronged by her husband, destitute and about to be thrust from the poor home into which she had shrunk: faint and weary, it seemed as if hope were gone forever. While she suffered thus, Logan lay in a drunken sleep. Arousing herself at last, she removed his boots and coat, drew a pillow under his head, and threw a coverlet over him. She then sat down and wept again. The tea bell rung, but she did not go to the table. Half an hour afterwards, the landlady came to the door and kindly inquired if she would not have some food sent up to her room.

"Only a little bread and milk for Henry," was replied.

"Let me send you a cup of tea," urged the woman.

"No, thank you. I don't wish any thing to night."

The woman went away, feeling troubled. From her heart she pitied the suffering young creature, and it had cost her a painful struggle to do what she had done. But the pressing nature of her own circumstances required her to be rigidly just. Notwithstanding Mrs. Logan had declined having any thing, she sent her a cup of tea and something to eat. But they remained untasted.

On the next morning Logan was sober, and his wife informed him of the notice which their landlady had given. He was angry, and used harsh language towards the woman. Fanny defended her, and had the harsh language transferred to her own head.

The young man appeared as usual at the breakfast table, but Fanny had no appetite for food, and did not go down. After breakfast, Logan went to the shop, intending to go to work; but found his place supplied by another journeyman, and himself thrown out of employment, with but a single dollar in his pocket, a months boarding due, and his family in need of almost every comfort. From the shop he went to a tavern, took a glass of liquor, and sat down to look over the newspapers, and think what he should do. There he met an idle journeyman, who, like himself, had lost his situation. A

fellow feeling made them communicative and confidential.

"If I was only a single man," said Logan, "I wouldn't care, I could easily shift for myself."

"Wife and children! Yes, there's the rub," returned the companion. "A journeyman mechanic is a fool to get married."

"Then you and I are both fools," said Logan.

"No doubt of it. I came to that conclusion, in regard to myself, long and long ago. Sick wife, hungry children, and four or five backs to cover; no wonder a poor man's nose is ever on the grindstone. For my part, I am sick of it. When I was a single man, I could go where I pleased, and do what I pleased; and I always had money in my pocket. Now I am tied down to one place, and grumbled at eternally; and if you were to shake me from here to the Navy Yard, you wouldn't get a sixpence out of me. The fact is, I'm sick of it."

"So am I. But what is to be done? I don't believe I can get work in town."

"I know you can't. But there is plenty of work and good wages to be had in Charleston or New Orleans."

Logan did not reply; but looked intently into his companion's face.

"I'm sure my wife would be a great deal better off if I were to clear out and leave her. She has plenty of friends, and they'll not see her want."

Logan still looked at his fellow journeyman.

"And your wife would be taken back under her father's roof, where there is enough and to spare. Of course she would be happier than she is now."

"No doubt of that. The old rascal has treated her shabbily enough. But I am well satisfied that if I were out of the way he would gladly receive her back again."

"Of this there can be no question. So, it is clear, that with our insufficient incomes, our presence is a curse rather than a blessing to our families."

Logan readily admitted this to be true. His companion then drew a newspaper towards him, and after running his eyes over it for a few moments, read:

"This day, at twelve o'clock, the copper fastened brig Emily, for Charleston. For freight or passage, apply on board."

"There's a chance for us," he said, as he finished reading the

advertisement. "Let us go down and see if they won't let us work our passage out."

Logan sat thoughtful a moment, and then said, as he arose to his feet.

"Agreed. It'll be the best thing for us, as well as for our families."

When the Emily sailed, at twelve o'clock, the two men were on board.

Days came and passed, until the heart of Mrs. Logan grew sick with anxiety, fear and suspense. No word was received from her absent husband. She went to his old employer, and learned that he had been discharged; but she could find no one who had heard of him since that time. Left thus alone, with two little children, and no apparent means of support, Mrs. Logan, when she became at length clearly satisfied that he for whom she had given up every thing, had heartlessly abandoned her, felt as if there was no hope for her in the world.

"Go to your father by all means," urged the woman with whom she was still boarding. "Now that your husband has gone, he will receive you."

"I cannot," was Fanny's reply.

"But what will you do?" asked the woman.

"Work for my children," she replied, arousing herself and speaking with some resolution. "I have hands to work, and I am willing to work."

"Much better go home to your father," said the woman.

"That is impossible. He has disowned me. Has ceased to love me or care for me. I cannot go to him again; for I could not bear, as I am now, another harsh repulse. No--no--I will work with my own hands. God will help me to provide for my children."

In this spirit the almost heart-broken young woman for whom the boarding-house keeper felt more than a common interest--an interest that would not let her thrust her out from the only place she could call her home--sought for work and was fortunate enough to obtain sewing from two or three families, and was thus enabled to pay a light board for herself and children. But incessant toil with her needle, continued late at night and resumed early in the morning, gradually undermined her health, which had become delicate, and weariness and pain became the constant companions of her labor.

Sometimes in carrying her work home, the forsaken wife would have to pass the old home of her girlhood, and twice she saw her father at the window. But either she was changed so that he did not know his

child; or he would not bend from his stern resolution to disown her. On these two occasions she was unable, on returning, to resume her work. Her fingers could not hold or guide the needle; nor could she, from the blinding tears that filled her eyes have seen to sew, even if her hands had lost the tremor that ran through every nerve of her body.

A year had rolled wearily by since Logan went off, and still no word had come from the absent husband. Labor beyond her bodily strength, and trouble and grief that were too severe for her spirit to bear, had done sad work upon the forsaken wife and disowned child. She was but a shadow of her former self.

Mr. Crawford had been very shy of the old Quaker, who had spoken so plainly to him; but his words made some impression on him, though no one would have supposed so, as there was no change in his conduct towards his daughter. He had forewarned her of the consequences, if she acted in opposition to his wishes. He had told her that he would disown her forever. She had taken her own way, and, painful as it was to him, he had to keep his word--his word that had ever been inviolate. He might forgive her; he might pity her; but she must remain a stranger. Such a direct and flagrant act of disobedience to his wishes was not to be forgotten nor forgiven. Thus, in stubborn pride, did his hard heart confirm itself in its cold and cruel estrangement. Was he happy? No! Did he forget his child? No. He thought of her and dreamed of her, day after day, and night after night. But he had said it, and he would stick to it! His pride was unbending as iron.

Of the fact that the husband of Fanny had gone off and left her with two children to provide for with the labor of her hands, he had been made fully aware, but it did not bend him from his stern purpose.

"She is nothing to me," was his impatient reply to the one who informed him of the fact. This was all that could be seen. But his heart trembled at the intelligence. (sic) Nevertheless, he stood coldly aloof month after month, and even repulsed, angrily, the kind landlady with whom Fanny boarded, who had attempted, all unknown to the daughter, to awaken sympathy for her in her father's heart.

One day the old Friend, whose plain words had not pleased Mr. Crawford, met that gentleman near his own door. The Quaker was leading a little boy by the hand. Mr. Crawford bowed, and evidently wished to pass on; but the Quaker paused, and said--

"I should like to have a few words with thee, friend Crawford."

"Well, say on."

"Thee is known as a benevolent man, friend Crawford. Thee never refuses, it is said, to do a deed of charity."

"I always give something when I am sure the object is deserving."

"So I am aware. Do you see this little boy?"

Mr. Crawford glanced down at the child the Quaker held by the hand. As he did so, the child lifted to him a gentle face, with mild earnest loving eyes.

"It is a sweet little fellow," said Mr. Crawford, reaching his hand to the child. He spoke with some feeling, for there was a look about the boy that went to his heart.

"He is, indeed, a sweet child--and the image of his poor, sick, almost heart-broken mother, for whom I am trying to awaken an interest. She has two children, and this one is the oldest. Her husband is dead, or what may be as bad, perhaps worse, as far as she is concerned, dead to her; and she does not seem to have a relative in the world, at least none who thinks about or cares for her. In trying to provide for her children, she has overtaken her delicate frame, and made herself sick. Unless something is done for her, a worse thing must follow. She must go to the Alms-house, and be separated from her children. Look into the sweet, innocent face of this dear child, and let your heart say whether he ought to be taken from his mother. If she have a woman's feelings, must she not love this child tenderly; and can any one supply to him his mother's place?"

"I will do something for her, certainly," Mr. Crawford said.

"I wish thee would go with me to see her."

"There is no use in that. My seeing her can do no good. Get all you can for her, and then come to me. I will help in the good work cheerfully," replied Mr. Crawford.

"That is thy dwelling, I believe," said the Quaker, looking around at a house adjoining the one before which they stood.

"Yes, that is my house," returned Crawford.

"Will thee take this little boy in with thee, and keep him for a few minutes, while I go to see a friend some squares off?"

"Oh, certainly. Come with me, dear!" And Mr. Crawford held out his hand to the child, who took it without hesitation.

"I will see thee in a little while," said the Quaker, as he turned away.

The boy, who was plainly, but very neatly dressed, was about four years old. He had a more than usually attractive face; and an earnest look out of his mild eyes, that made every one who saw him his friend.

"What is your name, my dear?" asked Mr. Crawford, as he sat down in his parlor, and took the little fellow upon his knee.

"Henry," replied the child. He spoke with distinctness; and, as he spoke, there was a sweet expression of the lips and eyes, that was particularly winning.

"It is Henry, is it?"

"Yes, sir,"

"What else besides Henry?"

The boy did not reply, for he had fixed his eyes upon a picture that hung over the mantle, and was looking at it intently. The eyes of Mr. Crawford followed those of the child, that rested, he found, on the portrait of his daughter.

"What else besides, Henry?" he repeated.

"Henry Logan," replied the child, looking for a moment into the face of Mr. Crawford, and then turning to gaze at the picture on the wall. Every nerve quivered in the frame of that man of iron will. The falling of a bolt from a sunny sky could not have startled and surprised him more. He saw in the face of the child, the moment he looked at him, something strangely familiar and attractive. What it was, he did not, until this instant, comprehend. But it was no longer a mystery.

"Do you know who I am?" he asked, in a subdued voice, after he had recovered, to some extent, his feelings.

The child looked again into his face, but longer and more earnestly. Then, without answering, he turned and looked at the portrait on the wall.

"Do you know who I am, dear?" repeated Mr. Crawford.

"No, sir," replied the child; and then again turned to gaze upon the picture.

"Who is that?" and Mr. Crawford pointed to the object that so fixed the little boy's attention.

"My mother." And as he said these words, he laid his head down upon the bosom of his unknown relative, and shrunk close to him, as if half afraid because of the mystery that, in his infantile mind, hung around the picture on the wall.

Moved by an impulse that he could not restrain, Mr. Crawford drew his arms around the child and hugged him to his bosom. Pride gave way; the iron will was bent; the sternly uttered vow was forgotten. There is power for good in the presence of a little child. Its

sphere of innocence subdues and renders impotent the evil spirits that rule in the hearts of selfish men. It was so in this case. Mr. Crawford might have withstood the moving appeal of even his daughter's presence, changed by grief, labor, and suffering, as she was. But his anger, upon which he had suffered the sun to go down, fled before her artless, confiding, innocent child. He thought not of Fanny--as the wilful woman, acting from the dictate of her own passions or feelings; but as a little child, lying upon his bosom--as a little child, singing and dancing around him--as a little child, with, to him, the face of a cherub; and the sainted mother of that innocent one by her side.

When the Friend came for the little boy; Mr. Crawford said to him, in a low voice--made low to hide his emotion--

"I will keep the child."

"From its mother?"

"No. Bring the mother, and the other child. I have room for them all."

A sunny smile passed over the benevolent countenance of the Friend as he hastily left the room.

Mrs. Logan, worn down by exhausting labor, had at last been forced to give up. When she did give up, every long strained nerve of mind and body instantly relaxed; and she became almost as weak and helpless as an infant. While in this state, she was accidentally discovered by the kind-hearted old Friend, who, without her being aware of what he was going to do, made his successful attack upon her father's feelings. He trusted to nature and a good cause, and did not trust in vain.

"Come, Mrs. Logan," said the kind woman, with whom Fanny was still boarding, an hour or so after little Henry had been dressed up to take a walk--where, (sic) the the mother did not know or think,--"the good Friend, who was here this morning, says you must ride out. He has brought a carriage for you, It will do you good, I know. He is very kind. Come, get yourself ready."

Mrs. Logan was lying upon her bed.

"I do not feel able to get up," she replied. "I do not wish to ride out."

"Oh, yes, you must go. The pure, fresh air, and the change, will do you more good than medicine. Come, Mrs. Logan; I will dress little Julia for you. She needs the change as much as you do."

"Where is Henry?" asked the mother.

"He has not returned yet. But, come! The carriage is waiting at the

door."

"Won't you go with me?"

"I would with pleasure--but I cannot leave home. I have so much to do."

After a good deal of persuasion, Fanny at length made the effort to get herself ready to go out. She was so weak, that she tottered about the floor like one intoxicated. But the woman with whom she lived, assisted and encouraged her, until she was at length ready to go. Then the Quaker came up to her room, and with the tenderness and care of a father, supported her down stairs, and when she had taken her place in the vehicle, entered, with her youngest child in his arms, and sat by her side, speaking to her, as he did so, kind and encouraging words.

The carriage was driven slowly, for a few squares, and then stopped. Scarcely had the motion ceased, when the door was suddenly opened, and Mr. Crawford stood before his daughter.

"My poor child!" he said, in a tender, broken voice, as Fanny, overcome by his unexpected appearance, sunk forward into his arms.

When the suffering young creature opened her eyes again, she was upon her own bed, in her own room, in her old home. Her father sat by her side, and held one of her hands tightly. There were tears in his eyes, and he tried to speak; but, though his lips moved, there came from them no articulate sound.

"Do you forgive me, father? Do you love me, father?" said Fanny, in a tremulous whisper, half rising from her pillow, and looking eagerly, almost agonizingly, into her father's face.

"I have nothing to forgive," murmured the father, as he drew his daughter towards him, so that her head could lie against his bosom.

"But do you love me, father? Do you love me as of old?" said the daughter.

He bent down and kissed her; and now the tears fell from his eyes and lay warm and glistening upon her face.

"As of old," he murmured, laying his cheek down upon that of his child, and clasping her more tightly in his arms. The long pent up waters of affection were rushing over his soul and obliterating the marks of pride, anger, and the iron will that sustained them in their cruel dominion. He was no longer a strong man, stern and rigid in his purpose; but a child, with a loving and tender heart.

There was light again in his dwelling; not the bright light of other times; for now the rays were mellowed. But it was light. And there was music again; not so joyful; but it was music, and its spell over

his heart was deeper and its influence more elevating.

The man with the iron will and stern purpose was subdued, and the power that subdued him, was the presence of a little child.

A CURE FOR LOW SPIRITS.

A HOUSEHOLD SKETCH.

FROM some cause, real or imaginary, I felt low spirited. There was a cloud upon my feelings, and I could not smile as usual, nor speak in a tone of cheerfulness. As a natural result, the light of my countenance being gone, all things around me were in shadow. My husband was sober, and had little to say; the children would look strangely at me when I answered, their questions, or spoke to them for any purpose, and my domestics moved about in a quiet manner, and when they addressed me, did so in a tone more subdued than usual.

This re-action upon my state, only made darker the clouds that veiled my spirits. I was conscious of this, and was conscious that the original cause of my depression was entirely inadequate, in itself, to produce the result which had followed. Under this feeling, I made an effort to rally myself, but in vain; and sank lower from the very struggle to rise above the gloom that overshadowed me.

When my husband came home at dinner time, I tried to meet him with a smile; but I felt that the light upon my countenance was feeble, and of brief duration. He looked at me earnestly, and, in his kind and gentle way, inquired if I felt no better, affecting to believe that my ailment was one of the body instead of the mind. But I scarcely answered him, and I could see that he felt hurt. How much more wretched did I become at this. Could I have then retired to my chamber, and, alone, give my full heart vent in a passion of tears, I might have obtained relief to my feelings. But, I could not do this.

While I sat at the table, forcing a little food into my mouth for appearance sake, my husband said--

"You remember the fine lad who has been for some time in our store?"

I nodded my head, but the question did not awaken in my mind the slightest interest.

"He has not made his appearance for several days; and I learned this morning, on sending to the house of his mother, that he was very ill."

"Ah!" was my indifferent response. Had I spoken what was in my mind, I would have said--"I'm sorry, but I can't help it." I did not, at the moment, feel the smallest interest in the lad.

"Yes," added my husband, "and the person who called to let me know about it, expressed his fears that Edward would not get up again."

"What ails him?" I inquired.

"I did not clearly understand. But he has fever of some kind. You remember his mother very well?"

"Oh, yes. You know she has worked for me. Edward is her only child, I believe."

"Yes. And his loss to her will be almost every thing."

"Is he so dangerous?" I inquired, a feeling of interest beginning to stir in my heart.

"He is not expected to live."

"Poor woman! How distressed she must be? I wonder what her circumstances are just at this time. She seemed very poor when she worked for me."

"And she is very poor still, I doubt not. She has herself been sick, and during the time it is more than probable, that Edward's wages were all her income. I am afraid she has suffered, and that she has not, now, the means of procuring for her sick boy things necessary for his comfort. Could you not go around there this afternoon, and see how they are?"

I shook my head instantly, at this proposition, for sympathy for others was not yet strong enough to expel my selfish despondency of mind.

"Then I must step around," replied my husband, "before I go back to the store, although we are very busy today, and I am much wanted there. It would not be right to neglect the lad and his mother under present circumstances."

I felt rebuked at these words; and, with a forced effort, said--

"I will go."

"It will be much better for you to see them than for me," returned my husband, "for you can understand their wants better, and minister

to them more effectually. If they need any comforts, I would like you to see them supplied."

It still cost me an effort to get ready; but as I had promised that I would do as my husband wished, the effort had to be made. By the time I was prepared to go out, I felt something better. The exertion I was required to make, tended to disperse slightly the clouds that hung over me, and, as they began gradually to move, my thoughts turned, with an awakening interest, toward the object of my husband's solicitude.

All was silent within the humble abode to which my errand led me. I knocked lightly, and in a few moments the mother of Edward opened the door. She looked pale and anxious.

"How is your son, Mrs. Ellis?" I inquired, as I stepped in.

"He is very low, ma'am," she replied.

"Not dangerous, I hope?"

"The fever has left him, but he is as weak as an infant. All his strength is gone."

"But proper nourishment will restore him, if the disease is broken."

"So the doctor says. But I'm afraid it is too late. He seems to be sinking every hour. Will you walk up and see him, ma'am?"

I followed Mrs. Ellis up stairs, and into the chamber where the sick boy lay. I was not surprised at the fear she had expressed, when I saw Edward's pale, sunken face, and hollow, almost expressionless eyes. He scarcely noticed my entrance.

"Poor boy!" sighed his mother. "He has had a very sick spell." My liveliest interest was at once awakened.

"He has been sick indeed!" I replied, as I laid my hand upon his white forehead. I found that his skin was, cold and damp. The fever had nearly burned out the vital energies of his system. "Do you give him much nourishment?"

"He takes a little barley water."

"Has not the doctor ordered wine?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Mr. Ellis, but she spoke with an air of hesitation. "He says a spoonful of good wine, three or four times a day, would be very good for him."

"And you have not given him any?"

"No ma'am,"

"We have some very pure wine, that we always keep for sickness. If you will step over to our house, and tell Alice to give you a bottle of it, I will stay with Edward until you return."

How brightly glowed that woman's face, as my words fell upon her ears!

"Oh, ma'am you are very kind!" said she. "But it will be asking too much of you to stay here!"

"You didn't ask it, Mrs. Ellis," I smilingly replied. "I have offered to stay; so do you go for the wine as quickly as you can, for Edward needs it very much."

I was not required to say more. In a few minutes I was alone with the sick boy, who lay almost as still as if death were resting upon his half closed eye-lids. To some extent, in the half hour I remained thus in that hushed chamber, did I realize the condition and feelings of the poor mother whose only son lay gasping at the very door of death, and all my sympathies were, in consequence, awakened.

As soon as Mrs. Ellis returned with the wine, about a tea spoonful of it was diluted, and the glass containing it placed to the sick lad's lips. The moment its flavor touched his palate, a thrill seemed to pass through his frame, and he swallowed eagerly.

"It does him good!" said I, speaking warmly, and from an impulse of pleasure that made my heart glow.

We sat, and looked with silent interest upon the boy's face, and we did not look in vain, for something like warmth came upon his wan cheeks, and when I placed my hand again upon his forehead, the coldness and dampness was gone. The wine had quickened his languid pulses. I staid an hour longer, and then another spoonful of the generous wine was given. Its effect was as marked as at first. I then withdrew from the humble home of the widow and her only child, promising to see them again in the morning.

When I regained the street and my thoughts, for a moment, reverted to myself, how did I find all changed. The clouds had been dispersed--the heavy hand raised from my bosom, I walked with a freer step. Sympathy for others, and active efforts to do others good, had expelled the evil spirits from my heart; and now serene peace had there again her quiet habitation. There was light in every part of my dwelling when I re-entered it, and I sung cheerfully, as I prepared, with my own hands, a basket of provisions for the poor widow.

When my husband returned in the evening, he found me at work, cheerfully, in my family, and all bright and smiling again. The effort to do good to others had driven away the darkness from my

spirit, and the sunshine was again upon my countenance, and reflected from every member of my household.--_Lady's Wreath._

THREE HUNDRED A YEAR.

THE CALL.

"HOW much salary do they offer?" asked Mrs. Carroll of her husband, who was sitting near her with a letter in his hand. He had just communicated the fact that a Parish was tendered him in the Village of Y--, distant a little over a hundred and fifty miles.

"The money is your first thought, Edith," said Mr. Carroll, half chidingly, yet with an affectionate smile.

This remark caused a slight flush to pass over the face of Mrs. Carroll. She replied, glancing, as she did so, towards a bed on which lay three children.

"Is it wrong to think of the little ones whom God has given to us?"

"Oh, no! But we must believe that God who calls us to labor in his vineyard, will feed both us and our children."

"How are we to know that HE calls us, Edward?" inquired Mrs. Carroll.

"I hold the evidence in my hand. This letter from the vestry of Y--Parish contains the call."

"It may be only the call of man."

"Edith!--Edith!--Your faith is weak; weak almost as the expiring flame."

"What do they say in that letter? Will you read it to me."

"Oh, yes." And Mr. Carroll read--

"REV. AND DEAR SIR:--Our Parish has been for some months without a minister. On the recommendation of Bishop--, we have been led to make you an offer of the vacant place. The members of the church, generally, are in moderate circumstances, and we cannot, therefore, offer anything more than a moderate living. There is a neat little

parsonage, to which is attached a small garden, for the use of the minister. The salary is three hundred dollars. You will find the people kind and intelligent, and likewise prepossessed in your favor. The Bishop has spoken of you warmly. We should like to hear from you as early as convenient.

"Very affectionately, &c. &c."

"Three hundred dollars!" said Mrs. Carroll in a disappointed tone.

"And the parsonage," added Mr. Carroll, quickly.

"Equivalent to sixty or seventy more."

"Equivalent to a hundred dollars more, at least."

"We are doing much better here, Edward."

"True! But are we to look to worldly advantage alone?"

"We have a duty to discharge to our children, which, it seems to me, comes before all other duties."

"God will take care of these tender lambs, Edith, do not fear. He has called me to preach his everlasting Gospel, and I have heard and answered. Now He points to the field of labor, and shall I hold back because the wages seem small? I have not so learned my duty. Though lions stood in the way, I would walk in it with a fearless heart. Be not afraid. The salvation of souls is a precious work, and they who are called to the labor will not lack for bread."

"But Edward," said the wife, in a serious voice, "will it be right for us to enter any path of life blindfold, as it were? God has given us reason for a guide; and should we not be governed by its plain dictate?"

"We must walk by faith, Edith, and not by sight," replied Mr. Carroll, in a tone that indicated some small measure of impatience.

"A true faith, dear husband!" said Mrs. Carroll tenderly, while a slight suffusion appeared about her eyes.

"A true faith is ever enlightened and guided by reason. When reason plainly points the way, faith bids us walk on with unfaltering steps."

"And does not reason now point the way?" asked Mr. Carroll."

"I think not. From our school we receive nearly seven hundred dollars; and we have not found that sum too large for our support. I know that I work very hard, and that I find it as much as I can do to keep all things comfortable."

"But remember that we have rent to pay."

"I know. Still a little over five hundred dollars remain. And the present offer is only three hundred. Edward, we cannot live upon this sum. Think of our three children. And my health, you know, is not good. I am not so strong as I was, and cannot go through as much."

The wife's voice trembled.

"Poor, weak doubter!" said Mr. Carroll, in a tender, yet reproving voice. "Does not He who calls us to this labor know our wants? And is not He able to supply them? Have you forgotten that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof? Whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills? Did not God feed Elijah by ravens? Did the widow's oil fail? Be not doubtful but believing, Edith! And what if we do have to meet a few hardships, and endure many privations? Are these to be counted against the salvation of even one precious soul? The harvest is great, hut the laborers are few."

Mrs. Carroll knew her husband well enough to be assured that if he believed it to be his duty to accept a call from Lapland or the Indian Ocean, he would go. Yet, so strongly did both reason and feeling oppose the contemplated change, that she could not help speaking out what was in her mind.

"The day of miracles is past," she replied.

"We must not expect God to send us bread from heaven if we go into a wilderness, nor water from the rock, if we wander away to some barren desert. This Parish of Y--cannot afford living to any but a single man, and, therefore, it seems to me that none but a single man should accept their call. Wait longer, Edward. We have every comfort for our children, and you are engaged in a highly useful employment. When the right field for ministerial labor offers, God will call you in a manner so clear that you need not feel a doubt on the subject."

"I feel no doubt now," said Mr. Carroll. "I recognise the voice of my Master, and must obey. And I will obey without fear. Our bread will be given and our water sure. Ah! Edith. If you could only see with me, eye to eye. If you could only take up your cross hopefully, and walk I by my side, how light would seem all the burden I have to bear?"

Mrs. Carroll felt the words of her husband, as a rebuke. This silenced all opposition.

"I know that I am weak and fearful," she murmured, leaning her head upon her husband, and concealing her face. "But I will try to have courage. If you feel it to be your duty to accept this call, I will go with you; and, come what may, will not vex your ears by a complaining word. It was only for our little ones that I felt

troubled."

"The Lord will provide, Edith. He never sends any one upon a journey at his own cost. Fear not: we have the God of harvest on our side."

The will of Mr. Carroll decided in this, as in almost every thing else. He saw reason to accept the call, and did not therefore, perceive any force in his wife's objections.

The school, from which a comfortable living had been obtained, was given up; an old home and old friends abandoned. Prompt as Mr. Carroll had been to accept the call to Y--, the process of breaking up did not take place without some natural feelings coming in to disturb him. How he was to support his wife and children on three hundred dollars, did not exactly appear. It had cost him, annually, the sum of five hundred, exclusive of rent; and no one could affirm that he had lived extravagantly. But he dismissed such unpleasant thoughts by saying, mentally--

"Away with these sinful doubts! I will not be faithless, but believing."

As for Mrs. Carroll, who felt, in view of the coming trials and labor, that she had but little strength; the parting from the old place where she had known so many happy hours, gave her deeper pain than she had ever experienced. Strive as she would, she could not keep up her spirits. She could not feel any assurance for the future,--could not put her entire trust in Heaven. To her the hopeful spirit of her husband seemed a blind confidence, and not a rational faith. But, even while she felt thus, she condemned herself for the feeling; and strove--with how little effect!--to walk sustainingly by the side of her husband.

THE CHANGE.

Six months have elapsed since Mr Carroll accepted the call to Y--. He has preached faithfully and labored diligently. That was his part. And he has received, quarterly, on the day it became due, his salary. That was according to the contract on the other side. His conscience is clear on the score of duty; and his parishioners are quite as well satisfied that they have done all that is required of them. They offered him three hundred a year and the parsonage. He accepted the offer; and, by that act, declared the living to be adequate to his wants. If he was satisfied they were.

"I don't know how he gets along on three hundred dollars," some one, more thoughtful about such matters, would occasionally say. "It costs me double that sum, and my family is no larger than his."

"They get a great many presents," would, in all probability, be replied to this. "Mr. A--, I know, sent them a load of wood some time ago; a Mr. B--told me that he had sent them a quarter of lamb and a bushel of apples. And I have, two or three times, furnished one little matter and another. I'm sure what is given to them will amount to half as much as Mr. Carroll's salary."

"This makes a difference, of course," is the satisfied answer. And yet, all told, the presents received by the whole family, in useful articles, has not reached the value of twenty-five dollars during six months. And this has been more than abstracted from them by the kind ladies of the parish, who must needs visit and take tea with the minister as often as convenient.

Six months had passed since the Rev. Mr. Carroll removed to Y--. It was mid-winter; and a stormy day closed in with as stormy a night. The rays which came through the minister's little study-window grew faint in the pervading shadows, and he could no longer see with sufficient clearness to continue writing. So he went down stairs to the room in which were his wife and children. The oldest child was a daughter, six years of age, named Edith from her mother. Edward, between three and four years old, and Aggy the baby, made up the number of Mr. Carroll's household treasures. They were all just of an age to require their mother's attention in every thing. As her husband entered the room, Mrs. Carroll said--

"I'm glad you've come down, dear. I can't get Aggy out of my arms a minute. It's nearly supper time, and I haven't been able even to put the kettle on the fire. She's very fretful."

Mr. Carroll took the baby. His wife threw a shawl over her head, and taking an empty bucket from the dresser, was passing to the door, when her husband said--

"Stop, stop, Edith! You musn't go for water in this storm. Here, take the baby."

"I can go well enough," replied Mrs. Carroll, and before her husband could prevent her, she was out in the blustering air, with the snowflakes driving in her face.

"Oh, Edith! Edith! Why will you do so?" said her husband, as soon as she came back.

"It's as easy for me to go as for you," she replied.

"No it isn't, Edith. I am strong to what you are. If you expose yourself in this way, it will be the death of you."

Mrs. Carroll shook the snow from her shawl and dress, and brushed it from her shoes, saying as she did so--

"Oh no! a little matter like this won't hurt me."

She then filled the tea-kettle and placed it over the fire. After which she set out the table, and busied herself in getting ready their evening meal. Meanwhile, Mr. Carroll walked the floor with Aggy in his arms, both looking and feeling serious; while the two older children amused themselves with a picture book.

As the reader has probably anticipated, the "living" (?) at Y--proved altogether inadequate to the wants of Mr. Carroll's family; and faith, confidence, and an abstract trust in Providence by no means sufficed for its increase.

At first, Mrs. Carroll had a servant girl to help her in her household duties, as usual. But she soon found that this would not do. A dollar and a quarter a week, and the cost of boarding the girl, took just about one-third of their entire income. So, after the first three months, "help" was dispensed with. The washing had to be put out; which cost half a dollar, weekly. To get some one in the house to iron, would cost as much more. So Mrs. Carroll took upon herself the task of ironing all the clothes, in addition to the entire work of the house and care of her three children.

For three months this hard labor was performed; but not without a visible effect. The face of Mrs. Carroll grew thinner; her step lost its lightness; and her voice its cheerful tone. All this her husband saw, and saw with intense pain. But, there was no remedy. His income was but three hundred dollars a year; and out of that small sum it was impossible to pay one hundred for the wages and board of a girl, and have enough left for the plainest food and clothing. There was, therefore, no alternative. All that it was in his power to do, was done by Mr. Carroll to lighten the heavy burdens under which his wife was sinking; but it was only a little, in reality, that he could do; and he was doomed to see her daily wasting away, and her strength departing from her.

At the time we have introduced them, Mrs. Carroll had begun to show some symptoms of failing health, that alarmed her husband seriously. She had taken cold, which was followed by a dry, fatiguing cough, and a more than usual prostration of strength. On coming in with her bucket of water from the well, as just mentioned, she did not take off her shoes, and brush away the snow that had been pressed in around the tops against her stockings, but suffered it to lie there and melt, thus wetting her feet. It was nearly an hour from the time Mr. Carroll came down from his room, before supper was ready. Aggy was, by this time, asleep; so that the mother could pour out the tea without having, as was usually the case, to hold the baby in her arms.

"Ain't you going to eat anything?" asked Mr. Carroll, seeing that his wife, whose face looked flushed, only sipped a little tea.

"I don't feel any appetite," replied Mrs. Carroll.

"But you'd better try to eat something, dear."

Just then there was a knock at the door. On opening it, Mr. Carroll found a messenger with a request for him to go and see a parishioner who was ill.

"You can't go away there in this storm," said his wife, as soon as the messenger had retired.

"It's full a mile off."

"I must go, Edith," replied the minister. "If the distance were many miles instead of one, it would be all the same. Duty calls."

And out into the driving storm the minister went, and toiled on his lonely way through the deep snow to reach the bedside of a suffering fellow man, who sought spiritual consolation in the hour of sickness, from one whose temporal wants he had, while in health, shown but little inclination to supply. That consolation offered, he turned his face homeward again, and again breasted the unabated storm. He found his wife in bed--something unusual for her at ten o'clock--and, on laying his hand upon her face, discovered that she was in a high fever. In alarm, he went for the doctor, who declined going out, but sent medicine, and promised to come over in the morning.

In the morning Mrs. Carroll was much worse, and unable to rise. To dress the children and get breakfast, Mr. Carroll found to be tasks of no very easy performance for him; and as soon as they were completed, he called in a neighbor to stay with his wife while he went in search of some one to come and take her place in the family until she was able to go about again as usual.

That time, however, did not soon come. Weeks passed before she could even sit up, and then she was so susceptible of cold, that even the slightest draft of air into the room affected her; and so weak, that, in attempting to mend a garment for one of her children, the exertion caused her to faint away.

When Mrs. Carroll was taken sick, they had only fifteen dollars of their quarter's salary left. It was but two weeks since they had received it, yet nearly all was gone, for twenty-five dollars, borrowed to meet expenses during the last month of the quarter, had to be paid according to promise: shoes for nearly every member of the family had to be purchased, besides warmer clothing for themselves and children; and several little bills unavoidably contracted, had to be settled. The extra expense of sickness, added to the regular demand, soon melted away the trifling balance, and

Mr. Carroll found himself, with his wife still unable to leave her room--in fact, scarcely able to sit up--penniless and almost hopeless.--His faith had grown weak--his confidence was gone--his spirits were broken. Daily he prayed for strength to bear up; for a higher trust in Providence; for light upon his dark pathway.--But no strength came, no confidence was created, no light shone upon his way. And for this we need not wonder. It was no day of miracles, as his wife had forewarned him. He had, as too many do, hoped for sustenance in a field of labor where reason could find no well-grounded hope. He knew that he could not live on three hundred a year; yet he had accepted the offer, in the vain hope that all would come out well!

The last shilling left the hand of the unhappy minister, and at least six weeks remained before another quarter's salary became due. He could not let his family starve; so, after much thought, he finally determined to call the vestry together, frankly state his case, and tell his brethren that it was impossible for him to live on the small sum they allowed.

A graver meeting of the vestry of Y--parish had not for a long time taken place. As for an increase of salary, that was declared to be out of the question entirely. They had never paid any one over three hundred dollars, which, with the parsonage, had always been considered a very liberal compensation. They were very sorry for Mr. Carroll, and would advance him a quarter's salary. But all increase was out of the question. They knew the people would not hear to it. The meeting then broke up, and the official members of the church walked gravely away, while Mr. Carroll went home, feeling so sad and dispirited, that he almost wished that he could die.

The Parish of Y--was not rich; though six hundred dollars could have been paid to a minister with as little inconvenience to the members as three hundred. But the latter sum was considered ample; and much surprise was manifested when it was found that the new minister asked for an increase, even before the first year of his engagement had expired.

The face of his wife had never looked so pale, her cheeks so thin, nor her eyes so sunken, to the minister, as when he came home from this mortifying and disheartening meeting of the vestry. One of those present was the very person he had gone a mile to visit on the night of the snow-storm; and he had more to say that hurt him than any of the rest.

"Edith," said Mr. Carroll, taking the thin hand of his wife, as he sat down by her and looked sadly into her face, "we must leave here."

"Must we? Why?" she asked, without evincing very marked surprise.

"We cannot live on three hundred a year."

"Where will we go?"

"Heaven only knows! But we cannot remain here!"

And as the minister said this, he bowed his head until his face rested upon the arm of his wife. He tried to hide his emotion, but Edith knew that tears were upon the cheeks of her husband.

THE SEQUEL.

JUST one year has elapsed, since Mr. Carroll accepted the call from Y--. It has been a year of trouble, ending in deep affliction. When the health of Mrs. Carroll yielded under her too heavy burdens, it did not come back again. Steadily she continued to sink, after the first brief rallying of her system, until it became hopelessly apparent that the time of her departure was near at hand. She was too fragile a creature to be thrown into the position she occupied. Inheriting a delicate constitution, and raised with even an unwise tenderness, she was no more fitted to be a pastor's wife, with only three hundred a year to live upon, than a summer flower is to take the place of a hardy autumn plant. This her husband should have known and taken into the account, before he decided to accept the call from Y--.

When it was found that Mrs. Carroll, after partially recovering from her first severe attack, began, gradually to sink; a strong interest in her favor was awakened among the ladies of the congregation, and they showed her many kind attentions. But all these attentions, and all this kindness, did not touch the radical disability under which she was suffering. They did not remove her too heavy weight of care and labor. All the help in her family that she felt justified in employing, was a girl between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and this left so much for her to do in the care of her children, and in necessary household duties that she suffered all the time from extreme physical exhaustion.

In the just conviction of the error he had committed, and while he felt the hopelessness of his condition, Mr. Carroll, as has been seen, resolved to leave Y--immediately. This design he hinted to one of the members of his church.

"You engaged with us for a year, did you not?" enquired the member.

That settled the question in the mind of the unhappy minister. He

said no more to any one on the subject of his income, or about leaving the parish. But his mind was made up not to remain a single day, after his contract had expired. If in debt at the time, as he knew he must be, he would free himself from the incumbrances by selling a part of his household furniture. Meantime his liveliest fears were aroused for his wife, as symptom after symptom of a rapid decline, showed themselves. That he did not preach as good sermons, nor visit as freely among his parishioners during the last three months of the time he remained at Y--, is no matter of surprise. Some, more considerate than the rest, excused him; but others complained, even to the minister himself. No matter. Mr. Carroll had too much at home to fill his heart to leave room for a troubled pulsation on this account. He was conscience-clear on the score of obligation to his parishioners.

At last, and this before the year had come to its close, the drooping wife and mother took to her bed, never again to leave it until carried forth by the mourners. We will not pain the reader by any details of the affecting scenes attendant upon the last few weeks of her mortal life; nor take him to the bed-side of the dying one, in the hour that she passed away. To state the fact that she died, is enough--and painful enough.

For all this, it did not occur to the people of Y--that, in anything they had been lacking. They had never given but three hundred a year to a minister, and, as a matter of course, considered the sum as much as a reasonable man could expect. As for keeping a clergyman in luxury, and permitting him to get rich; they did not think it consistent with the office he held, which required self-denial and a renouncing of the world. As to how he could live on so small a sum, that was a question rarely asked; and when presented, was put to rest by some backhanded kind of an answer, that left the matter as much in the dark as ever.

Notwithstanding the deep waters of affliction through which Mr. Carroll was required to pass, his Sabbath duties were but once omitted, and that on the day after he had looked for the last time upon the face of his lost one. Four Sabbaths more he preached, and then, in accordance with notice a short time previously given, resigned his pastoral charge. There were many to urge him with great earnestness not to leave them; but a year's experience enabled him to see clearer than he did before, and to act with greater decision. In the hope of retaining him, the vestry strained a point, and offered to make the salary three hundred and fifty dollars. But much to their surprise, the liberal offer was refused.

It happened that the Bishop of the Diocese came to visit Y--a week before Mr. Carroll intended taking his departure with his motherless children, for his old home, where a church had been offered him in connexion with a school. To him, three or four prominent members of the church complained that the minister was mercenary, and looked more to the loaves and fishes than to the duty of saving souls.

"Mercenary!" said the Bishop, with a strong expression of surprise.

"Yes, mercenary," repeated his accusers.

"So far from it," said the Bishop, warmly, "he has paid more during the year, for supporting the Gospel in Y--, than any five men in the parish put together."

"Mr. Carroll has!"

"How much do you give?" addressing one.

"I pay ten dollars pew rent, and give ten extra, besides," was the answer.

"And you," speaking to another.

"The same."

"And you?"

"Thirty dollars, in all."

"While," said the Bishop, speaking with increased warmth, "your minister gave two hundred dollars."

This, of course, took them greatly by surprise, and they asked for an explanation. "It is given in a few words," returned the Bishop. "It cost him, though living in the most frugal manner, five hundred dollars for the year. Of this, you paid three hundred, and he two hundred dollars."

"I don't understand you, Bishop," said one.

"Plainly, then; he was in debt at the end of the year, two hundred dollars, for articles necessary for the health and comfort of his family, to pay which he has sold a large part of his furniture. He was not working for himself, but for you, and, therefore, actually paid two hundred dollars for the support of the Gospel in Y--, while you paid but twenty or thirty dollars apiece. Under these circumstances, my friends, be assured that the charge of being mercenary, comes with an exceeding bad grace. Nor is this all that he has sacrificed. An insufficient income threw upon his wife, duties beyond her strength to bear; and she sunk under them. Had you stepped forward in time, and lightened these duties by a simple act of justice, she might still be living to bless her husband and children!--Three hundred a year for a man with a wife and three children, is not enough; and you know it, my brethren! Not one of you could live on less than double the sum."

This rebuke came with a stunning force upon the ears of men who had expected the Bishop to agree with them in their complaint, and had its effect. On the day Mr. Carroll left the village, he received a

kind and sympathetic letter from the official members of the church enclosing the sum of two hundred dollars. The first impulse of his natural feelings was to return the enclosure, but reflection showed him that such an act would be wrong; and so he retained it, after such acknowledgments as he deemed the occasion required.

Back to his old home the minister went, but with feelings, how different, alas! from those he had experienced on leaving for Y--. The people among whom he had labored for a year, felt as if they had amply paid him for all the service he had rendered; in fact had overpaid him, as if money, doled out grudgingly, could compensate for all he had sacrificed and suffered, in his effort to break for them the Bread of Life.

Here is one of the phases of ministerial life, presented with little ornament or attractiveness. There are many other phases, more pleasant to look upon, and far more flattering to the good opinion we are all inclined to entertain of ourselves. But it is not always best to look upon the fairest side. The cold reality of things, it is needful that we should sometimes see. The parish of Y--, does not, by any means, stand alone. And Mr. Carroll is not, the only man who has suffered wrong from the hands of those who called him to minister in spiritual things, yet neglected duly to provide for the natural and necessary wants of the body.

I'LL SEE ABOUT IT.

MR. EASY sat alone in his counting room, one afternoon, in a most comfortable frame, both as regards mind and body. A profitable speculation in the morning had brought the former into a state of great complacency, and a good dinner had done all that was required for the repose of the latter. He was in that delicious, half asleep, half awake condition, which, occurring after dinner, is so very pleasant. The newspaper, whose pages at first possessed a charm for his eye, had fallen, with the hand that held--it, upon his knee. His head was gently reclined backwards against the top of a high, leather cushioned chair; while his eyes, half opened, saw all things around him but imperfectly. Just at this time the door was quietly opened, and a lad of some fifteen or sixteen years, with a pale, thin face, high forehead, and large dark eyes, entered. He approached the merchant with a hesitating step, and soon stood directly before him.

Mr. Easy felt disturbed at this intrusion, for so he felt it. He

knew the lad to be the son of a poor widow, who had once seen better circumstances than those that now surrounded her. Her husband had, while living, been his intimate friend, and he had promised him, at his dying hour, to be the protector and adviser of his wife and children. He had meant to do all he promised, but, not being very fond of trouble, except where stimulated to activity by the hope of gaining some good for himself, he had not been as thoughtful in regard to Mrs. Mayberry as he ought to have been. She was a modest, shrinking, sensitive woman, and had, notwithstanding her need of a friend and adviser, never called upon Mr. Easy, or even sent to request him to act for her in any thing, except once. Her husband had left her poor. She knew little of the world. She had three quite young children, and one, the oldest, about sixteen. Had Mr. Easy been true to his pledge, he might have thrown many a ray upon her dark path, and lightened her burdened heart of many a doubt and fear. But he had permitted more than a year to pass since the death of her husband, without having once called upon her. This neglect had not been intentional. His will was good but never active at the present moment. "To-morrow," or "next week," or "very soon," he would call upon Mrs. Mayberry; but to-morrow, or next week, or very soon, had never yet come.

As for the widow, soon after her husband's death, she found that poverty was to be added to affliction. A few hundred dollars made up the sum of all that she received after the settlement of his business, which had never been in a very prosperous condition. On this, under the exercise of extreme frugality, she had been enabled to live for nearly a year. Then the paucity of her little store made it apparent to her mind that individual exertion was required directed towards procuring the means of support for her little family. Ignorant of the way in which this was to be done, and having no one to advise her, nearly two months more passed before she could determine what to do. By that time she had but a few dollars left, and was in a state of great mental distress and uncertainty. She then applied for work at some of the shops, and obtained common sewing, but at prices that could not yield her any thing like a support.

Hiram, her oldest son, had been kept at school up to this period. But now she had to withdraw him. It was impossible any longer to pay his tuition fees. He was an intelligent lad--active in mind, and pure in his moral principles. But like his mother; sensitive, and inclined to avoid observation. Like her, too, he had a proud independence of feeling, that made him shrink from asking or accepting a favor, putting himself under an obligation to any one. He first became aware of his mother's true condition, when she took him from school, and explained the reason for so doing. At once his mind rose into the determination to do something to aid his mother. He felt a glowing confidence, arising from the consciousness of strength within. He felt that he had both the will and the power to act, and to act efficiently.

"Don't be disheartened, mother," he said, with animation. "I can and

will do something. I can help you. You have worked for me a great many years. Now I will work for you."

Where there is a will, there is a way. But it is often the case, that the will lacks the kind of intelligence that enables it to find the right way at once. So it proved in the case of Hiram Mayberry. He had a strong enough will, but did not know how to bring it into activity. Good, without its appropriate truth, is impotent. Of this the poor lad soon became conscious. To the question of his mother--

"What can you do, child!" an answer came not so readily.

"Oh, I can do a great many things," was easily said; but, even in saying so, a sense of inability followed the first thought of what he should do, that the declaration awakened.

The will impels, and then the understanding seeks for the means of affecting the purposes of the will. In the case of young Hiram, thought followed affection. He pondered for many days over the means by which he was to aid his mother. But, the more he thought, the more conscious did he become, that, in the world, he was a weak boy. That however strong might be his purpose, his means of action were limited. His mother could aid him but little. She had but one suggestion to make, and that was, that he should endeavor, to get a situation in some store, or counting room. This he attempted to do. Following her direction, he called upon Mr. Easy, who promised to see about looking him up a situation. It happened, the day after, that a neighbor spoke to him about a lad for his store--(Mr. Easy had already forgotten his promise)--Hiram was recommended, and the man called to see his mother.

"How much salary can you afford to give him?" asked Mrs. Mayberry, after learning all about the situation, and feeling satisfied that her son should accept of it.

"Salary, ma'am?" returned the storekeeper, in a tone of surprise.

"We never give a boy any salary for the first year. The knowledge that is acquired of business is always considered a full compensation. After the first year, if he likes us, and we like him, we may give him seventy-five or a hundred dollars."

Poor Mrs. Mayberry's countenance fell immediately.

"I wouldn't think of his going out now, if it were not in the hope of his earning something," she said in a disappointed voice.

"How much did you expect him to earn?" was asked by the storekeeper.

"I didn't know exactly what to expect. But I supposed that he might earn four or five dollars a week."

"Five dollars a week is all we pay our porter, an able bodied, industrious man," was returned. "If you wish your son to become

acquainted with mercantile business, you must not expect him to earn much for three or four years. At a trade you may receive for him barely a sufficiency to board and clothe him, but nothing more."

This declaration so dampened the feelings of the mother that she could not reply for some moments. At length she said--

"If you will take my boy with the understanding, that, in case I am not able to support him, or hear of a situation where a salary can be obtained, you will let him leave your employment without hard feelings, he shall go into your store at once."

To this the man consented, and Hiram Mayberry went with him according to agreement. A few weeks passed, and the lad, liking both the business and his employer, his mother felt exceedingly anxious for him to remain. But she sadly feared that this could not be. Her little store was just about exhausted, and the most she had yet been able to earn by working for the shops, was a dollar and a half a week. This was not more than sufficient to buy the plainest food for her little flock. It would not pay rent, nor get clothing. To meet the former, recourse was had to the sale of her husband's small, select library. Careful mending kept the younger children tolerably decent, and by altering for him the clothes left by his father, she was able to keep Hiram in a suitable condition, to appear at the store of his employer.

Thus matters went on for several months. Mrs. Mayberry working late and early. The natural result was, a gradual failure of strength. In the morning, when she awoke, she would feel so languid and heavy, that to rise required a strong effort, and even after she was up, and attempted to resume her labors, her trembling frame almost refused to obey the dictates of her will. At length, nature gave way. One morning she was so sick that she could not rise. Her head throbbed with a dizzy, blinding pain--her whole body ached, and her skin burned with fever. Hiram got something for the children to eat, and then taking the youngest, a little girl about two years old, into the house of a neighbor who had showed them some good will, asked her if she would take care of his sister until he returned home at dinner time. This the neighbor readily consented to do--promising, also, to call in frequently to see his mother.

At dinner time Hiram found his mother quite ill. She was no better at night. For three days the fever raged violently. Then, under the careful treatment of their old family physician, it was subdued. After that she gradually recovered, but very slowly. The physician said she must not attempt again to work as she had done. This injunction was scarcely necessary. She had not the strength to do so.

"I don't see what you will do, Mrs. Mayberry," a neighbor who had often aided her by kind advice, said, in reply to the widow's statement of her unhappy condition. "You cannot maintain these children, certainly. And I don't see how, in your present feeble

state, you are going to maintain yourself. There is but one thing that I can advise, and that advice I give with reluctance. It is to endeavor to get two of your children into some orphan asylum. The youngest you may be able to keep with you. The oldest can support himself at something or other."

The pale cheek of Mrs. Mayberry grew paler at this proposition. She half sobbed, caught her breath, and looked her adviser with a strange, bewildered stare in the face.

"O, no! I cannot do that! I cannot be separated from my dear little children. Who will care for them like a mother?"

"It is hard, I know, Mrs. Mayberry. But necessity is a stern ruler. You cannot keep them with you--that is certain. You have not the strength to provide them with even the coarsest food. In an asylum, with a kind matron, they will be better off than under any other circumstances."

But Mrs. Mayberry shook her head.

"No--no--no," she replied--"I cannot think of such a thing. I cannot be separated from them. I shall soon be able to work again--better able than before."

The neighbor who felt deeply for her, did not urge the matter. When Hiram returned at dinner time, his face had in it a more animated expression than usual.

"Mother," he said, as soon as he came in, "I heard today that a boy was wanted at the Gazette office, who could write a good hand. The wages were to be four dollars a week."

"You did!" Mrs. Mayberry said, quickly, her weak frame trembling, although she struggled hard to be composed.

"Yes. And Mr. Easy is well acquainted with the publisher, and could get me the place, I am sure."

"Then go and see him at once, Hiram. If you can secure it, all will be well, if not, your little brothers and sisters will have to be separated, perhaps sent to an orphan asylum."

Mrs. Mayberry covered her face with her hands and sobbed bitterly for some moments.

Hiram eat his frugal meal quickly, and returned to the store, where he had to remain until his employer went home and dined. On his return he asked liberty to be absent for half an hour, which was granted. He then went direct to the counting room of Mr. Easy, and disturbed him as has been seen. Approaching with a timid step, and a flushed brow, he said in a confused and hurried manner--

"Mr Easy there is a lad wanted at the Gazette office."

"Well?" returned Mr. Easy in no very cordial tone.

"Mother thought you would be kind enough to speak to Mr. G--for me."

"Havn't you a place in a store?"

"Yes sir. But I don't get any wages. And at the Gazette office they will pay four dollars a week."

"But the knowledge of business to be gained where you are, will be worth a great deal more than four dollars a week."

"I know that, sir. But mother is not able to board and clothe me. I must earn something."

"Oh, aye, that's it. Very well, I'll see about it for you."

"When shall I call, sir?" asked Hiram.

"When? Oh, almost any time. Say to-morrow or next day."

The lad departed, and Mr. Easy's head fell back upon the chair, the impression which had been made upon his mind passing away almost as quickly as writing upon water.

With anxious trembling hearts did Mrs. Mayberry and her son wait for the afternoon of the succeeding day. On the success of Mr. Easy's application, rested all their hopes. Neither she nor Hiram eat over a few mouthfuls at dinner time. The latter hurried away, and returned to the store, there to wait with trembling eagerness until his employer should return from dinner, and he again be free to go and see Mr. Easy.

To Mrs. Mayberry, the afternoon passed slowly. She had forgotten to tell her son to return home immediately, if the application should be successful. He did not come back, and she had, consequently, to remain in a state of anxious suspense until dark. He came in at the usual hour. His dejected countenance told of disappointment.

"Did you see Mr. Easy?" Mrs. Mayberry asked, in a low troubled voice.

"Yes. But he hadn't been to the Gazette office. He said he had been very busy. But that he would see about it soon."

Nothing more was said. The mother and son, after sitting silent and pensive during the evening, retired early to bed. On the next day, urged on by his anxious desire to get the situation of which he had heard, Hiram again called at the counting room of Mr. Easy, his heart trembling with hope and fear. There were two or three men

present. Mr. Easy cast upon him rather an impatient look as he entered. His appearance had evidently annoyed the merchant. Had he consulted his feelings, he would have retired at once. But that was too much at stake. Gliding to a corner of the room, he stood, with his hat in his hand, and a look of anxiety upon his face, until Mr. Easy was disengaged. At length the gentlemen with whom he was occupied went away, and Mr. Easy turned towards the boy. Hiram looked up earnestly in his face.

"I have really been so much occupied my lad," the merchant said, in a kind of apologetic tone, "as to have entirely forgotten my promise to you. But I will see about it. Come in again, to-morrow."

Hiram made no answer, but turned with a sigh towards the door. The keen disappointment expressed in the boy's face, and the touching quietness of his manner, reached the feelings of Mr. Easy. He was not a hard hearted man, but selfishly indifferent to others. He could feel deeply enough if he would permit himself to do so. But of this latter failing he was not often guilty.

"Stop a minute," he said. And then stood in a musing attitude for a moment or two. "As you seem so anxious about this matter," he added, "if you will wait here a little while, I will step down to see Mr. G--at once."

The boy's face brightened instantly. Mr. Easy saw the effect of what he said, and it made the task he was about entering upon reluctantly, an easy one. The boy waited for nearly a quarter of an hour, so eager to know the result that he could not compose himself to sit down. The sound of Mr. Easy's step at the door at length made his heart bound. The merchant entered. Hiram looked into his face. One glance was sufficient to dash every dearly cherished hope to the ground.

"I am sorry," Mr. Easy said, "but the place was filled this morning. I was a little too late."

The boy was unable to control his feelings. The disappointment was too great. Tears gushed from his eyes, as he turned away and left the counting-room without speaking.

"I'm afraid I've done wrong," said Mr. Easy to himself, as he stood, in a musing attitude, by his desk, about five minutes after Hiram had left. "If I had seen about the situation when he first called upon me, I might have secured it for him. But it's too late now."

After saying this the merchant placed his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, and commenced walking the floor of his counting room backwards and forwards. He could not get out of his mind the image of the boy as he turned from him in tears, nor drive away thoughts of the friend's widow whom he had neglected. This state of mind continued all the afternoon. Its natural effect was to cause him to cast about in his mind for some way of getting employment for Hiram

that would yield immediate returns. But nothing presented itself.

"I wonder if I couldn't make room for him here?" he at length said--"He looks like a bright boy. I know Mr.--is highly pleased with him. He spoke of getting four dollars a week. That's a good deal to give to a mere lad. But, I suppose I might make him worth that to me. And now I begin to think seriously about the matter, I believe I cannot keep a clear conscience and any longer remain indifferent to the welfare of my old friend's widow and children. I must look after them a little more closely than I have heretofore done."

This resolution relieved the mind of Mr. Easy a good deal.

When Hiram left the counting room of the merchant, his spirits were crushed to the very earth. He found his way back, how he hardly knew, to his place of business, and mechanically performed the tasks allotted him, until evening.

Then he returned home, reluctant to meet his mother, and yet anxious to relieve her state of suspense, even, if in doing so, he should dash a last hope from her heart. When he came in Mrs. Mayberry lifted her eyes to his, inquiringly; but dropped them instantly--she needed no words to tell her that he had suffered a bitter disappointment.

"You did not get the place?" she at length said, with forced composure.

"No--It was taken this morning. Mr. Easy promised to see about it. But he didn't do so. When he went this afternoon, it was too late."

Hiram said this with a trembling voice and lips that quivered.

"Thy will be done!" murmured the widow, lifting her eyes upwards. "If these tender ones are to be taken from their mother's fold, oh, do thou temper for them the piercing blast, and be their shelter amid the raging tempests."

A tap at the door brought back the thoughts of Mrs. Mayberry. A brief struggle with her feelings enabled her to overcome them in time to receive a visitor with composure. It was the merchant.

"Mr. Easy!" she said in surprise.

"Mrs. Mayberry, how do you do!" There was some restraint and embarrassment in his manner. He was conscious of having neglected the widow of his friend, before he came. The humble condition in which he found her, quickened that consciousness into a sting.

"I am sorry, madam," he said after he had become seated and made a few inquiries, "that I did not get the place for your son. In fact, I am to blame in the matter. But, I have been thinking since that he

would suit me exactly, and if you have no objections, I will take him and pay him a salary of two hundred dollars for the first year."

Mrs. Mayberry tried to reply, but her feelings were too much excited by this sudden and unlooked for proposal, to allow her to speak for some moments. Even then her assent was made with tears glistening on her cheeks.

Arrangements were quickly made for the transfer of Hiram from the store where he had been engaged, to the counting room of Mr. Easy. The salary he received was just enough to enable Mrs. Mayberry, with what she herself earned, to keep her little together, until Hiram, who proved a valuable assistant in Mr. Easy's business, could command a larger salary, and render her more important hid.

THE FIERY TRIAL.

"THE amount of that bill, if you please, sir."

The man thus unceremoniously addressed, lifted his eyes from the ledger, over which he had been bending for the last six hours, with scarcely the relaxation of a moment, and exhibited a pale, care-worn countenance--and, though still young, a head over which were thickly scattered the silver tokens of age. A sad smile played over his intelligent features, a smile meant to shake the sternness of the man who was troubling his peace, as he replied in a low, calm voice--

"To-day, it will be impossible, sir."

"And how many times have you given me the same answer. I cannot waste my time by calling day after day, for so paltry a sum."

A flush passed over the fine countenance of the man thus rudely addressed. But he replied in the same low tone, which now slightly trembled:

"I would not ask you to call, sir, if I had the money But what I have not, I cannot give."

"And pray when _will_ you have the money?" The man paused for some time, evidently calculating the future, and after a long-drawn sigh, as if disappointed with the result, said:--

"It will be two or three months, before I can pay it and even then, it will depend on a contingency."

"Two or three months?--a contingency? It must come quicker and surer than that, sir."

"That is the best I can say."

"But not the best I can do, I hope.--Good-morning." After the collector had gone, the man bent his head down, until his face rested even upon the ponderous volume over which he had been poring for hours. He thought, and thought, but thought brought no relief. The most he could earn was ten dollars a week, and for his children, two sweet babes, and for the comfort of a sick wife, he had to expend the full sum of his wages. The debt for which he was now troubled, was a rent-bill of forty dollars, held against him by a man whose annual income was twenty thousand dollars. Finally, he concluded to go and see Mr. Moneylove, and try to prevail upon him to stop any proceedings that the collector might institute against him. In the evening, he sought the dwelling of his rich creditor, and after being ushered into his splendid parlour, waited with a troubled heart for his appearance. Mr. Moneylove entered.

"How do you do, sir?"

"How do you do?" replied the debtor, in a low, troubled voice. The manner of Mr. Moneylove changed, the moment he heard the peculiar tone of his voice, although he did not know him. There was an appealing language in its cadence that whispered a warning to his ear, and he closed his heart on the instant.

"Well, sir," were his next words, "what is your will?"

"You hold a bill against me for rent."

"Well, sir, go to my agent."

"I have seen Mr.--"

"That will do, sir. He knows all about my business, and will arrange to my entire satisfaction."

"But, sir, I cannot pay it now, and he threatens harsh measures."

"I have entire confidence in his judgment, sir, and am willing to leave all such matters to his discretion."

"I am in trouble, sir, and in poverty beside, for the demands on me are greater than I can meet."

"Your own fault, I suppose," retorted the landlord, with a sneer.

"That, any one might know, who took half a glance at you."

This remark caused the blood to mount suddenly to the face of the man.

"Let me be judged by what I am, not by what I have been," was the meek reply, after the troubled pause of a few moments. Then in a more decided tone of voice, he said:--

"Will you not interfere?"

"Will I? _No!_ I never interfere with my agent. He gives me entire satisfaction, and while he does so, I shall not interfere." And Mr. Moneylove smiled with self-satisfaction at the idea of his careful and thrifty agent, and his own worldly policy.

The petitioner slowly left the house--murmuring to himself: "_Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors._" It was more than an hour before he could compose his mind sufficiently to be able to meet his wife with a countenance that was not too deeply shadowed with care.

She was ill, and besides, under the pressure of many causes, was suffering from a nervous lowness of spirits. Against this depression, her husband saw that she was striving with all the mental energy she possessed, but striving almost in vain. To know that she even had cause for the exercise of such an internal power, was, to him, painful in the extreme; and he was bitter in his self-reproaches for being the cause of suffering to one he loved with a pure and fervent love.

Turning, at last, resolutely towards his dwelling, and striving with a strong effort to keep down the troubles that were sweeping in rough waves over his spirit; it was not long before he set his foot upon his own doorstone.

To give force to this scene, and to throw around what follows its true interest, it will be necessary to go back and sketch some things in the history of the individual here introduced.

His name was Theodore Wilmer. In earlier years, he was clerk in the large mercantile house of Rensselaer, Wykoff & Co., in New York. Being a young man of intelligence, good address, and good principles, he was much esteemed, and valued by his employers, who took some pains to introduce him into society. In this way he was brought into contact with some of the first families in New York, and, in this way, he became acquainted with Constance Jackson, the daughter of a wealthy merchant. Constance was truly a lovely girl, and one for whom Theodore soon began to entertain feelings akin to love.

Mr. Jackson, (the father of Constance,) was the son of a man who had begun life in New York, at the very bottom of fortune's wheel. He was a native of Ireland, and came to this country very poor. For some years, with his pack on his back, he gained a subsistence by

vending dry-goods, and unimportant trifles, through the counties and small towns in the vicinity of New York. Gradually he laid up dollar after dollar, until he was able to open a very small shop in Maiden Lane, a kind of thread-and-needle store. Careful in his purchases, and constant in his attendance on business, he soon began to find his tens counting hundreds; and but few years rolled away, before his hundreds began to grow into thousands. After a while he took a larger store, and suddenly became known and respected as "a merchant." At the end of twenty years from the time he carried his pack out of New York, he could write himself worth fifty thousand dollars. Success continued to crown his efforts in business, and when his children came on the stage of active life, they were raised to consider themselves as far superior to mere mechanics, or those who had to labour for their daily bread.

The father of Constance was the eldest son of old Mr. Jackson, and inherited from him a large share of haughty pride. His wife was out of a family with notions equally aristocratic. Constance was their only child, and they had bestowed no little care in endeavouring to make her the most accomplished young lady in New York. They loved her tenderly, but pride divided with affection their interest in her. She had already declined the hands of two young men of the first families in the city, much to the displeasure of both her parents, when she met Theodore Wilmer, who resided in the family of Mr. Wykoff, partner in the house that employed the young man in the capacity of clerk. In this family, Constance visited regularly, and the intimacy which sprung up between the young couple, had a chance of maturing into a more permanent affection, before Mr. or Mrs. Jackson had the slightest suspicion of such an event. Indeed, the first knowledge they had of the real state of affairs was obtained through Wilmer himself, in the form of an application for the hand of their daughter. It was made to Mr. Jackson, on whom it fell with the unexpected suddenness of a flash from a clear sky in June.

"And pray, sir, who are you?" was his hasty and excited answer.

"Theodore Wilmer, clerk in the house of Rensselaer, Wykoff & Co."

"Are you really in earnest, young man?" said Mr. Jackson, in a calmer voice, though his lips trembled with suppressed anger.

"Never more so in my life, sir."

"And does my daughter know of this application?"

"She does."

"And is it made by her consent?"

"Of course."

The calm, and "of course" manner of the young man was more than the patience of Jackson could withstand. Hardly able to contain the

indignation that swelled within him, at the presumption of an unknown clerk, thus to ask the hand of his daughter, he paused but a moment, and then seizing Wilmer by the shoulder, and looking him steadily in the face, while he almost foamed with anger, replied thus to his last admission:--

"If that headstrong girl has dared to place her thoughts on you, obscure underling! and dared, as you say, to consent to accept you, I will cut her off this hour from fortune and affection. I will cast her loose upon the world as unworthy. Go--go--and never presume to come again into my presence!"

Opposition, denial, he had expected; but nothing like this. He had hoped that when the parents saw a fixed resolution on the part of Constance to accept none other, that gradually opposition would be worn away. Such a termination he now saw to be hopeless. The father did not seek an immediate interview with his child. Before meeting her, he had found time to reflect upon the real position of affairs. He was well enough taught in the theory, at least, of a woman's affections. He had heard of instances where opposition in a love affair had only added fuel to the flame; and one or two such cases had fallen under his own eye. He, therefore, decided to make no present show of opposition, and on no consideration to allow her to know of the interview that had occurred between her lover and himself. Mrs. Jackson, entering into her husband's view and feelings, took upon herself the task of watching and silently controlling all the movements of her daughter. Particular care was taken to prevent her visiting the family of Mr Wykoff.

"Where are you going, love?" said her mother, to her the next day after that of the interview, as Constance came out of her room, dressed for a walk.

"I promised to walk with Laura Wykoff, ma, and am going to call for her."

"I was just going to send for you to dress for a walk with me; I want to make a call to-day on Madame Boyer. And this afternoon I am to spend with Mrs. Claxton and her five daughters, and you must go along, of course. So you will have to postpone your walk with Laura today."

If it had only been the walk with Laura Wykoff, Constance would not have hesitated a moment, but her heart almost ached with suspense to know from Theodore the result of his interview with her father. He had promised to leave a note for her with Laura, who was their mutual confidante. The mother, of course, noticed an air of regret at her disappointment, and ingeniously remarked--

"So you would rather walk with Miss Wykoff, than your mother?"

The tears started into the eyes of Constance, and twining her arms around the neck of her mother, she murmured,

"No, no, dear mother! How could you think so?"

Hiding her anxious desire to know the result of that interview upon which hung her fate, she passed with apparent cheerfulness through the weary day; and late at night sought her pillow from which sleep had fled. On the next morning, much to her distress of mind, she learned that a visit of a few weeks to a relation in Albany had been suddenly determined upon, and that in company with her mother she had to set off in the first boat that day. Her suspicions were at once roused as to the real cause for this hasty movement, and she determined to write to Theodore immediately on her arrival at Albany.

The beautiful scenery of the Hudson was unappreciated by one eye of the many brilliant ones that looked out from the majestic boat, that, in the language of Carlyle, "travelled on fire-wings," through the looming highlands. The watchful mother strove hard to divert the mind of her child, but in vain. Her heart was away from the present reality; and no effort of her own could bring it back. It was night when the boat arrived, and no chance offered for writing before retiring to bed. It seemed, indeed, as if the mother, suspicious that some communication would be made in this way, kept so about Constance all the next day, that she had no chance of dropping Theodore even a line to say where she was, and that she still remembered him with affection. And the next day passed in the same way; not an hour, not a moment could she get for privacy or uninterrupted self-communion. At last she determined to write to Laura Wykoff, to which, of course, her mother could make no objection. But she dared not mention the name of Theodore, or allude to her present restrained condition, except remotely, for fear that her mother would ask to see the letter. This letter was given to a servant to convey to the post-office, in the presence of her mother. It never reached its destination. And the mother knew well the reason why. In it, she asked an immediate answer. Day after day passed, and no answer came. She wrote again, and with the same success. Finally, she gained a few minutes to pen a line or two to Theodore, which she concealed, suspecting that there was something wrong about the transmission of the letters, until a chance offered for having it certainly placed in the right channel of conveyance. This note reached Theodore, and removed a mountain from his feelings. He had learned of her hasty journey to Albany, but this was all he could ascertain, and suspecting the cause, his mind was in a state of racking and painful suspense.

Day after day passed, until a month had expired, and still there was no indication of a movement to return home. Once or twice a week her father would come up from New York, and to the persuasions of the relatives at whose house they were visiting, half-consented that Constance and her mother should stay all summer. Finally, it was decided, that Albany should be their place of residence for some months.

Things assuming this decided appearance, Constance now set herself resolutely to work to circumvent her mother's careful surveillance. It was the first time in her life that she had seriously determined to act towards the parent she had so long and so tenderly loved, with duplicity. All at once she became more cheerful, and seemed to enter with a joyful spirit into every plan proposed for spending the time pleasantly. With a sprightly cousin, a young girl of her own age, she cultivated a close intimacy, and finding her somewhat romantic and independent, finally confided to her the secret that was wearing into her heart from concealment. Readily did Ellen Raymond enter into the scheme she at last proposed, which was to write to Theodore, and give the letter into her charge. It was promptly conveyed to the post-office. Theodore was directed to address Ellen, and in the envelope to enclose a letter for Constance. On the third day, the young ladies took a walk, and in their way called at the post-office. A letter was handed out to Ellen, and on breaking the seal, another appeared addressed to Constance. She did not dare to open it in the street, but retired to a confectioner's, and while Ellen was tasting an ice-cream, Constance was devouring, with eager eyes, the first love-token she had ever received from Theodore Wilmer.

This was the beginning of a correspondence which was regularly kept up through the summer, of all of which both father and mother remained profoundly ignorant. They were delighted to see their daughter so soon recover from the first deep depression of spirits which was occasioned by their sudden removal from New York, but little suspected the cause. Less and less carefully did the mother watch her daughter, and more frequently were the two young friends alone in their chambers, even for hours together. Such times were not spent idly by Constance. Thus the very means--separation--resorted to by Mr. Jackson and his wife, to wean the mind of their daughter from the "low-born" Wilmer, only proved, from not having been thoroughly carried out, that which bound them together in heart for ever. Give two lovers, pen, ink, and paper, and their love will defy time and distance. The thousand expressed fond regards, and weariness of absence, endear each to each; and imagination, from affection, invests each with new and undiscovered perfections. Three months had passed away since the hasty journey from New York, and supposing Constance to be thoroughly weaned from her foolish preference for a poor clerk, for she was now cheerful, and expressed no wish to return--the parents proposed to go back to the city. Preparation was accordingly made, and in a few days Constance found herself, with a yearning desire to get home again, gliding swiftly along the smooth surface of the Hudson. She had not failed to inform Theodore of her return, and as the boat swept up to the wharf, her quick eye caught his eager face bending over towards her. A glance of glad, and yet painful recognition passed between them, and in the next moment he had disappeared in the living mass of human beings. For some time she was closely watched; but she carefully lulled suspicion, and at last succeeded in managing to get short and stolen interviews with Wilmer. Their first meeting was at a young friend's, to whom she had confided her secret: this was not

Laura Wykoff, for her mother had managed to fall out with her family, so as to have a good plea for denying to Constance the privilege of visiting her. Regularly did the lovers meet, about once every week, at this friend's; and, encouraged by her, they finally took the hazardous and decisive step of getting married clandestinely.

Three days after this event, Wilmer entered the store of the merchants in whose service he had been for years, for the purpose of resuming his regular duties which had been briefly interrupted. He was met by the senior partner, with a manner that chilled him to the heart.

"Is Mr. Wykoff in?" he asked.

"No," was the cold reply.

"He has not left town?"

"Yes. He went to New Orleans yesterday, and will not return for two or three months."

"Did he leave a letter for me?"

"No."

Then came an embarrassing silence of some moments which was broken by Wilmer's saying--

"I suppose that I can resume my duties, as usual?"

"We have supplied your place," was the answer to this.

Quick as thought, the young man turned away, and left the store, his mind all in confusion. In marrying Constance in opposition to her parents' wishes, he did so with a feeling of pride in the internal power, and external facilities, which he possessed for rising rapidly in the world, and showing ere long to old Mr. Jackson, that he could stand upon an equal social eminence with himself. How suddenly was this feeling of proud confidence dashed to the earth! The external facilities upon which he had based his anticipations were to be found in the friendship and ample means of the house of Rensselaer, Wykoff & Co. That friendship had been suddenly withdrawn, evidently in strong disapprobation of what he had done.

As he turned away, and walked slowly along, he knew not and scarcely cared whither, a feeling of deep despondency took possession of his mind. From a proud consciousness of ability to rise rapidly in the world, and show to the friends of Constance that she had not chosen one really beneath her, he sunk into that gloomy and depressing state of mind in which we experience a painful inability to do anything, while deeply sensible that unusual efforts are required at our hands. The thought of not being able to lift his wife above the

obscure condition in which he must now inevitably remain, at least for a long time, seemed as if it would drive him mad. Passing slowly along, wrapped thus in gloomy meditations, he was suddenly aroused by a hand upon his arm, and a cheerful voice, saying--

"Give us your hand, Theodore! Here's a hearty shake, and a hearty congratulation at the same time! Run off with that purse--proud old curmudgeon's daughter Ha! ha! I like you for that! You're a man of mettle. But, halloo! What's the matter? You look as grave as a barn-door, on the shady side. Not repenting, already, I hope?"

"Yes, Henry, I am repenting of that rash act from the very bottom of my heart."

"O, no! Don't talk in that way, Theodore. Constance is one of the sweetest girls in the city, and will make you a lovely wife. There are hundreds who envy you."

"They need not; for this is the most wretched hour of my life."

"Why, what in the world is the matter, Wilmer?" his friend replied to this. "You look as if you had buried instead of married a wife. But come, you want a glass of something to revive you. Let us step in here. I am a little dry myself."

Without hesitation or reply, Wilmer entered a drinking-house, with the young man, where they retired to a box, and ordered brandy and water. After this had been taken in silence, the friend, whose name was Wilbert Arnold, said--

"The state of mind in which I find you, Theodore, surprises and pains me greatly. If it is not trespassing too far upon private matters, I should like very much to know the reason. I ask, because I feel now, and always have felt, much interest in you."

It was some time before Wilmer replied to this. At length, he said--

"The cause of my present state of mind is of such recent occurrence, and I have become so bewildered in consequence of it, that I can scarcely rally my thoughts sufficiently to reply to your kind inquiries. Suffice it to say, that, in consequence, I presume, of my having run off with Mr. Jackson's daughter, I have lost a good situation, and the best of friends. I am, therefore, thrown upon the world at this very crisis, like a sailor cast upon the ocean, with but a plank to sustain himself, and keep his head above the waves. When I married Miss Jackson, it was with the resolution to rise rapidly, and show to the world that she had not chosen thoughtlessly. Of course, I expected the aid of Rensselaer, Wykoff & Co. Their uniform kindness towards me seemed a sure guarantee for this aid. But the result has been, not only their estrangement from me, but my dismissal from their service. And now, what to do, or where to turn myself, I do not know. Really I feel desperate!"

"That is bad, truly," Arnold rejoined, musingly, after Wilmer had ceased speaking. Then ringing a little hand-bell that stood upon the table, he ordered the waiter, who obeyed the summons, to bring some more brandy. Nothing further was said until the brandy was served, of which both of the young men partook freely.

"What do you intend doing?" Arnold at length asked, looking his friend in the face.

"I wish you would answer that question for me, for it's more than I can do," was the gloomy response.

"You must endeavour to rise in the world. It will never do to bring Constance down to the comparatively mean condition in which a clerk with a small salary is compelled to live."

"That I know, too well. But how am I to prevent it? That is what drives me almost beside myself."

"You must hit upon some expedient for making money fast."

"I know of no honest expedients."

"I think that I do."

"Name one."

"Do you know Hardville?"

"Yes."

"He came as near failure as could possibly be, last week."

"He did?"

"Yes."

"And how did he get through?"

"It is the answer to that question which I wish you to consider. He was saved from ruin in the last extremity, and by what some would call a desperate expedient. Your case is a desperate one, and, if you would save yourself, you must resort to desperate expedients, likewise."

"Name the expedient."

"Hardville had one thousand dollars to pay, more than he could possibly raise. He tried everywhere, but to no purpose. He could neither borrow nor collect that sum. In a moment of desperation, he put one hundred dollars into his pocket, and went to a regular establishment near here, and staked that sum at play. In two hours he came away with twelve hundred dollars in his pocket, instead of

one hundred. And thus he was saved from ruin."

When Arnold ceased speaking, Wilmer looked him in the face with a steady, stern, half-angry look, but made no reply.

"Try another glass of this brandy," the former said, pouring out a pretty liberal supply for each. Mechanically, Wilmer put the glass to his lips, and turned off the contents.

"Well, what do you think of that plan?" asked the friend, after each had sat musing for some time.

"I am not a gambler!" was the reply.

"Of course not. But your case, as I said, and as you admit, is a desperate one; and requires desperate remedies. The fact of your going to a regular establishment, and gaining there, in an honourable way, something, as a capital to begin with, does not make you a gambler. After you have got a start, you needn't go there any more. And all you want is a start. Give you that, and, my word for it, you will make your way in the world with the best of them."

"O, yes! Give me a start, as you say, and I'll go ahead as fast as anybody. Give me that start, and I'll show old Mr. Jackson in a few years that I can count dollars with him all day."

"Exactly. And that start you must have. Now, how are you going to get it, unless in the way that I suggest?"

"I am not so sure that I can get it in that way."

"I am, then. Only make the trial. You owe it to your wife to do so. For her sake, then, let me urge you to act promptly and efficiently."

Thus tempted, while his mind was greatly obscured by the strong potations he had taken, Theodore Wilmer began to waver. It did not seem half so wrong, nor half so disgraceful, to play for money, as it did at first. Finally, he agreed to meet his friend that evening, and get introduced to some one of the many gambling establishments that infest all large cities.

A reaction in his feelings now took place. The elation of mind caused by the brandy, made him confident of success. He saw before him a rapid elevation to wealth and standing in society, and, consequently, a rapid restoration of Constance to the circle in which she had moved.

Before marriage, he had rented a handsome house, and had it furnished in very good style, upon means which he had prudently saved from a liberal salary. Into this, he at once introduced his young wife, who had already begun to feel her heart yearning for her mother's voice, and her mother's smile. One young friend had been

with her all the morning, but had left towards the middle of the day Alone, for the first time, since her hurried marriage, her feelings became somewhat saddened in their hue. But as the hour approached for her husband to come home, those feelings gave place, in a degree, to an ardent desire for his return, the result of deep and fervent love for him. She had sat for some moments, expecting to hear him at the door, when the bell rung, and she started to her feet, and stood on the floor, ready to spring forward the moment he should enter the room. No one, however, came in, and her heart sunk in her bosom with the disappointment. In a moment after, the servant handed her a note, the seal of which she broke hastily. It was from her husband, and ran thus:--

"DEAR CONSTANCE:--An accumulation of business in my absence so presses upon me now, that I cannot possibly come so great a distance to dinner, at least for this day. It may likewise keep me away until eight or nine o'clock this evening. But keep a good heart, dear; our meeting will be pleasanter for the long absence--Adieu,

THEODORE."

The note dropped from her hand, and she sank into a chair, overcome with a feeling of strong disappointment. To wait until eight or nine o'clock in the evening, before she should see him, when the morning had appeared lengthened to a day! O, it seemed as if she could not endure the wearisome interval!

As for Wilmer, the truth was, he found himself so much under the influence of the liberal quantity of brandy which he had taken, that he dared not go home to Constance. He would not have appeared before her as he was, for the world. It was under the consciousness of his condition, that he wrote the billet, which his young wife had received. After doing so, he went to bed at a public house, and slept until towards evening. When he awoke, Arnold was sitting in the chamber. Some feelings of bitter regret for the pains which his absence must have caused his young wife, passed through his mind, as he aroused himself. These were soon drowned by a few glasses of wine, which his friend had already ordered to be sent up. That friend, let it here be remarked, was not a professed gambler--nor had he any sinister designs in urging on Wilmer as he was doing. But he was a man of loose morals, and, therefore, really believed that he was doing him a service in urging him to make an effort to get upon his feet by means of the gambling-table. Knowing the young man's high-toned feelings--and how utterly he must, from his character, condemn anything like play, he had purposely sought to obscure his perceptions by inducing him to drink freely. In this, he had succeeded.

As soon as night had thrown her dark shadows over the city, the two young men took their steps towards one of those haunts, known, too appropriately, by the name of "hells." At eight o'clock, Theodore went in, with two hundred dollars in his pocket--all the money he possessed;--and at ten o'clock, came out penniless.

Lonely and long was the afternoon to the young bride, giving opportunity to many thoughts of a sober, and even saddening nature. Evening came at last, and then night with its deeper gloom. Eight o'clock arrived, and nine, but her husband did not return. And then the minutes slowly passed, until the clock struck ten.

"O, where can he be!" Constance ejaculated, rising to her feet, and beginning to pace the room to and fro, pausing every moment to listen to the sound of passing footsteps. Thus she continued for the space of something like half an hour, when she sunk exhausted upon a chair. It was twelve o'clock when he at length came in. As he opened the door, his young wife sprung to his side, exclaiming--

"O, Theodore! Theodore! Why have you staid away so very long?"

As she said this, he staggered against her, almost throwing her over, and then passed on to the parlors without a word in return to her earnest and affectionate greeting.

Poor Constance was stunned for the moment. But she quickly recovered, her woman's heart nerving itself involuntarily, and followed after her husband. He had thrown himself upon a sofa, and sat, half-reclining, with his head upon his bosom.

"Are you sick, dear Theodore?" his young wife asked, in a tone of deep and earnest affection, laying her hand upon him, and bending down and kissing his forehead.

"Yes, I am sick, Constance," was the half-stupid reply--

"Come, then, let me assist you up to bed. A good night's rest will do you good," she said, gently urging him to rise.

She understood perfectly his condition. She knew that it was intoxication. But while it pained her young heart deeply, it awoke in her bosom no feelings of alarm. She felt convinced that it was the result of accident, and had no expectation of ever again seeing its recurrence. She asked him if he were sick, to spare him the mortification of knowing that she perceived the true nature of his indisposition.

Thus urged, he at once arose, and supported by the weak arm of his young wife, slowly ascended the stairs, and entered his chamber. It was not many minutes before his senses were locked in profound slumber.

Not so, however, Constance. The earnestness with which she had looked for evening to come, that she might again see the face, and hear the voice of her husband, had greatly excited her mind. This excitement was increased by the condition in which he had so unexpectedly returned. The effect was, to keep her awake, in spite of strong efforts to sink away into sleep. Many sad and desponding

thoughts forced themselves upon her, as she lay, hour after hour, in a state of half-waking consciousness. It was nearly day-dawn, when, from all this, she found relief in a deep slumber.

The next day was one of heart-aching reflections to Theodore Wilmer. In his eager, but half-insane effort to elevate himself rapidly for the sake of his young wife, he had sunk into actual want, and not only forfeited his own self-respect, but degraded himself, he felt, in the eyes of her whose love was dearer to him than life.

The events of two years must now be passed over, with but a brief notice. There will be enough in the after history of Wilmer and his young wife, to awaken the reader's keenest sympathies, without unveiling the particular incidents of this period.

Suffice it, then, to say,--that the first night's experience at the gambling-table was not enough to satisfy Wilmer, that it was neither the right way, nor the most successful way of elevating himself in the world. So anxious did he feel on account of Constance, that he borrowed money of his false friend Arnold, on the evening of the very next day, and after drinking, freely, to nerve himself up, sought again the gambling-table. At ten o'clock, he left, the winner by fifty dollars. He left thus early on account of his wife, who would be, he knew, anxiously looking for his return. This encouraged him to go on, and he did go on. But he could never feel sanguine of success, or be able to still the troubled whispers within, until he had drunken freely. Of course, he was every day more or less under the influence of liquor. For a year, he managed, in this way, to keep up the style of living in which he had commenced, but he could get nothing ahead. None could imagine how this was done, for the young man was exceedingly cautious. He looked to some good turn of fortune by which he should be enabled to abandon for ever a course of life that he hated and despised. No such lucky turn, however, met his anxious expectations. After the first year of this course of life, his health, which had never been very good, began rapidly to fail. His cheeks became hollow, and a racking cough began to show itself. Still he went on keeping late hours, and drinking more and more freely, while his mind was all the time upon the rack. Towards the close of the second year, he was taken down with a severe illness, the result of all this abuse of mind and body. He lingered long upon the brink of the grave; but the little energy which his system retained, rallied at last, and he began slowly to recover. During convalescence, he had full time for reflection. For full two years, he had been almost constantly so much under the influence of brandy, as really to be unable to think rationally upon any subject, and he had, in consequence, pursued a course of life, injurious, both to his own moral and physical health, and to the happiness of her for whom he would, at any moment of that time, have sacrificed everything, even life itself. In rising from that bed of sickness, it was with a solemn vow never again to enter a gaming-house, and never again to touch the bewildering poison that had been the secondary, if not, indeed, the primary cause of two years' folly--nay, madness.

And Constance, what of her, all that time? the reader asks. It would be a difficult task to give even a feeble idea of all she patiently endured, and of all she suffered. Not once in that long period did she either see, or hear from her parents. Three or four times had she written to them, but no answer was returned. At last she ventured under the yearning anxiety that she felt once more to see her mother, and to hear the voice that lingered in her memory like old familiar music to go to her, and ask her forgiveness and her love. But she was coldly and cruelly repulsed--not even being permitted to gain her mother's presence.

In regard to her husband, her love was like a deep, pure stream. Its course was never troubled by passion, or obstructed in its onward course. Though he would come home often and often in a state of stupor from drink--though it was rarely earlier than midnight when he returned to make glad with his presence her watching and waiting heart, she never felt a reproaching thought. And to her, his words and tones, and manner, were ever full of tenderness. Deeply did he love her--and for her sake more than for his own, was he struggling thus against a powerful current daily exhausting his strength, without moving onward.

Thus much, briefly, of those two years of toil, and struggle, and pain. On recovering, with a shattered constitution, from the serious attack of illness that had resulted from the abuse of himself during that period, Wilmer felt compelled to give up his fondly-cherished ideas of rising with Constance to the position from which he had dragged her down, and to be content with a humbler lot. He, therefore, sought, and obtained a situation as a clerk at a salary of eight hundred dollars per annum. Already he had been compelled to move into a smaller house than the one at first taken, and in this he was now able to remain.

But seeing, with a clearer vision than before, Wilmer perceived that much of the bloom had faded from his wife's young cheek, and that her heart had not ceased to yearn for the home and loved ones of her earlier years.

Another year passed away, and during the whole of that time not one word of kindness or censure reached the ears of Constance from her parents. They seemed to have not only cast her off, but to have forgotten the fact of her existence. To a mind like that of Theodore Wilmer's, any condition in which a beloved one was made to suffer keenly, and as he believed, alone through him, could not be endured without serious inroads upon a shattered constitution; and much to his alarm, by the end of the year he found that he was less able than usual to attend through the whole day to the fatiguing duties of the counting-room. Frequently he would return home at night with a pain in his breast, that often continued accompanied by a troublesome cough through a greater part of the night. The morning, too, often found him feverish and debilitated, and with no appetite.

The engrossing love of a mother for her first-born, relieved, during this year, in a great degree, the aching void of Constance Wilmer's breast. The face of her sweet babe often reflected a smile of deep, heart-felt happiness, lighting up, ere it faded away into the sober cast of thought, a feeble ray upon the face of her husband. The steady lapse of days, and weeks, and months, brought a steady development of the mind and body of their little one. He was the miniature image of his father, with eyes, in which Wilmer could see all the deep love which lay in the dark depths of those that had won his first affections. Happy would they have been but (who would not be happy were it not for that little word?) for one yearning desire in the heart of Constance for the lost love of her mother--but for the trembling fear of want that stared Theodore daily in the face. His salary as clerk was small, and to live in New York cost them no trifle. At last, owing to the failure of the house by which he was employed, the dreaded event came. He was out of a situation, and found it impossible to obtain one. the failure had been a very bad one, and there was a strong suspicion of unfair dealing. The prejudice against the house, extended even to the clerks, and several of them, finding it very difficult to get other places that suited them, left New York for other cities. One of them, a friend to Wilmer, came to Baltimore, and got into a large house; a vacancy soon occurring, he recommended Wilmer, who was sent for. He came at once, for neither to him nor his wife was there anything attractive in New York. His salary was to be five hundred dollars.

In removing to Baltimore, he took with him the greater part of the furniture that he had at first purchased, some of which was of a superior quality. There he rented a small house, and endeavoured by the closest economy to make his meagre salary sufficient to meet every want. But this seemed impossible.

Gradually, every year he found himself getting behind-hand, from fifty to sixty dollars. The birth of a second child added to his expenses; and, the failing health of his wife, increased then still more. Finally, he got in arrears with the agent of Mr. Moneylove, his landlord. At this time, an apparently rapid decline had become developed in the system of his wife, and on the night on which he had appealed to this person's feelings of humanity, as mentioned in the opening of the story, he found her, on his return, extremely ill. A high fever had set in, and she was suffering. much from difficult respiration. The physician must, of course, be called in, even though but the day before he had put off his collector for the tenth time. Sad, from many causes, he turned again from the door of his dwelling, and sought the physician.

He rang the bell, and waited with a throbbing heart, for the appearance of the man he earnestly desired, and yet dreaded to see. When he heard his step upon the stairs, his cheek began to burn, and he even trembled as a criminal might be supposed to tremble in the presence of his judge. For a moment he thought only of his unpaid bill, in the next of his suffering wife. The physician entered. Theodore hesitated, and spoke in a low, timid voice, as he requested

a call that night upon his wife.

"Is Mrs. Wilmer very ill?" inquired the physician, in a kind voice.

"I fear seriously so, sir."

"How long has she been sick?"

"It has been several weeks since she complained of a pain in her side; and all that time she has been troubled with a hard cough. For the last few days she has hardly been able to move about, and to-night she is in a high fever, and finds great difficulty in breathing."

"Then she must be attended to, at once. Why did you not call before, Mr. Wilmer? Such delays, you know, are very dangerous."

"I do--I do--but"--Wilmer hesitated, and looked troubled and confused.

"But what, Mr. Wilmer?" urged the physician in the kindest manner.

"I--I--I have not been able to pay your last bill, much as I have desired it. My salary is small, and I find it very difficult to get along."

"Still, my dear sir, health and life are of great value. And besides, if you had called in a physician at the earliest stage of Mrs. Wilmer's illness, you might have saved much expense, as well as spared her much suffering. But cheer up, sir; bright sunshine always succeeds the cloud and the storm. I shall be glad to have my bill when it is convenient, and not before. Don't let it cause you an uneasy moment."

The kind manner of the physicians soothed his feelings, and the prompt visit, and prompt relief given softened the stern anguish of his troubled spirit. The bruised reed is never broken. When the stricken heart is tried, it is never beyond the point of endurance.

In no instance had Wilmer drawn from his employers more than his regular salary, no matter how pressing were his necessities. Beyond the contract he had entertained no desire to go, but strove, in everything, to keep down his expenses to his slender income. Now, however, in view of the threat made by the collector of rents, after having thought and thought about it until bewildered with a distressing sense of his almost hopeless condition, he came to the resolution to ask an advance of fifty dollars, to be kept back from his regular wages, at the rate of five dollars a month. For some hours he pondered this plan in his mind, and obtained much relief from the imaginary execution of it, But when the moment came to ask the favour, his heart sank within him, and his lips were sealed. In alternate struggles like this, the morning of the first day passed, after his interview with Mr. Money. love, and still he had not been

able to prefer his humble request. When he went home to dine, in consequence of the continued perturbation of his mind for hours, he was pale and nervous, with no inclination for food. To add to his distress of mind, his oldest child, now a fine boy of four summers, had been taken extremely ill since morning, and the anxiety consequent upon it, had painfully excited the feeble system of his wife. Another visit from the physician became necessary, and was promptly made.

Frequently, in consequence of pressing calls at home, he had been almost forced to remain longer away from his place of business at dinner-time, than was customary for the clerks. On this day, two hours had glided by when his hasty foot entered the store, on his return from dinner. His fears of a distraint for rent were greatly heightened in consequence of the increased illness of his family, and as the only way to prevent it that had occurred to his mind, was to obtain from his employers a loan of fifty dollars as just mentioned, he had fully made up his mind to waive all feeling and at once name his request. Two hours we have said had expired since he went home to dine. On his entering the counting-room, the senior partner of the house drew out his watch, and remarked, rather angrily, that he could not permit such neglect of duty in a clerk, and that unless he kept better hours, he must look for another place.

It was some time before the confusion of his mind, consequent upon this censure and threat, subsided sufficiently to allow him to feel keenly the utter prostration of the last expectation for help, that had arisen like an angel of hope, in what seemed the darkest hour of his fate. And bitter indeed, were then his thoughts. Those who have never felt it, cannot imagine the awful distress which the mind feels, while contemplating the wants of those who are dearer than all the world, without possessing the means of relieving them. At times, there is a wild excitement, an imaginary consciousness of power to do all things; too quickly, alas! succeeded by the chilling certainty that honestly and honourably it can do nothing.

Slowly and painfully passed the hours until nightfall, and then Wilmer again sought with hasty steps the nest that sheltered his beloved ones. Alas! the spoiler had been there. True to his threat, the agent of Mr. Moneylove had taken quick means to get his own. All of his furniture had been seized, and not only seized, but nearly everything, except a bed and a few chairs, removed in his absence.

"O, Constance, what is the meaning of this?" was his agonized question, to his weeping wife, who met him ill as she was at the door, and hid her face in his bosom, like a dove seeking protection.

"I cannot tell, Theodore. Everything has been carried off under distraint for rent, so they said, who came here. But you do not owe any rent, do you? I am sure you never mentioned it."

"It is too true--too true," was his only answer. Carefully had

Wilmer concealed from his wife all his troubles. He could not think of adding one pang more to the heart that had already suffered so much on his account. Wisely he did not act in this, but few can blame the weakness that shrunk from giving pain to a beloved object. There are few who have not, sometime in life, found themselves in situations of trial and distress, in which nothing was left them but submission. In that very condition did this lonely family, strangers in a strange place, find themselves on this night of strong trial. They experienced a ray of comfort, and that was the apparent health re-action in the system of their sick child. With this to cheer them, they gathered their two little ones with them in their only bed, and slept soundly through the night.

Their servant had left them the day before, and they were spared the mortification of having such a witness of their humiliation. Mrs. Wilmer found it somewhat difficult to prepare their food on the next morning, as even her kitchen furniture had nearly all shared the fate of the rest, and she found herself very feeble. Something like three hundred dollars worth had been taken for a debt of forty or fifty. The slender breakfast over, with the reprimand of the day before painfully fresh in his mind, Wilmer hastened away to the counting-room. He had only been a few moments at the desk, when the partner who had spoken to him the day before, came up with the morning's paper in his hand, and pointing to an advertisement of a sale of furniture seized for rent due by Theodore Wilmer, asked him if he was the person named. Wilmer looked at him for some moments, vainly attempting to reply, his face exhibiting the most painful emotions--finally, he laid his head upon the desk without a word, and gave way to tears. It was a weakness, but he was not then superior to it.

"How much do you owe for rent?"

"Forty dollars."

"Forty dollars! And is it for this sum alone that your furniture has been taken?"

"That is all I owe for rent."

"Then why did you not let us know your condition? You should have had more consideration for your family."

"Yesterday, sir," Wilmer replied, somewhat bitterly, "I came here from dinner, after having been unavoidably detained with a sick child, resolved to conquer my reluctance, and ask for the loan of fifty dollars, to be deducted from my salary, at the rate of five dollars a month. But your reproof for remissness deterred me. And when I returned home, the work had been done. They have left us but a bed, a few chairs, and a common table. Oh, sir, it seems as if it would kill me!"

"But, my dear sir, when I complained, you owed it to yourself, and

you owed it to me, to explain. How could I know your peculiar situation?"

"Have you ever felt, sir, that no one cared for you? As if even Heaven had forgotten you? If not, then you cannot understand my feelings. It may be wrong, but always meaning to act justly towards every one, I feel so humbled by accusation, that I have no heart to explain. It seems to me that others should know that I would not wrong them."

"It certainly is wrong, Mr. Wilmer. Suppose you had simply mentioned yesterday the illness of your child; I should at once have withdrawn my censure, and probably have made some kind inquiry; you would then have been more free to prefer your request, which would have been at once granted. See what it would have saved your family."

"I see it all. Feeling always obscures the judgment."

"To one in your particular situation, a right knowledge of the truth you have just uttered is all-important. No matter what may be your condition, never suffer feeling to become so acute as to dim your sober thoughts, and paralyze your right actions. But here are a hundred dollars. Redeem your things, and get on your feet again. Take them as an advance on your salary for the last year; and draw six hundred instead of five, in future."

A grateful look told the joy of his heart, as he hastened away. In one hour the furniture which the day before had been forcibly taken away, was at his own door.

Relief from present embarrassment, and a fair prospect of a full support for the future, gave Wilmer a lighter heart than he had carried in his bosom for many months. The reaction made him for a time happy. But, while our hearts are evil, we cannot be happy, except for brief periods. The disease will indicate by pain its deep-rooted presence.

The drooping form of his wife soon called his thoughts back to misery. Health had wandered away, and the smiling truant strayed so long, that hope of her return had almost forsaken them.

Nearly five years had passed since Constance turned away, almost broken-hearted, from the door-stone of her father's house; and during all that long, long time, she had received no token of remembrance. She dared not suffer herself to think even for a moment on the cruel fact. The sudden, involuntary remembrance of such a change from the fondest affection to the most studied disregard, would almost madden her.

As for Wilmer, the recollection of the past was as a thorn in his pillow, too often driving sleep from a wearied frame, that needed its health-restoring influence. And often, deep and bitter were his self-reproaches. But for his fatal and half-insane abandonment of

himself to the vain hope of gaining a foothold by which he might rapidly elevate his condition for the sake of Constance, he was now conscious that, slowly, but surely, he would have risen, by the power of an internal energy of character. And more deeply conscious was he, that, but for the half-intoxicated condition in which he was when he consented to go to a gaming-house, he never would have abandoned himself to gaming and drinking as he did for two long years of excited hopes, and dark, gloomy despondency. Two years, that broke down his spirits, and exhausted the energies of his physical system. Two years, from whose sad effects, neither mind nor body was ever again able to recover.

But now let us turn from the cast-off, from the forsaken, to the parents who had estranged themselves from their child.

A foreign arrival had brought letters from Mr. Jackson's agent in Holland, containing information of a great fall in tobacco. Large shipments had been made by several houses, and especially by that of Mr. Jackson, in anticipation of high prices resulting from a scarcity of the article in the German markets. But the shipments had been too large, and a serious decline in price was the consequence. Any interruption of trade, by which the expectation of profits entertained for months is dashed to the ground in a moment, has, usually, the effect to make the merchant unhappy for a brief period. It takes some time for the energies of his mind, long directed in one course, to gather themselves up again, and bend to some new scheme of profit. The "tobacco speculation" of 18--, had been a favourite scheme of Mr. Jackson's, and he had entered into it more largely than any other American house. Its failure necessarily involved him in a heavy loss.

As evening came quietly down, sobering into a browner mood the feelings of Mr. Jackson, the merchant turned his steps slowly towards his home. Naturally, the smiling image of his daughter came up before his mind, and he quickened his pace instinctively. He remembered how nearly he had lost even this darling treasure, and chid himself for being troubled at the loss of a few thousand dollars, when he was so rich in the love of a lovely child. He rang the bell with a firmer hand, and stepped more lightly as he entered the hall, in anticipation of the sweet smile of his heart's darling. He felt a little disappointed at not finding her in the sitting-room, but did not ask for her, in expectation of seeing her enter each moment. So much was he engrossed with her image that he almost forgot his business troubles. Gradually his mind, from the over-excitement of the day, became a little fretted, as he listened in vain for her light foot-fall at the door. When the bell rung for tea, he started, and asked,--

"Where is Constance?"

"In her room, I suppose," replied Mrs. Jackson, indifferently. They seated themselves at the tea-table, and waited for a few moments; but Constance did not come.

"John, run up and call Constance; perhaps she did not hear the bell."

John returned in a moment with the intelligence that his young mistress was not there.

"Then, where is she?" asked both the parents at once.

"Don't know," replied John, mechanically.

"Call Sarah."

Sarah came.

"Where is Constance?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Did she go out this afternoon?"

"Yes, ma'am. She went out about two hours ago, ma'am."

"That's strange," said her mother. "She always tells me where she is going."

Both parents left the tea-table, each with a heavy presentiment of coming trouble about the heart. They went, as by one consent, to Constance's chamber. The mother proceeded to look into her drawers, and found to her grief and astonishment that they were nearly all empty.

For some time, neither spoke a word. The truth had flashed upon the mind of each at the same moment.

"It may not yet be too late," were the first words spoken, and by the mother.

"_It is too late,_" was the brief, but meaning response.

From that time her name was not mentioned, and even her portrait was taken down and thrown into the lumber-room. Her few letters, after her hasty and imprudent marriage, were burned up without being opened. So much for wounded family pride! But think not that her image was really obliterated from their minds. No--no. It was there an ever constant and living presence.--

Though neither of the parents spoke of, or alluded to her, yet they could not drive away her spiritual presence.

Year after year glided away, and though the name of Constance had never passed their lips, and they knew nothing of her destiny; yet as year after year passed, her image, now a sad, tearful image, grew

more and more distinct before their eyes. In their dreams they often saw her in suffering and nigh unto death, and when they would stretch forth their hands to save her, she would be snatched out of their sight. Still they mentioned not her name; and the world thought the cold-hearted, unnatural parents had even forgotten their child.

But what had they now to live for? To such as they, no happiness resulted from doing good to others, for the love of self had extinguished all love of the neighbour. The passion for accumulating, it is true, still remained with the merchant; but trade had become so broken up and diverted from its old channels, that he realized small profits, and frequent losses. Finally, he retired from business, and from the city.

After the marriage of Constance, Mrs. Jackson found herself of far less consideration in company. Few in high life are altogether heartless, and all are ready to censure any exhibition of family pride, which is carried so far as to alienate the parent from the child. This feeling the mother of Constance found to prevail wherever she went, and she never attributed the coolness of fashionable acquaintances, nor the gradual falling away of more intimate friends, to any other than the right cause. How could she? In her case the adage was true to the letter--"A guilty conscience needs no accusation."

Nearly ten years had passed away since the parents became worse than childless. They were living at their country residence near Harlaem, enduring, but not enjoying life. They had wealth, and every comfort and luxury that wealth could bring. But the slave who toiled in the burning sun, and prepared his own coarse food at night in a dirty hovel, was happier than they. Even unto this time had they not spoken together of their child, since the day of her departure.

One night in August, a terrible storm swept over New York and its neighbourhood. Flash after flash of keen lightning blazed across the sky, and peal after peal of awful thunder rent the air. It came up about midnight, and continued for more than an hour. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson were roused from slumber by this terrible war of the elements. Its noise had troubled their sleep ere it awoke them, and their dreams were of their child. During its awful continuance, while they felt themselves more intimately in the hands of the All-Powerful, their many sins passed rapidly before them, but the stain that darkened the whole of the last ten years, the one crime of many years, which made their hearts sick within them with a strange fear, was their conduct towards their child. But neither spoke of it. Upon this subject, for several years, they had been afraid of each other.

The storm passed away, but they could not sleep. Wearied nature sought, but could find no repose. Each tossed and turned and wished for the morning, and when the morning began to dawn they closed their eyes, and almost wished the darkness had continued. A troubled

sleep fell upon the husband, and in it he murmured the name of his child. The quick ear of the mother caught the word, and it thrilled through every nerve. Tears stole down her cheeks, and her heart swelled near to bursting with maternal instincts. The vision of his child that passed before him had been no pleasant one, and with the murmur of her name he awoke to consciousness. Lifting himself up, he saw the tearful face of his wife. He could not mistake the cause. Why should she weep but for her child? He looked at her for a moment, when she pronounced the name of Constance, and hid her tearful face on his breast.

The fountain was now unsealed, and the feelings of the parents gushed out like the flow of pent-up waters. They talked of Constance, and blamed themselves, and wept for their lost one. But where was she? how could they find her?

The sun had scarcely risen, when Mr. Jackson set out to seek for his child, while his wife remained at home in a state of agonizing suspense. He knew not whether she were alive or dead; in New York or elsewhere. The second day brought Mrs. Jackson a letter, it ran as follows:--

"I have searched in vain for our Constance. But how could it be otherwise? Who should know more about her than myself? I have asked some of our old acquaintances if they ever heard of her since her marriage. They shake their heads and look at me as though they thought me demented. Laura Wykoff, you know, married some years ago. I called upon her. She knew little or nothing; but said, she had heard that her husband who had become dissipated had left her and gone off to Baltimore. She thought it highly probable that she had been dead some years. She treated me coldly enough. But I feel nothing for myself. Poor, dear child! where can thy lot be cast? Perhaps, how dreadful the thought! she may have dragged her drooping, dying form past our dwelling, once her peaceful home, and looked her last look upon the door shut to her for ever, while the cold winds of winter chilled her heart in its last pulsations. Oh, I fear we have murdered our poor child! Every meagre-looking, shrinking female form I pass on the street, makes my heart throb. 'Perhaps that is Constance,' I will say, and hasten to read the countenance of the forlorn one. But I turn away, and sigh; 'where, where can she be?'

"Since writing this, I have seen a young man who knew her husband. He says, that after the failure of a house in which Wilmer was employed, he went to Baltimore and took Constance with him. He says, he knows this to be so, because he was well acquainted with Wilmer, and shook hands with him on the steamboat when he went away. I hinted to him what I had heard about Wilmer's leaving her. He repelled the insinuation with warmth, and said, that he, Wilmer, would have died rather than cause Constance a painful feeling--that she certainly did go with him, for when he parted with Wilmer, Constance was leaning on his arm. He says, she looked pale and troubled; and mentioned that they had with them a sweet little baby.

Oh, how my heart yearns after my child!

"I have since learned the name of the firm in Baltimore in whose employment he was, shortly after he went there. To-morrow morning I shall go to that city. You shall hear from me on my arrival."

Nearly a week passed before Mrs. Jackson received further intelligence from her husband. I will not attempt to describe her feelings during that long time. In suffering or joy we discover how relative and artificial are all our ideas of time.

The next letter ran thus:--

"Here I am in Baltimore, but it seems no nearer finding our child than when I was in New York. The firm in whose employment Wilmer was shortly after his arrival in Baltimore, has been dissolved some years; and I am told that neither of the partners is now in this city. I have not been able to learn the name of a single clerk who was in their store. I feel disheartened, yet more eager every day to find our lost one. Where can she be?"

"A day more has passed since my arrival here, and I have a little hope. I have found one of his former fellow-clerks. He says, that he thinks Wilmer is still in town. I do not want to advertise for him, if I can help it, but shall do so before I leave the city, if other means fail. This young man tells me, that when he knew him he had three children. He never saw our Constance. He represents Wilmer as having been in bad health, and as generally appearing dejected. He says, all his furniture was once seized and sold by the sheriff for rent, but that it was redeemed next day by his employers, who treated him very kindly on the occasion. I have heard nothing of the poor boy that has not prepossessed me in his favour. I fear he has had a hard time of it. How much happiness have we lost--how much misery have we occasioned!--Surely we have lived in vain all our lives! I feel more humbled every day since I left home.

"Since yesterday I have learned that he was in the city less than a year ago--and that Constance was living. How my heart throbs! Shall I see my own dear child again? Theodore, I fear, is in very bad health, if still alive. He had to give up a good situation about a year ago, as book-keeper in a large establishment here, where he was much esteemed, on account of his health giving way so fast under the confinement. I believe he took another situation as salesman in a retail store, on a very small salary. Some one told me that Constance had been under the necessity of taking in sewing, to help to get a living--and all this time we had abundance all around us! I call myself, 'wretch,'--and so I would call any other man who would cast off his child, as I have done--a tender flower to meet the cold winds of autumn.

"I have seen my child! my poor dear Constance! But oh, how changed! While passing along the street to-day, almost in despair of ever finding her--a slender female, about the same height of Constance,

passed me hastily. There was something peculiar, I thought, about her, and I felt as I had never yet felt, while near a stranger. I followed her, scarce knowing the reason why. She entered a clothing-store, and I went in after her, and asked to look at some article, I scarce knew what. Her first word startled me as would a shock of electricity. It was my own child. But I could not make myself known to her there. She laid down upon the counter three vests, and then presented a small book. in which to have the work entered. The entry was made, and the book handed back.

"There are just three dollars due you,' said the man.

"Three-and-a-half, I believe it is, sir.'

"No, it's only three.'

"Then I have calculated wrong. I thought it was three-and-a-half.'

"How mournful and disappointed was her tone!

"After standing for some time looking over her book, she said in a lighter voice, 'well, I believe I am right. See here; I have made twenty-eight vests, and at twelve-and-a-half cents each, that is three dollars and a half.'

"Well, I believe you are right,' said the man, in a changed tone, after looking over the book again.

"Can you pay me to-day? I am much in want of it.'

"No, I can't. I have a thousand dollars to pay in bank, and I cannot spare anything before two or three days.'

"She paused a moment, and then went slowly towards the door; lingered for a short time, and then turned to the man again. I then saw for the first time, for ten long years, her face. How thin and pale it was! how troubled its expression!--But it was the face of our dear Constance. She did not look towards me; but turned again to the shop-keeper, and said,

"Be kind enough, sir, to let me have one dollar. I want it very much!'

"You give me more trouble about your money than any other workman I have,' said the man roughly, as he handed her a dollar.

"She took it, unheeding the cruel remark, and before I could make up my mind how to act, glided quickly away. I followed as hastily, and continued to walk after her, until I saw her enter a large, old-fashioned brick building. About this dwelling, there was no air of comfort. In the door sat a little girl, and two boys, pale, but pleasant-looking children. One of them clapped his little hands as Constance passed them, and then got up and ran after her into the

house. They all had her own bright eyes. I would have known them for (sic) her's anywhere.

"Does it not seem strange that I hesitated to go in at once to my child. But I am at a loss what to do. Sometimes I think that I will wait until you come on, and make her heart glad with the presence of both at once. To-morrow I will write you again. The mail is just closing; and I must send this."

After Wilmer had received the kindly proffered relief from his employers, in an increase of salary, he was less troubled about the daily wants of his family. But other sources of keen anxiety soon presented themselves. His own health began to give way so rapidly as to awaken in his mind, fearful apprehensions of approaching inability to support his family; and Constance was not strong. Too often, the pain in his breast and side was so severe as to make his place at the desk little less than torture. A confirmed, short, dry cough, not severe, but constant, also awakened his liveliest fears.

At the end of a year from the time when his employers began to feel a kind interest in him, he was removed from the desk, and given more active employment as salesman and out-of-door clerk. The benefit of this change was soon felt. The pain in his breast and side gradually gave way, his appetite increased, and his cough became less and less irritating. But this improvement was only temporary. The disease had become too deeply rooted. True, he suffered much less than while confined at the desk, but the morbid indications were too constant to leave him much of the flattery of hope.

Another year gradually rolled away, and with it came more changes, and causes of concern. A little stranger had come into his family, making three the number of his babes, and adding to the list of his cares and his expenses; and it must also be said, to his pleasures. For what parent, with the heart of a parent, be his condition what it may, but rejoices in the number of the little ones whose eyes brighten at his coming? But there was a change of greater importance in his prospects. The firm in whose service he was, became involved and had to wind up their business. All the clerks were in a short time discharged, and Wilmer among the rest. The time was one of great commercial pressure, and many long-established houses were forced to yield; others were driven to great curtailment of expenses. The consequence was that few were employing clerks, and many dispensing with their services. Under the circumstances, Wilmer found it impossible to obtain employment. Daily did he call at the various stores and counting-rooms in the hope of meeting with a situation, only to return to his dwelling more depressed and disheartened.

By great economy, in view of approaching ill health, he had managed to lay up, since the increase in his wages, nearly the amount of that increase. He had done this, by living upon the same amount that he before found to be inadequate to the support of his family. How this was done, they only can know who have resolutely, from

necessity, made the same experiment, and found that the real amount necessary to live upon is much smaller than is usually supposed. This sum, about one hundred dollars, he had when he was thrown out of employment scarcely enough to last for three months, under their present expenses. It was with painful reluctance that Wilmer trespassed upon this precious store, but he found necessity a hard task-master.

Amid the gloom and darkness of his condition and prospects, there was one bright star shining upon him with an ever-constant light. No cloud could dim or obscure it. That light, that cheerful star, was the wife of his bosom. The tie that bound her to her husband was not an external one alone; she was wedded to him in spirit. Her affection for him, as sorrow, and doubt, and fearful foreboding of coming evils gathered about him, assumed more and more of the mother's careful and earnest love for the peace of her child. She met him with an ever-cheerful countenance; gently soothed his fears, and constantly referred him to the overruling care of Divine Providence. Affliction had wrought its proper work upon her affections, and as they became gradually separated from the world, they found a higher and purer source of attraction. From a thoughtless girl, she had become a reflecting woman, and with reflection had come a right understanding of her duties. An angel of comfort is such a woman to a man of keen sensibilities, who finds his struggle in the world a hard and painful one.

Two months passed away in the vain effort to obtain employment. Every avenue seemed shut against him. The power of endurance was tried to its utmost strength, when he was offered a situation in an iron-store, to handle iron, and occasionally perform the duties of a clerk. Three hundred dollars was the salary. He caught at it, as his last hope, with eagerness, and at once entered upon his duties. He found them more toilsome than he had expected. The business was a heavy one, and kept him at fatiguing labour nearly the whole day. Never having been used to do hard work, he found on the morning of the second day, that the muscles of his back, arms, and legs, were so strained, that he could hardly move himself. He was as sore as if he had been beaten with a heavy stick. This, however, in a great measure, wore off, after he began to move about; but he found his strength giving way much sooner on this day than on the preceding one. At night, his head ached badly, he had no appetite, and was feverish. On the next morning, however, he went resolutely to work; but he felt so unfit for it, that he finally, referring in his own mind to what he had suffered on a former occasion by not explaining his true situation, determined to mention to his new employer how he felt. and ask a little respite for a day or two, until his strength should return. He, accordingly, left the large pile of iron which he had commenced assorting, and entered the counting-room. He felt a great degree of hesitation, but strove to keep it down, while he summoned up resolution to utter distinctly and mildly his request.

The man of iron was busy over his bill-book when Wilmer sought his presence, and looked up with a stern aspect.

"I feel quite sick," began Theodore, an older man than his employer, "from working beyond my strength for the last two days, and should be very glad if you could employ me at something lighter for as long a time, until I recover myself, when I will be much stronger than when I began, and able to keep steadily on. I have never been used to hard labour, and feel it the more severely now."

Mr.--looked at him with a slight sneer for a moment, and then replied,--

"I can't have any playing about me If my work suits you, well; if not, there are a plenty whom it will suit."

Silently did Wilmer withdraw from the presence of the unfeeling man, and turned with aching limbs to his toilsome work.

At night he found himself much worse than on the preceding evening; and on the ensuing morning he was unable to go to the store. It was nearly a week before he could again find his way out, and then he was in a sadly debilitated state, from the effects of a fever brought on by over-exertion. He went to the iron-store, and formally declined his situation. No offer was made to reengage him, and as he turned away from the door of the counting-room, he heard the man remark, in a sneering under-tone to a person present, "a poor milk-sop!"

Generally, the unfortunate are stung to the quick by any reflection upon them by those in a better condition; and few were more alive to ridicule than Wilmer. Both the condition and the constitutional infirmity combined, made the remark of Mr.--produce in his bosom a tempest of agitation; and for a moment he was roused from his usual calm exterior; but he recovered himself as quick as thought, and hurried away. He did not go directly home, but wandered listlessly about for several hours. When he returned at the usual dinner hour, he found his wife busily engaged in preparing dinner. Her babe was asleep in the cradle, by which sat the eldest boy, touching it with his foot, while the other little one, about four years old, was prattling away to her baby-doll.

"Why Constance, where is Mary?"

"She has gone away," was the smiling reply.

"How comes that? I thought she appeared very well satisfied."

"She was very well pleased with her place, I believe; but as I have taken it into my head to do without her, and am a very wilful creature, as you know, why, there was no remedy but to let her get another place. So I told her as much this morning, and she has already found a pleasant situation--not so good, however, as this, she says. Come, don't look so serious about it! Theodore can bring water for me, and you can cut the wood, and among us we will do very

well. It is a pity if two people can't take care of themselves, and three other little bodies besides. And just see what we will save?--Four dollars a month for her wages, and her boarding into the bargain. And you know, Mary, though a kind, good sort of a body, and very industrious and obliging, eat almost as much as all the rest of us together."

"Well, Constance, put as good a face upon the matter as you can, but I feel that stern necessity has brought you to it."

"You must not talk so much about 'stern necessity,' Theodore. It is surely no great hardship for me to sweep up the house every morning, and get the little food we eat. I know that our income is cut off, for I don't suppose you are going back to that iron-store again. But there will be a way opened, for us. The kind Being who is trying us for our good will not leave us in our last extremity. It is for us to do the best we can, with what we can get. Now that our certain resources are withdrawn, it is for us to limit our expenses to the smallest possible sum. We have, it is true, lived quite frugally for the past year. But it is possible for us to live on much less than the five hundred dollars that it has cost. Our servant's wages and boarding were at least one hundred dollars; and by the present retrenchment we save that sum, and shall live just as comfortably, for now we will all help to take care of each other."

"So far so good, my comforter! But where will the four hundred dollars come from?"

"Well, let us go on. We pay one hundred and fifty dollars for this house. By going out upon the suburbs of the town, we can get a pleasant little house for five dollars a month."

"O, no, Constance, you are too fast."

"Not at all. I have seen just the little place that will suit us. The house is not old, and everything around is sweet and clean. And it's plenty big enough for us."

"Well, Constance, suppose by so doing we reduce our expenses to three hundred and ten dollars. Where is that sum to come from? I can't get any work."

"Don't despair, Theodore! We shall not be forsaken. But we must do for ourselves the best we can. I have been turning over a plan in my head, by which we can live much cheaper and a great deal happier; for the less it takes us to live, the less care we shall have about it."

"Go on."

"By moving into a smaller house, we can dispense with a great many things which will then be of no use to us. These will bring us from two to three hundred dollars, at public sale. Good furniture, you

know, always brings good prices."

"Well."

"With this money, we can live in a smaller house, without any servant, for nearly a year; and surely you will get something to do by next spring, even if you should be idle all winter."

Wilmer kissed the cheek of his wife, now glowing with the excitement of cheerful hope, with a fervent and heartfelt affection, and murmuring in a low voice--"My comforting angel!" turned with a lighter heart than had beat in his bosom for months, to caress the little girl, who was clamouring for her usual kiss.

That afternoon was spent in discussing the proposed retrenchment, and in going to look at the little house which Mrs. Wilmer had mentioned. It was small, but neat, and had a good yard, with a pump at the door. They decided at once to take it, and obtained possession of the key.

No time was lost in offering their superfluous furniture at public sale; and to the satisfaction of both Wilmer and his wife, the auctioneer returned them, after deducting his commissions, the net sum of three hundred dollars.

In one week from the time of Mrs. Wilmer's proposition, they were snugly packed away in their new residence.

Late in the fall, Wilmer obtained a situation as collector for one of the newspaper offices, on a salary of four hundred dollars. This, under the reduced expense system, and with the surplus on hand, afforded them ample means. The exercise in the open air which it allowed him, was greatly conducive to his health, and he soon showed considerable improvement in body and mind. Things went on smoothly and satisfactorily until about Christmas, when he took a violent cold, on a wet day, which fell upon his lungs, and soon brought him to a very weak state. From this, his recovery was so slow, and his prospect of health so unpromising, that he found it a matter of necessity to decline his situation, which was retained for him as long as the office could wait.

During the whole of the remaining inclement weather of the winter season, he found it necessary to keep within doors, as he invariably took cold whenever he ventured out.

Perceiving the failure of her husband's health to be certainly and rapidly progressing, Mrs. Wilmer dwelt in her own mind with painful solicitude upon the probable means of support for them all, when his strength should so entirely give way, as to render him altogether unfitted for business. The only child of over-fond parents, rich in this world's goods, she had received a thorough, fashionable education, which fitted her for doing no one thing by which she could earn any money. Her music had been confined to a few

fashionable waltzes and overtures; her French and Spanish were nearly forgotten, and her proficiency in drawing and embroidery had never been very great. In her girlish days she could dance gracefully, and talk fashionable nonsense with a bewitching air when it became necessary to amuse some sprig of fashion, or wield good plain common sense with common sense people, when occasion called for it. But as to possessing resources in herself for getting a living in the world, that was another matter altogether. But there is a creative power in necessity, which acts with wonderful skill when the hour of trial comes. That hour had come with Constance, and she steadily cast about her for the means of earning money.

Next door to where she lived was a widow woman with three grown-up daughters, who were always busy working for the clothing-stores, or "slop-shops," as they were called. She had made their acquaintance during the winter, and found them kind and considerate of others, and ever ready with an encouraging word, or serious advice when called for. The very small compensation which they received for their work, encouraged her but little, when she thought of obtaining something to do in the same way. But the more she thought of other means, the less she found herself fitted for doing anything else, and at last determined to learn how to make common pantaloons, that she might have some resource to fly to, when all others failed. She found her kind neighbours ready to give her all the instruction she needed, and they also kindly offered to introduce her to the shops whenever she should determine to take in work. It did not take her long to learn, and soon after she had acquired the art, as her husband's health still continued to decline, she began, in odd times, to make common pantaloons and vests, for which she received the meagre compensation of twelve-and-a-half cents each. It took her about one-half of her time, actively engaged, to attend to her family.

During the remaining half of each day and evening, she would make a vest or a pair of pantaloons, which at the end of the week would bring her in seventy-five cents. When she looked at this small sum, the aggregate of a week's labour, during leisure from the concerns of her family, she felt but little encouraged in prospect of having the whole of her little family dependent upon her; and for some weeks she entertained, in the silence of her own heart, a sickening consciousness of coming destitution, which she might in vain endeavour to prevent. Gradually her mind reacted from this painful state, and she gave daily diligence to her employments, entertaining a firm trust in Divine Providence.

As the spring opened, her husband's health revived a little, and he found employment at a small compensation in a retail dry-goods store. This just suited his strength and the state of his health, and he continued at it for something like three years. During this period nothing of material interest occurred, and we pass it over in silence.

The long-looked-for, long-dreaded time, when Wilmer's health should

entirely give way, at length came; and although through the kindness of his employers he had been retained in the store long after he was able to do his full duty, yet at last he had to give up.

It would require a pen more skilled to portray the workings of the human heart, than mine, to sketch his real feelings, when he received his last month's wages; the last that he felt he would ever earn for his family, and turned his steps homeward. He loved the wife who had forsaken the wealth and comfort of a father's house, and had been all in all to him through sunshine and storm, with deep and tearful affection; he would have sacrificed everything for her; and yet for years had he been compelled to see her toil for a portion of the bread that nourished her and her children. He loved his little ones, with a yearning tenderness; the more fervently and passionately, now that he could no longer minister to their wants. How could he meet them all on this evening, and see their dear faces brighten up on his entrance, when he could no longer earn them food, or provide them with comforts? It was with a strong effort that he kept down his feelings. as he entered his home, now comprised in two rooms in the second story of an old house in Commerce street, where they had removed, to be nearer his place of business, the long walk having been too fatiguing for him, after standing behind the counter all day.

Mrs. Wilmer's quick eye at once detected a change in the expression of her husband's countenance, but she said nothing. After tea, the children were all put to bed in the next room, and they were then alone. Wilmer sat in deep thought by the table, shading his face with his hand when his wife came in from the chamber where she had been with the children. Twining her arm round his neck, she bent over him, and said, in a tone of tender concern--

"Why so thoughtful, Theodore?"

He did not reply for some moments, nor lift his head, and Constance was about to repeat her question in a more earnest voice, when a hot tear fell upon her hand. She had seen him often sorely tried and painfully exercised, but had never known him to shed a tear. There had always been a troubled silence in his manner when difficulties pressed upon him, but tears moistened not his eyes. Well might her heart sink down in her bosom at that strange token of intense suffering.

"Dear Theodore!" she said, in a changed tone, "tell me what it is that troubles you!"

A shuddering sob was the only reply, as he leaned his head back upon her bosom.

"Say, dearest, what has happened?"

The tears now fell from his eyes like rain, and sob after sob shook his frame convulsively.

Constance waited in silence until the agitation subsided, and then gently urged him to tell her what it was that troubled him so painfully.

"I am broken in spirits now, Constance. I am a weak child. I have received the last blow, and manhood has altogether forsaken me."

"Tell me! oh, tell me! Theodore, all, all! Do not distress me by further silence, or mystery!"

A pause of some minutes succeeded, during which Wilmer was making strong efforts to overcome his feelings.

"Constance," he at length said, mournfully, "I have tried long, and much beyond my strength, to earn the small sum that it took to support our little ones; but nature has at last given way. Here is the last dollar I shall probably ever earn, and now I shall be a burden upon you, eating the bread of my children, while they, poor things, will hunger for the morsel that nourishes me. I do not wonder that manly feelings have passed away with my strength. Constance, what shall we do?"

An angel of comfort is woman to life's last extremity.

Fragile as a reed, that bends to the passing breeze, when the sunshine of prosperity is bright above and around, she becomes the tall oak, deep-rooted and strong-branched, when the wintry storms of adversity sweep over the earth. No trial subdues her, no privation brings a murmur of discontent. She will hope to the last, and still have a smile of assurance for those who, in their despondency, have even cast away hope. Constance Wilmer was a woman, and as a woman, her worth was felt more and more, as troubles came thicker and faster.

"Dear husband!" she said, in a steady and cheerful voice, "you have forgotten that line, so true and so comforting--"Despair is never quite despair"--

"I see no cause for such painful feelings. Pinching want is not upon us yet, and I am sure the time will never come when our children shall ask food at our hands in vain. Trial, which is always for our good, will never reach beyond the point of endurance."

"The burden is all upon you, Constance. Heaven grant that you may have strength to bear it!"

"I fear not for the strength. That will come in due time. Now we have food and raiment, and therewith let us be content. If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, will he not clothe us? He that feedeth the young ravens when they cry, will not turn away from us. Are we not of more value than many sparrows?"

"Bless you! bless you! Constance."

"Do not, then, dear husband! cast away your confidence. If the burden is to be all upon me, it will be lightened by your cheerful countenance and encouraging words. I shall need them both, doubtless; then do not withhold them."

Her voice lost its steadiness, trembled a moment, and then she hid her face, in silence and in tears, upon his bosom.

As Wilmer had foreseen, the strength for further labour was gone for ever. He lingered about for a few weeks, and then took to his bed. And now came the time for the full trial of Mrs. Wilmer's mental and bodily strength.

Notwithstanding all her close application at the needle, the small sum that had been saved from former earnings, slowly, but steadily diminished. Daily she increased her exertions, and encroached further upon the hours of rest; but still there was a steady withdrawal of the hoarded treasure. At first, her confidence in the Divine Providence was measurably shaken; but soon the wavering needle of her faith turned steadily to its polar star. Her own health, never vigorous, began also to give way under the increased application which became necessary for the support of the beloved ones, now entirely dependent upon her labour for food and raiment. Her appetite, never very good, failed considerably, and consequently there was a withdrawal instead of an increase of strength. But none knew of her pain or weakness. Her pale face was ever a cheerful one, and her voice full of tenderness.

When the next spring opened, Wilmer was not only confined to the house, but unable to sit up, except for a few hours at a time through the day. His wife's health had suffered much, and all the hours she sat at her needle, were hours of painful endurance. Spring passed away, and summer came. But the milder airs had no kind effect upon the fast sinking frame of her husband. He was rapidly going down to the grave, his last hours embittered by the sight of his wife and children suffering before him.

During the month of August, Wilmer declined so fast, and needed such constant attention, that his wife could find but little time to devote to her needle. What she thus lost in the day-time, she had to make up, as far as possible, by encroaching upon the night hours, and often the lamp by her side would grow dim before the light of day, while she still bent in weariness and pain, over the work that was to give bread to her children.

For some months her work had been confined to one shop, the master of which was not always punctual in paying her the pittance she earned. Instead of handing her, whenever she called, the trifle due her, he made her procure a little book in which he would enter the work, promising to pay when it would amount to a certain sum. In

anxious hope would Mrs. Wilmer wait until her earnings rose to the required amount; but not always then could she get her due; there would too frequently be a part payment, or a request to call in a day or two.

One day towards the first of September, she found that both food and money were out. She was just finishing a couple of vests for the clothing-shop, and there were more than three dollars due to her. While turning over in her own mind the hope that Mr.--would pay her the small sum due, when she carried in the work, and troubled the While with fears lest he should deny her, as he had often done before; her husband, whose bright eye had been upon her for some time, and whose countenance, unseen by her, had expressed an earnest, yet hesitating desire to ask for something, said--

"Constance, I don't know whether you are able to get them, but if you can, I should like, above all things, to have some grapes."

"Then you shall have some," Constance replied, earnestly and affectionately. "I am sure they will help you. Why did I not think of this for you long ago?"

Resuming her needle, she plied it with double swiftness, her heart trembling lest when she asked for her money at the shop, it should be refused her. At last the work was done and she carried it in. It was entered, and her book handed back to her. She paused a moment, then turned to go out, but she could not go home without some money. Hesitatingly she asked to have her due, but it was refused on some excuse of having a large payment to make on that very day. Again she turned to go, but again turned to ask for only a part of what was her own. One dollar was thrown her with an unkind remark. The first she seized with avidity, the last passed her ear unheeded.

How swiftly did she hurry home with her little treasure! more precious than a hundred times the sum had ever been before. It was to meet the first expressed want of her husband, to gratify which she would herself have abstained days from food.

The grapes were soon obtained, with some bread, and a small portion of meat, for the children. They proved very grateful and refreshing to Wilmer, who, soon after he had eaten a few of them, fell into a gentle sleep.

The food which Mrs. Wilmer had bought would last them probably about two days--not longer. Two months' rent would be due in a week, amounting to eight dollars. Their landlord had threatened to take some of their things to satisfy the last months' rent, and she had little hope of his being put off longer than the expiration of the two months. There were still two-and-a-half dollars due her by the keeper of the clothing-store, which she knew it would be almost as hard to get as to earn.

Not disposed, however, to sit down and brood over her difficulties,

which only made them worse, she went to work in the best spirit possible to overcome them. She obtained more work, and bent herself again over her daily employment.

She was sitting with an aching head and troubled heart at her work on the next morning, having only sought a brief repose through the night, when a smart tap at the door roused her from her abstraction of mind.

"Does Mrs. Wilmer live here, ma'am?" asked a man.

"That is my name."

"Then I am directed to leave this basket,"--and the man deposited his burden on the floor, and was gone before another word could be spoken.

Mrs. Wilmer stood for a moment in mute surprise, and then removed the covering off the basket. It contained tea, coffee, sugar, rice, meat, bread, and various other articles of food; and also, a letter directed to "Constance Wilmer." She broke the seal with an anxious and trembling heart. It contained a fifty dollar note, and these brief words:--

"_Put by your work--you are cared for--there is help coming, and now very nigh--be of good cheer!_"

The coarse garment she still held in her hand, fell to the floor. Her fingers released themselves from it by an instinctive effort which she could not control. Her head reeled for a moment, and she sunk into a chair, overcome by a tumult of contending feelings. From this, she was aroused by the voice of her husband, who anxiously inquired the contents of the letter. He read it, and saw the enclosure, and the supply of food in the basket, and then clasped his hands and looked up with mute thankfulness to heaven. Mrs. Wilmer obeyed, with a confidence for which she could not account, the injunction of her stranger-friend, and almost hourly for the first day referred to the characters of the letter, which seemed familiar to her eye. That she had seen the writing before, she was certain; but where, or when, she could not tell.

Relieved from daily care and toil, she had more time to give to her sick husband. She found him nearer the grave than she had supposed.

Four days more passed away, and Wilmer had come down to the very brink of the dark river of death.

It was night. The two younger children were asleep, and the oldest boy, just in his tenth year, with his mother, stood anxiously over the low bed, upon which lay, gasping for breath, the dying husband and father. The widow, who cannot forget the dear image of her departed one; the orphan, who remembers the dying agony of a fond father, can realize in a great degree the sorrows which pressed upon

the hearts of these lone watchers by the bed of death.

The last hours of Wilmer's life were hours of distinct consciousness.

"Constance," he whispered, in a low difficult whisper, while his bright eyes were fixed upon her face--"Constance, what will you do when I am gone? I am but a burden on you now; but my presence I feel is something."

His stricken-hearted wife could make no answer; but the tears rolled over her face in great drops, and fell fast upon the pillow of her dying husband.

"I cannot say, 'do not weep,'" continued Wilmer. "O that I could give a word of comfort! but your cup is full, running over, and I cannot dash it from your lips:--Dear Constance! you have been to me a wife and a mother. Let me feel your warm cheek once more against mine, for it is cold, very cold. Hark! did you not hear voices?" And he strained his eyes towards the door, half-lifting himself up.

For a few moments he looked eagerly for some one to enter, and then fell back upon the bed with a heavy sigh, murmuring to himself, in a low disappointed tone--

"I thought they were coming."

"Who, love?" asked Mrs. Wilmer, eagerly. But her husband did not seem to hear her question; but lay gasping for breath, the muscles of his neck and face distorted and giving to his countenance the ghastly expression of death.

"Who, love?--who were coming?" eagerly asked Mrs. Wilmer again, her own heart trembling with a recurrence of the vague hopes with which the mysterious letter and timely supply had inspired her,--hopes that had never been hinted to her husband. But it seemed that he had given the incident his own interpretation.

But he heeded not her question. For some time mother and son again stood over him, in troubled silence. Perhaps half an hour had passed since he had spoken, when a slight bustle was heard, on the steps below, and then feet were heard quickly ascending, and hastening along the passage towards their chamber door.

"They come! They come!" half-shrieked the dying man, springing up in the bed, and bending over towards the door, which was hastily flung open. His eyes glared upon the two persons, a man and woman, both well advanced in life, as they entered. That one anxious gaze was enough. Looking up into the face of Constance, against whose breast his head had sunk, his countenance changed into an expression of intense delight, and he whispered--

"They have come, Constance! they have come. Think of me as at rest

and happy. I die in peace!"

His eye-lids closed naturally--there was no longer any convulsive play of the muscles, and as an infant sinking into slumber, so quietly did Theodore Wilmer sleep the sleep of death.

One month from that night of sorrow, the darkest one in the many gloomy seasons of Mrs. Wilmer's life, might have been seen this child of many afflictions, with her three little ones, at home in one of the most pleasant houses in the vicinity of New York. There was something sad and subdued in the expression of her pale face, but it was from the recollection of the past. Her mother, who ten years before had cast her off as unworthy, now gazed upon her with a look of the intensest affection; and the father, who had sworn never to call her his child, sat holding her thin white hand in his, and listening to her first recital of all she had passed through since she left the home of her childhood, while the tears fell from his eyes in large drops, upon the hand that lay within his own.

THE SISTERS.

[THE following unadorned narrative, the reminiscence of a friend, I give as if related by him from whom I received it. He was, in early years, the apprentice of a tradesman, in whose family the principal incidents occurred. The picture presented is one of every-day life.]

MR. WILLIAMS, to whom, when a boy, I was apprenticed to learn the art and mystery by which he supported a pretty large family, was not rich, although, by industry and economy, he had gathered together a few thousand dollars, and owned, besides, two or three neat little houses, the aggregate annual rent of which was something like six hundred dollars. His wife, a weak-minded woman, however, considered him independent, in regard to wealth, and valued herself accordingly. Few held their heads higher, or trode the pavement with a statelier step than Mrs. Williams.

An elder sister, greatly her superior in every quality of mind, had been far less fortunate in her marriage. She was the wife of a man, who, instead of increasing his worldly goods, the fruit of some twenty years' prudence and industry, had become dissipated, and at the time now referred to, was sinking rapidly, and bearing his family, of course, down with him. All energy seemed lost, and though his family was steadily increasing, he grew more and more careless every day.

He spent much time in taverns, and wasted there a good deal of money, that his family needed. Mrs. Haller, his wife, was, as has been said, in intelligence and feeling, much the superior of Mrs. Williams, but appeared to little advantage in her peculiar situation. She was the elder sister, by four or five years. At the time of which I am now writing, Mrs. Haller had five children, two of them grown up, and the rest small. Her husband had become so indolent and sottish, that all her exertions were needed to keep her little flock from suffering with cold and hunger. No woman could have laboured more untiringly than she did, but it was labouring against a strong current that bore her little bark slowly, but surely backward. Here, then, are the two sisters; one, the elder, and superior in all the endowments of head and heart--the other with few claims to estimation other than those afforded by a competence of worldly goods. Let us view them a little closer. Perhaps we can read a lesson in their mutual conduct that will not soon be forgotten.

In earlier years, I have learned, that they were much attached to each other. In their father's house, they knew no cares, and when they married, which was within a few years of each other, their prospects were equal for future happiness. While this equality existed, their intercourse was uninterrupted and affectionate. But, as Mr. Haller began to neglect his family, the cloud that settled upon the brow of his poor wife was not pleasant for Mrs. Williams to look upon. Nor were the complaints that a full heart too often forced to the lips, at all agreeable to her ears. Naturally proud and selfish, these two feelings had been gaining strength with the progress of years, and were now so confirmed, that even towards an only sister in changed circumstances they remained in full activity.

When I first went to live with Mr. Williams, Mrs. Haller resided in a neatly furnished, small two-story brick house. Her husband had not then shown his vagabond propensities very distinctly, though he spent in his family, and otherwise, all that he earned each week, thus leaving nothing for a rainy day. He was a little in debt, too, but not so much as to make him feel uneasy. Mrs. Haller was anxious to lay up something, and to be getting ahead in the world, and was, consequently, always troubled because things never got any better. She came to our house every week, and Mr. Williams would visit her once in a month or two. Mrs. Haller often talked of her troubles to her sister, who used then to sympathize with her, and make many suggestions of means to gender things more accordant with her desires. As matters gradually grew worse in the progress of time, and Mrs. Haller began to make rather an indifferent appearance, the manner of her sister became evidently constrained and unsympathizing. She began to look upon her in the light of a "poor relation." Her children, cousins of course to Mrs. Williams's, were not treated encouragingly when they came to our house, and if company happened to be there, they were kept out of sight, or sent home. Mrs. Williams rarely visited Mrs. Haller--not so often as once in six months.

Long before the period of which I am now writing, Haller had become drunken and very lazy. Their comfortable house and furniture had been changed for poor rooms, with little in them, except what was barely necessary. The oldest child, a son, about nineteen years of age, on to whose maturity the mother had often looked with a lively hope, following the example of his father, had become idle and dissipated; spending most of his time in low taverns and gambling-shops. Here was a keen sorrow which no heart but a mother's can understand. Oh, what a darkening of all the dreams of early years! When a warm-hearted girl, looking into the pleasant future with a tremulous joy, she stood beside her chosen one at the altar, how little did she dream of the shadows and darkness that were to fall upon her path! And alas! how little does many a careless girl, who gives herself away, thoughtlessly, to a young man of unformed character, dream of the sorrow too deep for tears that awaits her. Surely this were anguish enough,--and surely it called for the sustaining sympathy of friends. But the friend of her early years, the sister in whose arms, in the days of innocent childhood, she had slept peacefully, now turned from her coldly, and even repulsively.

So unnatural and revolting seems the picture I am drawing, even in its dim outlines, that I turn from it myself, half-resolved to leave it unfinished. But many reasons, stronger than feeling, urge me to complete my task with the imperfect skill I possess, and I take the pencil which I had laid down in shame and disgust, and proceed to fill up more distinctly.

I had observed for some time the growing coolness of Mrs. Williams towards her unfortunate sister, and had noted more than once the deep dejection of Mrs. Haller's manner, whenever she went away from our house. She began to come less and less frequently, and her children at still more remote intervals. Things became desperate with her at length, and she came, forced by necessity, to seek a little aid and comfort in her sorrow from her once kind sister, and with the faint hope that some relief would be offered. I was sitting in the neatly furnished breakfast-room, one evening, a little after tea, reading a book, when Mrs Haller came in. She had on a dark calico dress, faded, but clean, a rusty shawl that had once been black, and a bonnet that Mrs. Williams's kitchen-servant would not have worn. My eye instinctively glanced to the face of Mrs. Williams as she entered; it had at once contracted into a cold and forbidding expression. She neither rose from her chair, nor asked Mrs. Haller to take one, greeting her only with a chilling "well, Sally." The latter naturally sought a chair, and waited silently, and surely with an aching heart, for a kinder manifestation of sisterly regard. I immediately left the room; but learned afterwards enough of the interview to make it distinct to the imagination of the reader.

The sisters sat silent for some moments, the one vainly trying to keep down the struggling anguish of a stricken heart, and the other, half-angry at the intrusion, endeavouring to fashion a form of greeting that should convey her real impressions, without being

verbally committed. At length the latter said, half-kindly, half-repulsively:--

"Why, Sally, what has brought you so far from home, after dark?"

"Nothing very particular. Only I thought I would like to drop in a little while and see how you all did. Besides, little Thomas is sick, and I wanted to get a few herbs from you, as you always keep them."

"What kind of herbs do you want?"

"Only a few sprigs of balm, and some woodbitney."

"Kitty"--bawled out this unfeeling woman to the servant in the kitchen--"go up into the garret and bring me a handful of balm and woodbitney--and don't stay all night!"

"No, ma'am," said Kitty, thinking the last part of the order most requiring a reply.

A further pause of a few minutes ensued, when Mrs. Haller, after almost struggling to keep silence, at length ventured to say, sadly, and despondingly, that she should have to move again.

"And what, in the name of heaven, Sally, are you going to move again for? You can't be suited much better."

"Nor much worse, either, Mary. But John has paid no rent, and we can't stay any longer. The landlord has ordered us to leave by next Wednesday, or he will throw our few things into the street."

"Well, I declare, there is always something occurring with you to worry my mind. Why do you constantly harass me with your troubles? I have enough at home in my own family to perplex me, without being made to bear your burdens. I never trouble you with my grievances, or anybody else, and do not think it kind in you to make me feel bad every time you come here. I declare, I grow nervous whenever I see you!"

Poor Mrs. Haller, already bending beneath her burden, found this adding a weight that made it past calm endurance, and she burst into tears, and sobbed aloud. But not the slightest impression did this exhibition of sorrow make upon Mrs. Williams. She even reproached her with unbecoming weakness.

Although her sister had before shown indifference and great coolness, yet never had she spoken thus unkindly. In a few moments Mrs. Haller regained her calmness, and with it came back some of her former pride of feeling. For a moment she sat with her eyes cast upon the floor, endeavouring to keep down her struggling emotions; in the next she rose up, and looking her sister fixedly in the face, read her this impressive lesson.

"Mary, I could not have dreamed of such harshness from you! I have thought you cold and indifferent, long; but I tried hard to believe that you were not unkind. I have never come to see you in the last three years, that I did not go away sad in spirit. There was something in your manner that seemed to say that you thought my presence irksome, and as you were the only friend I had to speak to about my wearying cares and anxieties, it grieved me more than I can tell to think that that only friend was growing cold--and that friend a sister! As things have become worse with me, your manner has grown colder, and now you have spoken out distinctly, and destroyed the little resting place I sometimes sought when wearied to faintness. Mary, may God who has afflicted me, grant you a happier lot in the future! May you never know the anguish of one who sees a once idolized husband become a brute--her children growing up worthless under the dreadful example of their father, and all often wanting food to sustain nature! You have everything you desire. I have not the necessaries of life. We were born of the same mother, and nursed at the same bosom. We played together in childhood,--once I saved your life. And now, because our ways are different; yours even and flowery, and mine rough and thorny, you turn from me, as from an importunate beggar. Mary, we shall meet our father and mother at the bar of God!"

Thus saying, Mrs. Haller turned slowly away, and left the house before her sister, who was startled at this unexpected appeal, could sufficiently collect her senses to reply. Her real errand, or, rather, her principal errand to the house of Mrs. Williams, had been to ask for some food for her children. It was many weeks since her husband had contributed a single dollar towards the daily family expenses, and all the burden of their support devolved upon the wife and mother. Night and day, in pain, and exhaustion of body and mind, had she toiled to get food for those who looked up to her, but all her efforts were inadequate. Like thousands of others, when a girl, she had acquired an education that was more ornamental than useful. The consequence was, that she had no ready means of earning money. The wants of a family of children, had, it is true, given her some skill with her needle, but not of a kind that would enable her to earn much by sewing.

She did, however, at first try what she could do by working for the cheap clothing-stores. But twelve-and-a-half cents a pair for pantaloons, ten cents for vests, and eight cents for shirts, yielded so little, that she was driven to something else. That something else was the washtub; over which, and the ironing-table, she toiled early and late, often ready to sink to the floor from exhaustion.

Of this, she said nothing to Mrs. Williams, who would have been terribly mortified at the idea of her sister, taking in washing for a support. The labour of one pair of hands in the wash-tub, was, however, unequal to the task of providing food for seven mouths, even of a very poor quality. Consequently, Mrs. Haller found the wants of her family pressing, every day, harder and harder upon the

slender means by which they were supplied. Often, when she carried home her work, there was no food in the house, and often did she work half the night, so as to be able to take her clothes home early on the next day, and get the money she had earned to meet that day's wants.

Among those for whom she washed and ironed, was a woman in good circumstances, who never paid her anything until she asked for it, and then the money came with an air of reluctance. Of course, she applied to her for her hard earnings, only when pressed by necessity. On the morning before the interview with her sister, just detailed, Mrs. Haller found herself nearly out of everything, and with not a cent in the world. The woman just alluded to, owed her two dollars, and she had nearly completed another week's washing for her, which would make the amount due her two dollars and a half. At dinner-time, every mouthful of food, and that a scanty portion, was consumed, and there would be nothing for supper, or breakfast, on the next morning, unless Mrs. Hamil should pay her. It was nearly night when she finished ironing the last piece. Hurriedly putting on her things, after sending two of her children with the clothes in a basket, she joined them as they were about entering the dwelling of Mrs. Hamil.

Her heart beat, audibly to her own ear, as she went in, and asked to see the woman for whom she had been labouring. Although, heretofore, whenever she had asked for her money, she had received it, sometimes with reluctance, it is true, yet her extremity being now so great, she trembled lest, from some cause, she should not be able to get the pittance due her.

For a few moments she sat in the kitchen hesitating to ask for Mrs. Hamil, after the clothes had been given to the servant. When she did do so, she was told that she was engaged and could not be seen.

"Ask her, then, for me, if you please," she said, "to send me a dollar. I want it very much."

The servant went up and delivered her message, and in a few moments came back with the answer, that Mrs. Hamil was engaged, and could not attend to such matters;--that she could step in on the next day, and get her money.

The words fell coldly upon her feelings, and oppressed her with a faint sickness. Then she got up slowly from her chair, hesitated a moment, took one or two steps towards the door, and then pausing, said to the servant,

"Go up and tell Mrs. Hamil, that I am sorry to trouble her, but that I want the money very much, and that if she will send it down to me, she will confer a very great favour, indeed."

"I had rather not," the servant replied. "She didn't appear pleased at my going up the first time. And I am sure she will be less

pleased if I go again."

"But you do not know how much I am in want of this money, Jane--" and the poor woman's voice quivered.

"Well, Mrs. Haller, I will try again," the kind-hearted girl said, "but I can't promise to be successful. Mrs. Hamil is very queer sometimes."

In a few minutes Jane returned with a positive refusal. Mrs. Hamil couldn't and wouldn't be troubled in that way.

In a state of half-conscious, dreamy wretchedness, did Mrs. Haller turn her steps slowly homewards. The shadows of evening were falling thickly around, adding a deeper gloom to her feelings.

"O, mother! I'm glad you've come. I'm so hungry!" cried one of her little ones, springing to her side as she entered. "Won't we have supper soon, now?"

This was too much for her, and she sank exhausted and almost fainting into a chair. Tears soon brought temporary relief to an overburdened heart. Then she soothed her hungry little ones as well as she could, promising them a good supper before they went to bed.

"But why can't we have it now?" urged one, more impatient, or more hungry, than the rest.

"Because mother hasn't got any good bread for little Henry--" she replied--"But she will have some soon. So all be good children, and wait until mother goes out and gets some bread and meat, and then we will all have a nice supper."

After quieting the importunities of her children in this way, and soothing little Thomas, who was sick and fretful, Mrs. Haller again left them, and bent her steps, with a reluctant spirit, towards the comfortable dwelling of her sister, nearly a mile away from where she lived. The interview with that sister has already been given.

When she turned away, as has been seen, empty-handed, from the door of that sister, it was with feelings that few can imagine. It seemed to her as if she were forsaken both of earth and heaven. How she got home, she hardly knew, but when she entered that cheerless place she found her poor sick child, for whom she had no money to buy medicine, burning with fever, and crying bitterly. Her brutal husband was snoring on the bed the smaller children quarrelling among themselves, and her oldest boy, half-intoxicated, leaning over the back of a chair, and swinging his body backward and forward in the (sic) idiocy of drunkenness. As she entered, the children crowded round her, asking fretfully for their suppers; but nothing had she to give them, for she had come away empty-handed and repulsed from the door of her affluent sister, to whose dwelling she had gone solely to ask for some food for her children! In the

momentary energy of despair she roused her husband rudely from the bed, and bade him, in an excited tone, to go and get some bread for the children: The brute, angered by her words and manner, struck her a blow upon the head, which brought her senseless to the floor.

An hour at least passed before she recovered her senses; when she opened her eyes, she found herself on a bed, her sister sitting by her side, weeping, and Mr. Williams standing over her. Her husband was not there, some of the children were crying about the room, and others had fallen asleep on the floor. The oldest boy was sitting in the position before-mentioned. Brief explanations were made, and Mrs. Williams offered a faint apology for her harsh treatment. The appeal of her sister had touched her feelings, and she had proposed to Mr. Williams to go over and see her. On entering her dwelling they found her senseless on the floor, and the children screaming around her. The husband was not there.

As soon as the mother's voice was heard by the smallest child, a little girl, she climbed up the side of the bed, and simply, and earnestly, in lisping tones, asked for a "piece of bread." The poor woman burst into tears, and turned her head away from her child. Mrs. Williams went to the closet, saying--"Come, Emma, I will get you some bread. "The little thing was at her side in a moment. But the search there was in vain.

"Where is the bread, Sally?" she asked.

"There is none in the house," faintly murmured the almost broken-hearted mother.

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Williams--"you are not without food, surely?"

"We have tasted nothing to-day," was the startling reply.

"Where is Mr. Haller?"

"I know not--he left the house a short time ago."

"He ran out when he struck you, mother," spoke up the little child who had asked for the bread.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams looked at each other for some moments in silence.

"Get a basket and come with me, John," said Mr. Williams, to the oldest boy, who was gazing on with indifference or stupidity.

Mechanically he took a basket and followed his uncle. They soon returned with bread, dried meat, ham, &c., and in a brief space, a comfortable meal was prepared for the starving family.

Conscience felt about the heart of Mrs. Williams that night, with

touches of pain, and she repented of her cruel neglect, and unkind treatment of her sister. She dreamed not of the extent of her destitution and misery--simply, because she had refused to make herself acquainted with her real condition. Now that the sad reality had been forced upon her almost unwilling eyes, a few returning impulses of nature demanded relief for her suffering sister.

Mr. Williams, whose benevolent feelings were easily excited, was shocked at the scene before him, and blamed himself severely for not having earlier become acquainted with Mrs. Haller's condition. He immediately set about devising means of relief. Haller had become so worthless that he despaired of making him do anything for his family. He therefore invited his sister-in-law to come home to our house, and bring her two youngest girls with her. The rest were provided with places. The family had grown pretty large, and she could assist in sewing, &c., and thus render a service, and live comfortably. Mrs. Williams seconded the proposition, though not with much cordiality; she could not, however, make any objections.

We look at the sisters now in a different relation. The superior in dependence on the inferior. Can any for a moment question the result?

It was not without a struggle that poor Mrs. Haller consented to disband her little family--and virtually to divorce herself from her husband. No matter how cruel the latter had been, nor how deplorable the condition of the former, her heart still retained its household affections, and would not consent willingly to have her little flock scattered--perhaps for ever. But stern necessity knows no law. In due time, with little Emma, and Emily, Mrs. Haller was assigned a comfortable room over the kitchen, and became a member of our family. All of us in the shop felt for her a warm interest, but hesitated not to express among ourselves a regret that she could do no better than to trust herself and little ones to the tender mercies of a sister, whom we knew too well to respect.

At first, Mrs. Haller was employed in needle-work, but as she was neither a very fast nor neat sewer, her sister soon found it better policy to let her do the chamber-work, and sometimes assist in cooking. For about three months, her situation was comfortable, except that her children were required to act "just so," and were driven about and scolded if they ventured to amuse themselves in the yard, or anywhere in the sight or hearing of their aunt. Her own children were indulged in almost everything, but her little nieces were required to be as staid and circumspect as grown-up women. After about six months had elapsed, Mrs. Williams began to find fault with her sister for various trifles, and to be petulant and unkind in manner towards her. This thing was not done right, and the other thing was neglected. If she sat down for half an hour to sew for herself or children, something would be said or hinted to wound her, and make her feel that she was viewed by her sister in no other light than that of a hired servant.

Something occurring to make the kitchen-servant leave her place, Mrs. Haller cooked and attended in her situation until another could be obtained. There was, however, no effort made to procure another; week after week passed away, and still all the menial employments of the house and the hard duties of the kitchen fell upon Mrs. Haller. From her place at the first table, where she sat for a short time after she came into the house, she was assigned one with us. To all these changes she was not indifferent. She felt them keenly. But what could she do? Unfortunately for her, she had been so raised (as too many of our poor, proud, fashionable girls are now raised) as to be almost helpless when thrown upon her own resources. She was industrious, and saving; but understood nothing about getting a living. Therefore, she felt that endurance was her only present course. It was grievous to the heart to be trampled upon by a sister whose condition was above her's; but as that sister had offered her an (sic) assylum, when in the utmost destitution, she resolved to bear patiently the burden she imposed upon her.

It was now tacitly understood between the sisters that Sally was to be kitchen-servant to the other. And as a servant she was treated. When company were at the house, she was not to know them or sit down in the parlour with them. Her little ones were required to keep themselves out of the family sitting-room, and Mrs. Williams's children taught, not by words, but by actions, to look upon them as inferiors. From confinement, and being constantly checked in the outburst of their feelings, they soon began to look much worse than they did when first taken from their comfortless abode. The youngest, a quiet child, might usually be found sitting on a little stool by her mother in the kitchen, playing with some trifling toy; but the other was a wild little witch, who was determined to obey no arbitrary laws of her aunt's enacting. There was no part of the house that she did not consider neutral ground. Now she would be playing with her little cousins in the breakfast-room, or in some of the chambers, and now clambering over the shop-board among the boys and journeymen. All liked her but Mrs. Williams, and to her she was a thorn in the flesh, because she set at defiance all her restrictions. This was a cause of much trouble to Mrs. Haller, who saw that the final result would be a separation from one or both of her children. The only reason that weighed with her and caused her to remain in her unpleasant and degraded situation, was the ardent desire she felt to keep her two youngest children with her. She could not trust them to the tender mercies of strangers. Deep distress and abject poverty had not blunted a single maternal feeling, and her heart yearned for her babes with an increased anxiety and tenderness as the chances every day appeared less in favour of her retaining them with her. One had nearly grown up, and was a sorrow and an anguish to her heart. Two others, quite young, were bound out, and but one of them had found a kind guardian. And now, one of the two that remained she feared would have to be removed from her.

One day, her sister called her into the sitting-room, where she found a lady of no very prepossessing appearance.

"Sally," said she, "this is Mrs. Tompkins. She has seen Emily, and would like to have her very much. You, of course, have no objections to getting so good a place for Emily. How soon can you get her ready to go? Mrs. Tompkins would like to have her by the first of next week."

Thus, without a moment's warning, the dreaded blow fell upon her. She murmured a faint assent, named an early day, and retired. She could not resist the will of her sister, for she was a dependant.

In the disposition of other people's children, we can be governed by what we call rational considerations; but when called upon to part with our own helpless offspring, how differently do we estimate circumstances! Every day we hear some one saying, "Why don't she put out her children?"--and, "Why don't she put out her children? They will be much better off." And perhaps these children are but eight, nine, and ten years old. Mother! father! whoever you may be, imagine your own children, of that tender age, among strangers as servants (for that is the capacity of children who are thus put out) required to be, in all respects, as prudent, as industrious, as renouncing of little recreations and pleasures as men and women, and subject to severe punishments for all childish faults and weaknesses, such as you would have borne with and gently corrected. Don't draw parallels between your own and poor people's children, as if they were to be less regarded than yours. Even as your heart yearns over and loves with unspeakable tenderness your offspring, does the mother, no matter how poor her condition, yearn over and love her children--and when they are removed from under her protecting wing, she feels as keen a sorrow as would rend your heart, were the children of your tenderest care and fondest love, taken from you and placed among strangers.

In due time, Emily was put out to Mrs. Tompkins, a woman who had wonderful fine notions about rearing up children so as to make men and women of them, (than her own, there were not a more graceless set in the whole city.) She had never been able to carry into full practice her admirable theories in regard to the education of children among her own hopefuls; because--first: Johnny was a very delicate boy, and to have governed him by strict rules, would have been to have ruined his constitution. She had never dared to break him of screaming by conquering him, in a single instance, because the rupture of a blood-vessel would doubtless have been the consequence, or a fit in which he might have died. Once indeed she did try to force him to give up his will, but he grew black in the face from passion, and she had hard work to recover him--after this he was humoured in everything. And Tommy was a high-spirited and generous fellow, and it would have been a pity to warp his fine disposition. Years of discretion would make him a splendid specimen of perfect manhood. Angelina, (a forward, pert little minx,) was, from her birth, so gentle, so amiable, so affectionate, that no government was necessary--and Victorine was so naturally high-tempered, that her mother guarded against the developement of

anger by never allowing her to be crossed in anything.

In Emily, Mrs. Tompkins supposed she had found a fine subject on which to demonstrate her theories. A wilful, spoiled child, she was, eleven years of age, and needed curbing, and in a few days Mrs. Tompkins found it necessary to exercise her prerogative. Emily was, of course, put right to work, so soon as she came into the house. Her first employment was to sweep up the breakfast-room, after the maid had removed the breakfast-things and placed back the table. She had never handled a broom, and was, of course, very awkward. With this awkwardness, Mrs. Tompkins had no patience, and once or twice took the broom from her hand, and directed her how to hold and use it, in a high tone, and half-angry manner. In due course she got through this duty; and then was directed to rock the cradle, while Mrs. Tompkins went through her chamber and made herself look a little tidy. Sitting still a whole hour was a terrible trial to Emily's patience, but she made out to stick at her post until Mrs. Tompkins re-appeared. She was then sent into the cellar to bring up three or four armfuls of wood, and immediately after to the grocer's for a pound of soap, then to the milliner's with a band-box. When she returned, it was about eleven o'clock, and she was set to help one of the servants wash the windows, which were taken out of the frames and washed in the yard. This occupied until twelve. Then she must rock the cradle again, which she did until one o'clock, when it waked, and she had to sit on a little chair and hold it, while the family dined. Her own dinner was afterwards put on a plate, and she made to stand by the kitchen-table and eat it. All the afternoon was taken up in some employment or other, and as soon as supper was over (which she eat, as before, standing at the kitchen-table) she was sent to bed--and glad she was to get there, for she was so tired she could hardly stand up.

The next day passed in the same unrelaxing round of duties, and the third commenced in a similar way. The little thing had by this time become almost sick from such constant confinement and extra labour for one of her strength. She was set, on this day, to scrub down a pair of back stairs, a task to which she was unequal. Before she had got down to the third step, she accidentally upset the basin and flooded the whole stair-case--dashing the dirty-water in the face of Mrs. Tompkins who was just coming up. She was a good deal frightened, for Mrs. Tompkins had shown so much anger towards her on different occasions in the last three days, and had once threatened to correct her, that she feared punishment would follow the accident. A slight box on the ear was indeed administered. Trembling from head to foot with fear, and weakness, for the child was by no means well, she brought up another basin of water, and commenced scouring the steps again. By some strange fatality, the basin was again upset, and unfortunately fell in the face of Mrs. Tompkins again. A cruel chastisement followed, with a set of leather thongs, upon the poor child's bare back and shoulders.

That night the child came home to her mother, and gave a history of her treatment. Her lacerated back was sufficient evidence how

cruelly she had been punished. The little thing was in a high fever, and moaned and talked in her sleep all night.

Finding that the child was not sent back in the morning, Mrs. Williams wished to know the reason, and was told the real condition of Emily.

"She's a bad child, Sally, and has no doubt deserved a whipping! You have spoiled your older children by mistaken kindness, and will spoil the rest. But I can tell you very distinctly that I am not going to be a party in this matter, and will not consent that Emily stay here any longer. So, if you don't send her back to Mrs. Tompkins, you may get her a place somewhere else, for after this week she shall not stay here. She has almost ruined my Clara, now!"

To this, poor Mrs. Haller made no reply. Her home at our house had only been endured because there she thought she could keep her babes with her. She left the presence of her unfeeling sister, and began to study how she could manage to support herself and two children by her own unaided exertions. Many plans were suggested to her mind, but none seemed to promise success. At length she resolved to rent a small room, and put into it a bed, a table, and a few chairs, with some other necessary articles which she still had, and then buy some kind of vegetables with about five dollars that were due her, and go to market as a huckster! Let not the sentimental and romantic turn away in disgust. When humanity is reduced to a last resource, be it what it may, the heart endures pains, and doubts, and fears of a like character, whether the resource be that offered to a noble lady, or a lonely widow.

Before Saturday night, Mrs. Haller had found a room near the market that just suited her, which she rented at two dollars a month with the use of the cellar. When she made known to Mrs. Williams her intention of leaving her house, and told her how she intended to make a living, the latter was almost speechless with surprise.

"Surely, Sally," said she, "you cannot be in earnest?"

"Indeed I am in earnest, though?"

"But consider the disgrace it will be to your family."

"Nothing is disgraceful that is honest."

"I never will consent to your being a huckster:--Sally! if you do so disgrace yourself as to stand in the market and sell potatoes and cabbages, I will disown you! You have a comfortable home here, and where then is the use of your exposing yourself in the market-house?"

"You will not let Emily stay here with me, and I cannot part with my poor babes." A flood of tears burst forth, even though she struggled hard to conceal them.

"You are very weak and foolish, Sally. Emily will be much better off, away from you. She is growing up a spoiled child, and needs other care than yours. You are too indulgent."

"In any case, Mary, I am determined to keep these children with me. I know that it is not pleasant for you to have them here, and I don't want to have them in your way. The best thing I can do is that which I have determined on."

"If you will go, why not take in sewing, or washing and ironing?"

"Simply, because I cannot make a living with my needle, and my health will not permit me to stand over the wash-tub from morning till night. There is no resource left me but the market-house, reluctantly as I go there."

"Well, Sally, you can do as you please. But let me tell you, that if you do turn huckster, I will never own you as my sister again."

"Any such foolish and rash resolution on your part, I should regret very much; for, unkindly and unfeelingly as you have acted towards me, I have no wish to dissolve the tie of nature."

"It shall be dissolved, you may rely upon it, if you do so disgraceful a thing."

On Saturday she got what was due to her, and on Monday removed to her new abode. Of all this, Mr. Williams had not the slightest knowledge. After getting her room fixed up, she went down to the wharf and bought a few bushels of potatoes, and some apples: with these she went to the market. Her feelings in thus exposing herself, can only be imagined by such as have had to resort to a similar method of obtaining a livelihood, when they first appeared in the market-house. She had not been long at her stand, when Mr. Williams, who generally went to market, came unexpectedly upon her.

"Why, Sally, what in the world are you doing here?" was his surprised salutation.

"Why, didn't you know that I had left your house for the market-house?"

"No! How should I know You never told me that you were going.

"But surely sister did?"

"Indeed she did not."

"She knew last week that I was going, and that I had determined to make a living for myself and children in this way."

"I am sorry you left our house, Sally! You should have had a home

there as long as I lived. You must not stay here, anyhow. Something better can be done for you. Surely you and Mary have not quarrelled?"

"She has renounced me for ever!"

Mr. Williams was a good deal shocked by this unexpected interview, and when he went home inquired into the state of affairs. He censured his wife severely for her part in the matter, upon her own statement; and told her plainly that she had not treated Sally as a sister should have been treated. He went to see Mrs. Haller that day, and used many arguments to induce her to come back, or at least to give up her newly-adopted calling.

"Put me in a better and more comfortable way of making a living, Mr. Williams," was her answer--"and I will most gladly adopt it. I know of no other that will suit me. I cannot longer remain dependent. In your house I was dependent, and daily and hourly I was made to feel that dependence, in the most galling manner."

By her first day's efforts in the market-house, Mrs. Haller earned three-quarters of a dollar, with which she bought food for herself and children, and re-invested the original amount. On the next day, as on the first, she disposed of her whole stock, and was so fortunate in her sales as to clear one dollar. On the next day she did not sell more than half of her little stock, and cleared only thirty-seven-and-a-half cents on that. Greatly discouraged she went home at twelve o'clock, and was still further cast down at finding her husband there, come to take up his lodgings, and eat up her meagre earnings from her children. She remonstrated against his coming back, but with drunken oath and cruel threats he let her know that he should stay there in spite of her. Before night, her oldest son, a worthless vagabond, also made his appearance, and between them swept off all the food, that she had bought with the profits on her five dollars, which she had resolved from the first not to break. On the next morning she cleared a full dollar, and on Saturday, another. But her increased family prevented her adding a cent of the profits to her original capital. After the market on Saturday morning, she went out and bought about three dollars worth of eggs, at ten cents a dozen, which, before night, she sold at twelve-and-a-half cents, thus clearing twenty-five cents on the dollar, or three-quarters of a dollar in all. With a dollar and three-quarters that she had made that day, she laid in a supply of common and substantial food.

On Sunday she went, as was her custom, to church, and took her two little girls with her. Her husband and son remained at home. When she returned from service they were gone; instinctively turning to where she had concealed her little treasure, of five dollars, she found that it had also disappeared! She knew well how to account for its loss. Her husband and son had robbed her! The little hope that had animated her breast for the last few days, gave way, and she sunk down into a condition of mind that was almost despair. Towards

evening, her husband and son came home drunk, and lay all night stupid. In the morning, they stole off by day-light, and she was left alone with her little ones, to brood over her melancholy prospect. She could not, of course, go to market, for she had nothing to sell, nor anything with which to purchase a little stock.

Mr. Williams, who felt a lively interest in her case, especially on account of the unkind treatment she had received from his wife, used to stop and inquire into her prospects whenever he saw her in the market, and had been looking round for something better for her to do. Missing her this morning, he went to her house, and there found her in a state of complete despondency. He encouraged her in the best way he could, but did not advance her another little capital, which he would willingly have done under other circumstances, and then went away, determined to get her some situation which would be more suitable for one of her habits and feelings.

Not an hour after he learned that a head nurse was much wanted at the alms-house. He made immediate application for her, and was happy in securing the place. It was at once offered to her, and she accepted it with gladness, especially as she would be allowed to bring her two children with her. In due time, she removed to her new abode, and soon won the good-will and kind consideration of the Board of Trustees, and the affectionate regards of those to whose afflictions she was called to minister. Her two little girls were educated at the alms-house school, and grew up amiable, intelligent, and industrious. Of her other children, I never knew much.

Mrs. Williams seemed to think the situation of her sister at the alms-house, almost as disgraceful as her place in the market. She never renewed a communication with her. Even up to the hour when Mrs. Haller was called to her final account, which was many years after, her sister neither saw nor spoke to her.

THE MAIDEN'S ERROR.

THE story of Julia Forrester is but a revelation of what occurs every day. I draw aside the veil for a moment, would that some one might gaze with trembling on the picture, and be saved!

The father of Julia had served an apprenticeship to the tanning and currying business. He had been taken when an orphan boy of twelve years old, by a man in this trade, and raised by him, without any of the benefits of education. At twenty-one he could read and write a

little, but had no taste for improving his mind. His master, being well pleased with him for his industry and sobriety, offered him a small interest in his business, shortly after he was free, which soon enabled him to marry, and settle himself in life.

His new companion was the daughter of a reduced tradesman; she had high notions of gentility, but possessed more vanity and love of admiration than good sense. Neither of them could comprehend the true relation of parents. If they fed their children well, clothed them well, and sent them to the most reputable schools, they imagined that they had, in part, discharged their duty; and, wholly, when they had obtained good-looking and well-dressed husbands for their daughters. This may be a little exaggerated; but such an inference might readily have been drawn by one who attentively considered their actions.

I shall not spend further time in considering their characters. Their counterpart may be found in every street, and in every neighbourhood. The curious student of human nature can study them at will. Julia Forrester was the child of such parents. When she was fifteen, they were in easy circumstances. But at that critical period of their daughter's life, they were ignorant of human nature, and entirely unskilled in the means of detecting false pretension, or discovering true merit.

Indeed, they were much more ready to consider the former as true, and the latter as false. The unpretending modesty of real worth they generally mistook for imbecility, or a consciousness of questionable points of character; while bold-faced assurance was thought to be an open exhibition of manliness--the free, undisguised manner of those who had nothing to conceal.

It is rarely that a girl of Julia's age, but little over fifteen, possesses much insight into character. It was enough for her that her parents invited young men to the house, or permitted them to visit her. Her favour, or dislike, was founded upon mere impulse, or the caprice of first impressions. Among her earliest visitors, was a young man of twenty-two, clerk in a dry-goods' store. He had an open, prepossessing manner, but had indulged in vicious habits for many years, and was thoroughly unprincipled. His name I will call Warburton. Another visitor was a modest, sensible young man, also clerk in another dry-goods' store. He was correct in all his habits, and inclined to be religious. He had no particular end in view in visiting at Forrester's, more than to mingle in society. Still, as he continued his visits, he began to grow fond of Julia, notwithstanding her extreme youth. The fact was, she had shot up suddenly into a graceful woman; and her manners were really attractive. Little could be gleaned, however, in her society, or in that of but few who visited her, from the current chit-chat. It was all chaffy stuff,--mere small-talk. Let me introduce the reader to their more particular acquaintance. There is assembled at Mr. Forrester's a gay social party, such as met there almost every week. It is in the summer time. The windows are thrown open, and the

passers-by can look in upon the light-hearted group, at will. Warburton and Julia are trifling in conversation, and the others are wasting the moments as frivolously as possible. We will join them without ceremony.

"A more beautiful ring than this on your finger, I have never seen. Do you know why a ring is used in marriage?"

"La! no, Mr. Warburton. Do tell me."

"Why, because it is an emblem of love, which has neither beginning nor end."

"And how will you make that out, Sir Oracle? ha! ha!"

"Why as plain as a pike-staff. True love has no beginning; for those who are to be married love each other before they meet. And it cannot have an end. So you see that a ring is the emblem of love."

"That's an odd notion; where did you pick it up?"

"I picked it up nowhere. It is a cherished opinion of my own, and I believe in it as firmly as some of the Jews of old did in the transmigration of souls."

"You are a queer body."

"Yes, I _have_ got some queer notions; so people say: but I think I am right, and those who don't agree with me, wrong. A mere difference of opinion, however. All things are matters of opinion. Aint it so, Perkins?" addressing the young man before alluded to.

"What were you talking about?"

"Why, I was just saying to Julia that all different ideas entertained by different persons, were differences of opinion merely."

"Do you mean to say, that there is no such thing as truth, or error?"

"I do--in the abstract."

"Then we differ, of course--and as it would be, according to your estimation, a mere difference of opinion, no argument on the subject would be in place here."

"Of course not," replied Warburton, rather coolly, and dropped the subject. Julia _almost_ saw that Warburton had made himself appear foolish in the eyes of the dull, insipid Perkins--but her mental vision was closed up as firmly as ever, in a moment.

A loud burst of laughter from a group at the other end of the room,

drew the attention of the company, who flocked to the scene of mirth, and soon all were chattering and laughing in a wild and incoherent manner, so loud as to attract the notice of persons in the street.

"Ha! he! he!" laughed a young lady, hysterically, sinking into a chair, with her handkerchief to her mouth--"what a droll body!"

"He-a, he-a, he-o-o-o," more boisterously roared out a fun-loving chap, who knew more about good living than good manners. And so the laugh passed round. The cause of all this uproar, was a merry fellow, who had made a rabbit out of one of the girl's handkerchiefs, and was springing it from his hand against the wall. He seemed to have a fair appreciation of the character of his associates for the evening; and though himself perfectly competent to behave well in the best society, chose to act the clown in this.

In due course, order was restored, more from the appearance of a waiter with nuts and raisins, than from an natural reaction.

"Name my apple, Mr. Perkins,"--(don't smile, reader--it's a true picture)--whispered a young lady to the young man sitting next her.

"It is named."

"Name my apple, Mr. Collins," said Julia, with a nod and a smile.

"It is named."

"And mine, Mr. Collins"--"And mine, Mr. Warburton"--"And mine, Mr. Jones."

The apples being eaten, the important business of counting seed came next in order.

"How many have you got, Julia?"

"Six."

"She loves!"

"Who is it, Mr. Collins?" asked two or three voices.

"Mr. Warburton," was the reply.

"I thought so, I thought so,--see how she blushes."

And in fact the red blood was mounting fast to Julia's face.

The incident escaped neither the eye of Warburton nor of Perkins. To go through the whole insipid scene would not interest any reader, and so we will omit it.

After the apples were eaten, "hull-gull,"--"nuts in my hand," &c., were played, and then music was called for

"Miss Simmons, give us an air, if you please."

"Indeed you must excuse me, I am out of practice."

"No excuse can be taken. We all know that you can play, and we must hear you this evening."

"I would willingly oblige the company, but I have not touched the piano for two months, and cannot play fit to be heard."

"O, never mind, we'll be the judges of that."

"Come, Miss Simmons, do play for us now, that's a good soul!"

"Indeed you must excuse me!"

But no excuse would be taken. And in spite of protestations, she was forced to take a seat at the piano.

"Well, since I must, I suppose I must. What will you have."

"Give us 'Bonny Doon'--it is so sweet and melancholy," said an interesting-looking young man.

"'Charlie over the Water,' is beautiful--I dote on that pong; do sing it, Miss Simmons!"

"Give us Auld Lang Syne."

"Yes, or Burns's Farewell."

"'Oft in the Stilly Night,' Miss Simmons--you can sing that."

"Yes, 'Oft in the Stilly Night,'--Miss Simmons," said half-a-dozen voices, and so that was finally chosen. After running her fingers over the keys for a few moments, Miss Simmons started off.

Before she had half finished the first verse, the hum of voices, which had commenced as soon as she began to sing, rose to such a pitch as almost to drown the sound of the instrument. She laboured on through about a verse and a half of the song, when she rose from the piano, and was proceeding to her vacant seat.

"O no!--no!--no!" said half-a-dozen voices at once.

"That will never do--we must have another song."

"Indeed I can't sing to-night, and _must_ be excused," said the lady warmly, and so she _was_ excused. But soon another was chosen to be victimized at the piano, and "will-ye-nill-ye," sing she must.

Simultaneous with the sound of the instrument rose the hum of voices, which grew louder and louder, until the performer stopped, discouraged and chagrined.

"That's beautiful! How well you play, Miss Emma!" and Miss Emma was forced to resume the seat she had left half in mortification. All was again still for a moment.

"Can you play the 'Harp and Lute,' Miss Emma?"

"No sir."

"Yes you can, though, for I've heard you many a time," said a smart young lady sitting on the opposite side of the room.

The blood mounted to the performer's cheeks. "Indeed you're mistaken though," half pettishly replied Miss Emma.

"But you can play 'Yankee Doodle,'" retorted the first speaker. Miss Emma left the instrument in anger.

"I'll never speak to the pert minx again as long as I live," whispered Miss Emma in the ear of a friend.

Thus ended the musical exhibition for that evening. As the spirit of wine grew more active, the men became less formal in their attentions, and the young ladies less reserved. Before the company broke up, I almost blush to say, that there was scarcely a lady present who had not suffered her red-ripe lips to be touched by those of every young man in the room. And on all these proceedings, the parents of Julia looked on with keen satisfaction! They liked to see the young people enjoying themselves!

Then there were rambles by moonlight, during which soft things were whispered in the ears of the young ladies. These were the occasions on which Warburton loved most to steal away the fond confidence of Julia; and, by degrees, he succeeded in fixing her regard upon himself. Consent was asked of the parents, and given; and soon Julia Forrester was Mrs. Warburton. It was only six months after the marriage that a commercial crisis arrived; one of those reactions from prosperity which occur in this country with singular regularity, every ten or fifteen years, and swept from Julia's father the whole of his property. This sudden revulsion so preyed upon his mind, that a serious illness came on, which hurried him in a brief period to the grave. The mother of Julia soon followed him. Warburton, ere this, had neglected his wife, and wrung from her many a secret tear. He had married her for the prospect of worldly gain which the connection held out, and not from any genuine regard. And when all hope of a fortune was suddenly cut off, he as suddenly appeared in his real character of a heartless and unprincipled man.

He held the situation of clerk, at the time, in the same store where he had been for years. But immediately upon the death of his

father-in-law, a flood of demands for debts due here and there came in upon him, and not having where with to meet them, he was thrown into jail, and obtained his freedom only by availing himself of the law made and provided for the benefit of Insolvent Debtors.

His poor wife knew nothing of the proceedings against him, until he was lodged in the jail. Hour after hour had passed since the time for his return to dinner, and yet she listened in vain for his well-known footsteps. She felt strangely oppressed in feeling when the dim twilight came stealing sadly on, and still he came not home. But when the clock struck nine, ten, eleven,--her distress of mind became heightened to agony. The question, so often asked of herself, "Where _can_ he be?" could find no answer. All night long she sat listening at the window, and sunk into a heavy slumber, just as the grey light of morning stole into the window and paled the expiring lamp. From this slumber, which had continued for nearly two hours, she was aroused by the entrance of a servant, who handed her a note, addressed in the well-known hand of her husband. Tremblingly she tore open the seal; at the first words:

Jail.

DEAR JULIA:

the note fell from her hand, and she pressed her aching head for a moment, as if she feared that her senses would leave her. Then snatching up the paper, she read:--

"Yesterday I was sent here for debt. I owe more than I can possibly pay, and I see no chance of getting out but by availing myself of the Insolvent Law, which I am determined to do. Don't let it trouble you, Julia; I shall not be here long. To-morrow I shall probably be at liberty. Good-bye, and keep a brave heart,

H. WARBURTON."

For some time after reading this letter, a stupor came over her senses. Utterly unprepared for such a distressing event, she knew not how to act. The idea of a jail had ever been associated in her mind with disgrace and crime, and to think that her own husband was in jail almost bereft her of rational thought. Slowly, however, she at length rallied, and found herself able to appreciate her situation, and to think more clearly on her course of action.

Her first determination was to go to her husband. This she immediately did. When admitted, she fell senseless in his arms, and it was a long time before she recovered her consciousness. Her presence seemed to move his feelings less than it annoyed him. There was nothing about his manner that sought affectionately her sympathy and confidence--that which gives woman, in situations no matter how distressing, something so much like happiness to bestow. He gave her but little satisfaction as to the manner in which he became involved, and when, after several hours, she prepared to go home, at

his suggestion, he told her that she must not come there again, as it was not a fit place for her.

"If you are here, Henry," was her reply, the tears starting freshly to her eyes--"it is a fit place for me."

"That's all nonsense and sentiment, Julia! This is no place for you, and you must not come again. I shall be out in a day or two."

"A day or two is a long--long time,"--and the poor wife's voice trembled as she spoke.

"It will soon pass away."

"It will seem ages to me, and you in this dreadful place. I must come tomorrow, Henry. Tell me who has imprisoned you, and I will go to him, and come to-morrow with his answer. He cannot stand the pleadings of a wife for her husband."

"It's no use, at all, Julia. He is a hard-faced villain, and will insult you if you see him."

"He cannot--he dare not!"

"He dare do anything."

"Dear Henry, tell me his name."

"No!--no!--no!--It's no use to ask me."

She had many times before suffered from his petulance and coldness; but under present circumstances, when she sought to bring him sympathy and relief, to be repulsed, seemed as though it would break her heart. Slowly and in tears did she leave the dreadful place that confined her husband, and sought her home. There she endeavoured to rally her scattered thoughts, and devise some means of relief. Her first movement was to go to the employers of her husband. They received her coldly, and after she had stated the condition of her husband, told her that they could offer no relief, and hinted that his conduct had been such as to forfeit their confidence. This was a double blow; and she returned home with but strength enough to seek her chamber and throw herself, almost fainting, upon her bed.

For hours she lay in a kind of nervous stupor, the most fantastic and troubled images floating through her brain. Sometimes she would start up, at the imagined sound of her husband's voice, and spring to the chamber-door to meet him. But the chilling reality would drive her back in tears. Where now were the crowds of friends that but a short time since had hovered round her? They were but fashionable, soulless insects--the cold winds of adversity had swept them away. Since the failure and death of her father, not one of the many who had called her friend had come near her lonely dwelling. But she could not complain. More than one friend had she deserted,

when misfortune came suddenly upon them.

She took no food through the whole of that dreadful day, and could find no oblivious sleep during the night of agony that followed. On the next day, just as she had determined to go again to the prison, her quick ear recognised the foot-fall of her husband. She sprang to meet him, with a gladder heart than she had known for many weeks--but his cold manner and brief words threw back upon her feelings a sickening chill.

"We must move from here, Julia," said he, after a few silent moments, and looked at her as though he expected objection as a matter of course.

"I am willing, if it is necessary, Henry. I will go anywhere with _you_."

Her manner softened his feelings, and he said more tenderly,

"Things are changed with me, Julia. In expectation of something handsome from your father, I have been imprudent, and am now largely in debt. The Messrs. R. & L. will not, I am sure, take me back into their store, and it will be hard, I am afraid, for me to get a situation in town. Our furniture, which I have secured to you, is all we have, except about money enough to pay our quarter's rent now due. I see no wiser plan for us than to sell this furniture, except enough for one chamber, and then go to boarding. It will bring a sum sufficient to pay our board and other expenses for at least one year, if we manage prudently; and, surely, I can get something to do in the mean time."

"I am willing for anything, dear Henry!" said his wife, twining her arms about his neck, and laying her pale cheek to his. The furniture was accordingly sold, and the reduced and humbled couple removed to a boardinghouse.

As he had expected, Warburton found it hard to get employment. Finally, after doing nothing for two months, he accepted the situation of bar-keeper at one of the city hotels. Julia pleaded hard with him not to go there, for she feared the influence of such a place upon him, but he would listen to no argument.

His wife soon began to observe indications of a change for the worse in his character. He grew more pettish and dissatisfied, and frequently acted towards her with great unkindness. He was rarely, if ever, at home before midnight, and then repulsed every affectionate act or word. Several times he came in intoxicated, and once, while in that state, he struck her a severe blow on the head, which caused an illness of several weeks.

At the end of a year, Warburton had not only become dissipated in his habits, but had connected himself with a set of gamblers, who, as he proved to be a skilful hand, and not at all squeamish,

resolved to send him on a trip down the Ohio and Mississippi, to New Orleans, for mutual benefit. To this he had not the slightest objection. He told his wife that he was going to New Orleans on business for the Stage Office, and would probably be gone all winter. Unkind as he had grown, it was hard parting. Gladly would she have taken all the risk of fatigue, to have accompanied him with her babe but four months old, but he would listen to no such proposal. When he did go, she felt sick at heart, and, as the thought flashed across her mind that he might probably desert her, helpless and friendless as she was, it seemed as if the fever of her mind would end in madness.

Regularly, however, for several months, she heard from him, and each time he enclosed her money; but little more than was sufficient to meet expenses. In the last letter she received, he hinted that he might return home in a few weeks. At the usual time of receiving a letter, she waited day after day, hoping and almost fearing to receive one--anxious to hear from him, and yet fearing that he might have changed his mind as to his contemplated return.

Week after week passed, and there were no tidings. Day after day she went to the post-office with an anxious heart, which throbbed quicker and quicker as the clerk mechanically and carelessly turned over letter after letter, and at last pronounced the word "none," with professional indifference. Then it would seem to stop, and lie like a motionless weight in her bosom, and she would steal away paler and sicker than when she came. At last, her distress of mind became so great, that she went, reluctantly, to the stage-office, to inquire if they had heard from him recently. To her hesitating, anxious inquiry, she received the brief reply that they knew nothing of him.

"But is he not in the employment of this office?"

"I hope not," was the short, sneering reply of one of the clerks.

"What do you mean, sir?" she asked, in an excited tone--"he is my husband."

The manner of the man instantly changed. "Nothing, ma'am.--It was only a thoughtless reply. He is not, however, in our employment, and never has been."

Mrs. Warburton turned pale as ashes. A chair was instantly handed to her, and a glass of water, and every kind attention offered.

At this moment a man entered, who eyed Mrs. W. with a vulgar stare. The person who had first spoken to Mrs. W. took him aside, and after conversing in whispers for a few moments, turned to her and said that he had just learned that her husband had joined a band of traders, and was now on his way to Mexico.

"How do you know?" was the quick reply.

"This gentleman has just told me."

"And how do you know, sir?"

"I received a letter from him three weeks ago, in which he stated the fact to me. He has been in my employment ever since he has been away, but has left it and gone to Mexico."

"When did he say he would return?" she asked, in a calm voice.

"That is uncertain, madam."

She tottered out of the office, and stole home with an enfeebled step. "Forsaken!--forsaken!--" was all the form her thoughts would take, until she met the sweet face of her babe, and then her heart felt warmer, and not all forsaken.

"Poor thing! how I pity her," said the clerk in the stage-office, when Mrs. W. had retired. "Her husband is a scoundrel, that's all I know about it," responded the gentleman-gambler, who had sent Warburton out on a swindling expedition.

"The more the pity for his poor wife."

"I wonder if she has any property of his in her hands?" queried the gambler.

"Why?"

"Why?--Why because I'll have my own out of it if she has. I have his note, payable in a week, for money lent; and if he has got a dollar here, I'll have it."

"You'll not turn his wife out of doors, will you?"

"Will I?"--and his face grew dark with evil thoughts.--"Will I?--yes!--what care I for the whining wench! I'll see her to-morrow, and know what we have both to expect."

"Coulson!" said the clerk, in an excited but firm voice--"You shall not trouble that helpless, unfortunate woman!"

"_Shall not?_ ha! Pray, Mr. Sympathy, and how can you hinder me?"

"Look you to that, sir. I act, you know, not threaten."

The gambler's face grew darker, but the clerk turned away with a look of contempt, and resumed his employment.

That night he sought the dwelling of Mrs. Warburton. He found her boarding at a respectable house on--street. He named his business at once, and warned her not to allow herself to get in the power of

Coulson, who was a gambler, and an abandoned villain.

When he understood her real situation--that she was in debt for board, and without a dollar, forsaken of her husband, and among strangers, his heart ached for her. Himself but on the salary of a clerk, he could give little or no assistance. But advice and sympathy he tendered, and requested her to call on him at any time, if she thought that he could aid her. A kind word, a sympathising tone, is, to one in such a sad condition, like gentle dews to the parched ground.

"Above all," was his parting admonition, "beware of Coulson! He will injure your character if he can. Do not see him. Forbid the servants to admit him. He will, if he fixes his heart upon seeing you, leave no stone unturned to accomplish it. But waver not in your determination. And be sure to let me know if he persecutes you too closely. Be resolute, and fear not. I know the man, and have crossed his path ere this. And he knows me."

Early on the next day, Coulson called, and with the most insinuating address, asked to see Mrs. Warburton.

"Ask him to send up his name," was Mrs. W.'s reply to the information of the servant, that a gentleman wished to speak to her.

"Coulson," was returned.

"Tell him that I cannot see him."

To this answer he sent back word that his business was important and urgent.

"Tell him that I cannot see him," was the firm reply.

Coulson left the house, baffled for once. The next day he called, and sent up another name.

"He is the same person who called himself 'Coulson' yesterday," said the servant to Mrs. W.

"Tell him that I cannot be seen."

"I'll match the huzzy yet!" he muttered to himself as he left the house.

It now became necessary for Mrs. Warburton to rally all the energies of her nature, feeble though they were, and yet untried. The rate of boarding which she was required to pay, was much beyond what she could now afford. At first she nearly gave up to despair. Thus far in life, she had never earned a single dollar, and, from her earliest recollection, the thought of working for money seemed to imply degradation. But necessity soon destroys false pride. Her greatest concern now was, what she should do for a living. She had

learned to play on the piano, to draw and paint, and had practised embroidery. But in all these she had sought only amusement. In not a single one of them was she proficient enough to teach. Fine sewing she could not do. Her dresses had all been made by the mantua-maker, and her fine sewing by the family sempstress. She had been raised in idle pleasure--had spent her time in thrumming on the piano, making calls, tripping about the streets, and entertaining company.

But wherever there is the will, there is a way. Through the kind interference of a stranger, she was enabled to act decisively. Two rooms were procured, and after selling various articles of costly chamber furniture which still remained, she was enabled to furnish them plainly and comfortably, and have about fifty dollars left.

Through the kind advice of this same stranger, (where were all her former friends?) employment was had, by which she was soon able to earn from four to five dollars a week.

Her employment was making cigars. At first, the tobacco made her so sick that she was unable to hold her head up, or work more than half her time. But after awhile she became used to it, and could work steadily all day; though she often suffered with a distressing headache. Mrs. Warburton was perhaps the first woman who made cigars in--. Through the application of a third person, to a manufacturer, the work was obtained, and given, from motives of charity.

She had been thus employed for about three months, and was beginning to work skilfully enough to earn four dollars a week, and give all necessary attention to herself and child, when Mr.--, the manufacturer, received a note signed by all the journeymen in his shop, demanding of him the withdrawal of all work from Mrs. Warburton, on pain of their refusal to work a day longer. It was an infringement, they said, upon their rights. Women could afford to work cheaper than men, and would ruin the business.

Mr.--was well off, and, withal, a man who could brook no dictation, in his business. His journeymen were paid their regular wages, and had, he knew, no right to say whom he should employ; and for any such interference he promptly resolved to teach them a lesson. He was, moreover, indignant that a parcel of men, many of whom spent more money at the taverns and in foolish expenses, in the week, than the poor forsaken mother of a young babe could earn in that time, should heartlessly endeavour to rob the more than widow of her hard-earned mite.

"I will sacrifice half that I am worth, before I will yield to such dictation," was his only answer to the demand. The foolish men "struck," and turned out to lounge idly in taverns and other places, until their employer should come to terms. They were, however, soon convinced of their folly; for but a few weeks elapsed before Mr. had employed females to make his cigars, who could afford to work for one-third less than the journeymen had been receiving, and make good wages at that. The consequence was, that the men who had, from

motives of selfishness, endeavoured to deprive Mrs. W. of her only chance of support, were unable to obtain work at any price. Several of them fell into idle and dissolute habits, and became vagabonds. Other manufacturers of cigars followed the example of Mr.--, and lessened the demand for journeymen; and the result in this instance was but a similar one to that which always follows combinations against employers--viz: to injure the interests of journeymen.

It was not long before Coulson found out the retreat of Mrs. Warburton, and commenced his persecutions. The note of her husband had fallen due, and his first movement was to demand the payment. Perceiving, however, at once, that to make the money out of any property in her possession was impossible, he changed his manner, and offered to befriend her in any way that lay in his power. For a moment she was thrown off her guard; but remembering the caution she had received, she assumed a manner of the most rigid coldness towards him, and told him that she already had friends who would care for her. The next day she managed to apprize the clerk in the Stage Office of the visit of Coulson, who promptly took measures to alarm his fears, for he was a coward at heart, and effectually prevent his again troubling her.

Little of an interesting nature occurred for about a year, when she received a letter from her husband at Cincinnati. He stated that having despaired of getting along in the business he had entered into on leaving--which had involved him in debt, he had left with a company of traders for Mexico, and had just returned with a little money, with which he wished to go into business. But that if he returned to--, he would be troubled, and all he had taken from him. He enclosed her a hundred dollar note, and wished her to come to him immediately, and to leave--without letting any one know her destination. He professed much sorrow for having left her in so destitute a condition, but pleaded stern necessity for the act.

Mrs. W. did not hesitate a moment. In four days from the time she received the letter, she was on the way to Cincinnati. Arrived there, she was met by her husband with some show of affection. He was greatly changed since she had seen him, and showed many indications of irregular habits. He appeared to have plenty of money, and took rooms for his wife in a respectable boardinghouse. The improvement in his child pleased him much. When he went away it was only about five months old--now it was a bright little boy, and could run about and chatter like a bird. After some hesitation in regard to the kind of business he should select, he at last determined to go into the river-trade. To this Mrs. Warburton gently objected; because it would keep him away from home for months together. But his capital was small, and he at length made his first purchase of produce, and started in a flat-boat for New Orleans. Poor Mrs. W. felt as if deserted again when he left her. But at the end of three months he returned, having cleared four hundred dollars by the trip. He remained at home this time for two months, drinking and gambling; and at the expiration of that period had barely enough left to make a small purchase and start again.

Her troubles, she plainly saw, were just beginning again, and Mrs. Warburton almost wished herself back again in the city, for which, though there she had no friends, her heart yearned.

Her husband did not return, this time, from his river-voyage, for three months; nor did he send his wife during that time any money. The amount left her was entirely exhausted before the end of the second month, and having heard nothing of him since he went away, she feared to get in debt, and, therefore, two weeks before her money was out, applied for work at a cigar-factory. Here she was fortunate enough to obtain employment, and thus keep herself above absolute want.

Long before her husband returned, her heart had fearful forebodings of a second blighting of all its dearest hopes. Not the less painful, were those anticipations, because she had once suffered.

One evening in June, just three months from the time her husband left, she had paused from her almost unremitting employment, during the violence of a tremendous storm, that was raging without. The thunder rattled around in startling peals, and the lightning blazed from cloud to cloud, without a moment's intermission. She could not work while she felt that the bolt of death hung over her. For half an hour had the storm raged, when in one of the pauses which indicated its passing away, she started at the sound of a voice that seemed like that of her husband. In the next moment another voice mingled with it, and both were loud and angry. Fearfully she flung open the door, and just on the pavement, drenched with the rain, and unregarding of the storm, for one more terrible raged within, stood two men, contending with each other in mortal strife, while horrible oaths and imprecations rolled from their lips. One of these, from his distorted face, rendered momentarily visible in the vivid flashes of the lightning, and from his voice, though loud and disguised by passion, she at once knew to be her husband. His antagonist was not so strong a man, but he was more active, and seemed much cooler. Each had in his hand an open Spanish knife, and both were striking, plunging, and parrying thrusts with the most malignant fury. It was an awful sight to look upon. Two human beings striving for each other's lives amid the fury of a terrible storm, the lightnings of which glanced sharply upon their glittering knives, revealing their fiend-like countenances for an instant, and then leaving them in black darkness.

For a few moments, Mrs. Warburton stood fixed to the spot, but, recalling her scattered senses, she rushed towards the combatants, calling upon them to pause, and repeating the name of her husband in a voice of agony. The result of the strife was delayed but an instant longer, for with a loud cry her husband fell bleeding at her feet. His antagonist passed out of sight in a moment.

Lifting the apparently lifeless form of her husband in her arms, Mrs. Warburton carried or rather dragged him into the house, and

placed him upon the bed, where lay their sleeping boy. She then hurried off for the nearest physician, who was soon in attendance.

The first sound that met the ear of Mrs. Warburton, on her return, was the voice of her dear child, eagerly calling, "Pa! pa! wake up, pa!"--And there was the little fellow pulling at the insensible body of his father, in an (sic) extacy of infantile joy at his return.

"Pa come home!--Pa come home, mamma!" And the little fellow clapped his hands, and shook the body of his father in the effort to wake him.

The mother gently lifted her child from the bed. His little face instantly changed its expression into one of fear, when he looked into his mother's countenance. "Pa's very sick, and little Charles must keep still," she whispered to the child, and sat him down in the next room.

When the physician arrived, he found that the knife had entered the left breast just above the heart, but had not penetrated far enough to destroy life. There were also several bad cuts, in different parts of his body, all of which required attention. After dressing them, he left the still insensible man in the care of his wife and one of his assistants, with directions to have him called should any alarming symptom occur. It was not until the next morning that there was any apparent return of consciousness on the part of the wounded man. Then he asked in a feeble voice for his wife. She had left the bed but a moment before, and hearing him speak, was by his side in an instant.

"Julia, how came I here? What is the matter?" said he, rousing up, and looking anxiously around. But overcome with weakness from the loss of blood, he sank back upon the bed, and remained apparently insensible for some time. But he soon showed evidence of painful recollection having returned. For his breathing became more laboured, under agitated feelings, and he glanced his eyes about the room with an eager expression. After a few minutes he buried his face in the bed-clothes and sighed heavily. Distinct, painful consciousness had returned.

In a few days he began to grow stronger, and was able to sit up; and with the return of bodily vigour came back the deadly passions that had agitated him on the night of his return home. The man, he said, had literally robbed him of his money, (in fact, won it); had cheated him out of every dollar of his hard-earned gains, and he would have his life.

When hardly well enough to walk about, Warburton felt the evil influence of his desire for revenge so strong, as to cause him to seek out the individual who, he conceived, had wronged him, by winning from him, or cheating him out of his money. They met in one of the vile places in Cincinnati, where vice loves to do her dark work in secret. Truly are they called hells, for there the love of

evil and hatred of the neighbour prompt to action. Every malignant passion in the heart of Warburton was roused into full vigour, when his eyes fell upon the face of his former associate. Instantly he grasped his knife, and with a yell of fiendish exultation sprang towards him, like some savage beast eager for his prey. The other gambler was a cool man, and hard to throw off of his guard. His first movement was to knock Warburton down, then drawing his Spanish knife, he waited calmly and firmly for his enemy to rise. Blind with passion, Warburton sprang to his feet and rushed upon the other, who received him upon the point of his knife, which entered deep into the abdomen. At the same instant, Warburton's knife was plunged into the heart of his adversary, who staggered off from its point, reeled for a few seconds about the room, and then fell heavily upon the floor. He was dead before the cool spectators of the horrid scene could raise him up.

From loss of blood Warburton soon fainted, and when he came to himself, he found that he had been conveyed to his home, and that his weeping wife stood over him. There were also others in the room, and he soon learned that he was to be conveyed, even in the condition he was then in, to prison, to await his trial for murder.

In vain did his poor heart-stricken wife plead that he might be left there until he recovered, or even until his wound was dressed; but she pleaded in vain. On a litter, faint from loss of blood, and groaning with pain, he was carried off to prison. By his side walked her whom no ill treatment or neglect could estrange.

Three months he was kept in jail, attended daily by his uncomplaining wife, who supported herself and little boy, with her own hands, sparing much for her husband's comfort. The wound had not proved very dangerous, and long before his trial came on, he was as well as ever.

The day of trial at length came, and Mrs. Warburton found that it required her strongest efforts to keep sufficiently composed to comprehend the true nature and bearing of all the legal proceedings. Never in her life before had she been in a court of justice, and the bare idea of being in that, to her awful, place, stunned at first all her perceptions; especially as she was there under circumstances of such deep and peculiar interest.

Next to her husband, in the bar, did this suffering woman take her place: and that husband arraigned before his country's tribunal for the highest crime--murder! How little did she dream of such an awful situation, years before, when a gay, thoughtless, innocent girl, she gave up in maiden confidence, and with deep joy, her affections to that husband. Passing on step by step, in misery's paths, she had at last reached a point, the bare idea of which, had it been entertained as possible for a moment, would have almost extinguished life. Now, her deep interest in that husband who had abused her confidence, and almost extinguished hope in her bosom, kept her up, and enabled her to watch with unwavering attention every minute

proceeding.

After the indictment was read, and the State's Attorney, in a comprehensive manner, had stated the distinct features of the case, which he pledged himself to prove by competent witnesses, poor Mrs. Warburton became sick and faint. A clearer case of deliberate murder could not, it seemed to her, be made out. Still, she was sure there must be palliating circumstances, and longed to be permitted to rise and state her impressions of the case. Once she did start to her feet, but a right consciousness returned before she had uttered a word. Shrinking into her seat again, she watched with a pale face and eager look, the course of the proceedings.

Witness after witness was called on the part of the state, each testifying distinctly the fact of Warburton's attack upon the murdered man, and his threat to take his life. Hope seemed utterly to fail from the heart of the poor wife, when the testimony on the part of the prosecution closed. But now came the time for the examination of witnesses in favour of the prisoner. Soon Mrs. Warburton was seen upon her feet, bending over towards the witness' stand, and eagerly devouring each word. Rapid changes would pass over her countenance, as she comprehended, with a woman's quickness of perception, rendered acute by strong interest, the bearing which the evidence would have upon the case. Now her eye would flash with interest and her face become flushed--and now her cheek would pale, and her form seem to shrink into half its dimensions. Oh! who can imagine one thousandth part of all her sufferings on that awful occasion? When, finally, the case was given to the jury, and after waiting hour after hour at the court-house, to hear the decision, she had to go home long after dark, in despair of knowing the result before morning, it seemed hardly possible that she could pass through that night and retain her senses. She did not sleep through the night's long watches--how could she sleep? Hours before the court assembled, she was at the court-house, waiting to know the fate of one, who now, in his fearful extremity, seemed dearer to her than ever. Slowly passed the lingering minutes, and at length ten o'clock came. The court-room was filled to suffocation, but through the dense crowd she made her way, and took her place beside her anxious husband. The court opened, and the foreman of the jury came forward to read the verdict. Many an eye sought with eager curiosity, or strong interest, the face of the wife. Its calmness was strange and awful. All anxiety, all deep interest had left it, and as she turned her eye upon the foreman, none could read the slightest exhibition of emotion. "GUILTY OF MURDER IN THE SECOND DEGREE!" Quick as thought a hundred eyes again sought the face of Mrs. Warburton. It was pale as ashes, and her insensible form was gently reclining upon the arm of her husband, which had been extended to save her from falling.

When recollection returned, she was lying upon her own bed, in her own chamber, with her little boy crying by her side. Those who had, from humane feelings, conveyed her home, suffered the dictates of humanity to die in their bosoms ere her consciousness returned; and

thus she was left, insensible, with no companion but her child.

In due course, Warburton was sentenced to eight years imprisonment, the first three years to be passed in solitary confinement. During the first term, no person was to be allowed to visit him. The knowledge of such a sentence was a dreadful blow to Mrs. Warburton. She parted from him in the court-room, on the day of his sentence, and for three long, weary years, her eyes saw him not again.

But a short time after the imprisonment of Warburton, another babe came into the world to share the misery of her whose happiness he had, in all his actions, so little regarded. When able again to go about, and count up her store, Mrs. Warburton found that she had little left her beyond a willing heart to labour for her children. It would have been some comfort to her if she had been permitted to visit her husband, but this the law forbade.

"Despair is never quite despair," and once more in her life did Mrs. Warburton prove this. The certainty that there could be no further dependence upon her husband, led her to repose more confidently in her own resources, for a living, and they did not fail her. She had long since found out that our necessities cost much less than our superfluities, and therefore she did not sit down in idle despondency. Early in the morning and late at night was she found diligently employed, and though her compensation was not great, it was enough to supply her real wants.

For two years had she supported thus with her own hands herself and children. The oldest was now a smart little fellow of five years, and the youngest a fair-haired girl of some two summers. Thus far had she kept them around her; but sickness at last came. Nature could not always sustain the heavy demands made upon her, and at last sunk under them.

There are many more cases of extreme suffering in this country than persons are generally willing to believe. These extreme cases are among those whose peculiar feelings will not allow of their making known their real condition. They are such as were once members of some social circle, far removed indeed from the apparent chances of poverty. Their shrinking pride, their yearning desire for independence clings closer and closer to them, and operates more and more powerfully, as they sink lower and lower, from uncontrollable causes, into the vale of want and destitution. Beggars with no feelings, and no claims beyond those of idleness and intemperance, thrust themselves forward, and consume the bread of charity, that should go to nourish the widow and the orphan, who suffer daily and nightly, rather than ask for aid.

One to whom the idea of eating the bread of charity had ever been a painful and revolting one, was Mrs. Warburton. So long as she was able, she had earned with untiring industry, the food that nourished her children. But close confinement, insufficient nourishment, labour beyond her strength, and above all, a wounded spirit, at last

completed the undermining work, which threw down the tottering and feeble health that had long kept her at her duties.

It was mid-winter when she was severely attacked by a bilious-pleurisy. For some weeks she had drooped about, hardly able to perform half her wonted labour--most of that time suffering from a hard cough and distressing pain in the side, which was augmented almost to agony while bending steadily, and for hours over her work. Taking, as it did, all that she could earn to keep herself and children in comfort during the winter, she had nothing laid up for a time of more pressing need; and, as for the last few weeks, she had earned so little as to have barely enough for necessaries, when helplessness came, she was in utter destitution, Her wood was just out, except a few hard, knotted logs; her flour was out, and her money gone. When she could no longer sit up, she sent her little boy for a physician, who bled her, and left her some powerful medicines. The first gave temporary relief, and the latter reduced her to a state of great bodily and mental weakness. He did not call in again until the second day, when he found the children both in bed with their mother, who was suffering greatly from a return of the pain in her side. The room was chilly, for there was no fire, and it was intensely cold without, and the ground covered with a deep snow. He again bled her, which produced immediate relief, and learning that she had no wood, called in at the next door, where lived a wealthy family, and stated the condition of their poor neighbour A child of six years old stood by his mother while the physician was speaking. The lady seemed much affected when told of the sufferings of the, poor woman, politely thanked the physician for making her acquainted with the fact, and promised immediate attention.

That evening there was to be at this house a large party. Extra servants had been employed that day, and all was bustle and preparation.

"Sarah," called the lady, a few minutes after, to her housekeeper--"Sarah, Dr. H--was here just now, and said that the poor woman who lives next door is sick and out of fuel. Tell John to take her in an armful of wood, and do you just step in and see what more she is in want of."

"Yes, ma'am," responds Sarah, and muttering to herself some dissatisfaction at the order, descends to the kitchen, and addresses a sable man-servant, and kind of doer-of-all-work-in-general, in doors and out,

"John, Mrs.--says you must take an armful of wood in to Mrs. Warrington; I believe that is the woman's name who lives next door."

"Who? de woman whose husband in de (sic) Penetentiary?"

"Yes, that's the one, John."

"Don't love to meddle wid dem guess sort of folks, Miss Sarah.

'Druder not be gwine in dere," responds the black, with a broad grin at his own humour.

"Well, I don't care whether you do or not," responds Sarah, and glides swiftly away, satisfied to do one part of her order and forget the other, which related to her going in to see the poor woman herself. Mrs.--shifted off the duty on her housekeeper, and she contented herself by forgetting it.

Little William, who was present with his mother when the doctor called, was, like all children, a true republican, and had often played with the child of the sick woman. He had seen his little playmate but a few times since the cold weather set in; but had all his sympathies aroused, at the doctor's recital. Being rather more suspicious of the housekeeper than his mother, and no doubt for good reasons best known to himself, he followed on to the kitchen, and was an ear-witness to what passed between John and the sub-mistress of the mansion.

"Come, John, now that's a good fellow," said he to the negro, after the housekeeper had retired, "take in some wood to poor Mrs. Warburton."

"'Fraid, Massa Billy, 'deed. 'Fraid of (sic) penentenary--ha! ha!! ha!!!"

"She can't help that, though, John. So come along, and take the wood in."

"'Fraid, i'deed, Massa Billy."

"Well, if you don't, I'll take it in myself, and dirty all my clothes, and then somebody will find it out, without my turning tell-tale."

John grinned a broad smile, and forthwith, finding himself outwitted, carried in the wood, and left it in the middle of the floor, without saying a word.

Towards evening, just before the company assembled, little William, not at all disposed to forget, as every one else had done, the poor sufferers next door, went to the housekeeper's room, where she was busy as a bee with preparations for the party, and stationed himself in the door, accosted her with--

"Miss Sarah, have you been in to see Mrs. Warburton, as ma told you, to-day?"

"That's no concern of yours, Mr. Inquisitive."

"But I'd just like to know, Miss Sarah; 'cause I'm going in myself, if you hav'nt been."

"Do you suppose that I have not paid attention to what your ma said? I know my own business, without instruction from you."

"Well, I don't believe you've been in, so I don't, that's all; and if you don't say yes or no at once, why, you see, I'll go right in myself."

"Well (coaxingly) never mind, Billy, I haint been in, I've been so busy; but just wait a little bit, and I'll go There's no use of your going; you can't do nothing."

"I know that, Miss Sarah, and that's why I want you to go in. But if you don't go in, I will, so there, now!"

"Well, just wait a little bit, and I'll go."

The child, but half satisfied, slowly went away, but lingered about the passages to watch the housekeeper. Night, however, came on, and he had not seen her going. All were now busy lighting up, and making the more immediate and active preparations for the reception of company, when he met her in the hall, and to his, "Look here, I say, Miss Sarah," she hurried past him unheeding.

The company at last assembled, and the hours had passed away until it was nine o'clock. Without, all was cold, bleak, and cheerless. Within, there was the perfection of comfort.

Little William had been absent for some time, but no one missed him. Just as a large company were engaged in the various ways of passing time, dancing, chatting, and partaking of refreshments, the room door opened, and in came Master Billy, dragging in by the hand, a little barefoot fellow about his own age, with nothing on but a clean, well-patched shirt, and a pair of linen trowsers. Without heeding the company, he pulled him up to the glowing grate, and in the fulness of his young benevolent heart, cried out,

"Here's fire, Charley! Warm yourself, old fellow! Hurrah! I guess I've fixed Miss Sarah now." And the little fellow clapped his hands as innocently and as gracefully, as if there had been no one in the room but himself and Charley.

All was agreeable and curious confusion in a few minutes, and scores crowded around the poor child with a lively interest, who, an hour before would have passed him in the street unnoticed.

"Why, Willy! what does all this mean?" exclaimed the father, after something like order had been restored.

"Why, pa, you see, this is Charley Warburton," began the little fellow, holding the astonished Charley by the hand, and presenting him quite ceremoniously to his father. "Doctor H--came here to-day, and told ma that his mother was sick next door, and that they had no wood. So ma tells Sarah to send John in with some wood,

and to go in herself and see if they wanted anything. So Sarah goes and tells John to go and take some wood in. But John he wa'nt going to go, till I told him that if he didn't go I would, and if I went to carrying in wood, I'd dirty all my clothes, and then somebody would want to know the reason. So John he carried in some wood. Then I watched Sarah, but she didn't go in. So I told her about it. And then she promised, but didn't go. I told her again, and she promised, but didn't go. I waited and waited until night, and still Sarah didn't go in. Then you see, awhile ago I slipped out the front door, and tried to go in to Mrs. Warburton's. But it was all so dark there, that I couldn't see anybody; and when I called 'Charley,' here, his mother said, softly, 'who's there,' and I said 'it's only little Willy. Ma wants to know if you don't want nothing.' 'Oh, it's little Willy--it's little Willy!' says Charley, and he jumps on the floor, and then we both came in here. O! it's so dark and cold in there--do pa go in, and make John build them a fire."

During the child's innocent but feeling recital, more than one eye filled with tears. Mrs.--hung down her head for a moment, in silent upbraidings of heart, for having consigned a work of charity to neglectful and unfeeling servants. Then taking her child in her arms, she hugged him to her bosom, and said,

"Bless you, bless you, my boy! That innocent heart has taught your mother a lesson she will not soon forget." The father felt prouder of his son than he had ever felt, and there were few present who did not almost wish him their own. Little Charley was asked by Mr.--if he was hungry, on observing him wistfully eyeing a piece of cake.

"We haint had nothin' to eat all day, sir, none of us."

"And why not, my little man?" asked Mr.--in a voice of assumed calmness.

"'Cause, sir, we haint got nothin' to eat in the house. Mother always had good things for us till she got sick, and now we are all hungry, and haint got nothin' to eat."

"Here, Sarah, (to the housekeeper, who came in at the moment)--no, not you, either--do you, Emma, (to his wife,) give this hungry child some nourishing food with your own hands. He has a claim on you, for the sake of our little Willy."

Mrs.--was not slow in relieving Charley's wants and then, after excusing herself to the company, she visited, with John and Sarah, the humble, uncomplaining child of humanity, who had been suffering, so painfully, in the next house to her comfortable dwelling.

The light carried by John revealed, in the middle of the floor, the armful of wood, in large logs, almost impossible to kindle, which the servant had thrown down there without a word, or an offer to make a fire. Mrs.--'s heart smote her when she saw this evidence of her neglect of true charity. Enveloped in the bed-clothes, she

found Mrs. Warburton and her little child, the former suffering from pain and fever, and the latter asleep, with tears glistening on her eyelashes. The room was so cold that it sent chills all over her, as she had come in without throwing a shawl around her shoulders.

"I am sorry to find you so sick, and everything around you so cold and comfortless," she said, addressing Mrs. Warburton.

"I don't feel so very sick, ma'am, only when I try to sit up, I grow so faint, and have to lie down again. If my little things had anything to eat, I wouldn't mind it much."

Just then, aroused by the voice of her mother, the little girl awoke, and began moaning and crying. She could not speak plain, and her "bed and mik, mamma"--"O, mamma, bed and mik," thrilled every heart-string of Mrs.--, who had never before in her life witnessed the keen distress of a mother while her child asked in vain for bread. She drew the child out of bed, and kissing it, handed it to Sarah, whose feelings were also touched, and told her to take the little thing into her house, and give it to the nurse, with directions to feed it, and then come back.

By this time, John, rather more active than usual, had kindled a fire, the genial warmth of which began already to soften the keen air of the room. Some warm drinks were prepared for Mrs. Warburton; and Mrs.--had the satisfaction to see her, in the course of half an hour, sink away into a sweet and refreshing slumber. On glancing around the room, she was gratified, and somewhat surprised, to see everything, though plain and scanty, exhibiting the utmost order and cleanliness. The uncarpeted floor was spotless, and the single pine table as white as hands could make it. "How much am I to blame," was her inward thought, "for having so neglected this poor woman in her distress and in her poverty!"

On returning to her company, and giving a history of the scene she had just witnessed, the general feeling of sympathy prompted immediate measures for relief, and a very handsome sum was placed in the hands of Mrs.--, by the gentlemen and ladies present, for the use of Mrs. Warburton. Rarely does a social company retire with each individual of it so satisfied in heart as did the company assembled at Mrs.--'s, on that evening. Truly could they say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The incident just related, possessing a kind of romantic interest, soon became noised about from family to family, and for awhile it was fashionable to minister to the wants of Mrs. Warburton--whose health continued very delicate--and to her young family. But a few months passed away, and then one after another ceased to remember or care for her. Even Mrs.--, the mother of little Billy, began to grow weary of charity long continued, and to feel that it was a burdensome task to be every day or two obliged to call in or inquire after the poor invalid. Finally, she dismissed the subject from her mind, and left Mrs. Warburton to the tender mercies of Sarah, the

housekeeper.

From a state of deep despondence to one of hope, had Mrs. Warburton been raised, by the timely aid afforded through the persevering interference of the little playmate of her son. But she soon began to perceive, after a time, that the charity was only spasmodic, and entered into without a real consideration of her peculiar case. The money given her was the best assistance that could have been rendered, for with this she obtained a supply of wood, flour, meal, potatoes, and some warm clothing for her little ones. But this would not last always, and the multitude of little nice things sent from this one and that, were of but little service.

The month of March, so trying to a weak and shattered constitution, found her just well enough to venture out to seek for employment at her old business of cigar-making. She readily obtained work, and again sat down to earn for herself and children, the bread that should nourish them. But she was soon made to feel keenly that her health was not as it had been. A severe pain in the side was her daily companion, and she had to toil on, often sick and faint, from daylight until long after others had sought the grateful repose of their pillows. Painfully alive to a sense of dependence, she was ready at any time to work beyond her strength rather than to eat the bread of charity. This kept her steadily bending over her work until nature again became exhausted, and she was forced, from direct debility, to suspend her labours for at least the half of every day. As April came in, with an occasional warm day, her appetite gradually left her, and she began to experience a loathing of food. Weakness, headaches, and other painful warnings of nature, were the consequences. Her earnings were now so small, that she with difficulty procured enough of food for her children. She knew that if she would let Mrs.--know her pressing destitution, food and other necessaries would be supplied; but she shrank from telling her wants. Finding, however, that her strength continued to fail, until she was unable to sit up but for a few hours at a time, and that, in consequence of her extreme weakness, the nausea produced by the tobacco was so great, as to render it almost impossible for her to work in it, she made up her mind to let her boy go in to Mrs.--, with a request to send her some little thing that she could eat, in hopes that something from her table might provoke an appetite.

Mrs.--was sitting at her dinner-table, which was covered with the luxuries of the season, when little Charley came into the room and handed in his poor mother's request.

"Please, ma'am, mother says will you be so good as to send her some little thing that she could eat. She has no appetite, and not eatin' makes her so weak."

"Here's some pie, Charley," struck in little Billy. "It's good, I tell you! Eat it now; and ma, do send in Charley's mother a piece, too: I know she'll like it."

But Billy and his mother did not agree in this. The latter thought a little sago would be much better. So she gave Charley a paper in which were a few spoonfuls of sago.

"Here is some sago, mother," said Charley, on his return,
"Mrs.--says it will do you good."

Now it so happened that, from a child, she had never liked sago. There was something in it so insipid to her, that she had never felt an inclination to more than taste it. Particularly now did her stomach loathe it. But, even if she had felt an inclination to taste the sago, she had not, at the time, any way to prepare it so as to make it palatable. She did not, however, at the time, send for anything else. She still had some flour and potatoes, and a little change to buy milk, and on these her children fared very well. Healthy food does not cost a great deal in this country, and Mrs. Warburton had long before learned to husband well her resources.

On the next morning she tried to get up, but fainted away on the floor. Her children were still asleep, and were not even awakened by her fall. It was some time before she recovered sufficiently to crawl upon the bed; and there she lay; almost incapable of thought or motion, for hours. As feeble nature reacted again, and she was able to think over her situation, she made up her mind to send in her little boy again to Mrs.--, with an apology for not using the sago, and request her to give her some little thing from her table--anything at all that would be likely, as she said, "to put a taste in her mouth," and induce an appetite for food. The child delivered the message in the best way he knew how, but some how or other it offended the ear of Mrs.--, who had begun to be tired of what she was pleased to call the importunities of Mrs. Warburton; though, in fact, she had never before even hinted that she was in want of anything. The truth was, Sarah, the housekeeper, had heard something from somebody, about Mrs. Warburton, and had been relating the puerile scandal to Mrs.--, who, instead of opposing the tattling propensity in her servant, encouraged it, by lending to her silly stories an attentive ear. But the story was false, from beginning to end, as are nearly all the idle rumours which are constantly circulating from one family to another, through the medium of servants.

"How did she do," she had just been saying to Sarah, "before I befriended her? It is a downright imposition upon my good-nature, and I have no notion of encouraging idleness."

"The fact is, ma'am," chimed in the maid, "these here poor people, when you once help 'em, think you must be a'ways at it; they find it so much easier to beg than work."

Just at this stage of conversation, the child timidly preferred the humble and moderate request of his sick mother; a request that should have thrilled the heart of any one possessing a single human sympathy. But it came at the wrong moment. The evil of self-love was

active in the heart of Mrs.--, and all love of the neighbour was for the time extinguished. She cast upon the child a look so forbidding that the little fellow turned involuntarily to go.

"Here, Sarah," said she, in a half-angry tone, "send Mrs. Warburton a dried herring. Perhaps that will 'put a taste in her mouth.'"

And a herring was sent!

"It's a pretty pass, indeed," said Miss Sarah, as the child closed the door, "when beggars become choosers!"

Only half satisfied with herself, Mrs.--turned away and made no reply. How differently did she feel on the night, when, with her own hands, she ministered to the wants of this same suffering child of humanity! Then her heart, though melted even to tears, felt a bounding gladness, from the consciousness of having relieved the suffering. Now it was heavy and sad in her bosom, and she could not hush the whispers of an accusing conscience.

Little Charley carried home the herring, and laid it on the bed before his sick mother. His own little heart was full, for he could not mistake the manner of Mrs.--for kindness. Mrs. Warburton looked at the uninviting food, and turned her head away. After awhile, it did seem to her as if the fish would taste good to her, and she raised herself up with an effort, and breaking off a small piece, put it languidly to her lips. The morsel thrilled upon the nerve of taste, and she ate the greater part of it with a relish she had not known for many weeks.

In the mean time the heart of Mrs.--smote her so severely, when all at once she remembered having lost her appetite after a spell of sickness, and the difficulty with which she regained it;--how during the day, nothing could tempt her to eat, while all night long she would dream of rich banquets, of which she eagerly desired to partake, but which changed to tasteless morsels, when she lifted the inviting food to her lips. For a time she strove against her feelings, but at last gave up, and ringing for the cook, directed her to broil a couple of thin slices of ham very nicely, make a good cup of tea, and a slice or two of toast. When this was ready, it was sent in to Mrs. Warburton. It came just in time, and met the excited appetite of the faint-hearted invalid. It was like manna in the wilderness, and revived and refreshed her drooping frame.

From this time she gradually regained her appetite and strength; and had the gratification of being able to earn with her own hands enough for the support of her children.

This she continued to do until the expiration of the solitary confinement term of her husband. How wearily passed the long, long days and nights, as the time approached for her again to look upon the face that had been hid from her sight for three sorrowful years! The long absence had only excited her affection for him. Not as the

dead had she thought of him, but as of the living, and of the suffering. Her own deep poverty, sickness, and anxious concern for her children she counted as nothing to his lonely endurance of life.

Some weeks before the expiration of the first term of imprisonment, she gathered together all her little store, and having sold many heavy articles, packed the rest, and had them started for Columbus, the capital of the state. She then took a deck-passage for herself and children in a steamboat for Portsmouth, from which place she determined to walk, carrying her youngest child, a little girl of nearly three years, in her arms. I will not linger with her, nor trace her toilsome and lonely journey through strange places, continued without a day's intermission, until she at last came in sight of the long-looked-for place. After the time-worn state-house, the next building that met her eye, was the old, dark-looking prison, in which was confined her husband. How gladly did her eyes greet its sombre walls! It was the dwelling-place of one, for whom, in all his wanderings, her heart retained its warm emotions of love. Suddenly, like a parching wind of the desert, came upon her the thought that he might be dead. For three long years she had not been permitted to receive tidings from him, and who could tell, if in that time, the wing of death had not o'ershadowed him? Trembling, weary, and sick at heart, she made her way first to the prison-gate, and there, to her unspeakable joy, she learned that he still lived.

For many nights previous to the day on which permission would be granted her to see him, sleep had parted from her eyelids; and when the time did come, she was in a high state of mental excitement. Morning slowly dawned upon her anxious eyes, but seemed as if it would never give place to the broad daylight. At last the sun came slowly up from his bright chambers in the east. It was the day on which she should again see her husband; the long-looked-for, the long-hoped-for. Tremblingly she stole out, ere the day was an hour old, and ran, not walked, to the gloomy dwelling-place of her husband.

For several days previous she had not been able to keep away from the prison, and the keeper, who knew her errand, had become much interested in her case. He received her kindly, and made instant preparation for the desired interview.

For three years Warburton had not heard the music of a human voice. Far away from the sight or sound of his fellow-prisoners, he had dwelt alone, visited only by the mute keeper who had brought his daily food, or otherwise ministered to his wants. To his earnest and oft-repeated inquiries if nothing was known of his wife and children, for whose welfare a yearning anxiety had sprung up in his breast, he was answered only by a gloomy silence. He did not know, even on the morning of his release from solitary confinement, that the all-enduring companion of his better days had come to cheer his anxious eyes with her presence. Soon after daylight of this morning the door of his cell turned heavily on its hinges, and he was brought out among his fellows, and heard again the sweetest music

that had ever fallen upon his ear, the music of the human voice. A stronger thrill of pleasure had never passed through his frame. He felt as though he could remain thus shut out from the rest of the world for ever, so that he could see and talk with his fellow-men. He did not then think of the keen delight that awaited him, for in the first impulse of selfish gratification he had forgotten the being who loved him better than life.

An hour had not passed when he was again called for. The door of a private apartment in the keeper's house was thrown open, and he entered alone. There was but one being present: a pale, haggard woman, poorly clad, who tottered towards him with extended arms. At that moment both hearts were too full, and their lips were sealed in silence. But oh! how eagerly did each bind the other in a long, long embrace! It seemed as if their arms would never be unlocked. For one hour were they left, thus alone. But how were years crowded into that hour; years of endurance--terrible endurance!

It seemed scarcely one-tenth of that short time, when Mrs. Warburton was summoned away, but with the kind permission to visit her husband at the same hour every day. Slowly she passed beneath the ponderous gate, and still more slowly moved away, thinking how long it would be before another day had passed, bringing another blessed interview.

The case of Warburton and his faithful wife soon came to the ears of the governor, and he having expressed considerable sympathy for them, the fact was soon made known to Mrs. Warburton, who was recommended to petition him in person for a remission of the sentence. The hint was no sooner given than acted upon, and after a delay of several months of hope and fear, to the joy of her heart, she found her husband at liberty.

In some of his former business or gambling transactions he had become possessed of a clear title to three hundred acres of land, upon which was a log-cabin, situated about thirty miles eastward from the capital of the state, and nearly upon the national road. Searching among his papers, still preserved by his wife, he found the deed, and as nothing better offered, he started with his family and but ten dollars, to begin the world anew as a backwoods farmer. The few articles of furniture which his wife had preserved, served to render the dilapidated cabin, in which was not a single pane of glass, sash, or shutter, barely comfortable. It was early in the spring when they re-moved, and though the right time for planting corn and the ordinary table vegetables, yet it would be months before they would be fit to use. In the mean time, a subsistence must be had. The quickest way to obtain food Warburton found in the use of his rifle, for wild turkeys and deer abounded in the forest. He also managed to take a few dozen turkeys now and then to a neighbouring town, and dispose of them for corn-meal, flour, and groceries. In about a month he was enabled to sell one hundred acres of his land for three hundred dollars, one hundred in money, and the balance in necessary things for stocking a farm. He was now fairly

started again, with a cow, a horse, and all requisite agricultural implements.

Mrs. Warburton did not feel satisfied in her own mind that this sudden relief from daily pressing want would be a real benefit to them. She had learned to suspect the reformation which was effected by the force of external circumstances, while no salutary change in the will was going on. For some time, however, she had every reason to be encouraged. Her husband was industrious, and careful to make the best he possibly could out of his farm, and was kind and attentive to her and his children. Their garden, as the summer wore away, presented a rich supply of vegetables, and their corn and potatoes in the fall yielded enough for their use during the winter, besides several bushels for sale.

The winter, however, did not pass away without several indications on the part of Warburton of a disposition to indulge in the pleasures of the bottle. There had been, in the course of the summer, a tavern erected, about a mile from his dwelling, on the national road; and here, during the dull winter months, he too frequently resorted, to pass away the hours, with such persons as are usually to be found at these haunts of idleness.

The income of this house, as a place of accommodation for travellers, was very small, for within four miles of it stood a tavern and stage-house, kept in a style that had made it known to the travelling public. It was simply a receptacle for the odd change of the neighbours, at times when they had an hour or two to spare from business. Gradually, its business increased, and as gradually the farms of one or two individuals in the neighbourhood, who were, more frequently than others, to be found at the tavern, evinced a corresponding decrease in their flourishing condition. Fences that never wanted a panel were now broken in many places; and barns that never admitted a drop of rain, now leaked at a hundred pores. Once, there was an air of cheerfulness and plenty around their dwellings; now, wives and children looked, the former troubled and broken in spirits, the latter dirty and neglected. Where once reigned peace and quietness, existed wrangling and strife.

During the succeeding farming season, Warburton gave considerable attention--cultivating his ground, which in the fall yielded him an abundant return. Still, during the summer, he visited the "White Hall Tavern" too frequently, and was too often under the bewildering and exciting influence of liquor. The next winter tended greatly to complete the work of dissipation, which had been commenced a year before. Frequently he would come home so much intoxicated as to be lost to all reason. At such times he was not the stupid, good-natured, drunken fool that is often met with; he was then a cruel, unreasonable and exacting tyrant. His poor wife and children did not only suffer from his wordy ill temper, but had to endure in silence his blows, and often tremble even for their lives. When sober, an indistinct remembrance of his cruelties and other bad conduct, instead of softening his feelings towards his family, made

him moodily silent, or cross and snappish if a word were said to him.

The constant and almost daily drain of small change for liquor, had nearly exhausted all the money in the house long before the winter was over. The accommodating landlord seemed to discover, as by instinct, this condition of things, and encouraged Warburton to run up a score. He well knew that at any time it was easy to get the payment out of a man who had a good farm, well stocked. Not so much for the money to be made at the business, as for the purpose of attracting more persons to his tavern, the landlord of the "White Hall" kept a small store. At this store, Warburton, long before the winter was over, had also made a pretty large bill. As if to atone for his unkindness to, and neglect of his family, he would rarely return from his voluntary visits at the tavern, without bringing home something. A few pounds of sugar to-day, some cheese or fish to-morrow, or some dried fruit on the day after. The excuse, that such and such a thing was wanted, was often made to get away to the public house, and thus scarcely a day passed without a dollar or two being entered against him on the books of the smiling landlord.

When the spring opened, and his bill was made out, much to his surprise, he found his account to be one hundred and fifty dollars! After some two or three weeks' pondering on the matter, during which time he was cross and sulky at home, two fine cows and one of his best horses were quietly transferred from his pasture to the more capacious one of the landlord of the "White Hall;" and thus his account was squared with Boniface.

The discouragement consequent upon such a reduction of his stock, tended to make him less industrious and less pleasant. He was constantly grumbling about his expensive family, and could not afford to send his two oldest children to a school just opened in the neighbourhood, although the master offered to take them both for five dollars a quarter. His wife, he said, could teach them at home. And in this she was not neglectful, as far as her time allowed.

How rarely does the drunkard, when once fairly started, stop in his downward course! How similar is the history of each one! Neglect of business--neglect of family--confirmed idleness--abuse of family--waste of property--and finally, abject poverty.

In less than three years from the day on which he breathed the air again as a free man--free, through the untiring assiduity of his neglected but faithful wife, he struck her to the ground, and unregardful of all the ties of nature, left her alone with her children, in the wilds of the west, after having made over house and farm to the land lord of the "White Hall," for fifty dollars and his bill at the bar.

Day after day did his poor wife wait and look for him to return, until even hope failed, and she at last, with a heavy heart, commenced the task of recalling her own energies in aid of the

little ones around her.

But she soon found her condition to be far worse than she had imagined. But a few days passed after her husband had left her before the hard-hearted tavern-keeper came, and removed everything but the house in which she lived from off the place, and then gave her notice that she must also remove, and in three weeks, as he had rented the farm to a man who wished to take immediate possession.

Hope, the kind and ever attendant angel of the distressed, for more than a week seemed ready to depart; but at the end of that time, a faint desire to return to her native city began to grow into a resolution, and by the time a second week had passed away, she had fully resolved to set out upon the journey.

But she had only twenty dollars, after disposing of the few things their rapacious creditor had left them, and with this she had to go a journey of nearly five hundred miles, with three children, the oldest about twelve years of age. But when once her mind is made up, there are few things a resolute mother will not undertake for her children.

By persevering in her applications, day after day, to the wagoners on the national road, she at length so far prevailed on one of them as to let her and her children ride as far as Zanesville, for the trifle of a dollar or two, in his wagon.

In the true spirit of success, she looked only at the present difficulty, reserving thought and attention for all succeeding difficulties, whenever they might come. In this spirit she cut herself loose from her place in the west, and started for--utterly unable to say how she should ever reach the desired spot.

For the first day or two, the wagoner held no conversation with her; he had been unable to resist the promptings of his kind feelings in favour of one who had asked him for aid, although he had much rather not have given her a place in his wagon. By degrees, however, his temper changed, and he occasionally asked a question, or made a passing remark; and by the time he had reached Zanesville, he had become so interested in her case, that he refused to take the stipulated price, and kindly offered to carry her as far as Wheeling, and to-- if he found it to his interest to go there.

The way thus providentially opened for her, few obstacles remained, and in the course of a few weeks she found herself again in the home of her childhood, the dear spot that had lived in her memory, green and inviting, for years.

But how changed was the poor sufferer! But a very few dollars of her money was left. The fatigue of travel, long so long and in so uncomfortable a manner, had gradually shaken the props of a feeble body; and by the time she looked again upon the old, familiar places, her form was drooping with sickness.

Slowly she descended from the wagon, received her children, one by one, from the hands of the wagoner, thanked him with a tearful look, and tottered away. But where could she go? She had neither home, nor money, nor friends--was sick and faint. Years before, she had tripped lightly along the very street through which she now dragged her weary limbs. She even passed by the same house, and heard the light laughter of thoughtless voices, from the same window from which she had once looked forth in earlier years, a joyful and light-hearted creature. How familiar did that dear spot seem! but how agonizing the contrast that forced itself upon her! Little did the merry maiden who looked out upon the pale mother, with drooping form and soiled garments, who gazed up so earnestly towards her, imagine, that but a few years before, that poor creature looked forth from that same window, a glad-hearted girl.

Scarcely able to act or decide rationally, for her head ached intensely, and she was burning with fever, Mrs. Warburton wandered about the streets with her three children, one a boy about twelve years old, the other a little girl about nine, and the third, a little one tottering by her side, scarce two years old. All at once, as she turned her steps into--street, her eye caught sight of the tall poplars that indicated the home of the homeless. "I have no home but this," she murmured to herself, and turned her steps instinctively towards the dark mass of buildings that stood near the present intersection of--and--streets.

"Where is your permit?" said the keeper, as she falteringly asked for admission.

"I have none," was the faint reply.

"We cannot take you, unless you bring a permit from one of the commissioners."

"I don't know any commissioner."

"Where are you from?"

"I have just come to town from the west, and am too sick to do anything. I feel faint, and unable to go farther. Can you not admit me, and let application be made to the commissioners for me?"

The appearance of Mrs. Warburton too plainly indicated her sick condition, and the keeper thought it best to admit her for the present. A meeting of the commissioners was held on the same afternoon, and a formal admission given.

The first indication that Mrs. W. had, that she was no longer at liberty to choose or think for herself, was the entire separation of her children from her. True, she was soon too ill to attend to them, but that would have made no difference. After a dangerous illness of many weeks, during most of which time she was insensible to

everything around her, she was again able to droop about a little. Her first questions, after the healthy reaction of body and mind, were about her children; her first request, to see them. But this was denied. "They are doing well enough," was all the answer she could get.

"But cannot I see Emma, my little one? Do let me see her!"

"It is contrary to the rules of the institution. You cannot see her now."

"When can I see her?"

"I don't know,"--and the nurse of the sick woman left her and went to attend somewhere else, utterly insensible to the keen agony of the mother's heart. Was she not a pauper? What right had she to human feelings? But a mother's love is not to be chained down to rules, or circumscribed by the narrow policy of chartered expediency. As Mrs. Warburton slowly gained strength, a quicker perception of her situation grew upon her, and she soon determined to know all about her children. In vain had she asked to see them; but each denial only increased the desire, and confirmed her resolutions to see them and know all about them.

One day, when she could walk about a little, a day on which she knew the board of commissioners were in session, she watched her opportunity, and when the nurse was attending in another part of the room, stole quietly out, and soon made her way to the commissioners' room.

"Gentlemen, a mother asks your indulgence," was her appeal, as the keeper checked her entrance.

"Let her enter, Mr.--," said one of them.

"What is your wish, good woman?" continued the first speaker.

"I want to see my children."

Her voice was so low and mournful, and her pale face, which still retained many traces of former beauty, expressed so strongly her maternal anxiety, that the hearts of all were touched.

They looked at each other for a few moments, and after some whispered words, directed that she should be allowed to see her children for half an hour each day.

The keeper now called their attention to certain of their proceedings, some weeks past, and they found that places had been obtained for two of them, the oldest boy, and the little girl, scarce ten years old.

"We have obtained good places for two of your children, madam; the

other, aged two years, you can have under your own care, while here."

"And all without allowing me one word, as to who should take them, or where they should go! My poor little Mary, what can you do as a servant?"

"They are well provided for, madam. You can now retire."

Mrs. Warburton did retire, and with a bleeding heart. Her little Emma was restored to her, and was constantly by her side. She had been two months in the alms-house, when she was strong enough to work, and by a rule of the place, she had to work two months, to pay for her keeping while sick, before she would be allowed to go out, and maintain herself.

Slowly and heavily passed the hours for two weary months, when she presented herself for a release from imprisonment.

"Where can I find my children?" she asked of the keeper, as she was about to leave.

"It is against the rule to give any such information in regard to pauper children. And in this particular instance, it was the request of both persons taking your children, that you should not be told where they were, as they wished to raise them without being troubled by foreign influence."

The mother attempted no remonstrance, but turned away, and homeless, and almost penniless, leading her little one by the hand, again entered the city where her happiest years had been spent.

As she passed down a street, she saw on the door of an old brick house, the words "A room to let." She made application, and engaged it, at two dollars a month. A pine table, and an old chair, she bought at a second-hand furniture store for a dollar; and with the other dollar she had left, the pittance saved from the twenty dollars she had when she left Ohio, she bought some bread, dried meat, milk, &c. She had no bed, and was for some time compelled to sleep with her child on the hard floor.

The art of making cigars, which she had learned years before, and which had more than once stood between her and want, was again brought into use. She applied at a tobacconist's, and obtained work. Giving all diligence, day and night, she was able to make five or six dollars every week, with which, in a short time, she gathered a few comfortable things about her, among which was a bed.

Two months had passed since she left the alms-house, and still she could gain no tidings of her children. Daily, for an hour or two, had she made search for them, but in the only way she could devise, that of wandering about the streets, in hopes of finding them out on some errand. As the winter drew on, she became more and more anxious

and concerned. If her little girl, who was always a delicate child, should be in unkind hands, she sickened at heart to think how much she would suffer. Night after night would she dream of the dear child; and always saw her in some condition of extreme hardship.

One night she thought she saw little Mary sitting on the curb-stone. She went up to her, and dreaming that it was very cold, found her bare-foot, thinly clad, and almost perishing. The child threw her little arms, naked and icy cold about her neck, and as her well-known voice sounded in her ears, she awoke.

She slept no more through that night, and soon after breakfast, started out, being unable, through the uneasiness of her mind, to work. Without questioning the reason why, she naturally wandered in the direction indicated in her dream. When near the place, she was startled by the piercing screams of a child that seemed in great agony, and there was entreaty and supplication mingled in the tones. The voice was like the voice of her own child. She knew it was her own child; a mother's ear is never deceived. Darting towards the spot, she found a bucket of hot water spilled upon the pavement, from which the vapour was rising in a cloud, and glancing her eye down the alley, she saw her little one half-dragged, half-carried, by the arm, by a tall, masculine woman, who seemed in a violent rage. Following like the wind, she reached the dwelling of the virago as she entered and dashed the child upon the floor. Just as Mrs. Warburton came up, and was lifting it, the woman had obtained a stout cow-hide, and was turning to lacerate the back of the little one, as she had often done before, her face red and expressing the most wicked passions.

At once Mrs. Warburton felt that only in retreat was their safety, and catching up the child in her arms, she darted out as quickly as she had entered. Not more swiftly, however, did she go, than followed the enraged woman to whom this child of nine years old had been bound to do the work of a woman. Finding herself gained upon by the person in pursuit, she looked about for a place of retreat, and seeing "Magistrate's Office" on a sign, she darted into that lower court of justice. Here she was safe from molestation, until some decision was made in the case, by those deputed to act. A crowd soon gathered about, attracted by the strange sight of a woman flying with a child in her arms, and another in hot pursuit. The magistrate, who was a humane man, and held his office in a part of his dwelling, instinctively perceived that the mother and her child needed kindness and consideration, and had them, after examination, removed back into his dwelling, and placed under the care of his wife, while he entered more fully into the merits of the case.

When Mrs. Warburton was sufficiently at ease to examine her child, she found her a pitiable object indeed. Her face, neck, and body were dreadfully scalded, and her back was in scars and welts all over, and in some places with the skin broken and festering. It appeared, from the statement of the child, that the woman she lived with had placed on her head a bucket of scalding water for her to

carry to a store, which she was going to scrub out. The heavy weight on her head caused her to lose her balance and fall, when the whole contents of the bucket were spilled over her face and neck, and penetrated through her clothes to the skin, in all directions.

Of course, she was suffering the most excruciating pain. Medical aid was called in by the magistrate, and every attention extended to the little sufferer, who seemed to forget her pain in the consciousness of her mother's presence. The inhuman wretch who had thus brutally maltreated a mere child, enraged to a state of insanity in finding herself thwarted in obtaining the child, made an appeal to the city court, then in session, and had all the parties present. It needed but this to give Mrs. W. uncontrolled possession of little Mary. The condition in which the court found the child, added to the touching story of her mother, caused an instant cancelling of the indenture by which the unfeeling woman claimed possession of her.

In a few days after, Mrs. Warburton found her boy, who, much to her satisfaction, had a good place, with which he was pleased, and was learning a good trade. She was now fairly started again, and as her spirits revived, her health became much improved. Month after month passed away, and brought with it new sources of comfort, new causes for satisfaction. Of her husband, she now thought with no affection. It is true, earlier feelings would sometimes return, but with no force, and after moving the waters of her quiet spirit for a moment, would tremble into rest.

When a man once extinguishes his own self-respect, he is a burden to society. But when a husband and father descends so low, he becomes a curse to his family. After abusing them, and making their condition so wretched that even he cannot share it, he will forsake the wife of his bosom and the children of his early love, and leave them to the tender mercies of strangers. But let the mother gather her little ones around her, and by toiling early and late, make their condition comfortable, and the brutalized wretch will return and consume the food of his children, and abuse them if they complain.

A year had passed away, when early one evening in the fall of the year, a man pushed open the door of the room she occupied, and with a "well Julia," took a chair, and made himself at home without further ceremony. Though dirty and ragged, with a beard of a week's growth, and half drunk, Mrs. Warburton could not mistake the form of her wretched husband.

"O, husband! can this be you?"

"Yes, Julia, this is me. I've come back at last. I've tried hard to make something for you and the children, but it is no use, fate is against me; so here I am again, poor as ever. But give me something to eat, for I'm hungry as a badger."

Six years had passed away since Warburton had returned, and the wretchedness which had been with him in his absence, he brought as

an abiding guest to the dwelling of his wife. During that time, she had endured sickness, hunger, abuse, and been nigh unto death; but through it all she had come with a heart still unsubdued, though almost broken. For her children's sakes, two more of whom had been added in that time, she had stood up and breasted the storm.

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ad passed since she left the alms-house, and still she

could gain no tidings of her children. Daily, for an hour or two,

had she made search for them, but in the only way she could devise,

that of wandering about the streets, in hopes of finding them out on

some errand. As the winter drew on, she became more and more anxious

and concerned. If her little girl, who was always a delicate child,

should be in unkind hands, she sickened at heart to think how much

she would suffer. Night after night would she dream of the dear

child; and always saw her in some condition of extreme hardship.

One night she thought she saw little Mary sitting on the curb-stone.

She went up to her, and dreaming that it was very cold, found her bare-foot, thinly clad, and almost perishing. The child threw her little arms, naked and icy cold about her neck, and as her well-known voice sounded in her ears, she awoke.

She slept no more through that night, and soon after breakfast, started out, being unable, through the uneasiness of her mind, to work. Without questioning the reason why, she naturally wandered in the direction indicated in her dream. When near the place, she was startled by the piercing screams of a child that seemed in great agony, and there was entreaty and supplication mingled in the tones.

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