

NON-FICTION

Austin Potter

From Wealth to Poverty

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

 eBookTakeAway

NON-FICTION

FROM WEALTH TO POVERTY;

OR,

THE TRICKS OF THE TRAFFIC.

A Story of the Drink Curse

BY THE REV. AUSTIN POTTER.

"I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me I am a drunkard.
Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all.
To be now a sensible man, by-and-bye a fool, and presently a beast!"
--Othello, Act II.

TO THE FRIENDS OF PROHIBITION THE WORLD OVER THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

My reasons for writing this story were principally two. The first was my undying hatred of the rum traffic, which, in the days of the long ago, caused me and those dear to me to endure intense hardship and suffering; and the second was my desire to expose the unprincipled measures which were employed by the liquor party in order to render the Dunkin Act non-effective, and thus bring it into disrepute.

What I have written has been taken from personal experience and observation; and as I have resided in three counties where the Act was in force, and have since visited several others, the data, which served as a foundation for what follows, was not gleaned from any particular locality.

The picture I herein present of the plottings of the liquor party, and the cruel treachery to which they resorted in order to bring their conspiracy to defeat the law to a successful issue, is not overdrawn; and, let me ask, can there be any doubt but there are in existence at the present time plots similar to the one laid bare in this book, which have for their object the obstruction of the Scott Act in the counties where it has been or may be carried, thus if possible to bring it into such contempt among the unthoughtful, who will not examine back of the effect for the cause, as to finally secure its repeal. Of one thing we may be certain, if an unscrupulous use of money and the resorting to "ways that are dark" will accomplish their purpose, these conspirators will not fail of success.

It has been my aim in this book to help educate public sentiment, so that if the same tactics are resorted to as were in the places where the Dunkin Act was in force, my readers will not aid the violators of the law by joining in the senseless cry, "the Scott Act is a failure," but that they will, to the extent of their ability, assist those who are determined that it, like every law which has been placed on our statute books for the protection of the subject, must and shall be respected, and that the violators of its enactments shall be brought to summary and condign punishment: for except it is backed by public sentiment it, though much superior to the Dunkin Act, will fail just as signally.

In regard to the principal characters who appear in these pages, they are not mere creations of my imagination; for Richard and Ruth Ashton were real personages, with whom I was well acquainted, as were all the prominent individuals of this story.

The descriptions given of the murders and suicides, also of Morris throwing the tumbler at his son, and of the scene when Allie Ashton was insulted by Joe Porter and the latter was knocked down by Frank Congdon, are all taken from events which really occurred.

For what I have written I offer no apology, but will simply state that I have only been animated with a sincere desire to do my little all to sweep the drink curse from our country and the world.

A. P.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. A Departure.

CHAPTER II. Richard and Ruth Ashton.

CHAPTER III. On the down grade.

CHAPTER IV. Sail for America and meet a kindly welcome.

CHAPTER V. Good resolution—A tempter and a fall.

CHAPTER VI. Arrival in Canada—A friendly host—Applies for a situation.

CHAPTER VII. Mr. and Mrs. Gurney.

CHAPTER VIII. Ashton meets with friends and secures a situation.

CHAPTER IX. Ruth's misgivings and mental agony.

CHAPTER X. All in Canada.

CHAPTER XI. Aunt Debie and her friends.

CHAPTER XII. A worthy Sheriff and Judge—Dr. Dalton.

CHAPTER XIII. Ruth Ashton's introduction to Aunt Debie—Ruth's dilemma.

CHAPTER XIV. A happy home.

CHAPTER XV. Mr. and Mrs. Gurney's satisfaction with Ashton— Mutual congratulations.

CHAPTER XVI. Ashton revisits old scenes.

CHAPTER XVII. Mr. Howe gives his views in regard to Canada.

CHAPTER XVIII. The banquet, and what followed.

CHAPTER XIX. A startling newspaper item to Mr. and Mrs. Reid.

CHAPTER XX. A base plot, and what it led to.

CHAPTER XXI. Utterly broken—Blasted hopes.

CHAPTER XXII. The Dunkin Act—A discussion in which strong language is used.

CHAPTER XXIII. The conspirators formulating their scheme.

CHAPTER XXIV. Alderman Toper's flattering opinion of the "Dodger".

CHAPTER XXV. The friends of temperance rejoicing over their victory.

CHAPTER XXVI. In which the reader listens to a *tete-a-tete* between mother and daughter.

CHAPTER XXVII. Barton's despair, and what it led to.

CHAPTER XXVIII. The conspirators perfecting the details of their conspiracy.

CHAPTER XXIX. Mr. Brown's opinion of the trial, and the presiding magistrates.

CHAPTER XXX. The insult to Allie Ashton—Her gallant defender.

CHAPTER XXXI. Richard Ashton and little Mamie—Mamie's dream.

CHAPTER XXXII. A bar-room settlement of a misunderstanding.

CHAPTER XXXIII. The home and family of Morris—He nearly kills little Harry.

CHAPTER XXXIV. Tom Flatt's hut—A description of the scene in which he murders his wife.

CHAPTER XXXV. John, jun.'s wedding—Barton's murder—Luella Sealy's suicide and Ginsling's tragical death.

CHAPTER XXXVI. Some of the characters who helped the repeal— A hoodlum's victory.

CHAPTER XXXVII. Death of little Mamie—A promise.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. Richard Ashton murderously attacked—His death.

CHAPTER XXXIX. Mr. Gurney speaks his mind—Death of Dr. Dalton And Aunt Debie.

CHAPTER XL. Conclusion.

CHAPTER I.

A DEPARTURE.

"Richard, you will keep from drink, will you not, dear?" and the speaker, in order to make her pleading irresistible, kissed the one to whom these words were addressed again and again; and, as with a hand upon each shoulder, she looked lovingly into his eyes, there was an added pathos which, to a man of Richard Ashton's sympathetic and sensitive nature, was all powerful.

"Well, Ruth, dear, God helping me, I will again be a man, and when I am tempted I will think of my dear little wife and my darling children at home; and remembering how they love me, though I have been such an indifferent husband and father to them, I will not touch nor taste the cursed stuff."

The tears gleamed in his eyes as he thus spoke, but feeling his manhood was being compromised he endeavored to suppress them, the effort, however, was in vain, for the deepest depths of a noble, sensitive nature had been wrought upon by the loving appeal of his wife and the pent-up feeling, gathering force by the very effort which he had made to suppress it, manifested itself in a series of short, choking sobs. He returned the kisses of his wife, clasped her convulsively to him, and, as he looked down into the upturned face, his eyes manifested an affection which found no expression in speech. He stooped down and fondly kissed his children and then opening the door, with satchel in hand, he darted out, only looking back when his wife called to him, as she stood with her three little ones on the threshold--

"Remember, Richard, your wife and children will pray for you, that our Father in heaven may preserve you from danger, give you strength to resist temptation, and bring you back in safety to those who love you better than their own lives."

He stood looking back for a moment, and as he saw his wife and children still gazing intently after him, he murmured, "God bless you, my darlings;" and turning again, walked rapidly on until he was lost to view.

CHAPTER II.

RICHARD AND RUTH ASHTON.

Richard Ashton was a native of the town of G---, in the county of B---, England. His father, who was a draper in good circumstances, had given his son a liberal education and had brought him up to his own calling. The son, a young man of quick parts, took advantage of the opportunities so generously offered to him and prosecuted his studies with commendable success, and by the time he was a stripling of sixteen was possessed of knowledge that few of his years could boast.

Richard was also an omniverous reader, and, as his father possessed a good library, he, from a very early period had literally devoured the contents of the books which lined its shelves, and thus became well versed in history, both ancient and modern, in the biographies of most of the celebrated men of all ages, and was also well acquainted with the most eminent poets, from Chaucer to Tennyson, ever having an apt quotation at his command to fasten home a maxim or make more pungent a witticism. In fact he had further developed a mind naturally broad by making his own the best thoughts of the ages, and his sensitive nature could not, knowingly, have given pain to a worm--no one that was worthy appealed in vain to his generosity, and it seemed to be the endeavor of his life to gain happiness by making those with whom he associated happy. With his genial disposition, sparkling wit, skill at repartee, and brilliant conversational powers, it was not at all surprising, with such a nature and such accomplishments, joined to an exceedingly handsome person he should have been voted a good fellow by the men and a "catch" by the young ladies who had entered that interesting period when they are considered eligible candidates for matrimony. And as he had, over and above his accomplishments, good prospects for the future, the mammas of the aforementioned young ladies should not receive severe censure if they did each exercise the utmost skill to secure for a son-in-law the coveted prize. But these delicate manifestations were not productive of the results which, it was whispered by the Mrs. Grundies of the neighborhood, would have been most agreeable to the parties interested, for his heart had long been given to one who was in all respects worthy of its best affections. It afforded him, however, no little amusement to find himself the object of so much attention, and he quietly enjoyed the situation, while the parties in question endeavored to out-manoeuvre each other, as they strove, as they supposed without appearing to strive, to capture the object of their ambition. There was such subtle tact exhibited and such powers of delicate blandishment displayed that he was convinced women were born diplomatists, and he now had some conception of how it was that in a broader field some of the sex had wielded such an influence over kings and statesmen as to be the powers behind the throne which ruled empires and kingdoms for their benison or their bane. He certainly would have possessed extraordinary attributes if his vanity had not been flattered, by being conscious he was thought worthy of such flattering attention; though his thoughts were tinged with cynicism when exhibitions of selfishness were not wanting in his fair friends, and as, sometimes, delicate hints were faintly outlined which darkened character, and inuendoes were whispered to the detriment of rivals, by lips that seemed moulded only to breathe blessings or whisper love.

As we have previously stated, Richard Ashton had met his fate years before, when, as a young man of eighteen, he attended a social party given by a Mrs. Edmunds, whose husband was a great friend of his father's, and a member of the same guild. He was there introduced to a modest, unpretentious, but yet cultivated and refined country maiden, Ruth Hamilton by name, who was a niece of his host. We will not say it was a case of love at first sight, though they certainly were, from the first, mutually attracted each to the other, for, when he entered into conversation, he found her so modest and unaffected, yet with a mind so well furnished--seeming to have an intelligent conception of every topic upon which they touched, as they ranged at will in their conversation, evincing such acumen of intellect and such practical comprehension of subjects of which many of her sex, who made much greater pretentious, were entirely ignorant, that Ashton, concluded she was a treasure, indeed, which he would make his own, if possible.

She might not by some be called a beauty, for she could not boast of classic regularity of feature; but no one could be long in her presence without yielding the tribute which, at first sight, he was chary of giving. She was fair of complexion--not of a pallid hue, but tenderly tinted, like a peach blossom, and so transparent that the blue veins could be plainly discerned as they made their delicate tracery across her low, broad brow. Her mouth was small, but expressive, and her lips red and fresh as a rosebud. She had glorious gray eyes, large and expressive, luminous and deep, which in repose spoke of peace and calm, but which, when excited by mirth or by a witticism, glowed and scintillated like wavelets in the golden light of the sun.

Two such spirits, so alike in taste and yet so opposite in temperament and complexion, could scarcely fail to be mutually attractive; for he was dark and she fair; his temper was as the forked lightning's flash, quick and sometimes destructive, while she was ever calm, gentle, and self-possessed. In fact, they were the complement each of the other, and it was not long ere he had wooed and won her, and obtained the consent of her guardians to make her his wife.

They were married one beautiful day in the bright Spring-time, when nature had donned her loveliest dress, and the air was fragrant with the breath of flowers and vocal with the songs of birds. As they stood together at the altar--he with his wavy raven locks swept back from his broad brow, with his dark eyes flashing with intelligence; she with a face that rivalled in fairness the wreath of orange blossoms that crowned her luxuriant tresses of gold--they presented a picture of manly strength and sweet, womanly beauty that is seldom equalled and scarcely ever excelled.

As the guests congratulated them upon the happy consummation of their ardent desires, and expressed the hope that life would be to them as a summer's day with few clouds, they had every reason to believe their most sanguine hopes would be realized. Alas! many a day that has had a rosy morn, sweet with the breath of flowers and jocund with the voice of birds, has been dark with clouds and flashing angry lightnings ere noon. What a blessing it is that God in His mercy allows us to revel in the sunshine of the present, and does not darken our clear sky with the clouds of coming woe.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE DOWN GRADE.

A short time after their marriage Richard inherited the business and property of his father, whose health had been failing for years, and who died quite unexpectedly. His mother never recovered from the shock, but in a short time followed her loved husband to the grave. So the son was left with a good business and ample means, seeming to be on the road to opulence.

As the years rolled on business prospered, and the prattle of children's voices gladdened their home. First a boy came, with the fair hair and large dreamy eyes of the mother; then, two years later, a girl with the dark eyes and the raven black hair of the father, and their cup of bliss seemed full to overflowing.

Circumstances, however, had already occurred which caused Ruth very much uneasiness of mind, and sometimes when a friend called she had to absent herself for a short time until she had removed the traces of her tears.

Richard had joined the "Liberal Club," and as he threw his whole soul into anything which he deemed worthy of his attention, his wife soon had grave fears that it absorbed too much of his time. Hours which should have been devoted to business were spent in discussing the political issues of the day, and she felt they suffered serious loss, for there were left to his employees important transactions which should have had his undivided attention; and the course he had pursued had alienated some of his best customers. The Liberal Club of which he was a member was composed of the most ultra of the Radicals in that section of country--in fact a great many of its members had been participants in the Chartist agitation, and, a short time after Ashton joined, they invited Henry Vincent, the celebrated agitator, to deliver an address, he, while he remained in town, being the guest of Ashton. This gave great offence to many of his best customers--not only to those who were ultratories, but also to the whigs, and, as a consequence, many of them left him and gave their patronage to rival establishments.

This, however, was not the worst feature of the case; there was another and a stronger motive power to accelerate his already rapid descent. He, with many more of the prominent members of the "Liberal Club," was also among those who are called liberals in their religious views. This could not be tolerated for a moment by those among his customers who were decided in their religious convictions, for they were fully convinced that a person who held such opinions was a dangerous man in any community. They therefore withdrew their patronage, which completed the ruin of his formerly prosperous business, for it did not afterwards pay running expenses.

This state of things greatly alarmed Ruth, and was the source of much sorrow. But there were greater sorrows to follow.

When we are struggling with difficulties and environed by circumstances which have a tendency to make us miserable, we must not imagine that we have sounded the deepest depths of the abyss of woe, for if we do we may discover there are depths we have not yet fathomed. This Ruth Ashton soon bitterly realized, for her husband had of late frequently returned from the Club so much under the influence of liquor as to be thick in his speech and wild, extravagant and foolish in his actions, which caused her many hours of unutterable anguish.

When he first began to drink she was not seriously alarmed, it being the custom in England, at their convivial parties, to pledge each other in wine; and since on such occasions it frequently happened that they imbibed, enough, not only to make them a little exuberant but also quite intoxicated, she thought she must not expect her husband to be different from other men in this respect, as it was at most only a venial offence. But now when his troubles thickened, and his friends one after another left him, and he began to drink more deeply to drown his cares and to stimulate him to meet his difficulties, her partial anxiety deepened into agony, strong and intense. She made loving remonstrance, appealing to him if he loved wife and children to leave the "Club," and not destroy his business and thus involve them all in ruin. Also, frequently, when the children were fast asleep in their little cot, as she looked with a mother's tenderness and pride upon them, thinking what a picture of innocence and beauty they presented as their heads nestled lovingly together on the pillow--the raven-black and gold mingling in beautiful confusion--she would kneel beside them, and as the deepest, holiest feelings of her heart were stirred, she would pray that the one who was so dear to them all might be redeemed from evil and become again a loving husband, a kind father, and a child of God.

Richard at first received her gentle remonstrance with good-natured banter, and generally turned it off with a playful witticism. He asked her if she had not enough confidence in him to believe he was sufficiently master of himself to take a glass with a friend without degenerating into a sot, and he used very strong expletives when speaking of those who were so weak as not to be able to take a glass without making fools of themselves.

But he would not allow even Ruth to influence him in regard to his political predilections, for, when she tried to persuade him to take a more moderate course, he sternly replied he would not desist from exercising what he believed to be his right, not even for her, much as he loved her. He said it was his proud boast that he was a Briton, and as such he would be free--free not only to hold his opinions, but to act upon his convictions, and any man who would withdraw his support from him because he would not be a slave was a petty tyrant, and if such an one was not a Nero it was because he lacked the power, not the spirit.

So matters went from bad to worse with Richard Ashton, not only in regard to the moral, but, also, in the financial aspect of the case. In fact he had soon to draw so largely on his banker that the money his father had left him, outside of the business, began to be seriously diminished. Josh Billings says, "When a man begins to slide down hill he finds it greased for the occasion." And certainly the case of Richard Ashton illustrated the truth of the aphorism, for when he once began to go down hill his descent was so rapid that he soon reached the bottom; and became bankrupt in capital and character. He now began to talk of selling out and going to America: "There," he said, with much emphasis, "I shall be free."

CHAPTER IV.

SAILS FOR AMERICA, AND MEETS A KINDLY WELCOME.

Ruth was now suffering keenly. She loved her husband with such an intense passion that even his folly did not cool its ardor, and when others denounced him in the harshest terms she spoke only in tenderness. And when many of her friends went so far as to advise her to leave him, and so save to herself and children some remnant of her fortune, she indignantly protested against their giving her any such advice. She said she would remain faithful to her marriage vow, no matter what suffering and obloquy it might involve. Not but her idol had fallen very low. She had been so proud of him, proud of his manly bearing, his strength of character. Proud of his ability, which, to her, seemed to enter the regions of genius. "Oh!" she said, as she mourned over her blasted hopes, her vanished dream of bliss, "I never expected this." She suffered as only such a sensitive, noble, cultured woman could suffer, and suffered the more because she would give voice to no complaint. The heart was at high pressure, and the valve was close shut.

But she did not give up her endeavors to save him. She tried by gentle endearing tenderness to win him from destruction; and when she found this did not avail she passionately appealed to him to stop ere he had involved them all in ruin.

"Oh Richard!" she would say, "Why do you drink? You know your business is now nearly ruined. Your friends have nearly all deserted you. You are fast losing your self-respect, wrecking your health, and dragging your wife and children down with you. Consider, my darling, what you are sacrificing, and don't be tempted to drink again!"

She might have reminded him of how he formerly boasted of his strength, and denounced the weakness of the habitual drunkard, but she refrained from so doing. She determined, no matter what she suffered, never to madden him by a taunt or unkind word, but to save him if possible by love and gentleness. He as yet, though harsh and peevish to others, had never spoken an unkind word to her. He had once or twice been unnecessarily severe to the children, which caused pain to her mother's heart, but she had by a quiet word thrown oil upon the troubled waters of her husband's soul, and applied a balm to the wounded hearts of her children.

Sometimes, when she with tears in her eyes appealed to him, he would promise not to drink again. There is no doubt but it was his intention to keep his word, but yet it was invariably broken. The fact was he had become a slave to drink, such a slave that neither what he owed to wife, nor children, nor man, nor God, could restrain him. His word was broken; his honor stained, his wife and children ruined, his God sinned against, and he had become that thing which formerly he so despised--a poor, miserable drunkard.

His friends had seen this for some time, and now he himself could not fail to recognize his awful situation; for his thirst for spirituous liquor had become so strong that he would sacrifice everything he held dear on earth to obtain it--in fact, it had become a raging, burning fever, which nothing but rum could allay.

Reader, do not be too strong in your words of scorn and condemnation. You may never have been tried. People who boast of their purity and strength may never have been environed by temptation. "Let him that is without fault cast the first stone."

A few weeks after he had expressed to his wife his determination to sell out and go to America, two men, who were mutual friends of his, and who were members of the "Liberal Club," casually met on the street. After the usual compliments, one said to the other: "By-the-bye, Saunders, did you hear that Ashton had sold out to Adams and was going to sail for America next week?"

"No; is that so? Well, I expected something would happen. The poor fellow has been going to the bad very rapidly of late. Who would have thought he was so weak? I take it that a man who cannot drink a social glass with a friend without degenerating into a sot has very little original strength of character."

"It is all very well to talk, Bell; I have frequently heard Ashton express himself in the same manner, and yet you see what he is to-day. There was not a member of the Club his equal when it was first formed. In fact, he was the master spirit of the society. Not one of all the members could approach him in culture, in brilliancy, or in legislative ability. You

remember that in a former conversation we thought it strange he should associate with us, when he would be welcomed as a peer by those who, at least, consider themselves our betters; and you expressed it as your opinion that he, like Milton's Satan, would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven."

"But, Charley, is he completely bankrupt?"

"Well, I guess I might almost say so, for it is reported he has used up all the capital which was left him by his father and has drawn heavily on his wife's means. From what I hear, I would conclude he has but a few hundred pounds left to take him to America. I pity his wife. She was a charming girl, so beautiful, so clever, and yet so modest. Many a man envied Ashton his prize. And you know that many an eligible girl would like to have stood in her shoes and been the bride of Richard Ashton, for he was considered one of the best catches in the matrimonial market. Such is life; then it was high noon with him, and all smiled upon him; now, none so poor as to do him reverence."

This conversation gives a true outline of the actual state of affairs. Richard Ashton, at the date of which we are speaking, found absolute ruin staring him in the face, and he now knew he must either sell or be sold out. He wisely chose the former alternative, while there was some chance of saving a little for himself.

Poor Ruth, it almost broke her heart. Her guardian had died before her husband had so utterly fallen, and his wife had preceded him to the grave. She had now lost every near relative, with the exception of her husband and children. But every one who had been at all intimate with her was her friend, and ready to give sympathy and help. She felt grateful for the many expressions of kindness she had received, and it was a severe trial to sever the cords which bound her to those whom she had known so long, and to leave her dear native land and old home to go among strangers who were thousands of miles away. But though it was hard to part, she thought it would be for the best--it could scarcely be for the worse. She was rashly advised by some not to go, as they said, "there was no knowing how utterly he might fall, and then, if she were among strangers, she and her children might be brought down to the deepest depths of poverty and woe." But she nobly replied, "he is my husband and the father of my children, and no matter how he is despised by others he is inexpressibly dear to me, and I will never forsake him 'till death do us part,' no matter what may befall."

Soon after the conversation I have just narrated ensued, Richard Ashton settled up his business gathered the small remnant of his fortune together, and he and his family set sail for that land of promise--America. It was with sad forebodings that Ruth bade her friends a long, and, as it proved to be, a final farewell.

She stood upon the deck of the gallant vessel that bore them away, and as she saw the land she loved so well slowly fade from view and grow dimmer and dimmer as the distance lengthened, until it seemed as a haze upon the dreary waste of waters, there was a feeling of inexpressible sadness took possession of her. She involuntarily drew closer to her husband, and gave expression to the emotions of her soul by sobbing as though her heart would break. He lovingly threw his arm around her waist and drew her closely to him, soothing her sorrow by loving caresses. As the old look shone in his eye, he gently whispered, "God helping me, my darling, I will be a better man, and, as far as I can, I will redeem the past."

After landing in New York he remained there a short time to visit some old friends, and then pushed through to the beautiful city of Rochester, where a relative of his resided. Here he purchased an unpretentious but cozy little cottage, situated not far from Mt. Hope. It had a latticed porch, which was in summer-time covered with honeysuckles; and the cottage was embosomed in flowering trees and morning glories. It had at the back a very fine garden, which also contained numerous peach trees and a delightful snuggerly of a summer-house, whose sides were covered with lattice-work, over which clambered the vine, and through whose interstices, in their season, hung bunches of luscious grapes. In the front there was a nice lawn, with circular flower beds; in attending to which Ruth and her two children (Eddie and Allie) spent many happy hours.

After a short delay, he, through the influence of his friends, obtained employment as book-keeper for a large dry goods firm in the city. When he first began his engagement, his salary was comparatively small; but when his capabilities were recognized, his employer, who was a man of gentlemanly instincts, and was also generous in his dealings with those of his employees who were capable and industrious, raised his salary to an amount which not only enabled them to live respectably, but also to deposit something in the savings-bank each week, preparatory for a rainy day.

Ruth's face began to wear the old radiant look of calm peace, if not exuberant joy, which shone in her eye in the days of yore, and she, for two years, was able to send home to her friends in the old home land "glad tidings of great joy." But, alas! the dream was short as it was blissful. He met one day an old companion of his, with whom he had associated in his native town, and was induced by him, after much persuasion, to join in a friendly glass for the sake of "Auld Lang Syne." He met Ruth when she ran to the gate to welcome him that night with what seemed to her loving heart a cold

repulse, for he was drunk--yes, my dear reader--crazily, brutally drunk. His poor wife was as much stunned as if he had been brought home dead. She stood pale as death, with lips tightly pressed, with wide open eyes staring wildly. Poor little Eddie and Allie ran to their mother and nestled close to her for protection, as birdlings run to the cover of the mother in seasons of danger. And even poor little Mamie, for they had been blessed by a little girl, whom they had thus named, shortly after they arrived in Rochester, cuddled her head more closely to her mother's bosom, and clung to her as if in mortal terror of one whom she usually greeted with the fondest tokens of welcome.

From that time forward his descent to Avernus was very rapid. He soon lost his situation and was unable to secure another. He also became dissatisfied with the country. It is generally men who are their own worst enemies, who become agitators against the existing order of things.

The time of which I am writing was immediately after the American War, and, at that period, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction felt and expressed against England, because there were so many of her citizens who sympathized with the Southern cause. And if any of the more ignorant discovered a man to be an Englishman, he was almost certain to seize the opportunity to rail against his country. Ashton had to endure a great deal of this; for, in the hotels he met a great many returned soldiers, among whom there was a large percentage of the Fenian element; for the majority of the rank and file of these miscreants were tavern loafers. Their denunciation of England was not only strong, but blatant and couched in language both blasphemous and obscene. This Ashton felt he could not endure, this land of freedom was far too free for him. He said he loved liberty, but not license, and, therefore, stimulated by the spirit of patriotism, and by another spirit, which in his case was far the more potent, he resolved to move to Canada, to shelter again under the protecting folds of the "Union Jack." I have already given the reader to understand, in another chapter, that he acted upon that resolution.

CHAPTER V.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS; A TEMPTER, AND A FALL.

On the morning we introduced him to the reader he took the train to Charlotte and secured a berth on the steamer *Corinthian* for a port on the Canadian side, and as it would not start for an hour after he arrived, he thought he would endeavor to compose his perturbed mind by a quiet walk up the river. For in his sober moments he suffered intensely from the "pricks of an outraged conscience," and more than once he had been tempted to take his own life, but the thought of wife and children had restrained him from the rash and cowardly act. It may be, there was intermingled with that the thought, as Shakespeare says--

"Which makes cowards of us all,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of."

He now resolved, God helping him, he would never drink again, but he would establish a home in the strange land whither he was journeying, and live a sober, industrious life. But even as he made these resolves his craving, burning appetite came tempting him; and as he strove against it, he shut his teeth and knit his brow, and involuntarily clenched his hand as if about to struggle with a mortal foe, and stamped his foot as he hissed through his clenched teeth, "I will be free." Ah, Richard! don't begin to boast before you have gained the victory, depend more upon God than self, you surely need his aid, for here comes a tempter.

"Hallo, Ashton, is that you? What is the matter with you? Why, one would suppose you had an attack of the blues. At what were you glaring so fiercely? You look as if you had a live Fenian before you and was striking for the Old Land with a determination to give no quarter. How came you here, and whither are you bound?" And the speaker, with a quizzical smile upon his face, which half concealed and half revealed an underplay of devilish mockery, put his hand familiarly upon the shoulder of Ashton, and then grasped him by the hand and gave it a hearty shake. But if a good judge of human nature had been by, he would have concluded his manner was assumed for the occasion--that he was simply acting, and was a failure at the role he had assumed.

I have not given to the reader the expletives with which he adorned his conversation, nor do I intend to do so, for though he, like others who indulge in the habit of swearing, may have thought it was both ornamental and emphatic, I don't think so. Besides, I have hopes that these pages may be read by the young, and I do not wish to give, even in the conversations which I may transcribe, anything that is profane or impure; for if I did I might inoculate their young minds with an evil virus, which I would not knowingly do.

This person, who now accosted Ashton, was the one who acted imp to his satanic majesty in leading him to his last fall, and here he was again to tempt him. Well would it be for you, Richard Ashton, if you would contemptuously spurn him as you would kick a rabid dog from your path.

I have noticed this person before in these pages but I will now give him a more elaborate introduction to the reader; but as he is an unsavory subject I will make the introduction as brief as possible.

His name was Stanley Ginsling, he was the youngest son of an English gentleman, of considerable property, and of more pride, whose estate lay in the vicinity of Ashton's native town. His father intended him for the Church, not because there were any manifestations that he was peculiarly qualified for holy orders, either by mental or moral endowments, but because he did not know what else to do with him, he concluded he would make him a parson.

So, after he had gone through a certain course by private tuition he was sent to Eton, preparatory to going to Oxford.

He then got through his studies in some manner, though it was generally understood by his mates that he was better acquainted with the brands of his favorite liquors and cigars than he was with the works of the authors which filled up the list of his college curriculum.

But when he entered Oxford he threw off all restraint and gave himself up to a life of utter dissipation, and before long his father received a polite note from the college authorities, intimating that to save further disgrace he had better call

his worthy son home.

After this he became a dissipated tavern loungee, a barnacle on the good ship of society, a miserable sponge.

He soon found, as he sententiously expressed it, that it was not agreeable for him to remain under the kindly shelter of the paternal mansion; so he, prodigal like, took the portion his father gave him and spent it in riotous living. But he was determined not to feed on husks, if unmitigated cheek and unblushing effrontery could bring him better fare.

It was while he was a gentleman loungee about town he first met Richard Ashton, who, at that time, had become too much demoralized to be very choice in the selection of his associates. And Ginsling was rather intelligent--had a fine person and pleasing address, and had it not been for his moral depravity and lack of every noble instinct, he might have made his mark in society.

So Ashton, the ultra radical, and Ginsling, the young scion of extreme toryism, used to fraternize in their drinking bouts, and though they would, when sufficiently stimulated, boozily wrangle over their cups, there was in their common dissipation a ground for mutual understanding. But in his sober moments the radical had the most supreme contempt for his tory associate, and, sometimes, could not suppress its manifestation. The other, however, was too great a toady to be too thin skinned. It was not convenient for him to be over-sensitive. In fact he was willing to swallow such insults *ad infinitum* if their donors would only furnish the wherewithall to wash them down.

After Ashton left England he felt somewhat lonely, and then his father had become so utterly estranged from him because of his conduct, that his situation became unpleasant even for him; so he determined to sail for America. Learning that Ashton had settled in Rochester, he made his way to that city. He arrived there at the latter part of the year 1864, towards the close of the American War; and shortly after his arrival, meeting with his old comrade, as we have informed the reader, the latter, strange to say, had power enough over him to seduce him to his fall. And now, when Ashton was leaving Rochester in order to get away from his old associates, and was making resolutions of reform, here he was again as his tempter to lead him astray.

At his salute Ashton looked up with a dazed, faraway look upon his face, and then, as he slowly realized his position, he thought how foolish he must have appeared to another who had witnessed his fierce gesticulations and heard his wild and incoherent murmurings. The thought covered him with confusion, and he did not for a moment gain sufficient control of his faculties to answer his interlocutor in a rational manner.

The other, however, relieved his embarrassment by continuing in a bantering tone: "Why, Ashton, one would suppose by your actions you were the principal of some terrible tragedy, and that just now you were suffering from the "pricks of an outraged conscience." I declare you have mistaken your calling; you would have made your fortune on the stage. Why, your looks just now would have done for either Hamlet in the crazy scene, or Macbeth when talking to Banquo's ghost. But if you are suffering I have something which will reach the seat of the ailment; as the Scripture puts it, it is "A balm for all our woes, and a cordial for our fears." Here it is, Ashton. I have just been up to Charley's to have this dear little friend of mine replenished. How do you like the looks of it?" And suiting the action to the word he held up before him a beautiful little brandy flask. Then detaching the silver cup from the bottle it partially covered, he filled it full to the brim. "Here, Ashton, take this potheen," he said, "it will settle your perturbed spirits, comfort your soul, and drive dull care away."

Ashton's hand shot forward mechanically to take the proffered glass, and then he drew it hastily back.

"No, Quisling," he said, "I will not touch it. Curse the stuff; it has wrought enough ruin with mine and me. I was just swearing I would never drink again, and I was in earnest. I know I must have appeared to you as some gibbering maniac, but I was fighting my craven appetite for strong drink. Oh how hard the struggle has been; its fierceness is only known to God and myself. It comes upon me when I am least prepared to defend myself, and tortures me with the cruel malignity of a devil. And then I beat it back, and it comes upon me again. But I must triumph or go under; for if it is not liberty with me it will soon be death."

He then turned fiercely upon Ginsling, and said--

"Why do you dog my footsteps like a shadow? Have you not wrought ruin enough? Curse you; it was an evil day for me when you crossed the Atlantic, for had you not done so, I would have been a respectable and happy man to-day. It was you who urged me to drink, and, listening to you, brought me down from the happy and prosperous man that you found, to the miserable wreck you now look upon! A thing for angels and good men to pity, and for devils and evil men to despise. Leave me, if you have any pity, and do not tempt me more."

If there had been the slightest instinct of honor in the creature to whom these words were addressed, the appeal would not have been in vain. But his original stock of this attribute had been limited, and he had long since disposed of the little he once possessed. Such an attribute as honor or pity was viewed by him as a useless incumbrance, for he was a miserable, heartless wretch, seeking the gratification of his own depraved appetite, and careless of who might suffer.

He laughed with a seeming bluff heartiness when Ashton had finished speaking, but the laugh sounded hollow and insincere.

Novelists are ever introducing upon their pages, as the villain of the story, the smooth, oily rogue: as if they considered such ones were alone capable of cunning roguery and subtle diabolism. But there is many a mean soul disguised by a bluff, hearty exterior, and the mask is much the more difficult to penetrate. It is said of such an one--"He says hard things, but you always see the worst of him, for he puts his worst side out." Shakespeare's rogue, honest Jack Falstaff, was brusque and blunt, but he carried a rascal's heart, and there are many now living who are just as great blusterers, and are equally as cowardly and as base.

"Ha, ha! Ashton! this is too good to last! You know you have assumed the role of the Prodigal Son before, but you have come back to the riotous living again." Come, old fellow, take a little; it will do you good. I believe you used to be an orthodox Methodist, and, therefore, must be considerably versed in Scripture, and you know that Paul advised Timothy to "take a little wine for his stomach's sake, and for his oft infirmities."

When Ginsling had finished speaking, a look of unutterable scorn passed over the face of Ashton, and he glared at the former with fierce contempt, and once or twice he seemed as if about to reply, but, though his quivering lips and the contortions of his face showed violent emotion, he for a time uttered no response, as if he could not find words adequate to express his burning thoughts, till suddenly starting he said--"Pshaw! you miserable rascal, it was an evil day for me when I first met you. Have you not wrought ruin enough? Why do you come again to tempt me? Leave me or I will not be responsible for the consequences." And, turning upon his heel, he abruptly left him.

"Whew--but that's cool," whispered Ginsling, "but old fellow you are not going to escape me that easily. I have come down here for a purpose, and I am going to succeed in my undertaking, or my name is not Stanley Ginsling."

And I might here give the reader to understand that it was not mere accident which brought Ginsling to Charlotte that day, he had come with a fixed purpose of meeting Ashton, enticing him to drink, and then accompanying him upon his journey and getting as much out of him as possible. He had heard Ashton say it was his intention to start for Canada, and he concluded that he was too good a quarry for an old hunter like himself to lose. And as it did not matter to him whether he spent the instalments, which were regularly forwarded from home, in the United States or in Canada; he resolved to meet Ashton at Charlotte, and be the companion of his voyage. This accounts for his coming upon the latter as we have just narrated.

He did not allow Ashton, who was walking rapidly away after he had done speaking, to proceed far before he called after him, "Stop!"

The latter turned to learn what he wanted, for he began to have a little compunction of conscience, because he had treated him so rudely, and under the impulse of the new change of feeling waited until Ginsling had caught up.

"Now Ashton," he said, "I think you have treated me in a manner which is very hard for a gentleman of spirit to endure." As he said this he saw the faint outline of a sneer curling the lip of his companion. But taking no notice he hastily continued, "But I have known you too long to be over-sensitive at what you say or do, I would endure more from you, old fellow, than from any man on earth. Let us be friends, Ashton, for the sake of our friendship in 'Merry England.'"

"I am sure, Ginsling, I don't want to part with you in anger, and if I have wounded your feelings you must remember it was under strong provocation. Drink has been my ruin, and the ruin of those I love best on earth. It has certainly been 'Our Curse,' and through it I have been most cruel to those I love best and for whom, when I am myself, I would sacrifice my life to defend from evil or danger. This morning I promised my wife, as I have at least a score of times before, that I would keep sober, and, while struggling against my appetite, and determined to conquer, no matter how much suffering the struggle might entail, you came up, as my evil genius, to tempt me to my ruin, I could scarcely endure your solicitations, but your rough banter drove me wild."

"Well, old fellow, let it all pass, I was not aware of the mood you were in, or I would have been more careful how I addressed you. I am sure I would be the last man in the world who would knowingly cause you pain. And to lead you astray, I can assure you, is far from my purpose. I would rather do what I could to help you. And, in my opinion, if I can

prevail upon you to take a few spoonfuls of brandy I will do this most effectively; why, man, a glass is just what you want. A little, under certain circumstances, will benefit any one who takes it; especially is this the case with one who is as you are now. Why, you are all unnerved--see how your hands tremble, and your whole system seems as if it wanted toning up. Now if you break off too suddenly it may be serious for you, while if you take a little, to brace you up, such disagreeable consequences will not follow. I hate a man to drink too much, for, if he does, he is sure to make a fool of himself, but a little will do any man good."

The tone and manner of Ginsling when he thus addressed Ashton was subdued and gentlemanly, for he had not so far degenerated as to have lost altogether the grace and polish which the refined associations of his youth had given to him. His language, also, sounded reasonable to the one to whom it was addressed, for, though Ashton had become an awful example of the ultimate issue of moderate drinking, at least in some cases, he would still argue in its favor, and when the advocates of prohibition would point to those who had fallen victims to the pernicious habit, he would answer that it was the abuse and not the use of intoxicating liquor which produces the evil.

So Ginsling, who had frequently heard him thus argue, adroitly stole an arrow out of his own quiver, and addressed him as he had frequently heard him address others. And there was just enough truth mixed with the sophistry of his argument to carry conviction to the mind of one as unstable as Ashton; for he did feel all unnerved. He had broken off suddenly from a long-continued drunken spree, and was beginning to have premonitions of something which he dreaded only second to death. He had already twice suffered the horrors of delirium tremens, and he now had good cause for fearing another attack. It was to this Ginsling referred when he said if he broke off suddenly it might lead to serious consequences. So, after what seemed to be a desperate struggle--the better instincts of his nature endeavoring to overcome the craving of his appetite and the sophistry of his tempter--he concluded he would just take a little now to help him over this one trouble, and then he would give it up forever. He argued to himself, "I could not live through another attack, for I am sure the dreadful suffering is akin to the horrors of the host."

"Well, Ginsling," he said, "I think I will take your advice." He was half ashamed thus to speak, because he was about to do something for which his conscience strongly condemned him, and also because he felt he was manifesting weakness and vacillation in the presence of one whom he, in his heart, despised, and who, after this, would hold similar sentiments in regard to himself. "I do feel a little unlike myself this morning, and as the wind is rather squally, and the captain says when we shoot out beyond the point the lake will be wild, I need a little something to settle my stomach; I have a fearful dread of sea-sickness." He said this partly to justify his conduct to his companion, but more to convince himself he was about to take a step which was not only perfectly justifiable, but, under the circumstances, a manifestation of wisdom.

If a man is about to perform an action of doubtful propriety, he is never at a loss to find arguments to defend the course he is about to pursue, and though he may not be able to satisfy his conscience, he can, at least to some extent, deaden the acuteness of its pangs. Richard Ashton endeavored to justify his present action to himself, in the moment which intervened between his new-formed resolution and its consummation. The reader is no doubt aware, from experience, that a great deal will pass through the mind in the space of a single moment, and that sometimes a man's weal or woe, for time, yea, and for eternity, depends upon a decision which has to be thus hastily given. It was one of these crucial moments which Ashton was now passing through. Alas! his decision was far from being a wise one, and he could not deceive himself so completely as not to partially feel this; for, try how he would, he could not banish the thought that yielding to the tempter might entail a train of misery horrible to contemplate. Then Ruth's pale, pleading face, all suffused with tears, came up vividly before him, as he last saw her, and as he remembered the promise given, for a moment he hesitated, but finally he subdued every better feeling, and reaching forth his hand, took the glass which Ginsling temptingly offered, and drained it to the dregs.

One glass such as he had thus taken was sufficient to make Ashton regardless of consequences, and, therefore, it was not long before it was followed by another and more copious one. In short, in half an hour after he had met Ginsling he was wild and reckless, and the latter had accomplished his purpose, for Ashton was spending his money as freely as though he had the coffers of a Rothschild or an Astor. In short, ere the steamboat had started he had to be helped on board, for he was utterly helpless.

CHAPTER VI.

ARRIVAL IN CANADA: A FRIENDLY HOST APPLIES FOR A SITUATION.

It was a beautiful morning when the boat landed at the picturesque little Canadian town of L----. The first that Ashton knew of the arrival was when he was awakened from his drunken stupor by being violently shaken by Ginsling; and, as he gained consciousness, he heard that worthy saying, with a subdued voice: "Come, wake up, Ashton, for we are again on British soil. Why, is not that strain enough to cause any true Briton to rise from the dead?"

He was at last aroused, and his first sensation was that he had a terrible pain in his head, a horrible thirst, and a certain vague realization that he heard the strains of "Rule Britannia." He staggered out to the bar, for he felt he must soon have a drink, or he could not live. Ginsling also stepped up without being invited; for that worthy could not righteously be charged with too much modesty, as he never was backward in helping himself at a friend's expense.

They immediately, after securing their luggage, stepped out upon the wharf, where there was a large crowd gathered, listening to the music of a band--each member of which was dressed in the garb of a British soldier--as it played patriotic airs, such as "Rule Britannia," "God Save the Queen," etc. The reason of this manifestation of patriotism will be readily understood when we inform the reader that it was the Queen's Birthday.

Ashton, for a moment or two, almost thought he was back in Old England again, and he was so carried away by the grand old airs that if a recruiting sergeant had presented himself just then he might have taken a step in haste of which he would have repented at leisure.

"Come, Ashton, don't stand there in that daft fashion, or the Canucks will imagine you are one of the irresponsibles who lately arrived in New York from Europe, and that the cute Yankees have quietly shipped you over to John Bull's domains."

He was aroused by the voice of Ginsling out of his day-dream to realize that several cabbies were exerting the utmost of their lung power in crying up the merits of their respective hotels.

"British American, sir--the best house in town. Won't cost you a cent to ride there, sir."

"Don't you believe that fellow," shouted another. "Come to the Tarlton; it is the only house in town which is fit to kape a gentleman like you, sir." And then several others shouted out in full chorus, each endeavoring to say something more witty than the other; and if push, rough bantering wit, and imperturbable good nature could secure success, certainly each would have had a bus full.

But Ashton had caught the name "British American," and as he, just then, was feeling intensely loyal, he determined to put up there, and he intimated to the runner his resolution. Ginsling, who was waiting for him to decide, jumped aboard also, and they were soon quartered at the aforementioned hotel, which they found, if not of the very highest grade, at least eminently respectable. The charges, also, were exceedingly moderate.

The room he had given to him looked out upon the blue waters of noble Ontario, which swept far away to the south, until it laved the shores he had left but a few hours before--a land now associated in his mind with so much of happiness and of misery, and which yet contained those who were inexpressibly dear to him.

He had no sooner secured a room than he sat down to write a note to Ruth; for, demoralized as he was, he did not forget his promise. He found, however, that his head was in a perfect whirl, and that his hand was so unsteady as to make the accomplishment of the task almost an impossibility; but he managed, in an almost illegible scrawl, to inform her of his safe arrival. He asked her to excuse the brevity of his communication, as he was still suffering from the effects of his stormy voyage across the lake, which had shattered, for the time being, his nervous system. He ended by sending his love to her and the children, and asking her to write immediately, as he was anxious to hear from his darlings at home.

The next two weeks were passed in continuous drunkenness. He would awaken each morning feeling, as those who have passed through the ordeal say has to be experienced in order to have the faintest idea of what it is; his lips and

throat were as dry as withered leaves; his brain seemed on fire, and his bloodshot eyes, gleaming out from his pale, emaciated face, appeared as though they might have belonged to one of Canada's dark-visaged aborigines in the savage state rather than to their present intellectual, though dissipated, owner.

In his sober moments he would think of his wife and children, and there was in the thought a mingling of shame and agony which almost drove him wild; then he would remember the purport of his journey, for which he had not yet made the slightest endeavor; and when, on examination, he found his stock of money was almost gone, and that he would soon have either to secure a situation or be a penniless vagrant in a strange land, it added to his despair.

"I say, Mr. Ashton," said the polite landlord of the hotel one morning, as he was about to take his first drink, "did you not give me to understand you were looking for a situation in some dry goods or clothing establishment?"

"Yes, Mr. Rumsey, that is what I am after; but God knows how I will succeed; for I have done nothing, nor am I, as I am now, in a fit state to do anything; for who would engage such a wretch as I am?"

Rumsey pitied him; for he was a man who was too good for the business in which he was engaged.

"I will give you a light glass, Ashton," he said; "but you must sober off. I like you, and therefore will not let you kill yourself with drink at this establishment; so for your sake, and also to keep up the reputation of my house, I must limit you to-day to two more glasses. And if you will excuse me for presuming to interfere with your business, I would advise you to cut the acquaintance of that precious companion of yours. I gave him a bit of my mind last night, and told him pretty emphatically what I thought of him. Why, man, have you entirely lost possession of your senses, to let a leech like that loafer drain you dry? I will give you this drink now, one after breakfast, and one after dinner; then you must eat something, for I do not believe that during the last three days you have taken enough to keep a pigeon alive. If you find that in trying to sober off you are likely to be sick, I will send for the doctor, and he will help you through. You told me you were a married man; for the sake of your wife and children you must get over this spree."

Ashton took the proffered glass with his hand shaking as if he had the ague, and with the eagerness of one who was perishing for want of a drink.

"Oh, landlord," he said, "that was only a taste; I must have more. Do, please, give me more."

"No, sir, not a drop," said Mr. Rumsey, with considerable sternness. "If you must have it, you will have to go to some other house to get it. I am not willing to be in any way responsible for what is sure to follow. Come, now, and have some breakfast--a bit of toast, a poached egg--and be yourself; for I want to become acquainted with the *bona fide* Mr. Ashton. I have not met him yet; you have not been sober since you came here."

"Well, sir, I will take your advice; and there is one who, when I tell her, will thank you, as I cannot. She has not a very high opinion of your guild, and she has strong reason not to have. God help me--how am I to get over this?"

"Well, Mr. Ashton, if others would stop selling liquor, I would willingly never sell another glass, for I could live comfortably here on the income I derive from the travelling public and my summer guests; for, to tell you the truth, I don't like the business, especially when I see its effects as exhibited in cases like your own; but while others sell I must, or I would lose my business. It is a case of self-preservation, and you know that 'self-preservation is the first law of nature.'"

"Or, in other words," said Ashton, "every man for himself, and Satan take the hindmost."

Ashton made the trial, and, though he had to pass through the fiery ordeal of intense suffering, yet, aided by the judicious treatment of his host, he was brought safely through.

He had, in the meantime, received a letter from his wife, and each of his children, breathing out love to him. Each one expressing the deepest anxiety as to the nature and result of his illness, and praying that he would soon be back with those who loved him so truly.

"Ashton," said Mr. Rumsey, his host, one morning, "this is the thing which will just suit you, if you can secure it," and he handed a copy of the *Daily Globe* to Ashton, at the same time pointing to an advertisement which read as follows: "A good managing clerk wanted for a dry goods and clothing establishment in the town of Bayton. He must be a man of matured experience. Apply Box 152, Post Office."

"That will just suit me," said Ashton. "What is the distance to Bayton?"

"About ninety miles. I suppose you think of applying personally? I should advise you by all means to do so."

Ashton immediately set about making the necessary preparation, and next morning started for the above-mentioned town, upon which journey we will leave him for the present.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. AND MRS. GURNEY.

Mr. and Mrs. Gurney sat in their cosy sitting-room, which was plainly but tastefully furnished; but though quiet, one could not fail to realize that it was the home of people of more than ordinary intelligence and culture. They both had passed life's meridian, and were, at the time we introduce them to our readers, verging upon three score years. They were dressed in deep mourning, and the look of subdued sadness which overcast their thoughtful faces told they had lately "passed under the rod." But suffering had not made them hard and cynical, but richer in grace and goodness, riper, sweeter, mellow. Each had learned to say with Asaph, "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever."

They certainly had reason to mourn. God had blessed them with four children; children of whom they had just cause to be proud, for they early displayed talents which marked them as above mediocrity, but one after another, just after they had reached manhood and womanhood, they had fallen victims to that insidious disease, consumption, and the aged couple were left in their declining years, sad and lonely, like two aged trunks stripped of their foliage, bare and alone.

Mr. Gurney had been for years engaged in the dry goods and clothing trade, and had intended his last surviving son should take the business, but Providence had ordered otherwise, taking him away just at the time when the father was about to carry out his long cherished scheme.

After they had laid in the grave the body of their beloved, for a while a cloud of intense sorrow hung over their home, though they had faith to believe it was lined with the silver of their Father's love.

They were too intelligent, and their grief was too intense for much outward manifestation, but each knew the pregnancy of the other's sorrow from their individual experiences; and by gentle ministrations of love each endeavored to soothe and ease the burdened heart of the other.

Mrs. Gurney found some relief in attending to her household duties--to the plants and flowers in the conservatory--for they had one of considerable size. This latter had been the special duty of her daughter who had preceded her brother by a few weeks to the grave. And as the mother now engaged in this "labor of love," each plant and flower that received her gentle attention would suggest some tender recollection of the loved and lost. As she trained them to their supports and trellises she would remember that the white fingers which had so frequently and lovingly performed the task were now cold in death.

But there was one--a night blooming cereus--which was a particular favorite of Grace's, and which, even after she knew she had not long to live, she hoped she would be spared to see bloom. But when she perceived she was failing so rapidly--quietly, peacefully, sinking to rest--she said--

"Mamma, darling, I have looked forward with a great deal of expectancy to the time when my cereus should bloom, I now know my hope in this respect will not be realized, but I want you, mother, when it opens out its pure white petals and its fragrance perfumes the midnight air to remember I shall be in heaven--among fairer flowers, with sweeter perfume; for they have not been cursed by sin. And while you mourn at my absence remember I am with Jesus--'Absent from the body, present with the Lord.'"

And now as the mother tended these flowers, and lovingly lingered near this special favorite, around which such tender memories lingered, the flood-gates of her soul were mercifully lifted up and she "eased her poor heart with tears."

Thus the mother, who was constitutionally the frailer of the two, and was the one from whom the children had inherited the tendency to the disease which had carried them off so prematurely, seemed to come back to herself, so to speak, and she soon manifested a subdued cheerfulness as she set about managing the domestic economy of her home.

But Mr. Gurney did not recover so rapidly; there seemed to be no outlet to his feelings--nothing to ease his burdened heart.

He had given his business into the hands of his clerks, and had concluded to sell out and permanently retire from active life. He went with his wife on a journey to the seaside, to a quiet watering-place, hoping that change of scene might divert his attention from his sorrows and enable him, at least to some extent, to recover his wonted health and spirits. But he returned unbenefited, and his wife and friends began to have grave fears for his life. They consulted an eminent physician, who advised him not to give up his business, but to devote to it as much of his attention as his strength would permit; and this advice coinciding with his own judgment, he concluded to act upon it; but as none of his employees hardly came up to his ideal of what a managing clerk should be, he thought he had better advertise for a responsible man, who thoroughly understood the business, and who could keep the books, while he could do the buying and attend to the outlying duties of the firm.

It was in accordance with this idea that he inserted the advertisement in the *Globe* which brought Richard Ashton to answer in person.

CHAPTER VIII.

ASHTON MEETS WITH FRIENDS AND SECURES A SITUATION.

"Have you received any answer to your advertisement, dear?" asked Mrs. Gurney of her husband.

"Yes, dear, I received a telegram this morning from a man who lives in L---, who said he thought he would suit me. He stated he could give first-class references, and that he had been in the business from a boy. He also stated he would make personal application, and would take the next train for this place: so I am expecting him on the 7 o'clock. I left word with Johnson to drive him here, and he may arrive at any moment."

"But, my dear," said his wife, "is it not rather risky for him to come? You may not like his appearance, and if even in this respect everything is satisfactory, his credentials may not be so."

"I am sure I cannot help that," replied Mr. Gurney. "I did not state in the advertisement that parties who wished to engage should make personal application, and I have no doubt but I shall receive applications by letter. If individuals come from a distance to apply, it must be at their own risk."

Their conversation was here interrupted by the ringing of the door-bell, and in a moment after the servant reported that a Mr. Ashton wished to see Mr. Gurney.

"That is the name of the person in question," Mr. Gurney remarked. "Show him in, Sarah;" and in a moment after Ashton was ushered into their presence.

"Mr. Gurney, I presume," he said, with that ease and grace that good breeding and familiarity with good society alone gives to a man.

"I sent you a telegram," Ashton continued, "making application for the situation, in answer to your advertisement; and I have now come in person, as I stated I would."

Mr. Gurney, who had risen, extended to him his hand--then introduced him to his wife, and in a few moments, by his cordial reception, made him completely at his ease.

His appearance, and, still more, his manner, impressed Mr. and Mrs. Gurney favorably, and they both concluded he was a very intelligent person.

He produced his credentials, which were highly satisfactory; but Mr. and Mrs. Gurney were too keen observers not to notice the marks of dissipation which his two weeks' debauch had stamped upon his face. The former, however, possessed too much of the courtesy which distinguishes the true gentleman to give utterance to a word which would wound even the most sensitive person, if he could do his duty and avoid it. Though, if it lay in the way of his duty, he immediately entered into its performance, but in the least offensive manner possible.

He said to Richard Ashton, in his most kindly tone: "You will pardon me, I am sure, for asking you another question. I would not do so only it is necessary that I should exercise the utmost caution in order that I may secure a person who has not only ability and experience, but who also is a man of good character and temperate habits--who, in short, would be every way reliable. Pardon me if I ask, in all kindness, would you in every respect till up my requirements?"

This was a plain question, put with the most gentle courtesy, but yet in a straightforward manner; and if Ashton had wished in any way to equivocate, he felt he could not do so without utterly destroying his chances of employment. To do him justice, however, let us state he never, even for a moment, entertained a thought of so doing. He felt he was being weighed in the balance, and would probably be found wanting, but he resolved he would not endeavor to bring down the scale in his favor, either by equivocation or dealing in untruths. In fact, he immediately concluded to make a clean breast of it, and give him, in as few words as possible, a history of his life, and then leave him to deal with his case. Acting upon this thought, he in a few moments graphically and pathetically told his sad story.

"I will not ask you to decide to-night," he said after he had finished, "but if it is agreeable to you I will call in the morning. I would like you would give me a decided answer by that time if possible, and," he added, "if you conclude to engage me I will endeavor so to devote myself to your interest as never to give you cause to regret it."

Mr. Gurney immediately agreed to this arrangement, as he thought it would be better to have a few hours to carefully consider the matter, and to talk it over with his wife. In fact, he had been so much wrought upon by the sad recital, as to entirely unfit him for a calm and judicious consideration of the business in hand. So, making an appointment for the next day at 9 a.m., he saw Ashton to the door, and bade him good night.

Ashton, as he walked rapidly away, was very despondent. He had but slight hope of securing the situation; for, he reasoned to himself, had a person of similar character come to him seeking a position, when he was in business, no matter how much he might sympathise with him he never would have thought of engaging him.

He wisely determined, however, to hope for the best. He was sure he would like the situation, for he had formed a very high opinion of Mr. Gurney. He considered him a very superior person--cultured, but plain, and practical, and it was because he knew he possessed the latter attribute he had no hopes of being engaged.

But had he been capable of reading Mrs. Gurney's mind, and could he also have known the influence she possessed over her husband, he would not have been so despondent. His story had not been half told before she had been so affected by its touching pathos as to be unable to repress her tears, and before he had finished she had resolved she would exert all the influence she possessed over her husband to persuade him to take Ashton on trial; for she felt it would be a noble thing to aim at the redemption of this man from evil, and to give help, hope, and joy to his wife and children, of whom he had spoken so tenderly.

"Well, Martha," said Mr. Gurney, after Ashton had departed, "would it be safe for us to employ him?"

He asked this in all sincerity; for he was a man who consulted his wife in relation to all his business affairs. He said, "he looked upon marriage as a partnership, the wife being an interested member of the firm." And as he firmly believed this, he made it a rule never to enter into any business transaction without seeking her counsel, in regard to it, and he boasted that some of the best hits he had made in business had been the outcome of acting upon her advice.

"Well, my dear," she said in answer to his question, "I am strongly in favor of giving him a chance. He is certainly a man of more than ordinary intelligence, and he could not have that ease and grace of manner which he possesses in so eminent a degree had he not associated with the best society. It is certainly a great pity he has become a victim of strong drink, but, then, if he had not he would never have applied for the situation."

"But, Martha," interjected Mr. Gurney, "do you think it would be in conformity with sound wisdom to engage him after the confession he has made?"

"Yes, James, I really do, and one of the strongest reasons for my thinking so is because of that confession. If he had protested he had not been drinking, as most men in his circumstances would have done, then I should have opposed your engaging him, but he was so straightforward that he has certainly enlisted my sympathy in his favor; and then I really think God guided him here. We have always been advocates of temperance, and if there is one thing more than any other for which I feel like praising Him, it is because he has enabled us to deliver some of our fellow-mortals from lives of intemperance, and it may be, some from drunkard's graves. But this has been done without any great sacrifice upon our parts--that is, we have not had to run any great risk. Now we are placed in different circumstances, and we have an opportunity of possibly saving one of our fellow-creatures if we are only willing to risk a little trouble and loss in order to accomplish our object. Now, don't you think, James, the Lord has sent him here just to try us?"

"It has not thus occurred to me," he answered; but he did not make any further remark, wishing to hear all his wife had to say before doing so.

"I think, James," she continued, "the reason that the cause of temperance has not gained greater triumphs, has been because its advocates have not been willing to make sacrifices enough: let us not fail in this respect. There is no doubt but you would employ Mr. Ashton if you had no fear he would again fall, for he seems to me in every way suited for the position--if we had any doubt in this respect his credentials should remove it. But, unfortunately, he has been a great drinker, and, therefore, if you employ him, it may involve you in trouble, and in the end it may result in loss; but if you do not employ him it will be because you are afraid of these things, that is, it will be a matter of selfishness, and you will practically say you are a friend of temperance until it becomes a matter which may affect your interest, but when it touches you there you will draw back and go no further, though by being willing to risk a little you may be the means of saving this man, and of giving succor to his wife and helpless children. I think, James, looking at it in this

light, you should give him a trial for a month or two if you can agree as to terms."

She had grown quite eloquent, ere she was through, for her heart was enlisted, and she was determined, if possible, to save this man. And, as she had listened to his description of his wife and children, she felt as if she almost knew Mrs. Ashton, and was certain she should esteem her very highly. So, she brought all her powers of persuasion to bear upon her husband, that she might persuade him to her way of thinking.

Mr. Gurney had listened to his wife attentively until she waited for an answer, and then he scarcely knew what to say in reply. He had, in fact, as we have stated, been also touched by Ashton's graphic story, and he felt he would be willing to sacrifice a great deal to save him; he also felt the force of her logic when she argued if he were a true temperance man he would be willing to make great sacrifice in order to rescue one of the victims of the rum traffic, but he thought he would be running almost too much risk to employ him under the circumstances. It was under the influence of these counter currents of thought he made his reply:

"Well, Martha," he said, "I should like to engage the man, and I have concluded, if he did not drink, he would just suit me, but, according to his own statement, he has not only fallen once, but several times, and we have no guarantee that he will not fall again. The fact is, judging from almost universal experience, he is more likely to fall than not, and if I should employ him, and after he had charge of the business he should give way to his besetting sin, he would not only cause me serious loss, but care and worry, which, in my delicate state of health, I should, if possible, avoid. Really, dear, I am in a strait betwixt two; I should like very much to help him, for, I will candidly confess, that no stranger, in so short a period of time, ever took hold of my feelings as he has done, and yet to put him in charge of my business, after the confession he has made, seems so contrary to the dictates of sound judgment as, in fact, to be actually courting trouble. But, my dear, let us not say anything more about it to-night; we will pray over it, and, in the morning, we will decide what to do. God will guide us in this as He has in all our past transactions, when we have gone to Him for guidance."

"I am perfectly content, dear, to leave it in His hands," said his wife, "but I am nearly satisfied now that it is His will we should employ Mr. Ashton. We will lay all the matter before him, and let us also bring this poor victim of strong drink, and his wife and children, before the Throne of Grace."

Mr. Gurney, after praying for Divine direction, and seriously considering the matter, concluded he would give Ashton a trial. He saw his wife would be seriously disappointed if he did not do so, and he wished to gratify her as far as he possibly could. He also thought if he took him for a comparatively limited period, on trial, there would be no great risk in it. He, however, determined to give him to understand the retaining of his position entirely depended upon his good behavior.

Ashton, when he called in the morning, was agreeably surprised to learn that Mr. Gurney had concluded to try him for a short period, if they could agree as to salary, and as he was willing to accept a very moderate one until he had satisfied his employer he was worthy of something better, they were not long in coming to terms.

So the matter was settled, and Ashton was able to write home to his wife that he had secured a situation.

"I think, my darling," he said, "I shall like the place very much. Mr. and Mrs. Gurney (my employer and his wife) seem to be an excellent couple. I should judge, from appearances, they are in very easy circumstances, and very intelligent and cultured.

"Bayton is a beautiful, cosy, old-fashioned town, containing, I should think, about three thousand inhabitants, and there is a fine river running through the centre of it, nearly, if not quite, as large as the Genesee. Its houses are, most of them, embowered in trees; in fact, it appears like an English town Americanized, and its inhabitants seem to have more the characteristics of Americans than Canadians.

"The business of which I am to have the management is the best dry goods and clothing establishment in the place. I am to remain on trial for a month, and then, if I give satisfaction and like the situation, I am to have a permanent engagement.

"I hope, my dear, at least for once, that old Father Time will fly with rapid wings. I do so long to see you all again. Tell Eddie that this is a famous river for fish, and will furnish him with rare sport. Also tell Allie that Bayton is a famous place for flower culture, almost every house having a flower garden in front of it to beautify it and to fill the air with fragrant perfumes.

"I was glad to learn that papa's darling little Mamie was well; and growing finely. You must not let her forget me. I hope

Eddie and Allie are paying strict attention to their studies; for if they do, success is almost certain, and in after years they will rejoice because of their present self-denial.

"And now, my darling, good-bye for the present. Kiss all the children for their papa.

"Your affectionate husband,

"RICHARD ASHTON."

CHAPTER IX.

RUTH'S MISGIVINGS AND MENTAL AGONY.

It is now time that we should return to Ruth and her children.

After her husband had left her, as we narrated in the first chapter, she was very sad, almost desolate, and she felt she must retire to hold communion with Him who promised to give rest to the weary soul who came to Him; so, leaving little Mamie in care of Eddie and Allie, she retired to her room to weep and also to pray. She was literally following the injunction of her Saviour--praying to her Father in secret that He might reward her openly. The reward she longed for was that He would protect her husband and influence him to walk aright.

As she was thus alone--and yet not alone, for God was with her--her memory took her back to the sunny days of her girlhood. How bright those halcyon days appeared! She was in fancy again walking amid the green fields and by the hedgerows of dear old England, plucking the daisies from the meadows and listening to the sweet strains of the lark as it carolled its lay to the morning. Sunny visions of the past, with loved faces wandering in their golden light, flitted before her; and her heart was filled with sadness as she remembered the breaks that Time, with his relentless hand, had made in that once happy number. She found herself unconsciously repeating--

"Friend after friend departs--
Who hath not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts
That hath not here an end."

Then the thoughts of the days when Richard Ashton came wooing, of moonlight walks, of music and literature--these incidents of joyful days flitted before her, each for a moment, and then vanished away, like dissolving views. Some who sought her then were now opulent, filling positions of honor and great responsibility; and some of her associates who then envied her, because she was more sought after than they, were now presiding over palatial homes.

As these visions of the happy days of yore passed like fairy dreams before her she heaved an involuntary sigh as she passionately exclaimed: "Oh drink, thou hast been our curse; turning our happiness into misery; our Eden of bliss into a waste, weary wilderness of poverty and woe!"

"Mamma, mamma, may I tum, I have such a petty flower to show oo."

It was the voice of little Mamie, and, as her mother opened the door, she came in, an almost perfect picture of innocent beauty; as with eyes sparkling with delight she held up to her mother a large and beautiful pansy.

"Isn't that petty, mamma? and wasn't Eddie a dood boy to get it for me? Now, mamma, I'm dust going to save it for papa. Will you put it up for him?"

Mrs. Ashton hastily turned away her head, and wiped her eyes, so that her child might not see traces of her recent tears. She then turned, and taking Mamie in her arms brushed her golden curls, which, young as she was, hung down her back, falling in rippling waves of sunlight over her fair young form, and assured her she would put away the flower for dear papa.

Little Mary, or as they called her Mamie, was born, as we have already noticed, a short time after they came to Rochester. She was a beautiful child, and in some respects seemed to resemble each of her parents; for she had the complexion and large, dreamy eyes of her mother and the features of her father. And in disposition and mental characteristics she also inherited qualities from both father and mother; for she possessed the sprightly animation of the former which ever and anon bubbled over in gentle, kindly mischief. While she, also, possessed the guileless trustfulness of the latter, and seemed never so happy as when she nestled peacefully in the arms of one she loved, and listened to a simple story of the good in other days, or was charmed by some beautiful song or hymn, which it was her delight to help sing.

As one looked at her fair young face--her sunny curls and regular classic features--either sparkling with animation or

melting with tenderness, they wondered not that she was the pet of home, and generally beloved, for with such beauty and such gentle witcheries she could not fail to win hearts.

"Mamma," she said, after her mother had kissed her, "Why has papa don away? I 'ove my papa ever so much, and I asked him, before he went away, if he 'oved oo and Eddie and Allie, and he taid he did, and that he 'oved me, his 'ittle sunbeam, too, and ett he has don and left us all. I am so sorry papa has don."

As Mamie said this the tears began to glisten in her eyes, and then sparkling for a moment, in their blue settings, ran in pearly drops down over her cheeks. Her mother snatched her closely to her to quiet her sobbings; but, in a moment or two, was weeping in sympathy with her child.

"My darling," she said, "papa has gone away to find another home for us all, and after awhile he will come back for us, then my little Mamie will be her papa's sunbeam again."

"But, mamma, I don't want to go, I dust want to 'top where we are now, for Eddie was saying, yesterday, that papa was in Tanada, and that he was coming over after us. And he taid, mamma that Tanada was so cold we would not have any petty flowers there, and I don't want to leave all my petty flowers. I dust want to stay here in our nice home."

"Eddie should not talk so to his little sister," said her mother, "and I do not think we will find Canada much colder than this country. God will take care of us there, Mamie, if we are good and pray to Him, and He will also take care of papa if we ask Him to do so."

"Will He, mamma?" said Mamie, "den I will ask Him."

She knelt down, and clasping her tiny hands looked heavenward with sweet trustfulness as she murmured: "Dod bless my papa, and take care of him." And then she added--the thought seeming to come intuitively to her mind. "O, Dod, don't let my papa drink, taus den he is tross to my dear mamma and to Eddie and Allie; and he don't 'ove mamma den. Dust let him come home nice.--Amen."

Her mother was strangely moved at her child's prayer and murmured, Amen. And as the little innocent knelt there, a perfect picture of seraphic beauty, purity, innocence and faith, the thought of the poet came to her mind--

"O man, could thou in spirit kneel beside that little child;
As fondly pray, as purely feel, with heart as undefiled;
That moment would encircle thee with light and love divine,
Thy soul might rest on Deity, and heaven itself be thine."

And she prayed that God might ever keep her as innocent and pure.

CHAPTER X.

ALL IN CANADA.

Time seemed to creep along very slowly for the next two days to Ruth Ashton. She sent Eddie to the Post Office, and when he came without a letter she was terribly disappointed. She exclaimed: "Oh, I am afraid he has broken his promise and is drinking again; for he certainly would have written if he were not!"

If those Christians and respectable members of society, who favor the drinking usages and oppose with all the power of their intellect the passing of a law to do away with its sale, only experienced for one short day the agony which wrung the heart of that sensitive, loving woman, that experience would do what the tongue of the most eloquent pleader would utterly fail to accomplish; that is, turn them to hate the traffic as they hate the father of evil.

Her mind was preyed upon by doubt, fear, terrible anxiety. "If he were drinking, in a strange country, what would become of him? She remembered he had considerable money with him; also, when he was intoxicated he always became reckless, and would be almost certain to display it, and thus, probably, tempt some hard character to rob or murder him.

"Oh, my Father, protect him!" she exclaimed in her anguish, as she knelt before Him who was her only help and consolation in such times of trouble.

The next morning Eddie was again sent for a letter, and as he came with one in his hand, the mother grasped it impulsively. But, a moment after, thinking her action might appear strange to Eddie, she kissed him affectionately, and said: "Excuse your mamma; my boy, I was so anxious to read papa's letter that I forgot myself."

The reader has already been made acquainted with the contents of that letter, and when Ruth had read it her worse fears were not allayed--rather, confirmed.

She wrote to him immediately--not expressing her fears, but filling her letter with words of love and confidence, thinking that by thus doing it would influence him, at least to some extent, to endeavor to prove to her that her confidence had not been misplaced.

She did not hear from him again for more than two weeks, though either she or the children wrote him several letters in the meantime. The agony she endured during that period I will allow the reader to imagine.

At length Eddie brought home the letter, the contents of which I have given in a former chapter. It relieved her heart of a great burden. In fact, she felt some compunctions of conscience--she thought she must have judged him wrongfully, for it hardly seemed possible to her that a stranger to her husband would have engaged him, if he had presented himself immediately after a long continued debauch.

That night, as she knelt by her bedside, she thanked God for His loving-kindness to her, in her hour of great trial. But, after she had retired and began to think over what the letter contained, she found that while, on the whole, its contents gave her great cause for thankfulness, yet, that it made her feel inexpressibly sad--sad, because she would have again to part with tried and true friends and go among strangers.

Never in her life had she been the recipient of more gentle attentions and delicate expressions of kindness than since she had resided in Rochester. True, some of her neighbors were more curious in regard to her affairs than she thought was consistent with good breeding, and sometimes they made inquiries which she did not wish to answer, but which she did not know how to evade without giving offence. However, this trait of a certain class of her American friends--and which, by-the-bye, has furnished a fund for humorists the world over--was more than redeemed by their genuine kindness and willingness to help upon every possible occasion. And some, she thought, were noble examples of what men and women are when in them natural goodness is joined with intelligence and culture; for they seemed to divine her wants like a quick-witted person will catch at a hint, and any service rendered was so delicately tendered that it almost left the impression upon the mind of the recipient that a favor had been granted in its acceptance. In fact, she had been favorably impressed with her acquaintances in Rochester from the first, and now she was about to leave, their kindly attentions endeared them to her so as to make it very hard for her to separate from them; for, day after day, they vied with each other in doing everything which kindness could suggest to prepare her for her anticipated journey.

And Ruth herself was employing every moment, for she never doubted her husband would have a permanent engagement. She had clothes to provide for the children, and her own wardrobe to replenish, so that all might be well prepared to go among strangers.

Eddie and Allie, also, had their own sorrows and trials. At first they said they would not leave their old home. Child-like, they thought Rochester was the only place in the wide, wide world where they could live and find pleasure; and as they had but dim recollections of England, and all the persons, objects, and scenes which they loved, and around which their memories lingered, were centred there, it is not surprising it was the dearest spot on earth to them, nor that it seemed very hard to leave their school and school-mates, their trees and flowers, and the many and varied objects which had been familiar to them for so many years.

"I do wish mamma would coax father not to move among strangers, especially when it is a cold country like Canada he is going to. I declare, it is too bad to leave everything we like behind, and go among those we won't care for, and who will not care for us."

As Eddie spoke, the tears began to glimmer in his eyes, for he certainly thought their lot was a hard one.

Allie agreed to use all her powers of persuasion to prevail upon their mother to influence their father not to take them from Rochester.

It was at one of these little indignation meetings they had given expression to the speeches which had been reported to their mother by Mamie. This called forth a remonstrance from her, and she pointed out to them how selfish and sinful it was to talk as they had been doing. This had the desired effect, and they promised not to murmur again, and the promise was kept; for they truly loved their mother, and would not do anything which they thought would grieve her.

"I tell you, Allie," said Eddie, one day, "it won't be so bad after all; for if we are lonesome, when we are not helping father and mother, you can be working in your flower garden, and I can help you; and if the fishing is as good as father thinks it is, won't I enjoy it? I tell you it will be jolly, and if I catch some big ones I will be able to write back and tell Harry Wilson and Jim Williams about it."

The eyes of Eddie sparkled with animation as he was looking forward and by anticipation enjoying these pleasures--forgetting, for the time being, the hardships which a short period before had stirred up such rebellious feelings; and then they settled into a more thoughtful expression as he continued: "Father says there is a good high school there, and I will, if I can, be the best in my class there, as I have been here."

"Well," said Allie, "I think we were naughty to speak as we did, and we caused mamma to grieve. She says God knows what is best, and that we should be satisfied to leave everything in His hands. I am sure I shall enjoy myself helping mamma and attending to my flower garden; for I know you will help me to make the beds, and we will also make a nice tiny one for Mamie, too. O! won't that be splendid?"

"I hope," continued Eddie, "that father will keep from drink there. I am sure mamma thinks he has been drinking since he has been away, and she is almost grieving herself to death about it. Oh, I don't see how it is that he don't leave whiskey alone!"

"I do wish he would," said Allie; "for sometimes, when I see mamma looking so sad, I go to my room and cry, and, Eddie, I often pray to God to keep papa from drink. Do you think He will hear and answer me, Eddie?"

"I guess He will," said Eddie. "Mamma says so, and she knows. I always say my prayers, Allie, but I don't do much more praying. I think you girls are better than we boys, anyway."

"I don't know," replied his sister; "I think I am bad enough, and I pray to God to make me better. I think the girls quarrel just as much the boys, and though they may not swear and talk so roughly, yet I think they speak far more spitefully."

"I never thought so," said Eddie.

"Well, they do. Why, just yesterday, Sarah Stewart, because I got ahead of her in our spelling class, twitted me about father's drinking, and said 'a girl who had an old drunkard for a father need not put on such airs.' And, Eddie, I did not say anything to her to make her speak so, only teacher put me up because I knew my lesson better."

"If a boy, had twitted me like that I would have knocked him down." And he clenched his teeth and doubled up his fist as he spoke, which left no doubt in the mind of his sister that he would have tried his best to have done as he said.

"Well, Eddie, that would have been wicked; it would have grieved mamma, and, besides, it would have brought you to the level of the one who insulted you. I was very angry at first, and almost felt like slapping her, but then I thought how low it would be. When I cried, the other girls, who heard what she said, shamed her. I stopped them, for I pitied her. I would pity any girl, Eddie, who could do so low a thing, and every night since then I have prayed for her."

"You are a good little puss," said Eddie, as he kissed her.

"Not very good," she answered, "for I am sometimes quick-tempered and hateful, but I do try to be good."

Richard Ashton gave good satisfaction, and was hired for a year with a salary that exceeded his expectations. He rented a suitable house, filling up in every respect the promises made in his letter. Then, getting leave of absence for a week, he came over for his wife and family.

He found a purchaser for his property in his next door neighbor, who paid half down and gave him his note for the remainder, which would expire a year from date.

He could not, try how he would, keep from feeling sad at leaving his American home and many friends: for Richard was himself again, and now saw, in its true light, his former foolishness. In his heart he sincerely liked the Americans, and left them with regret.

The hearts of Ruth and her children were almost too full for utterance, and when the time of parting came they did not attempt to give expression to their sorrow in words. They parted with many regrets from the dear old home that had sheltered them so long, and that would be hallowed in their memory forever more; and from the many friends who had treated them so kindly, some of whom they would never meet again. In a few days they were kindly welcomed and settled in their new home.

CHAPTER XI.

AUNT DEBIE AND HER FRIENDS.

"Did I not tell thee, Phoebe, that I was sartan there was going to be a death, and like enough more than one? Does thee not remember I told thee that on the first day, just before William Gurney died? And thee sees now that what I said has come troo, for both William and Annie have died since."

"Yes," said the person addressed as Phoebe, "thee then said thee had warning of death and knoo some one was going to die, and that thee thought there was going to be more than one. I remember just as plainly as if thee had said it not more'n a minute ago."

"I thought thee'd mind it," said the first speaker, and there was an accent of triumph in the tone of her voice as she spoke.

"I have known thee to tell before of things that jest happened as thee said they would. Why, thee told there was going to be a death just before Martha Foxe's child died; and whenever thee has told me that such was to be the case, I ain't never known it to fail. Tell us, Aunt Debie, how thee is able to foretell things as thee does."

"Well, Phoebe, there is more ways than one that I get warnings. If in the night I hear three loud raps, one after the other, I am then sartan there is goen to be a death; and if there is more than three then I knows there is goen to be more'n one death. If the raps are loud and sharp, then I know the death or deaths are to be right away; but if they be kind of easy like, I then know it will be quite a while. Now, I hearn three raps last night. I was awakened about one o'clock. I knoo it was one, 'cause I had the rheumatiz so bad I couldn't sleep, and so I got up and went to the fire to keep warm. I thought I would put my horn to my ear, and I jest caught the faintest sound of the roosters crowin'; so when I hearn that I knoo what time it was. Jest a little after that I went back to bed, and I hadn't been there more'n a minute of two before I hearn a rap, and then, in a little, I hearn another, and then another; they sounded far away like, and awfully solemn. Is it not strange that I can hear these things, when I cannot hear anything else?"

"Yes," said Phoebe, "it is strange; but God's ways are mysterious to us, and past finding out."

"Well," continued Aunt Debie, "I am sartan there is goen to be another death; for I never hear these things but some of our friends die."

"Oh," said Phoebe, solemnly, "I wonder who will be called for this time."

"God knows best," remarked Debie, "and he ain't going to do wrong; we must lam to trust Him."

"And then," she continued, "I have another way of knowing when there is to be trouble, sickness, and death. If I dream of a person walking through a corn or wheat field, I am then sartan there is going to be trouble or sickness; if they are cutting the wheat, or plucking the ears of corn, it is then sure to be followed by a death. I suppose God reveals these things to me by figures, the same as He did to Simon Peter in the long ago; for ain't we all jest like wheat waiting for the sickle, or like corn waiting till the time comes to be plucked by the Death Angel? I suppose my heavenly Father reveals more to me than He does to others, 'cause He, in His wisdom, has taken so much from me. He has left me here a poor old woman, deaf, blind, and lame. I can't see the faces of my friends through these poor sightless eyes, nor the beauties of the fields and sky, nor the blossoms and fruit of the trees, nor the flowers in the garden; neither can I hear the sweet music of the birds, nor even the prattle of the dear little children who come and kiss me, and let me play with their curls, save through this horn. He only knows"--and Aunt Debie looked up as she spoke--"how I long sometimes to see them. But, Father, Thou knowest what is best: 'Though Thou slayest me, yet will I trust in Thee.'"

This conversation occurred in Mrs. Gurney's parlor; for both Mr. and Mrs. Gurney were originally Quakers, but, settling in Bayton in their early married life, they joined another body, though they ever retained a profound respect for the Church of their childhood. In fact a great many of their relatives, and a very large circle of friends in the surrounding country, belonged to that body; and, as they are a people who are especially noted for their social qualities and for their warm attachment to kinsfolk and friends, the Gurneys very frequently received visits from them.

The conversation, part of which I have given to my readers, took place upon one of these visits. One of the parties present on this occasion deserves more than a passing notice, as she was an uncommon character.

Deborah Donaldson, or, as she was always called, "Aunt Debie," was, "after the strictest sect of her religion," a Quaker, and she never quite forgave James and Martha Gurney for leaving the Church of their fathers. She had been a widow for more than thirty years, her husband having been killed by the falling of a limb from a tree which he was chopping down, and she had been blind and deaf for the greater part of that time.

She had been a woman of very great energy, and there were some who hinted that she was the controlling member of the matrimonial firm when the now lamented Donaldson was living. Whether there was any truth or not in that report it is not for the writer to say, but she was certainly a woman of great force of character--a living embodiment of the Scripture maxim, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." And even now, in extreme old age--for she was more than four score--though in many ways she manifested she had entered her second childhood, she yet retained a great deal of her original energy. As I have illustrated, though she possessed genuine piety, it was so mingled with superstition as to leave it difficult to decide which exerted the controlling influence.

If any of my readers have associated to any extent with the people in the rural districts, especially those of American or Dutch-American descent, they, no doubt, have observed that a great many of the older and more illiterate ones among them are very superstitious, being implicit believers in signs, charms, apparitions, etc.; and most of them, also, entertain the opinion that the moon exerts an occult influence over many things of vital importance to the residents of this mundane sphere; and no power that could be brought to bear could induce some of them to plant corn, make soap, kill pigs, or perform many other important duties in certain phases of the moon, for they would be positive if they did it would result in dire disaster.

There are also sounds and signs which are looked upon as warnings of coming woe; for instance: three knocks in the still hours of the night are considered a "death call," and when heard by them they expect soon to learn of the decease of a friend. Dreams are the certain presages of coming events--of prosperity and happiness, of sorrow, disease, and death.

Now, Aunt Debie and her friends were firm believers in these things, and the former was looked upon as one who was favored with receiving more signs, seeing more visions, and dreaming more dreams, than any person in that section of country. She was also viewed by her friends as an oracle, in interpreting these signs; and she, having no doubt in regard to her own endowments, accepted in perfect faith their eulogium of her power in this respect.

Another present at the time to which we refer was a sister of Aunt Debie's, some ten years younger than herself, Phoebe Barrett by name. She was attended by her husband, whom she addressed as Enoch. He certainly was not the predominant spirit of the family; for he was so quiet and unobtrusive as to scarcely ever utter a word, except it might be to make a remark in regard to the weather or answer a question. There was also a young Quakeress by the name of Rachel Stebbins, a distant relative of the others, and they were all related to Mr. and Mrs. Gurney.

"Did thee have any peculiar dreams lately, Aunt Debie?" asked Rachel Stebbins. "I had a perfectly awful one the other night."

"Doo tell. What was it, Rachel?" said Aunt Debie.

"I dreamt," continued Rachel, "that I was standing by an open grave; and it appeared to me, jest before they lowered the coffin into it, they took the lid off from the coffin, and in it was the corpse of a young girl, white as chalk, but she appeared as if she must have been very pretty when she was living. There were orange blossoms on her bosom and also in her hair. The features 'peared familiar, but I could not, for the life of me, make out who she was, nor can I yet, though I see her ghastly face ever before me, and think I shall thus see it until the day I die. And what 'pears to me as singular is, that I saw every one that is here now there, and a great many more of our relatives and friends, and all were weeping as if she were some one very near and dear to them. Now, what does thee make of that dream?"

"What did thee eat before thee went to bed, Rachel?" asked Mr. Gurney, who came into the room while she was relating her dream. He was by nature inclined to be reserved, but yet possessed a fund of quiet humor, and he delighted to quiz Aunt Debie and her Quaker friends in respect to their superstitious fancies. But Aunt Debie could not look upon this levity with any degree of allowance, in fact, she viewed it as little else than profanity. "Did thee eat mince pie, dough nuts, or plum cake? If thee did, thee must be more careful in thy diet, or thee may dream something even more terrible the next time."

Rachel Stebbins repeated to Aunt Debie what Mr. Gurney had said, which so roused the old lady that she said to him,

with considerable asperity in the tone of her voice:

"I know thee always laughs at these things, James; but thee may be convinced some day in a manner that thee will not like, and then thee will be sorry that thee made so light of it."

And then addressing Rachel, she said, in answer to her question: "Well, Rachel, when I dream of a death I always expects to hear of a wedding. I have never known it to fail. And thee will see that some friend of ours will be getting married soon, and then thee will wonder how strangely contrary these kinds of dreams is. Why, before Jonas Head was married to Prudence Leggit, I seed him laid out in his shroud as plainly as I used to see thee; and a short time after that I heam that he was married. Now, thee just watch if this dream don't end in the same way."

"But, Debie," said Phoebe, "thee was telling me the other day about dreaming of Charles Dalton walking through the cornfield. Will thee tell it to us now?"

This was a request that would yield a great amount of satisfaction to Aunt Debie, for she was always delighted to be asked to relate her dreams and the warnings she received of coming woe. Phoebe, of course, was well aware of this, and it was partially because of it that she asked the question; but the strongest motive power that moved her was that she herself was a strong believer in the supernatural. And though men will not acknowledge it, or rarely do so, nevertheless all are more or less influenced by a certain undefined and shadowy belief in the supernatural, even in this grosser shape; and I believe most have a desire, though mixed with a strange dread, to listen to its relation.

"Well," began Aunt Debie, responding to Phoebe's request, "I dreamt I saw before me a field of waving corn. It was nearly ready to cut, and the wind moaned through it, as it bent and shook before it, and the tassels glinted in the moonlight like ghosts keeping watch. And then there seemed to be something gliding through the corn; at first it was nothing but a shadow, but after a little it 'peared more plain, and at last I could see the features--it was the face of Charles Dalton. And then way down at the other end of the field I could see men, though not very plain, but just like shadows, and they were cutting the corn. I tell thee there is going to be some terrible trouble come to him ere long, and before many years he will die."

Just after Phoebe had asked the question, Ruth Ashton came in and was introduced to the company, with the exception of Aunt Debie, Mrs. Gurney explaining that the latter was blind and deaf, and telling Mrs. Ashton she would introduce her to the old lady when she had finished relating and explaining her dream.

Mrs. Ashton had been invited to spend the afternoon with them, and had accepted the invitation.

After Aunt Debie had finished relating her dream and giving her interpretations of its meaning, Mr. Gurney moved his chair over near her and asked: "Were you talking and thinking of Charles Dalton, and of his unfortunate drinking habits, also of his being nearly drowned, before you went to bed the night you dreamed that dream?"

"Ye-s," said Aunt Debie, "I--was." She made the admission very reluctantly; for she immediately saw the inference Mr. Gurney wished to draw.

"And did thee not eat plum cake and cheese just before retiring?" He knew the old lady was very partial to the edibles he mentioned, and suspected that because she had yielded to her weakness she had been disturbed by dreams.

"Well," he said, "thee ate the cheese and plum cake, and these indigestibles caused thee to dream; and thee believes that to dream of persons walking in a cornfield and plucking ears of corn is a sign of disease and death. You were talking of Charles Dalton and of his unfortunate drinking habits, also of his being nearly drowned lately. Now, what is more natural than that you should dream of him of whom you were thinking just before you went to sleep, and that your sleeping thoughts should be influenced by your waking ones, and by your opinions in regard to such dreams?"

"Thee can always explain things to suit thine own notion, James Gurney. Does thee not believe that God can give warnings now the same as He did in the days of old? Did He not give warnings to Samuel of Eli's coming trouble? Likewise of Saul's? And to Nathan of David's? And is there not many other places in the Bible where it speaks of warnings given? Now let me ask, Is not God 'the same yesterday, today, and forever,' and, if so, can He not do as well now as He did then? *I wonder at thee, James Gurney!*"--and the old lady raised her voice as she uttered the last sentence.

Mr. Gurney thought it better not to argue the point, so he put his mouth to her horn and said: "Thee and I had better not argue any further, Aunt Debie. Thee always gets the better of me anyway. But were not Judge McGullett and Sheriff Bottlesby with Charles Dalton, and were they not the ones who furnished him with the liquor that intoxicated

him?"

"Yes, they were," said the old lady. But we will leave the remainder of her reply to another chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

A WORTHY SHERIFF AND JUDGE—DR. DALTON.

Aunt Debie continued: "They were out shooting on the marsh, and the judge and the sheriff had whiskey with them, of which I guess they drank as much as he did, but it 'pears they was able to stand it better; for they did not get drunk. I think it is a disgrace to this county to have a drunken judge and sheriff. The idea of the judge setting on the bench and trying men for breaking the law! And yet he will intice other men to drink that which will fit them to commit the crime which, if they come before him, he will punish them for doing. And the sheriff will take them to jail when they are condemned by the judge, though he helped to prepare them for the evil work they did."

"I agree with you, Aunt Debie," said Mrs. Gurney, speaking for the first time. "These two men being allowed to hold such high positions is not only a disgrace to this county but also to Canada. Men who hold offices of trust and grave responsibility should be patterns to the community, and above reproach. Especially should this be the case with a judge. He should be a man not only of the highest legal talent, and with a broad, judicial mind, but also of a pure and lofty character. How ever they came to appoint a man with the loose habits of Judge McGullett to the position is a mystery to me."

"Why, my dear," said Mr. Gurney, "it was given him because he worked for his party. He has ever been a man of low instincts and loose habits, though he was considered what is called a smart lawyer. In my opinion this did not qualify him for his position as judge. A man may be cunning, and so is a fox. He may have the qualities which enable him to browbeat a witness, and so has a bully. He may have great volubility, and so has a Billingsgate fishwife. He may even have considerable legal acumen, and yet be narrow and coarse. A man to be a judge, as you just remarked, should be of a broad, judicial mind, able to look at a case in all its bearings, to sift evidence, balance probabilities, and, being above prejudice and every outward influence, should decide a case on its merits. And I believe with you and Aunt Debie, that he should be as far above anything that is coarse or impure in his private life as above suspicion in his public capacity. But I look upon our present judge as the farthest remove from this; he was a good party hack, and, to the shame of the government in power when he was appointed be it said, he was rewarded for his unscrupulousness by being elevated to the bench of our county.

"In regard to Sheriff Bottlesby, he is a man who is almost beneath contempt; he has neither the brains, dignity, nor character to fit him for such a position. He cunningly worked to pack a caucus to secure the choice of our present member as a candidate to the local legislature, with the understanding, no doubt, if his efforts were crowned with success, that he should receive his reward. By low cunning, and resorting to means that no honorable man could employ, he succeeded. The last occupant of the position was found to be too old, and therefore asked to retire; and Bottlesby was rewarded for his faithfulness by getting the vacant position, though his predecessor was infinitely his superior in every respect.

"The fact is, everything that is pure and good in the government of our country is being dragged through the mire of party politics. If a measure is brought forward, I am afraid the question is not, Will this be for the best interest of society or the country? but, Will it help or hurt the party? If a public position of great responsibility becomes vacant, they do not appoint the man who is best qualified to fill it, but the one who has done the most for his party. And in some instances when they have not places for those who have been their subservient tools, they make them by removing, on some trivial pretext, those who are the occupants of the position, utterly regardless of the fact that it may cause misery to the ones removed and their families. If this evil is allowed to grow unchecked, our country will ere long be cursed with a system similar to that introduced into the United States by Burr and Jackson, and forcibly expressed by the words of an unscrupulous politician, 'To the victor belongs the spoil.'"

Mr. Gurney became quite excited while he was making this speech, for it was a subject upon which he had often thought, and with a great deal of solicitude. In fact, it was about the only topic which could have inspired him to speak with so much bitterness, and it was also the only time any of his friends had seen him so animated since his great bereavement. He was a man too broad in his views to make principle subservient to party. He had a party, and believed that it was necessary in the government of a country that such should exist; but he would not be a mere tool and follow his leaders, even though he could not endorse their policy. He said he would not vote for a man whom he believed was unprincipled, even if his party, through the caucus system, did make him their standard-bearer. He was strongly of the

opinion that men who were not pure in private life should not be entrusted to conduct public affairs; and if the party to which he gave allegiance chose such a man as their candidate, he would not so violate his conscience as to give him his support, for he would not trample his honor and principle in the dust for any party.

As Mr. Gurney has given to my readers some idea of Judge McGullett and Sheriff Bottlesby, I will give a sketch of Charles Dalton, the one whose name had been associated with those two worthies.

He was the only son of Aunt Debie's youngest sister. This sister had not married a Quaker, and in this respect differed from the rest of the family. Her husband was, however, a farmer in very comfortable circumstances, and was chosen, because of his superior intelligence, as reeve of the township in which he resided; but he had become a poor, besotted victim of strong drink, and driving home from Bayton one night, while in a helpless state of intoxication, he was thrown from his buggy, being so injured by the fall as never to recover consciousness, and died the following day. He left his wife and only child--a son, three years old--ample means.

Mrs. Dalton, much to the surprise of the Mrs. Grundys of the neighborhood, never married again, but seemed to devote her life to her son, whom she loved with a passionate tenderness. He, from a very early age, manifested that he was a child of quick parts: he seemed to master in a short time, with consummate ease, lessons that would tax the brains of others for hours; and he had a prodigious memory. He was also a general favorite, because of his chivalrous character and amiable disposition. In fact, this last element of character was his weakness, for he was so amiable as to sometimes be persuaded to enter into engagements against the dictates of his better judgment.

When he reached the age necessary for him to decide as to his future course of action, he chose medicine for his profession. He first took an Arts course in Toronto University, and then entered one of the Medical Schools of that city, in both institutions taking front rank as a student.

He had, previous to his entering the Medical School, neither smoked nor drank, and even when there, though he was almost alone in this respect, his companions found it impossible to tempt him. His mother had suffered so much from drink that she had taught him to shrink from even a glass that contained it as he would from a rattlesnake. But visiting one day at an old friend of his mother's, who was at that time residing in Toronto, a glass of wine was placed before him; and as all the rest drank, he, through fear of being laughed at for being singular, drank too. He would, no doubt, have passed through the ordeal unscathed, had not the eldest daughter of his host, a handsome young girl of eighteen, said to him, when she saw he hesitated, "Take a glass, Charley; it will do you good, and cannot possibly do you any harm."

Now, he had conceived a warm attachment for her, and had every reason to believe that his attentions were not distasteful to her; so, when she made the remark, he no longer hesitated, but took the fatal first glass. As he and a companion were on their way home from Mr. Fulton's to their boarding-house, the companion said: "Come, Charley, let us go into Frank's and take a glass of ale;" and, since he had taken the wine, it strangely presented itself to his consciousness as a reason why he should not refuse to take the beer. Thus Satan leads us on by first tempting us to transgress, then making our first sin an argument to sweep away all objections in regard to committing others. Dalton took the ale; and the enemy having broken down the barriers of his temperance principles, it was not long ere he had full possession of the citadel. In fact, in a short time after he had taken his first glass, he and several of his fellow-students had, what they termed, "a regular spree."

His mother, fortunately for her, did not live to hear of her son's sad fall; for, as she was sitting in her easy chair one day, she was suddenly seized with a pain near her heart, asked to be assisted to bed, and before the doctor could arrive she was dead.

"Died of heart disease," said the doctor; and then he added: "There is no doubt it resulted from her husband's death. She has never recovered from the shock; and though she has lived for years, she might have dropped off at any moment if she had been the least excited."

But she received her call home while sitting in her chair reading the 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel; asked to be carried to her bed, and, after being propped up by pillows, she said to her attendant, "Elizabeth, I think I am dying; tell Charley my last thoughts were of him." And then, looking heavenward, she murmured, "God bless and guard my own dear boy," and in another moment she was dead. But "the silver cord was loosed" as if by seraph fingers, and "the golden bowl was broken" so gently that she scarcely felt the stroke of the Death Angel. They laid her to rest while yet in her prime by the side of the husband of her youth.

The son was sadly stricken by his mother's death, for he had a very strong affection for her; and for a long time after his return to the Medical College--in fact, until he had taken his diploma--he remained perfectly sober; but in the

banquet that he and the rest of his class held to celebrate that event he again fell, and ere he left was so intoxicated he had to be helped to his lodgings. From that period he seemed to lose all power of resistance and almost all sense of shame.

He had been engaged to Mary Fulton, the young woman who, in her innocence, first tempted him to drink, and who now bitterly repented of her thoughtlessness; for she was a true woman, and loved him with all the strength of her deep, sensitive nature. He, after taking his medical degree, had started to practice in Orchardton, a small and lovely village not far from Bayton, and would have done exceedingly well had it not been for his drinking propensities.

It was about a year after he had begun to practice that he met with the adventure of which Aunt Debie and her friends were speaking.

"God was merciful when He removed poor Rebecca before she had a chance to hear of her boy's shameful conduct," said Aunt Debie. "'Pears to me that the words of Scripeter is come troo in his case--'The sins of the parent has to be borne by the children to the third and fourth generation.'"

Aunt Debie endeavored to quote from memory, and so she is to be excused if she did not render it according to the letter.

"I believe with thee, Aunt Debie," said Mrs. Gurney. "It was a blessed thing for Rebecca she died thinking her boy was pure; if she had known how it was--and if she had lived a little longer she would have been sure to have found out--it would have broken her heart. Then she would have gone down to her grave in sorrow, and Charles would have had his mother's death to answer for."

"I believe," said Mr. Gurney, breaking in rather abruptly, "that a tendency to drink is transmitted from father to son--that, in fact, it is a disease, and in this respect is similar to consumption or insanity. Because I take this view of the case, I have a great deal of sympathy with Charley Dalton. I am determined to do all I can to save the boy. I heard from a lady friend the other day who is very intimate with Mary Fulton, and she said that the latter was experiencing deep grief because of Charley's utter fall; for she holds herself partially responsible, because she, in her innocence and thoughtlessness, tempted him to take his first glass of wine. Her friends have been endeavoring to influence her to break the engagement, but she resolutely refuses to do so. She says she will never marry him while he continues to drink as he does, but breaking off the engagement will be the last report, and she declares she will never marry another."

"Well," said Phoebe, "I don't wonder she feels bad; 'pears to me I should feel bad, too, if I had coaxed the man I thought more of than any one else to drink, and then he went to the bad after it."

"Thee must not be too severe in thy thoughts of poor Mary," said Mrs. Gurney, "but when thee feels like censuring her, just remember that she has been accustomed to see wine on her father's table ever since she was a girl. It is the custom which should be condemned, and not poor, foolish innocents like Mary Fulton."

CHAPTER XIII.

RUTH ASHTON'S INTRODUCTION TO AUNT DEBIE RUTH'S DILEMMA.

As there was a lull in the conversation which we reported in the last chapter, after Mrs. Gurney had finished speaking, she thought it would be a favorable opportunity to introduce Mrs. Ashton to Aunt Debie; so she spoke to the former, and they walked over to the old lady's chair. Mrs. Gurney then took Mrs. Ashton's hand and placed it in the old lady's, saying, as she did so: "Aunt Debie, this is Mrs. Ashton, of whom thee has heard us speak!"

"Happy to meet with thee, I am sure." said Aunt Debie.

"What is thy fust name?"

"Ruth," answered Mrs. Ashton.

"That is a good Script'al name. May thee, like thy namesake, be worthy of the Lord's blessing."

"What is thy husband's name?"

"Richard," answered Mrs. Ashton.

"And how many children has thee got?"

"We have three, a boy and two girls," and then, as if in anticipation of the old lady's next question, she added: "Their names are Edward, Alice Maud, and Mary; Edward is fourteen, Alice Maud is twelve, and Mary is four, she is our baby."

"Thee had a long rest between thy second and third," remarked Aunt Debie. "Did thee lose any?"

Ruth Ashton's face flushed slightly, for Aunt Debie was like a new revelation to her; she had never met anyone like her before, but she good-naturedly answered "No" to her question.

Mrs. Gurney now told Ruth she had better leave the old lady, for she was very inquisitive, and added, by way of explanation: "She has been blind and deaf so long that she seems to have forgotten that some of her questions are hardly in keeping with good manners;" and, she continued, "in her youth, where she was raised, the habits and customs were not as they are here at the present. Then, as she cannot see nor hear, she is naturally more inquisitive."

Mrs. Ashton, who began to be alarmed, would gladly have left the old lady; but, as the latter held her by the hand, she thought it would be rude to hastily withdraw.

"It is a blessing thee has not had to pass through that sore trial," she said. "I lost a little babe more than sixty years ago, and I see its sweet little face now just as plainly as if it were only yesterday that it was taken from me; and often in my dreams it comes to me, and again I hear it prattle and crow as it did in the days of the long, long ago. But God was good to me in taking it away; for, while all the rest of my children are now getting old and gray, in my memory that sweet little babe is ever young. James and Sarah have had a harder trial. If God in His mercy, wisdom, and love, had seen it was for the better to have taken their children when they were young, it would not have been so hard for them to bear; but when they were let to grow up and then taken, leaving them alone in their age, the stroke is very hard indeed. But they--thank God--know where to go for consolation, and have learned to say: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'" And then, addressing Ruth, she said: "Thee ought to be very thankful that God hath not made thee to pass through this fire."

"I am more thankful than I can find words to express," said Ruth, as the tears streamed from her eyes, as they also did from the eyes of every person in the room, for, they were all strangely moved by Aunt Debie's pathos.

"But thee has had thine own troubles, has thee not?" and Aunt Debie asked the question significantly, as if she referred to a particular trouble.

Mrs. Gurney now saw what she feared was coming, and she told Ruth it would be prudent to withdraw, quietly, but as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Gurney was secretly condemning herself for what she now felt was to say the least, imprudence; for in a conversation she had had with Aunt Debie she gave her an outline of the life of Richard and Ruth Ashton, and she was now sure that the old lady was about to refer to it. In fact, she had unfolded to her, almost in full, the benevolent schemes they had formed for the purpose of reforming Richard Ashton.

Ruth, in answer to Aunt Debie's question, replied: "Yes, I have had to pass through troubles. I suppose," she added, "God has seen that it was better for me that I should have my share, the same as others. It would not do for any of us to be basking always in the sunlight and experiencing nothing but pleasure; so God takes us down in the shadow and brings sorrow upon us, that we can more fully sympathize with our suffering fellow-creatures, and also be made riper for heaven."

Ruth now gently withdrew her hand, and, bending down, said: "Please excuse me, Aunt Debie, Mrs. Gurney has called me into the conservatory."

"Pears to me Martha is in a hurry to get thee away"--and she spoke with some asperity of tone. "But I was going to say that I heard thee has passed through particular trouble--that thy husband had been a drinker, and that he had brought thee and thy children to poverty. This must have caused thee much sufferin'; and the wust of it is, if a man becomes a drinker, though he does break off he is almost sartan to begin again. He never abused thee and thy children, did he, Ruth?"

Ruth's pale face flushed red as she quickly withdrew. She did not know what to say in the way of reply, and therefore left the room as speedily as possible; but though she did, the tones of Aunt Debie's voice fell distinctly upon her ear as, in her innocence, she garrulously gave expression to her fears as to the woe that was yet to come. "I pity the poor thing," she said; "for thee jest mind if he does not take to drink again, such men scarcely ever fail to do so. He will likely drink himself to death, and then she will be a widow and her children orphans in a strange land. God help the poor thing!"

Mrs. Gurney closed the door to shut out the sound, but Ruth had heard the ominous words, and they made her feel wretched. She was not angry with Aunt Debie, for she was broad enough to understand, after Mrs. Gurney's explanation, that what would be inquisitive rudeness in another was to be excused in her because of her early environments and her latter afflictions. The major portion of her life had been passed in a primitive community, where, though its inhabitants were as pure as they were simple and unsophisticated, they had no conception of that fine sense of delicacy which is the product of higher culture, and keeps one from prying into the affairs of others. She was, in fact, an exaggerated specimen of those primitive times, for her afflictions had preserved her from the influences which had wrought such a transformation on those around her. Indeed, if she, at the time of which we are writing, could have had her hearing and her sight restored, the world would have appeared as strange to her as it did to Rip Van Winkle after his twenty years' sleep.

But though, as we have intimated, Ruth Ashton could, at least to some extent, excuse the old lady, when she understood the circumstances, this did not keep what she said from exerting such an influence upon her, for the time being, as to entirely destroy all peace of mind, and to cause the former to wish she had not accepted Mrs. Gurney's invitation.

In a short time after her interview with Aunt Debie, Enoch broke his long silence by giving expression to the opinion that "it was time to go hum." The female members of the party acquiescing, they quietly departed. And as her husband called on his way home from the shop to escort her, Ruth, shortly after, bade her kind host and hostess good-night.

Her first association with the rural inhabitants of Canada was not of the most pleasing character, but yet they possessed characteristics she could not help admiring; for, while there was an entire absence of that delicate sensibility which would have kept them from so rudely endeavoring to satisfy their curiosity, there was exhibited, in the short time she was in their company, so much shrewdness, common sense, and, added to this, such an inherent hatred of shams, of vice and villainy, and such a love for the true, the pure, and the good, that she formed an opinion in regard to them a narrower person, under the circumstances, would be incapable of doing.

That night she slept but little, and the little she did was broken, fitful, and disturbed by hideous dreams, in which her husband and children, Aunt Debie, and herself, were all mixed up in horrible confusion; and when awake she found the couplet of the poet Campbell running through her mind--

"The sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before"

the association of ideas in her mind quite involuntarily, as far as her will-power was concerned, linking this creation of the poet with Aunt Debie's ominous utterances. She finally quietly left the side of her sleeping husband, and knelt before the Lord in prayer; and then, returning to bed, soon fell into a peaceful slumber.

CHAPTER XIV.

A HAPPY HOME.

Richard Ashton had now settled down to business as vigorously and keenly as in the days of the past, and he seemed not to have lost any of his faculties by what he had passed through. And yet, physically, a great change had come over him in the last few years. He had aged very fast, his thick, wavy hair had lost its glossy blackness, and was now shaded with grey and white. The hand was not so steady as in the days of the past; the step had not so firm a tread.

Ruth saw this with loving apprehension, and while thanking God that He had influenced her husband so that he was as of old in his love and kindness to her and their children, and that they had again a happy home, she prayed he might be kept from temptation; for she was afraid, if he fell again, he would not be long with them, as he was only now a wreck of his former self.

And Ruth herself, though time had dealt more kindly with her than with her husband, knew that the care and anxiety of the last ten years had, to a serious extent, undermined her constitution and made her prematurely old. She was now much more easily fatigued than of yore, and there were those certain indications of time's ravages, "busy wrinkles," forming around her eyes, though her fair complexion was favorable to her.

She was sitting at the window one beautiful summer evening, listening to the carolling of a bird which was perched upon the bough of a tree that shaded the house, and little Mamie was playing at her feet, when Allie, who was in the parlor practising on the piano, struck up with her full-toned soprano voice:

"Darling, I am growing old
Silver threads among the gold
Shine upon my brow to-day;
Life is passing fast away."

"Why, my mamma, dear, oo have silver threads among the gold," said Mamie. "See dare," and she pointed to the shining silver threads that were glimmering in the sunlight amid her mother's golden hair. "I heard Eddie say to Allie that oo had."

Allie, hearing her little sister's remarks, came out and kissed her affectionately; then, sitting upon her mother's lap, she lovingly entwined her right arm round her neck, while she caressed and smoothed her hair with her left hand, and said:

"Yes, mamma, dear, there are now a great many 'silver threads among the gold,' and yet I don't think my own dear mamma is growing old at all." And then, as the white tears glistened in her dark eyes, she continued: "I hope my darling mamma's life is not passing fast away, for Eddie was saying last night that he was sure there never was another mother so patient, loving and good as you are;" and she kissed her again and again.

Ruth returned her child's caresses and said: "I am sure, Allie darling, I am very happy to know my children love me so fondly; but if God saw fit to take me, He would care for my motherless children. He has promised to be a 'Father to the fatherless;' but tell Eliza to hasten up tea, for here comes your pa."

The conference between mother and daughter was suddenly broken up by the husband and father's return to his tea. He was in high spirits, and having brought home a beautiful gros grain silk dress as a present to Ruth, he claimed a kiss as a bounty. He said to her: "I want you to congratulate me, dear, for Mr. Gurney has been so well pleased with me that he has raised my salary; so it will be the same as what I received when in Rochester, and as our living is much cheaper here, I consider it fully equal to a hundred dollars a year more. I am sure, dear, you find the people equally as considerate and kind as you did in your other home. Do you not?"

"Yes, dear, I have every cause to be thankful." She could truly thus speak; for, with the exception of the interview with Aunt Debie, her intercourse with her neighbors had been of the most pleasing character. They could not, in fact, do otherwise than treat Ruth Ashton with considerate kindness, as her amiable disposition drew all hearts to her, and her intelligent culture caused even the comparatively ignorant to respect her; for they instinctively realized she was a lady.

"I am sure, Richard, dear," she said, "that wherever you and our children are, if we are enjoying health and comparative prosperity, I cannot but feel contented. I should be very ungrateful, indeed, if I did not do so. Have we not every reason to be thankful? We are living in this delightful home, and is it not like Mount Zion, beautiful for situation?" As she spoke she drew aside the curtain, and looked out upon the flowers and gravelled walks which, sweeping in a circle, enclosed a closely-cropped lawn, with flower-beds on either side of and bordering them, and through an opening they could see the broad river that gradually widened until it entered the bay, which was dotted here and there with white sails, and away in the dim distance they could just discern the blue waters of the wide-sweeping Ontario. And, as she opened the window the breeze came fresh from the bay, catching, as it came, the fragrance of the clover and flowers, which had an exhilarating effect upon those who inhaled its fragrance. In fact, her words were emphasized by the silent but poetic eloquence of the surroundings.

Just then Eddie came in, bringing a fine string of fish. He had been angling in a stream which flowed into the river, a little more than a mile from the town, and had succeeded in capturing some really fine trout. His father, as he looked at them, said they were "speckled beauties," and they were; for, after counting them and finding there were nineteen, the scales were brought in, when they were found to weigh ten pounds.

Eddie's eyes sparkled with triumph. He enjoyed his success all the more because his father had indulged in a little good-natured banter as he was starting away, asking him if he should send out a cart to bring home what he would catch. He now felt he could turn the laugh against his father.

But who has ever yet caught a fine string of fish without being proud of his success? Even my reader, who may have reached life's summit, and is now on the steep decline, if he ever has indulged in the "gentle art," so beautifully delineated by quaint old Izaak Walton, will, I think, acknowledge that even yet he feels somewhat elated when he is so fortunate as to bring home a nice basket of the "speckled beauties," thus manifesting to all that his hand has not lost its cunning; but his feelings are cold when compared to the joy that animates the youthful heart under similar circumstances.

Let any gentleman who may read these pages go back, in memory, to the sunny days of boyhood, when he returned home with a "fine string"--the result of a day's fishing--how enthusiastically he entered into the description of the manner in which the big ones were captured. And then, with a tinge of regret in the tones, how graphically he related the escape of some monster of the stream, which, probably, carried away the hook and part of the line. If you can remember such episodes in your life, now, alas! in the long ago--and if you cannot the author sincerely pities you--then you can have some idea of the triumph of Eddie Ashton upon the evening in question. He had fished on several occasions in the river and bay, both with rod and with trolling line, and had been moderately successful, catching some fine pike and bass--larger indeed than he had ever seen before, even in the fish-market in the city; but their capture did not animate him with pride like this day's catch. He had often read of trout-fishing, and had longed to participate in its exciting pleasures, thinking how delighted he should be if he were ever so fortunate as to bring home even a few; but never in his wildest dreams did he anticipate anything like what he had now actually realized. That night he sat down and wrote to Jim Williams, telling him of his success, and then asking him if he thought Canada was such a slow place to live in after all.

As the Ashton family gathered round the tea board in their neat cosy dining-room that beautiful summer evening they presented a picture of true happiness. They had still many things left which they had purchased in the days of their opulence. The silver tea set was shining upon the board as brightly now as it did fifteen years before. The table was spread with a snow-white cloth--one that had been brought from over the sea. The silver spoons and china tea set were also mementos of the dear old home land. The fare was simple but ample, and there was so much of kindly mirth and genial wit that each one was happy.

Richard Ashton had not lost his fine sense of humor, and he dearly loved to enjoy a joke with his wife and children, though he never indulged in witticisms that would wound the feelings of the most sensitive person; he was too much of a gentleman to thus torture others.

If a person could have been present that night, without restraining their innocent mirth, and participated in the joy of that happy family, he would never have dreamed that less than one short year before there had been a dark cloud of sorrow lowering over them, shutting out all the sunlight from their view.

"Our business has been developing very rapidly lately," said Mr. Ashton; "there has not been a period during the time in which Mr. Gurney has been in business that the sales have equalled this month. And this is the reason, I suppose, he has raised my salary sooner than he promised. I think I have no cause to be discouraged with the result."

The dark eyes of Richard Ashton flashed pleasure as he thus spoke, and the eyes of his wife and children caught and reflected back the light.

"Pa," said Allie, "my music teacher spoke very kindly to-day, and said I had made much more advancement than any of his pupils. He also said if I only had the opportunity I would be much above mediocrity as a musician. I do wish, papa, that an opening might occur. Ella Fair has been to Toronto for a year taking lessons from one who is considered among the best teachers in Canada, and yet my teacher told me to-day that neither her touch nor her execution of difficult parts could be compared to my own."

"I am afraid," said her father, "that Mr. Stevens is praising you so much that he will make you vain. You must remember you are only a little girl as yet, and have to finish your studies at the High School. I think there is too much superficiality in the education of the young in this country, especially in the education of young girls. There seems to be a desire for what is named the accomplishments, while even the rudiments of an English education are to a great extent neglected."

"Why, the young lady of whom you were speaking bought the material for a silk dress from me to-day, and she undertook to make up the bill, but failed to do so. I am certain I should have had no difficulty in reckoning it when I was a mere child, eight years of age; and though she appeared to be so estimable young lady, her English was execrable and her slang phrases offensive to cultivated ears. I concluded if she had only been thoroughly taught in one of our common schools, she would have appeared to much better advantage."

"I hope, Allie, you will not become so entirely absorbed in your music as to neglect those primary studies, which certainly are of much greater importance. Pastry is all very well for dessert; it is, however, a very poor substitute for bread."

"But be diligent with your studies, dear, and then we will probably, some day, see if something cannot be done. If you will play a piece for me I shall be happy to listen to you after tea."

"I tay, papa," said little Mamie, "I'se going to have a foochoo," and she shook her head in coquettish consequence, till the curls fell over her eyes and nearly hid them from view.

"A foochoo? What is that, little sunbeam? Is it a Chinese doll, or a doggie, or what is it?"

Of course, by this time, the whole family had joined in a good-natured laugh at little Mamie's expense.

"No, no, papa, a foochoo--a pant dat will have a petty fower, I mean. Mrs. Gurney was here, and she taid she ood div me a foochoo in a petty 'ittle pot, and dat den I ood have my own fowers, and tood water and tend 'em all myself."

"Oh, it is a fuchsia that she is to give you! Well, I am sure papa is glad that his little sunbeam is to have a pretty plant to tend; and if she smiles as sweetly at it as she does at her papa, it will be a very naughty plant indeed if it does not soon have a great many beautiful flowers."

"Do you know, papa," said Mrs. Ashton, "that your little daughter has learned another hymn to sing for you, and she would like to sing it to you before you return to the store, if it will not detain you too long."

"Is that so?" said Mr. Aston. "Then, by all means, papa must hear it."

"I 'earned it from Allie," said Mamie, "and she has been teaching me this 'ong, 'ong time; but dey told me I was not to 'et papa know till I had dot it dood."

"Well, Allie," said her father, "you come and give me your piece, and then I will hear my little Mamie."

Allie sat down at the piano and played Thalberg's "Home, Sweet Home," and as she rendered it its sweet pathos went to the heart of her father, and he paid her the highest compliment possible; for when she had finished she found him with his head turned away to hide his emotion.

It had brought back the dear old home of his boyhood, and the dear ones who had made it so happy, but who had long, long ago gone to the home above; and then his thoughts came back to his present happy home, and he thought of the dear inmates who had been so true to him when he had been so untrue to himself. The piece was, in his estimation, the sweetest, the most thrilling, the most delicately and tenderly touching of anything to which he had ever listened.

"It is certainly very fine, my darling," he said, as he stooped and kissed Allie. "I never had music exercise such a power

over me; it was almost painful in its thrilling ecstasy."

The fine dark eyes of Allie glowed with happiness as she listened to the commendation of her father. Praise from any other lips would be but as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal" when compared with his; for her love for him, under every circumstance, through evil as well as good report, was so great that she would have died for him; and his praise of her singing filled her with inexpressible joy.

"Now, little sunbeam," said Mr. Ashton, "I will hear you sing your piece. Come, Allie, and play for her, for I must soon return to the shop."

Allie again took her place at the piano and played the prelude, and then started little Mamie, who sang:

"I am so glad that my Father in heaven
Tells of His love in the Book He has given.
Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
But this is the dearest--that Jesus loves me.

"I am so glad that Jesus loves me--
Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me;
I am so glad that Jesus loves me--
Jesus loves even me."

There was something in the singing of his little prattler which filled Richard Ashton with strange awe. As she lisped out "I am so glad," with note as clear as the carolling of a lark, the look of seraphic rapture which overspread her face evinced that she had entered into the spirit of the piece and that her little heart was glad. As he looked into the face of his wife he saw, intuitively, her thoughts were as his, and he whispered to her: "Ruth, dear, she seems too fair, too sweet, too good for earth; I am sometimes afraid that God will take her from us."

Mrs. Ashton made no reply; her heart was too full for speech. But as he looked at Allie he saw she had caught his whispered words, and--it seemed almost in unconscious harmony with her thoughts--her fingers struck the keys and her lips warbled forth in sweetest pathos the simple but tenderly touching words:

"Strange, we never prize the music
Till the sweet-voiced bird has flown!
Strange, that we should slight the violets
Till the lovely flowers are gone!
Strange, that summer skies and sunshine
Never seem one half so fair
As when winter's snowy pinions
Shake the white down in the air!

"Then scatter seeds of kindness," etc.

They each of them kissed the little one who was to them so dear.

"My little girl sang that beautifully," said her father, "but she must not sing too much; I am afraid, if she does, she will injure her voice."

"Call Eddie," he said; and Mamie ran out for him, for he had gone out immediately after supper to exhibit his catch to the son of a neighbor. Mamie met him, and told him that his father was waiting to have prayer.

It was now the custom of Richard Ashton to gather his wife and children around him at the family altar, both morning and evening, to sing a hymn and read a portion of Scripture; and then to supplicate the Father in heaven for His benediction upon the little group that were there assembled.

He had commenced family worship when they were married, but as his views changed he gradually desisted, and finally left off entirely. This caused Ruth great grief, for she had ever been a conscientious and consistent Christian. Since they came to Bayton she had prevailed upon him to resume the custom that was such a source of joy and comfort to them in the halcyon days of yore. He always held the service in the morning before breakfast and just after supper in the evening, as then all the children could be present.

When Eddie came his father took down the family Bible. They then sang an appropriate hymn, and, after reading a

chapter, he carried them all to a throne of grace in prayer.

The Bible from which he read the lesson had been in the family for four generations, and in the family record there were the names of some who had been gathered to their fathers for over a hundred years. It had been left him by his mother, and almost her last words were spoken as she presented it to him. She said: "Take this, my son; it has been your mother's counsellor and guide through life, and when other friends failed her it was true. Go to it for counsel every day, my son; it will be better unto thee than thousands of gold and silver."

The son took it with a determination to guard it as a precious treasure, and to leave it as an heirloom to his children. He penned upon its flyleaf the beautiful words of the poet Morris, as they so explicitly expressed the incidents which were associated with his own experience:

"This Book is all that's left me now;
Tears will unbidden start;
With faltering lip and throbbing brow
I press it to my heart.
For many generations past
Here is our family tree,
My mother's hand this Bible clasped,
She dying gave it me."

After prayer he went to his shop thanking God in his heart for His mercy to him after all his lapses. And there was that glow of happiness reigning in his soul which he only knows who has a happy home.

Never were truer words penned than those of the poor wanderer,
John Howard Payne:

"Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like home."

If a man has hearts that love him there, he is better prepared to successfully meet and overcome life's difficulties and to endure buffetings from the outside world. It seems eminently felicitous that heaven should be called home; for the name is associated with the sweetest, purest, holiest joys that are experienced in this life. It raises our hopes, and fills us with a glorious expectancy, when we think of that place of rest as "home, sweet home."

CHAPTER XV.

MR. AND MRS. GURNEY'S SATISFACTION WITH ASHTON; MUTUAL CONGRATULATIONS.

The next summer and winter passed away and there was nothing transpired to cause sorrow to rest upon the home of Richard and Ruth Ashton. They and their children were winning golden opinions from all with whom they were associated; and as Mr. Gurney's business prospered under the management of the former, who proved himself to be reliable, Mr. Gurney felt very thankful that he had secured so good a man.

"I think, dear," he said to his wife one day, "we might have gone farther and fared worse. I did not dream that I would be so relieved from responsibility. Ashton is certainly one of the best business men I have ever met."

"True," interjected Mrs. Gurney, "I came to that conclusion from almost the first; and his courteous, gentlemanly demeanour makes him a general favorite."

"Yes," continued Mr. Gurney, "and then he is so clear-sighted, intelligent, and energetic; so conscientious in regard to what he owes to his employer that he takes just as much interest in the business as if it were his own."

"I am sure, James," his wife replied, "we were divinely directed; the clouds of our affliction were so dark they hid all the sunlight from our view; but yet we can now see, can we not, dear, that they were lined with silver?"

"Yes," he replied; "God's ways are not our ways."

"I hope," she said, "Mr. Ashton may continue as he has so far; but if he were again to fall a victim to his old habit I should not, even then, regret that we employed him."

"How is that, my dear?" queried Mr. Gurney.

"Why, because in so doing, James, we have kept him from sin for a considerable period of time, and enabled him to sustain in comparative comfort his wife and family. And then I esteem it a great privilege to be intimately acquainted with such a family. Mrs. Ashton is certainly one of the most estimable women with whom I have ever associated; and their children are, to my mind, models of what children should be--they are so bright and amiable, so gentle to each other, and so obedient to their parents. Besides, he has taken such an interest in your business, and has so won the confidence of the public by his engaging manners and what seems to be his intuitive insight into character; and his power to please has helped your business so."

"Yes, I think you are about right, dear. In fact, I know you are, as far as what you said applies to myself, for I am certain I would not have recuperated so soon had it not been that I was relieved from a great deal of care and worry by my confidence in him, while I have had enough to employ my mind to keep me from brooding sorrow. I am now confident the doctor gave me the best possible advice when he said, 'You had better not give up your business.'"

"I am certain, dear," his wife said, "that the course you adopted was the very best under the circumstances; but, as you just remarked, it would not have done to have tried if you had not had a foreman to relieve you from all worry."

"Well, my dear," he remarked, "if it has turned out well for all parties concerned, it is you who deserves the credit. I believe a woman's instinctive perception of character is keener and clearer than that of a man's. And the heart of a true woman always beats responsive to human woe. If charity depended entirely upon the sterner sex, there would be many hearts which have been made happy by the beneficent hand of charity still unrelieved, and many homes which are now happy would be filled with misery--their inmates almost shut out from hope and sinking in despair."

"Thee mustn't flatter so, or I'll get vain," she said playfully, at the same time going over to his chair and, kissing him lightly on the forehead. She always spoke the plain language when she wished to manifest her affection, for it was the language that both of them spoke in their childhood.

"I do not deserve any more credit than you do. You hesitated, in order that you might look at the matter from all sides, and view it in all its bearings; you wished to weigh it carefully in your mind, and not come to a conclusion from the

impulse of the moment. You desired to do what was best for all concerned, and I have no doubt but you would have concluded to do just what you did."

"I might, or I might not," he said; "but thee seemed to conclude at once that he would be just the man for me; and then thee pitied him so that I think thee wanted to give him a chance under any circumstances."

"Well--yes, James, I will admit I did; but I must say that from the very first I liked him, and thought he would be, if he kept from drink, just the man for you. And I think you may be right in your estimate of women; for I have no doubt they have an intuitive perception of character that is, to a certain extent, lacking in men; this, in many instances at least, takes the place of reasoning with them. I also believe their hearts are more easily influenced by the appeals of want or sorrow, and that therefore they are more frequently found taking the initiative in matters that appeal largely to the heart. Their nature and their position alike fit them for this."

"Let me see, Sarah!" said Mr. Gurney, jocosely. "You are among those strong-minded women that believe in women being the equal of man in every respect, and should have the same rights as men."

"Now, James, thee knows better than that, and simply likes to tease. I believe that women should have the same rights as men, in their proper sphere; and I would like to see them have a right to vote on this temperance question, for if they had they would soon sweep the land clear of its most blighting curse; but except for this purpose I think the right place for woman to exert an influence is in the home circle: though, James, thee knows," she said, "that 'George Eliot' and Elizabeth Barrett Browning are, in their field, unexcelled--though I never think of the former without sorrow and shame--and there are a great many more whom I might mention. Then I often think, dear, there would be a much larger proportion of eminent women if they had the same chances as your sex; in their daily rounds of domestic duties they have not the same opportunities of development. I think it may be better that it is so; but yet, in making a comparison of the two sexes, we should not overlook this fact. Gray's lines--

'Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air'--

"I think, are even more applicable to the women than to the men. But I am talking too much. Does thee not feel tired, dear? If thee does not, I do; come, let's make ready for bed."

"Yes, dear, I do feel tired, for I have had rather a hard day; but I am very thankful I can now go to bed and sleep. If I was not so weary I would answer that long speech," he said, playfully: "Thee may expect a crushing reply at some other time."

CHAPTER XVI.

ASHTON RE-VISITS OLD SCENES.

A week or two after the conversation we recorded in the last chapter, Richard Ashton spoke to Mr. Gurney in regard to his contemplated journey to Rochester. He wished to go that he might settle his business with the man who had purchased his place.

Mr. Gurney was well aware that such a journey was contemplated, and he was sincerely sorry that such was the case.

Ashton, during the year that was passed, had never left the town for any purpose whatever, and had kept so strictly to his business as not to form any association with those who would be likely to lead him astray. Mr. Gurney, therefore, was not altogether satisfied that he would have strength enough to resist the temptations to which he would be exposed when he met his old associates in Rochester. He plainly told Ashton what his fear was, but the latter assured him he would pass through the ordeal and come out unscathed. So Mr. Gurney expressed the hope that he would bring his business to a successful issue, and return with improved health from his trip, and he then bade him a kindly good-bye.

But it was his wife who experienced the greatest anxiety. Ruth had from the beginning expressed her fears as to the result of the voyage. It seemed to her like courting temptation. She thought the business might have been settled through his solicitor without his going in person. But, as he seemed bent on the journey, she did not like to make many objections; she was afraid, by so doing, she would wound his feelings, for he would be certain to interpret the objections as inspired by her fears of his falling, and, strange to say, that, like a great many others in similar circumstances, he seemed to be very much hurt if anyone hinted to him that there was any danger of his drinking again.

She had, however, prevailed upon him to take Eddie along. She thought his presence would have a restraining influence upon his father, and she reasoned, if he should again fall, Eddie could, to some extent, take care of him.

The thought of this journey had so preyed upon her mind that it robbed her of her sleep; and now, as the time more nearly approached, her anxiety deepened into anguish which was all the more acute because she dare not make a confident of him from whom she kept no other secret. Only to Him from whom no thoughts are hidden, did she go and tell her anguish, and pray for strength to bear up under her great sorrow. She also prayed that God would protect him who was dearer to her than her own life.

It was nearly a year from the day in which they first landed in Bayton, when Richard Ashton was again bidding his wife and children an affectionate farewell, ere he departed on a journey to another land. It was undertaken under much more favorable auspices than when he started from Rochester to Canada; for in the first instance he was journeying to a strange land on an errand of doubtful success, while in the present instance he was going to a place with which he was familiar, where he would have old friends to bid him welcome, and kindly hearts to care for him. And yet, if possible, there was greater dread entertained by his wife now than there had been on the former occasion. Then he could scarcely make his position worse, and there was a possibility of his bettering it; now there was everything to lose and nothing to gain.

True, he had assured her she had nothing to fear. Just the night before he started he had said, as he lovingly threw his arms around her and drew her to him:--

"I know, Ruth, darling, you are suffering anxiety upon my account, and are fearing I shall not have strength to resist the temptation to which I shall be exposed; but you need not fear, little wife, I shall return as I leave you. I have made up my mind, God helping me, I will never drink again."

The tears started from Ruth's eyes as he spoke, and she threw her arms around his neck as she clung to him, sobbing as she did so. She spoke no word in denial of what he had stated concerning her fears in his behalf, but simply murmured: "God bless you, my darling; I know I am a poor, weak, foolish little thing to grieve so at parting from you; but oh, Richard, I am afraid something will happen you, and we are so happy now!"

He endeavoured to calm her by loving caresses. He was not at all surprised that his wife should be troubled with

anxious fear. He inwardly resolved he would so acquit himself this time that she should ever after, in this as in other respects, repose the most perfect confidence in him.

As we said, on the morning in question he and Eddie kissed their loved ones good-bye and took the seven o'clock train for the place in which they had spent so many happy years.

The wife and mother, with her two children who had accompanied them to the station, looked at the receding train with tearful eyes.

It was a beautiful morning: the first beams of the slowly-rising sun, stealing gently above the eastern hills, scattered the mist of the morning and bathed the river and bay in its golden light. A robin, which was perched upon a maple growing not far from where Ruth and her children were standing, was singing its lay to the morning, and the atmosphere was balmy with the breath of flowers. It was a morning to charm the heart into joyousness, and yet the heart of Ruth Ashton was filled with unutterable woe. The thoughts which had borne so heavily upon her spirits for so long a period of time now came with redoubled force, and dark, dreadful forebodings and sorrowful memories assailed her soul and filled it with unspeakable anguish.

"Oh, my Father, help me to bear up!" she prayed. "Oh, why am I filled with dread, with this awful fear?"

Taking her children by the hand, she led them back to the house. They uttered no word, even little Mamie seeming to understand that her mother's heart was too full for words.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. HOWE GIVES HIS VIEWS IN REGARD TO CANADA.

Richard Ashton found many in Rochester who were glad to see him again and extend to him a most cordial welcome. He soon had completed his business with Mr. Howe, the gentleman who had purchased his property, and was ready to return to Canada.

"I suppose you are able to exist in that country, Ashton," said Mr. Howe. "The climate must be somewhat healthy, or you and your boy would not be so hearty. But, from what I hear, I would not like to put in much of the time that may be allotted to me on this terrestrial sphere in a land where the thermometer so assiduously courts zero; and then the nature of the soil will keep it from ever amounting to much. The fact is, Ashton, the only hope for Canada is annexation to the United States."

When Mr. Howe made these remarks he threw himself back in his chair, elevated his feet on the back of another chair, took another chew of his honey dew, and, as he whittled a stick, consequentially shook his head, as much as to say, "I know what I am talking about."

"You are altogether mistaken, Mr. Howe, in almost everything about Canada, as most of your countrymen are."

"Well, I may be, but I would like to know in what particulars."

"Well, in the first place, in regard to the climate. I suppose you will be somewhat surprised when I inform you that it has not been so cold this winter where I reside as it has been in Rochester; for I have carefully noted what the thermometer registered in both places, and we had the advantage of you in this respect. As to the soil, there is no part of the world in which I have travelled, not even your much-lauded and far-famed Genesee, has better land than the country surrounding the town of Bayton, and I have been informed from the most reliable sources that the major portion of the land in Ontario is of a similar character."

"I want to know!" ejaculated Mr. Howe.

"And then we have the great North-West, that is just opening up, which they say has as fine land as the world possesses, and to an extent that is practically illimitable. This is settling rapidly, and will be in some future day the home of countless millions."

"I guess you are going to your imagination for your facts now, Ashton. Why, man, the thermometer often sinks to forty below zero. They'd freeze out; no white population can stand that."

"But, my dear fellow, they have stood it, and 'facts are stubborn things;' and you are well aware that at this present time the northern nations are the ones that lead the world in skill, enterprise, and deeds of daring. And then the atmosphere is so clear and dry that those who have resided there for years say they do not suffer from cold to the same extent as they did in countries where it was not nearly so cold but where the atmosphere was more humid."

"Well, all I can say is, they may stay and shiver there for all me. I wouldn't live there all my life if they'd give me the whole concern. No, no, not for Joseph!"

"I wouldn't trust you, sir, if you had the offer."

"You might."

"Then there is something else I wish to mention, and that is, our Common School system is not surpassed in the world; and for intelligent, healthy lads and lasses we will compare favorably with any country under the sun.

"The fact is, Mr. Howe, we like you as neighbors, but are too loyal to our Queen and mother land ever to want to be

united by any closer ties."

"Well, then, if Canada is the Eden you paint it how is it the views of Canadian life and scenery are so wintry looking? Why, sir, in the show rooms of the artists in this city--and you will see the same in artists' rooms of England and even Europe--there are sketches of Canadian scenes, and almost invariably something wintry is suggested--men in great fur overcoats and caps, muffled up to the eyes, and with capouches that seemed capacious enough to carry a week's stock of provisions, and yet have spare room; the men generally having on snow-shoes and accompanied with Indians to wait on them, and dogs to drag their toboggans, while all around them are heaps of snow piled up on huge rocks, and overtopping and bearing down short scrubby pines and firs. If you have a good country I calculate that such pictures as these, no matter what may be their artistic merits, are poor advertisements, and will not get you many immigrants."

"I am well aware of this. But I suppose you know these scenes have been got up, for effect, in the studios of enterprising photographer; and though they may be very fair representations of some parts of our Dominion in the depth of winter, they represent the country, generally, about as faithfully as winter views from the main lumber woods, or even from Alaska, would represent the United States."

At that moment Eddie, who had been enjoying himself with some of his old friends, came in. He asked his father if he might go and spend the afternoon and evening with his old and very particular friend, Jim Williams; as there was yet two days ere the time expired upon which he had decided to return home, he gave Eddie permission to go and extend his visit until the next day.

Eddie, during that afternoon, accompanied by his friend, visited some of the old familiar places; they were dear to him, because they were associated in his mind with some of the happiest hours in his life; and he thought that, though in the land where it seemed to be his destiny to reside in the future there were many attractive spots which would, no doubt, in time be very dear to him, he would never forget his old home nor the scenes where he had played in childhood's happy hours.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BANQUET, AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

Richard Ashton had been invited by some of his friends to a supper at the Metropolitan Hotel, which had been specially got up for his benefit.

His first thought was that he would absolutely refuse to accept the invitation—he was afraid he might be tempted to drink; but as he concluded it would be considered ungracious on his part to refuse he decided to go, but only on the understanding if there was any toast-drinking he would be permitted to pledge them in pure cold water.

When the members of the committee who had been appointed to wait upon him heard his decision, they said they certainly could not object to his observing his own mind; that they had no desire to cause him to violate his principles; in fact, they gave it as their opinion that there would not be a person present who would not respect him the more for proving that he had the courage of his convictions.

Upon the night appointed he went to the banquet, and it passed off as such affairs usually do. Many very gracious and pleasant things were said of the guest of the evening in the eulogistic strains which generally characterize speeches made on such occasions. How much of what was said was sincere, and how much mere complimentary phraseology of the dental kind, I will allow those who are in the habit of attending such parties to decide.

The meeting at last ended, as all meetings on earth do. But this differed in one respect from the great majority of such gatherings—that is, those who attended it at least left the banqueting room sober; though, as the sequel will show, one of them was not so fortunate as to reach his lodgings in that condition.

"I will accompany you home, Ashton," said one who had taken a very active part in the entertainment.

"I am sure, Chappell, I should like very much to have your company, but I could not think of allowing you to put yourself to such trouble on my account; of course you are aware that I am well acquainted with the city."

"Oh, I am well aware of that, but you seem to forget that until we cross the bridge my way home lies in the same direction as your own; and then I can, after seeing you up the avenue, cross by the way of Alexander or Jefferson Street to my own lodgings."

"It is exceedingly kind of you, Chappell, to make the offer, and I shall be thankful for your company as far as the bridge, but I shall insist upon our separating there, as I will soon reach Reid's after that."

Chappell, after what seemed at least to be a vigorous protest, finally yielded, and they started on their homeward journey.

The night was dark and cold—one of those chilly nights which we frequently experience in the first week of June—and they had to walk along briskly to keep themselves warm.

"Halloa, Chappell, is that you? Where are you going at this time of night? It seems to me rather peculiar that a man who sits in his pew every Sunday and listens to eloquent homilies on the evils that result from the keeping of late hours and indulging in bacchanalian revels should be wending his way home in the small hours of the morning. Come, sir, give an account of yourself!" and he slapped Chappell familiarly on the shoulder, and stood right in his way, hindering his further progress.

"Allow me, Lawrence," said Chappell, "before answering your question, to introduce you to Mr. Ashton."

"Oh, that is not necessary; we are old acquaintances, but I did not expect to have the pleasure of meeting him to-night. I thought he had migrated northward. I am happy to meet you again, Mr. Ashton; but it is cold, let us step into Conglin's, he is open yet. I want a few moments' conversation with you, Chappell."

Chappell asked Ashton if he would have any objections, and he, in reply, said if they would excuse him he'd journey

homeward, for his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Reid, with whom he was stopping, would not go to bed until he returned, and he would be sinning against their hospitality by remaining longer.

"But a few moments will not make any particular difference," said Lawrence, "and you will particularly oblige me if you step in for a moment or two, as I should like to have your opinion in regard to something of consequence."

Ashton, who, as the reader has already discovered, had a facile disposition, and was easily persuaded, yielded, and followed Lawrence and Chappell into the cosy sitting-room of Conglin's hotel.

The fire was burning brightly, and the atmosphere of the room was particularly warm and comfortable to men who had been out in the chill night air as they had been, with clothing that was not heavy enough to keep them warm.

"Just remain here a moment or two, gentlemen," said Lawrence, "I have a word or two to say to our mutual friend, Tom."

According to his promise he soon returned, but the landlord accompanied him carrying a tray, upon which there were three steaming glasses of whiskey punch.

"Gentlemen," said Lawrence, "it is not necessary for me to introduce you to Tom Conglin, for you have both been acquainted with him and his liquors in the long ago, and you know he always kept the very best brands. But I think this old rye is better than any he has ever had before. It is only, however, as the Scripture says "darkening counsel by words," to tell either of you the quality of liquor, for you have only to taste to immediately and correctly pass judgment. It was in regard to this matter I asked for your counsel. Come, gentlemen, after paying your respects to our jolly host we will do honor to his liquor."

They both shook hands with old Tom Conglin, a large, red-faced individual, who, evidently, knew the flavor of his favorite liquors. He expressed himself as particularly delighted to meet Ashton, and said he was sorry that they lost him; which no doubt was true, for Ashton had been one of his best customers, and had left with him many a dollar.

Chappell, who was standing near to Ashton, and was afraid he was about to refuse, whispered to him not to do so. "It will give offence," he said. "A glass will do you no harm, and may do you a great deal of good."

When the tray was presented he hesitated a moment, and then stifling, as men will sometimes, every warning of conscience, he took the fatal glass, and was again the foolish victim of his facile disposition and his appetite for strong drink.

He might, if he had watched the faces of Chappell and Lawrence, have noticed that a significant look passed between them when he took the glass, and that a gleam of hellish triumph shone in their eyes.

"Come, Tom, bring us some more liquor," said Chappell. "I will have another glass of punch. What will you have, gentlemen?"

"I will have the same," said Lawrence.

"What will you have, Ashton?" and as Ashton hesitated a moment before replying Chappell spoke for him: "Silence gives consent; he will keep us company."

"Of course you will bring one for yourself, Tom."

"I never refuse to take a glass with a gentleman, especially in such company as the present."

They were soon engaged sipping their fuming punch, and in a very short time Ashton seemed the gayest and most voluble of the company.

CHAPTER XIX.

A STARTLING NEWSPAPER ITEM TO MR. AND MRS. REID.

That night Mr. and Mrs. Reid waited long and anxiously for Ashton, but as he did not return they concluded he must have decided to remain at the Metropolitan, so at one o'clock in the morning they retired, not, however, without misgivings that all was not right.

They slept long that morning, and when they had completed their toilets Mr. Reid found the Rochester *Democrat* lying at the door. He read it leisurely as he ate his toast and sipped his coffee, now and then reading an item which he thought would be particularly interesting to his wife. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"My God, it is Ashton!" And in his excitement he sprang from his seat, nearly upsetting the table and seriously frightening Mrs. Reid.

"What is it Robert?" she said. "Oh, read it please."

In answer to her request he read the following:--

"As policeman Rogers was walking his beat about half-past one this morning, he heard a cry for help, which was evidently stifled. He ran towards the spot whence he thought the sound came, and as he neared the bridge he saw three men apparently engaged in a desperate struggle. He sounded his rattle for assistance; two of them, who evidently had been garroting and robbing the third, ran, leaving him lying motionless on the tow-path. He had either been choked until he was insensible, or else he had been made so stupid by drink as to be incapable of thought or action. Policeman Johnson coming up, they gave chase to the other two who, however, made good their escape. They carried the one who had been assaulted to No. --- Station, where he was recognized by Sergeant Jameson as a man by the name of Ashton, who was once in the employ of Robertson & Co., but had lately been residing in Canada. He came over to settle his business with Mr. Howe, who purchased some property from him. He evidently had been intoxicated, and while thus was waylaid and robbed. He had not, up to the time of our going to press, sufficiently recovered to be able to give an account of the affair, so at present it remains a mystery."

"Oh, Robert, you must go at once," said his wife; "the poor fellow has fallen again. I am afraid some of the party have made a pretence of doing him special honor in order that they might entice him to drink, and then waylay and rob him. Do you know, dear, whether he carried much money on his person?"

"I don't think he had any but what he brought from Canada. I remember hearing him say he had deposited what he had received from Mr. Howe in the bank, but I have no doubt he had quite a sum with him, and of course they would rob him of all he had."

"I think he said Eddie was stopping with Mr. Williams. I will run up and tell him, and then go to the police station and see what I can do."

"The poor boy will be nearly frightened to death," said Mrs. Reid; "and if there is anything very serious comes from this, God help Mrs. Ashton! The poor creature has had her own trouble."

Mr. Reid found Eddie eating his breakfast, and in as quiet a manner as possible broke the news, endeavoring to avoid every expression that would cause unnecessary alarm. But at the first hint every particle of color left the boy's face and he sprang to his feet, saying:

"Oh, Mr. Reid! what has happened to my father? Please tell me quickly."

Mr. Reid quietly handed him the paper, and as he took it, so great was his agitation, his hand trembled like an aspen leaf; but when he had read the paragraph which particularly interested him, it had just the opposite effect upon him to what Mr. Reid expected; for he seemed at once to become another person, and the boy of fifteen was as if transformed by some cabalistic power into a man.

"Let us go at once," he said with decision; and, as the tears gushed from his eyes and streamed down over his cheek he murmured, "Oh, my poor mother! if she hears of this it will break her heart."

CHAPTER XX.

A BASE PLOT, AND WHAT IT LED TO.

"I say, Bill, I have a pretty good lay for you, and I think you can work it without much risk."

The speaker was Chappell, and the person whom he addressed was Lawrence.

We, in the preceding chapter, introduced these worthies into this story, but as we wish our readers to become more thoroughly acquainted with them, will now give them a more formal introduction.

Moses Chappell was the son of highly respectable parents, and had the advantages that are ever associated with a home where there is comparative wealth, culture, and purity. He had a fair education, possessed a fine person and a gracious, polished manner.

When quite a young man he commenced the study of law with a firm in the city, but he became so unsteady in his habits that it took him a year or two longer to get through than the course required. When he became an attorney,—it being immediately after the close of the war,—he, through the influence of his friends, secured the position of claim agent; and as there were a great many soldiers who had claims for extra bounty and for pensions to prosecute, it was not long before he secured a large share of this business.

It was just after he had entered into business on his own responsibility that he became acquainted with Ashton. At that time he was simply looked upon as a rather fast young man, who would take a glass with a friend, and, as the boys would say, "just once in a while get a little 'O be joyful!'" But among this class he passed as a "Jolly good fellow!"

During the last year his degeneracy had been very rapid, and he had become almost a confirmed drunkard, it being well known by the initiated that he indulged in the passion of gambling, by which he lost a great deal of money.

A short time before Ashton's return to Rochester, Chappell's losses were, for him, very large indeed; and as his income failed to meet his liabilities, he took the money which he had collected from the Government for his clients, to meet his gambling debts, and also to make new ventures, with the hope that he would win back all his losses. But, as he expressed it, luck seemed to have turned against him, and he lost in one night, by wild, reckless play, hundreds of dollars that he had drawn for poor, wounded, and disabled men, many of whom had expended quite a sum in instituting their claim, and sadly needed it, because they had undermined their constitutions in the campaigns through which they had passed; some of them having wives and children depending upon them for support. In fact, no one knows what disappointment and misery was caused by the dishonest and reckless conduct of this now abandoned young man.

He, however, though fallen, had not yet reached such a depth of degradation as to be utterly careless of his reputation, or of the suffering and shame he would entail upon his friends if his wrong-doings were discovered, and he well knew that discovery was inevitable if he did not in some manner recover the amount he had lost. "Desperate diseases require desperate remedies;" and his case was desperate indeed, and he was now in such a state of mind that he was willing to resort to anything short of murder to extricate himself.

He was in this state of mind when Ashton again appeared in Rochester, and when he learned the nature of his business he resolved, if possible, to get possession of his money. He had, in the gambling dens of the city, formed the acquaintance of some hard characters, and resolved to use them as his tools in carrying out his purpose.

"Lawrence will do," he said, "and he can associate Dick Eagle with him in the venture. Lawrence is acquainted with Ashton, as they used to meet at old Tom's when on their drinking bouts. I will sound him, and, if I find he is all serene on the matter, Ashton must have become a more wary fly than he used to be if I do not induce him to enter my spider's web."

It was to further this scheme that he hinted to some mutual friends it would be a gracious thing to give Ashton a supper, and as they immediately entered with fervor into the idea, it was agreed upon. When Ashton stipulated, if he accepted, it must be understood he would not be asked to drink anything but water, it looked as if his well-concerted

scheme would be entirely frustrated. And then, after thinking the matter over, he hit upon the plan which he adopted, and which, alas, as we have already made known to our readers, he carried to a successful accomplishment.

Lawrence, the young ruffian whom he made his tool, had been associated with him before, in some transactions that would not bear the light of day, and when he unfolded the present scheme to him he found him ready to be his pliant instrument--willing to enter into any scheme, no matter how villainous its nature, if he could be sure of making something by the venture.

"I am pretty certain," said Chappell, "he will have by that time some four or five hundred dollars in his possession; and if you would meet us and persuade him to accompany us into Tom's, I think, old boy, we can induce him to take a glass. If he takes one, you know he is such a fool that we will soon have him gloriously drunk. But to make certain we will fix his liquor, and then by the time he gets to the bridge he will be completely at your mercy."

"Well, the question is, Chappell, what am I to get for the venture? Of course, if there is any hard work to be done you will expect me to do it, while you will play the role of gentleman."

"I am willing to deal fairly with you, Bill."

"But I want to have an understanding. I know you pretty thoroughly, Mose, and I am not going to let you gull me as you have on some former occasions. The question is what am I to get? And if I can't get what's square, I will wash my hands of the whole affair. 'Honor among thieves,' you know, Mose."

Chappell, who winced at the epithet "thieves," shrugged his shoulders, and a look of supreme disgust gleamed for a moment from his eyes, which did not pass unnoticed by Lawrence.

"Come now, Mose, no airs," he said; "if you don't like me just keep away, and I'll not bother you with my company. When you force yourself upon me you must be a little respectful, or, at least, you must not be so open in your manifestations of disgust, as I am somewhat sensitive and may resent it."

"Who was showing any signs of being disgusted? Now, what is the use of making a fool of yourself, Bill, because you know how; and if I were you I would not speak of "putting on airs." When Bill Lawrence talks of being sensitive, he of course means all he says: the idea of 'Billy the Kid' being sensitive is certainly a new wrinkle."

"Well, Chappell, I know I am not as good as I might be; if I were I would cut you dead, though you do wear kid gloves and move in the so-called 'best society,' like many another scoundrel. But this is neither here nor there; let's come to business. Before I enter into this thing I want an understanding; you are not going to come it over me as you have on former occasions."

"Why, Lawrence, I don't want to come it over you. It seems to me you are deuced suspicious, all at once. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you one half, to be divided between you and Dick Eagle. And when you remember that I put up the job, and run just as much risk as you do, I think you will conclude that I am quite moderate."

"Yes, 'quite moderate;' you are always 'moderate,' especially when it comes to risks; but you don't come none of your moderate games over me. If I get Dick Eagle to assist me in this job I will have to go halves with him. I couldn't gull him if I were to try, and I don't wish to try. I am not quite so mean as to cheat a comrade who runs equal risks with myself, though some would-be gentlemen of my acquaintance would. If we make anything by this venture it must be equally divided, if it is not more than fifteen cents. If you will not agree to this proposition I will wash my hands of the whole affair."

Chappell--after putting in several demurrers, at last, when he saw that he could make no better terms--consented.

It was arranged that Chappell should, if possible, induce Ashton to drink at the supper; but if he could not accomplish that, he was to accompany him up St. Paul street until he came in front of Tom Conglin's, and then Lawrence was to meet them, and between them they were to induce him to enter and, if possible, entice him to drink. Chappell was, after this, to accompany him as far as the bridge and leave him. And then Lawrence and Eagle were--to put it in their classic language--"to go through him."

The scheme was carried to a successful issue, though not with the ease that was anticipated. The drug was not as effective as they supposed it would be; for though, when they started, Ashton was in such a complete state of intoxication as not to be able to walk without the assistance of Chappell, as they continued on their homeward journey, the further they went the stronger he became. The cold morning air seemed to revive him. Chappell accompanied him to

the spot agreed upon, and then left him, though not without making a show of wishing to see him all the way home.

Ashton had not proceeded far on his uneven way before Lawrence, who had gone by another route and got ahead of him and Chappell, said to Eagle, who had waited for him near the appointed spot: "Here he comes, and he don't seem to be very drunk either. We'll have to make sure work, Dick. Now, go for him!"

Eagle, with whom Ashton was not acquainted, sprang forward as Lawrence spoke and struck him a terrible blow in the stomach; at the same time, Lawrence from behind swiftly passed his arm around his neck, then drew him across his back, lifting him entirely from the ground and choking him so that he could not cry out. But before Lawrence had succeeded in doing this an alarm had been given; for, though Eagle had struck him a terrible blow, Ashton gave a startled sound, something between a cry and a moan, but afterwards was perfectly helpless in their hands.

It was this sound which Constable Rogers heard, and, as we have already informed our readers, he immediately hastened to the spot, but arrived too late to rescue Ashton from his treacherous and brutal assailants.

All the three worthies secured as the result of their base treachery and inhuman villainy was about twenty dollars; for this was all that Ashton had upon his person at the time.

As soon as the latter was able, he gave an account to a detective of all that had transpired during the previous evening, which led the latter strongly to suspect Chappell and Lawrence, as he was well acquainted with them and knew their antecedents. He arrested them both, but as nothing could be substantiated, though there were strong grounds for believing they were the parties, they were discharged.

The Police Magistrate, however, gave them to understand that it was simply a case of "not proven." And he added, if they were the guilty parties, they deserved to be execrated by every good citizen for their treachery. He admonished them to be cautious, as a strict watch would be kept on their movements, and they would not be able always to escape the punishment they so richly deserved.

It was not long after this before Chappell was called to give an account of the money which he had collected for the soldiers who had entrusted their cases to him. And as it was discovered he had squandered it, the result was he was prosecuted and sent to jail for defrauding his clients, and lay there for a considerable time. Since that period he has been a moral leper, a disgrace to his friends, and loathed and shunned by respectable society.

Lawrence and Eagle, his companions in the nefarious transaction, were soon after captured as they were burglarizing a store, and sent to States Prison for five years.

We will now let them pass from these pages, simply remarking if it had not been for drink, which had made them its slaves and corrupted their young lives, they might have had honorable careers and been respectable and respected citizens; but rum was their ruin, their curse, as it has been of millions of others, and through it they are a disgrace to their friends and a curse to society. Surely "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

CHAPTER XXI.

UTTERLY BROKEN—BLASTED HOPES.

Ashton's constitution was so severely shaken by the treatment he had received, and from the effects of his debauch, that the physician Mr. Reid called in considered his condition really critical. He said his nervous system had received such a shock that he must have complete rest for a week or two, and then he might possibly be so far recruited as to start for his home; but he doubted if ever he would so recover as to be the same man he was before.

Eddie wrote home to his mother, telling her that "his father had been taken ill, and therefore they would not be able to start for home for a few days; but," he added, "he hoped their return would not long be delayed."

He was almost certain his mother would divine the cause, and that her grief would be inexpressible. But as he did not know what the issue might be, for his father was certainly very ill, he felt if he did not partially reveal the truth to her, and anything serious did happen, he never would forgive himself.

The reader will remember that Eddie's letter was composed under somewhat similar circumstances to those under which his father had written his hurried note just after his arrival in Canada, and if he recollects what the result was at that time he will be able, at least partially, to understand what the effect was in the present instance.

When Allie returned from the post-office with the letter, Mrs. Ashton found herself strangely excited, even before she had broken the seal. She held it with nervous hand, and ere she had read the first page sank pale and trembling into her chair, and gasped out, rather than spoke: "Oh, Allie, my worst fears are more than realized! Oh! what will become of us all?"

Allie and Mamie were immediately by their mother's side, the face of the former manifesting by its alarmed and saddened expression that she divined, at least to some extent, what had happened. While the face of innocent little Mamie wore a puzzled, troubled look; and though she could not understand what had happened to grieve her mother, tears glistened in her eyes in sympathy with her grief.

"What has happened to papa?" said Allie. "Is it anything very serious?" and she looked anxiously up in her mother's face.

The question was purely mechanical; she felt sure her father had again fallen, and she also knew if her mother thought so she would not give expression to her fears.

"Eddie writes he is ill," said her mother; "but he says he has hopes he will soon recover, and that their return will not long be delayed."

Allie sat down in her mother's lap, and, as she entwined her arms round her neck and kissed her, she said, "Mamma, you must not give way too much to trouble and sorrow, for God knows what is best, and He will take care of papa and of us all."

Little Mamie, who had been an attentive listener, now endeavored to console her mother.

"Mamma," she said, "you read me from the Bible the other day, that Dod cared for the dood man, and sent the raven to feed him. And you taid He would send His angel to care for me if I was a dood dirl. Will not Dod care for papa and Eddie?"

Mrs. Ashton returned Allie's caresses; and catching little Mamie in her arms, and kissing the tears from her face, she said, "Mamma's daughters are a great comfort to her. God will take care of us all, my darling. He will send His angel down to care for papa and Eddie, and to console us who are troubled and sorrowing because of them. He will care for us all!"

In a few days she received a letter from Eddie stating that, though his father was still weak, the doctor thought he was so far convalescent as to be able to start upon his journey, and therefore they might expect them in a short time; and he

mentioned the day when he thought they would reach Bayton.

Four days after they received the letter, Eddie and his father arrived. But what was the grief and anguish of Mrs. Ashton, and the sorrow of Mr. Gurney, who had accompanied her to the station, to discover that even now, when they had come with hearts full of sympathy to administer consolation to him in his hour of sickness and suffering, he had been so far forgetful of what was due to himself and to his friends, also of the anguish with which he would wring the heart of his wife, as to be in a state of semi-intoxication.

As they looked at him they were both terribly shocked at the change which a few days had wrought in him. He did not appear like the same person as the one who left them two short weeks before. He was, in fact, only the dilapidated wreck of his former self. His manhood, his self-respect, his glory had departed.

His wife welcomed both him and Eddie with a kiss; but Mr. Gurney, who was shocked beyond measure, coldly turned away—he could not trust himself to speak, for, if he had, burning as he was with indignation and a sense of violated trust, he would have given utterance to words that would have caused him future regret.

Mrs. Ashton had Eddie call a cab, and had her husband driven home, and by the time he reached there he seemed to become so intoxicated as to be almost helpless, having to be carried from the cab into the house; and what added to the shame and anguish of Mrs. Ashton was that there were a great many of the neighbors who had gathered to welcome him who, of course, took in the situation, though they were too well bred to give expression to their astonishment. It caused her exquisite pain to think her husband had again been degraded in the sight of the world, and that she and her children shared with him that degradation.

Richard Ashton, from that time, rapidly degenerated. He seemed to be sapped of both physical and moral strength. His friends rallied round and endeavored to induce him to reform. Mr. and Mrs. Gurney used every art they could command to restore him, but though he would promise to listen to their injunction, his promises were never put in practice. He really meant to be as good as his word, but he lacked the moral stamina, and the consequence was he sank to a lower level every day. It at last became evident he wished to avoid a meeting, and they therefore felt their endeavors in his behalf were becoming distasteful to him. So with great sorrow of heart, for they had become sincerely attached to him, they had, for the time being, to desist from their benevolent attempts and leave him to his fate.

And just then, to make matters still worse, Stanley Ginsling appeared upon the scene. Like the foul buzzard, he seemed to have scented his quarry from afar. And to add to the intense pain of Mrs. Ashton and her children, they were again boon companions.

The strain was finally too great for poor Ruth. Like thousands of other poor, heart-broken wives and mothers, she used every endeavor to keep up her spirits and try and maintain her strength; but her sensitive mind was daily tortured with the most exquisite pain.

Finally her strength gave way, and she was completely prostrated, all the more completely because of the unequal struggle she had been maintaining for the last few months.

"A complete collapse of the system," said the doctor. "She must have good nursing and rest; for without she has rest of mind and body I cannot possibly bring her through."

The doctor had a private interview with Ashton and told him, in language we will not repeat, for it was more energetic than select, that it was a shame for a man with his intelligence and refinement to so degrade himself, and then he added: "You are killing your wife, and if you do not desist from drinking it is very little use for me to come."

But his appetite seemed to have so gained the ascendancy that he daily came home in a state of intoxication. He seemed to have lost every vestige of his manhood's strength, and was such a vile slave to his appetite as not to be able to restrain himself even to save his wife.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DUNKIN ACT.—A DISCUSSION IN WHICH STRONG LANGUAGE IS USED.

"I say, Judge, I hear they are about to try and carry the Dunkin Act in this county, and I guess they will succeed, for I think there are a sufficient number of fools and fanatical humbugs to carry anything. What is your opinion in regard to it?"

The speaker was Sheriff Bottlesby, and the question was asked in one of the private rooms of the Bayton House—a house that was kept by Charles Rivers, Esq., and it was looked upon as the most respectable hotel in town.

There were assembled there at this time Judge McGullet, Sheriff Bottlesby, Captain McWriggler, who was an aspirant for the position of M.P., and whose only hope of success was in gaining the whiskey vote. There were also present Charles Dalton, Charles Sealey, Esq. (a prominent magistrate), Stanley Ginsling, and a retired captain—late of the British service—who rejoiced in the name of Timothy Flannigan. He kept a second-class tavern in Bayton, which was known as the "Crown Hotel."

"Well," said the judge, "you ask me a question which you should not expect me, situated as I am, to answer. But," he continued with a chuckle, "I will say it may, but if it succeeds here this will be the first place it has ever done so."

"Yes, it may," said Ginsling, "and elephants may fly, but they are not likely-looking birds. I have too high an opinion of the men of this county to believe they will give away their manhood. But if its advocates do succeed in their fanatical endeavours it will be a *brutem fulmen*. No true man will be weak enough to be bound by it. No man, or set of men, has a right to dictate to me what I shall eat or drink, and a man who would submit to it is a fool and a slave."

Dr. Dalton, who had been indulging very freely in drink, and had arrived at that stage when men are generally demonstrative, started up the refrain:

"Britons never, never shall be slaves."

"If any man could be a greater slave than you are, Dalton, his condition would be worse than any nigger I ever came across in the south. A fellow that can't take a glass of liquor with a friend, without getting beastly drunk, is about the worst specimen of a slave a man could even imagine. It is men like you that furnish the teetotal fanatics with their strongest arguments, and because of such fellows sensible men must suffer."

The words of Bottlesby had a magical effect upon Dalton, and he seemed to become sober in a moment. He sprang to his feet, his eyes flashed fire, and cutting, stinging words came to his lips.

"I am no greater slave than you are, Bottlesby," he said; "and, if I were, you are the last man in the world should taunt me with the fact. You know you drink twice the quantity of liquor that I do, and if you don't get drunk, it is because it does not find any brain to expend its strength upon. Whiskey attacks a man in his most prominent point, which, in your case, is your stomach. Men of genius like Savage, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Poe and others, it attacked their brains and made madmen of them; but it always soaks into a fool, because he is soft and porous like a sponge; and any man at a look would place you among the latter. Why, sir, you are at present full to the eyebrows, and your nose is a danger-signal to warn all young men to keep out of your track. It would have been well for me if I had heeded the warning."

"Dalton," said Bottlesby, emphasizing his remarks with expletives that can have no place here, "I want no more of your insults, and if you don't shut up I'll make you. I won't be insulted by a drunken blackguard like you, without resenting it. If it were not that I don't wish to disgrace my office and the company I am in, I would wring your neck."

"It is a good thing for you," said Dalton sardonically, "that those weighty considerations keep you from undertaking a contract you might not successfully complete. The government must have lost sight of the dignity of the office, or you would never have got the appointment. Your consideration of your office and the company you are in remind me of Pompey's, who, when he was asked why he ran from a battle, gave as his reason 'that he knew the rebs too well to have anything to do with such a pesky lot, and den,' he added, 'back, of dis dare is a pusal consideration.' I wouldn't wonder if back of your other considerations there is one of a personal nature. Why, man, if you were even to touch me

with your finger, in anger, I would leave you so you would have to employ a sub to draw your pay and drink your whiskey, which is your principal occupation at present."

"Come now, Charley," said Rivers, coming in between the two, who were standing in a threatening attitude and glaring at each other, "don't be so fast and rash; and, Sheriff, there is no sense in getting up a row. How would it sound if it got out that there was a fight at the Bayton House between Dr. Dalton and Sheriff Bottlesby, and that Judge McGullet and Captain McWiggler were there to see fair play. If you are both very desirous to have your names figuring in the papers as participants in such a disgraceful brawl, you had better retire to some other quarters, as I am determined it shall not take place in my establishment, if I can hinder it."

"I'll be blowed! but it would be as good as a circus, wouldn't it though?" observed Ginsling. "I wonder who would act as Her Majesty's representative, to vindicate the honor of outraged justice, if our sheriff happened to be the principal in a case of aggravated assault, and our judge had to be subpoenaed as a witness for the Crown!"

"Be jabbers, boys, go on!" said Captain Flannigan; "I havn't seen a dacent fight for a twelvemonth, barring a skirmish in which I meself was somewhat interested. You may desarn traces of it here." And, suiting the action to the word, he pointed to his eye, which was slightly discolored. "I had an argument with Bill Duffy yesterday, and he became so excited he emphasized his remarks by giving me a blow in the eye; but I soon demonstrated, to his complete satisfaction, that if he came to that style of argument I could make two points to his one, and put them in much more emphatically. He has kept to his room since to ponder the matter over. Now, boys, the best thing you can do is to take a walk out of town, and settle the matter dacently; but don't stop here, scolding like a couple of fishwives. Or put it off now and settle it after--there would be no nade for it to go any farther."

"As far as I am concerned, I am willing to settle it now or any other time," said Dalton.

Judge McGullet, who had been quietly listening, now spoke.

"I should think," he said, "you fellows have exhibited enough foolishness for one scene; it is about time for a change. I did not think you were capable of making such asses of yourselves. You were saying, Sheriff, before you entered into your extremely interesting conversation with Dalton, that the teetotalers were about to try and carry the Dunkin Act in this county. Well, if you desire to ensure them complete success, just have a brawl, and have the present company figuring in the papers as either participating in the row or of being present when it took place. You know they are extremely verdant, as well as what you term fanatical, and they are not likely to make any capital out of such a muss! Come, now, sit down, and act like rational beings."

The two men sank into their seats, but grumbling as they did, and each muttering he would yet have satisfaction.

"Boys, will yez just kape quiet for a minute, until I sing a song? and then the fellow that won't drink to the health of every man present, and be willing to shake hands with each and every one in this dacent company--well, then, Tim Flannigan will recognize him as a friend no more for ever!"

"Come, Rivers, fill up our glasses, and prove that your name is not a misnomer, by furnishing this thirsty crowd with something to drink."

Rivers, after taking their orders, brought in the liquor, and then they all clamored for Flannigan to give them his song. "And we want you to give us one of your own, Captain."

"Yes, yes, Captain," they all shouted; "give us a war song of your own composition."

Now this was something that would please Flannigan exceedingly, for he imagined he was quite a poet. He had written some wretched doggerel, in which he had endeavored to embody his thoughts of persons and of personal experiences during the war. He actually thought the wretched stuff was equal to the best efforts of "Tom" Moore. And if any one wished especially to flatter him he would best accomplish his purpose by asking him to sing one of his own songs. Those who knew him were well aware of this, and often enjoyed a good laugh at the expense of his vanity. This accounts for the clamorous call he received to give them a song of his own composition.

Flannigan cleared his throat. "Ye do me honor," he said; "but I shall be happy to plase ye. I will at this time give yez the song I composed when I quit the sarvice and had made up my mind to come to Canada." He then, in high cracked notes, sang:

THE SOLDIER'S FAREWELL!

I'll put by my musket,
Also my red coat;
On war and its glory
I'll no longer gloat.

CHO.--I'll go to the land
Of the green maple tree;
Whose emblem's the baver,
Whose pape are free.

No thoughts of ambition
Inspires now my breast.
My solduring's o'er--
In peace I'll now rest.--*Cho.*

And now I heed not
The trumpet or drum.
My battles are ended--
No more will now come.--*Cho.*

They greeted his song with uproarious applause, which he drank in as a genuine tribute to his genius as a poet, and also to his power in the realm of song.

It was really strange that a man with his, in some respects, sharp intellect and native wit, should be so weak as to imagine the trash he jumbled together was poetry, and thus leave himself open to be laughed at by even his own cronies. But it is said we all have a weak point--this was his.

After the applause which greeted his song had somewhat subsided, he said: "Come, now, each man of you saze his glass and let us drink to the toast--'Prosperity to our cause, and bad luck to the Dunkinites.'" After they had all drunk, he said: "Now, boys, let us have a talk of these cold-water men."

"If they are 'cold-water' men, as you contemptuously dub them, you'll find they will fight like heroes for what they believe to be right," remarked Dr. Dalton.

"Well," answered Flannigan, "they may, Charley; but I am tould they go in for petticoat government, for the best man among them is a woman. If such be the case we are not worth much if we let them bate us."

They all joined in a laugh at Flannigan's Hibernianism.

"That is a genuine Irish bull, Captain," said Sealy. "But as we are here we may as well have an informal talk as to the best course to pursue in the present contingency. In my opinion, it is our best policy not to make a very strong fight this time. I would be for almost letting them have a walk over. And then when they think the victory is theirs, I would commence the real battle. After it becomes law I would sell whiskey just the same as ever, and entice all the bummers in the country to drink and have a regular drunken carnival. You will not have to pay any license, so you will be able to stand being fined a time or two. But I can tell you what it is, boys, they will have a hard time to convict. From my experience--and it has been considerable--I have learned it is a pretty difficult thing to worm the truth out of unwilling witnesses. Then there is another thing in your favor, the majority of the magistrates have no sympathy with this movement. I would therefore badger and bother them all I could, and have free trade in whiskey; and after the people are thoroughly disgusted I would go in for repeal. I saw Jobson, the President of the Licensed Liquor Sellers' Association, the other day, and when I suggested this course to him he said he thought it would be the wisest one to pursue. Have you heard from him, Rivers?"

"Yes, I received a letter yesterday," answered Rivers. "And I have notified the members of the association in the county to meet here on Saturday, when I shall use my influence to get them to play a waiting game, and then, when the time comes, we will force the fighting."

"I think that will be the wisest policy," said the sheriff.

"If the Act is carried, there will be whiskey enough drunk here to satisfy Bacchus himself. We won't have to fight our battles without assistance, as we have had promised to us all the money that is really necessary from the outside. The Licensed Liquor Sellers' Association will supply all the needful we want. And if we don't flood this county with

whiskey, then you may call Charley Rivers a liar. They may have a chance to chuckle for a while, but we'll be more than even with them yet."

"Your craft is in danger," sneered Dalton, who, though he was such a slave to liquor, sympathised with the temperance party and constantly manifested his sympathy with them. "There is no doubt but you will fight for your interest, no matter who suffers."

"Now, Charley, don't be raising another row," said Ginsling. "You are as prickly as a hedgehog."

"What I say is the truth," he answered. "When the tavern-keepers fight against the Dunkin Act they are fighting in company with their father, the devil, and his angels, their brethren, against the right. My sympathy is with the temperance party, for I know that every one who really cares for me is among them, and my only hope in this world and the world to come is in their success. If there was no liquor to be got I might be a man yet."

"Well, if you sympathise with them you had better associate with them. We would manage to exist without you."

Rivers spoke very angrily, for he was irritated almost beyond endurance by the words and manner of Dr. Dalton.

"It is my intention to join them; so you had better not concoct any more schemes in my presence; but I promise what I have heard to-night shall never be repeated outside. Yes, I will join them; for if I continue as I am the end is not far off, and God only knows what that end will be."

"Come, Judge, let us go. I perceive you have about as large a cargo as you can conveniently carry. You will not be fit for court to-morrow, if you don't take time to sober off."

The judge had not been in the room during the time they were doing the greater part of their talking, as he had been called out just after he had replied to the sheriff; for though he sympathised with them they would not have talked quite so freely in his presence. In answer to Dalton he said:

"You will oblige me if you take care of yourself, Doctor, and leave me to mind my own affairs. I--hic--hic--have an idea it is just about as much as you can attend to, and I think I know what I am doing."

The worthy judge then turned to the company and said: "Good night, gentlemen. Don't all get drunk, or some of you may be more formally introduced to me. Come, Doctor, if I leave you here there is sure to be a row."

He then took the arm of Dalton, and bowed himself out, and as the last bow he made was rather an elaborate effort, he lost his equilibrium; and, if Dalton had not held him up, he might have demonstrated that a judge could be lowly as well as learned.

When they were out of hearing, Rivers said: "I am glad that fellow, Dalton, has gone. If the judge had not been with him I would have kicked him out long ago. He has a sharp, impudent tongue, when he has a mind to be ugly."

"Yes," said Sealy, "I am glad he has gone and taken the judge with him; for, even though he was more than half-seas-over, he did not wish to compromise himself by listening to our conversation upon that subject. I think he was glad that Peters called him out."

"He is on our side, though," said Rivers, "and will use every technicality that the law furnishes to balk the fanatics and make their efforts fruitless."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CONSPIRATORS FORMULATING THEIR SCHEME.

After the judge and Dr. Dalton had left, the worthies who remained sat long in council concocting their Satanic schemes for the final defeat of the Dunkinites. Each one who was present promised to exert all his influence to make as many drunk as possible, after the law was adopted in the county.

"You, Bottlesby, will be able to give a good account of Dalton, and you, Ginsling, can take care of Ashton," said Rivers. "I know that old Gurney and his wife will be doing their level best with them, but if you only work your cards for what they are worth they will not succeed worth a cent, for if whiskey is put in their way they are bound to drink."

"But what about the fine, Rivers?" said Capt. Flannigan. "If we sell liquor we will be fined, and if we have to pay a couple of hundred dollars in this way, or kape company with the rats for five or six months in jail, I guess we'll soon tire of that game. And they say that ould nager of a service is a regular sleuth-hound on the hunt. By St. Patrick! if he comes nosing round my place I will bate him until his skin is blacker than it is at present, and to do that I'll have to nearly murder him entirely."

"Don't you do anything of the kind; for if you did you would be putting your foot in it," said Rivers. "The Dunkinites would like us to resort to that kind of thing that they might get up a howl about ruffianism, brutality, etc. They well know this would enlist the sympathy of the public to their side of the question; now this would just defeat the object I have in view. What I intend to do is to sell liquor as usual, and when I can't sell it I will give it away, and make as many drunk as possible. If some of those to whom I sell give me away, and I am hauled up, I will then show what I can do on the fight."

"You'll beat them every time," said Bottlesby, "for almost every sensible magistrate in the county will sympathise with you."

"Yes, I am counting on that, and those who are not on our side I intend to employ a good sharp lawyer to badger and bother as much as possible, and I guess you are aware that a great many of our Justices of the Peace are as innocent of any knowledge of law as a ten-year-old boy. I have no doubt but most of them can be so frightened as to be afraid to convict. And you know most of the witnesses will be our friends, and, as Seely has just remarked, it will be pretty hard to worm the truth out of unwilling witnesses."

"But supposing they do convict, what will you do then?" asked Capt. Flannigan.

"I will appeal, and if it is decided against me in the lower court then I will appeal to a higher, and during the time it remains *sub judice* my friends and I will be flooding the county with liquor."

"But who will pay the piper?" asked Ginsling.

"The Licensed Liquor Sellers' Association," answered Rivers. "The Association is bound to beat if it costs them a hundred thousand dollars. The hotel-keepers of this county will only have to pay their fee into the society, and it won't cost them a cent more; so you see we can afford to fight and be cheerful. And after we have bothered them and kept them from carrying out the law for six or seven months, having, in the meantime, deluged the county with whiskey, we will then start the cry that the Act is a failure; and any one who is at all acquainted with human nature knows that it will not be long before we will have thousands to join in the cry."

"Of course they will," said Bottlesby, "the great majority of those who vote for it will do so because it is fashionable. They don't care a cent who gets drunk so long as they don't lose anything. It happens that just now it is thought rather respectable to be on the side of temperance, and so they are voting for it; but in their hearts half of them hope it will fail, and they will not turn their fingers to make it a success. And if the plan which has been suggested by my friend, Rivers, is carried out, that is, to badger and bother them in every way we can, and at the same time to make this county, if possible, a perfect pandemonium of drunkenness and revelry, these parties will then eagerly join in the cry that the Act is a huge failure, and when we try to have the thing repealed they will give us their active support, because they

will be able to assume the same role upon our side they did on the other, that is, that they are philanthropic citizens working on the side of morality and order. You mark my words, in a year from the present we will carry the repeal with an overwhelming majority."

The party broke up in the small hours of the morning, and the only one who was then sober was the landlord. In fact it was well understood, even among his cronies, that he was too mean to drink to any excess except he drank on the treats of his numerous customers; and then he was careful not to be so much under its influence as to neglect his business. He was one of those men of whom, alas! the world has too many, who live to satisfy their own selfish interest no matter who may be made to suffer.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ALDERMAN TOPER'S FLATTERING OPINION OF THE "DODGER."

The next week the "Licensed Liquor Sellers' Association" of the county held the meeting of which Rivers had spoken, and there were also representatives present from Toronto and other places. They all agreed that the plan outlined by Rivers would be the best to adopt; that was, if the reader recollects, to play a waiting game, and at the same time to treat the law with supreme contempt.

"I tell you what it is," said Alderman Toper, who was one of the representatives from the city--having been elected an alderman by the whiskey interest, for He was proprietor of the "Toper House," one of the largest second-class hotels in the city--"I will spend a thousand dollars of my own money in order in the end to beat them."

"Don't you think, Toper," said Rivers, "it would pay us to employ Gustavus Adolphus Dodger. I hear he is one of the best stump-speakers in the country, and that he can do as he likes with an average crowd. What do you think? You know him better than I do."

"Yes," said Toper, in an undertone, "I know his face better than I do his dimes, for I have had the former at my bar every day for the last six months, though nary one of the latter have I seen. But 'he is just the man for Galway,' for all that. He is the aptest, smoothest, most oily rascal I have ever met, and there is not a man in Canada that can hold a candle to him as a speaker in his own line. Why, I remember at a certain meeting he addressed a crowd who had been shouting themselves hoarse against the man in whose behalf he was about to speak, but he pleaded so eloquently and plausibly for his friend--and he was the man's friend, because he had received a consideration--that, before he was through, they shouted as loudly for the one whose cause he was advocating as they had a few moments before for his opponent."

"I suppose," said William Soker, one of the delegates from the county, "there is no fear of the other side getting the start of us and buying him up, for, from what you say, I should judge he was in the market and ready to sell himself to the highest bidder."

"There is no danger of that," said Toper, "for he has committed himself, soul and body, to the liquor interest, both upon the stump and through the press; and, though a man may not be troubled with that inconvenient article called principle, yet he has, to secure success, to be somewhat consistent."

"Oh, bosh about consistency," remarked Bottlesby; "I would not trust the rascal if he could make more than he could with us."

"Neither would I, if he had any chance to sell us, not a bit quicker than I would a fox in a goose-pen or a monkey on a peanut-stand, but there is no fear of the Dodger (that's what we call him) in this case, because he has so far committed himself to our side that the public would not believe him if he turned. But if he were ever so willing, the teetotal party 'wouldn't touch him with a ten-foot pole.'"

That night, after they were through with the business part of their programme, a supper was held by them at the Bayton House. There were present Judge McGullett, Capt. McWriggler, Sheriff Bottlesby, Capt. Flannigan, John Sealy, Esq., Stanley Ginsling, and as many of the magistrates of the town and county as could be induced to come. All were jubilant that so many of the latter responded to their invitation; for they considered their presence indicated their sympathy with them. Rivers, in a private conversation that he managed to have with Sealy, said with a chuckle:

"We have them as good as beaten already, for we have here the principal part of the men before whom the cases must be tried."

"That's so," replied Sealy, "but we will have some hard fighting to do first."

The party broke up in the small hours of the morning. During the course of their night's debauch there was a great deal of speechifying, and the epithets fanatical, humbug, etc., were used *ad infinitum*. Over the state of nearly every one of the party it is well to cast the veil of oblivion. But what may be expected of a town or a county that has such men to administer justice and to hold its most responsible positions.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FRIENDS OF TEMPERANCE REJOICING OVER THE VICTORY.

"I am certain, friends, from my knowledge of the places from which we have not yet received any returns, that our victory is assured; for I think we may depend upon those we have received as being correct, and those which are yet to be reported will help to swell the majority.

"We should be very thankful, as we are gaining a greater victory than what was anticipated by even the most sanguine of us. Our opponents seemed to have been paralysed, and were routed horse and foot.

"I am more thankful than I can find words to express that such is the case. When I remember the many who are miserable, degraded drunkards, without shame, and many of them without honor, who a few years ago were respectable citizens and worthy of our esteem and our confidence, but who have been thus degraded by the drink traffic; when I remember the number of those we once knew, and some of them amongst the most brilliant in intellect, the purest in morals, and the best loved of our citizens, who were cut off in their prime by this fell destroyer--who, if it had not been for alcohol, might have been with their friends--their hope, their joy, and their pride; when I think of the miserable, desolate homes--the brokenhearted wives--the wretched, starving little ones, whom rum has made so, then I thank God for this victory.

"I have no children of my own. God, in His mercy, has taken them 'one by one.' They are now where no destroyer can enter; but my friends and neighbours have children, and I see, with alarm, that some of them are being led to their ruin by those who frequent the rum-shops in our town; for their sakes I rejoice that this temptation is about to be removed.

"As I was on my way to this meeting to-night, I called upon one who was once a happy wife, but who now is a very wretched one, for her husband has been nearly ruined by this awful curse; one who, as those who know her best can testify, is a cultured lady, and her husband was once every way worthy of her, but he is now a poor, dilapidated wretch--a wreck, mentally, morally, and physically; and she is now prostrated upon what, in all probability, will be her death-bed, brought low by the hardship and mental anguish she has endured; for she and her children--and God never blessed a mother with better ones--have been reduced to abject poverty through rum. As I was leaving, she grasped my hand in both of her emaciated ones, and said, 'Oh, Mr. Gurney, may God give you the victory to-day! and if the prayers of a wretched wife and mother can affect the issue, He will. We are being brought to utter ruin, and if liquor is not kept from my husband we shall soon both be in our graves, and our children will be orphans in a cold, cold world. Oh! tell them that a worse than widowed wife, who is now very near the grave, but who was a happy wife and mother until the drink-curse blighted her hopes and destroyed her home, is now praying for the victory. May God bless you!'

"I am certain, friends," continued Mr. Gurney, "there are hundreds of such wives in our town and county, and thousands within the bounds of our fair Dominion who are praying for our success."

When Mr. Gurney, who was chairman of the temperance meeting, which was held in the Sons of Temperance Hall, in Bayton, on the evening of the polling day, sat down, there was a lady arose to address the meeting. When she stood up the audience was immediately hushed into silence. She had a beautifully modulated voice, full and round as the notes of a flute, over which she had perfect control, and that could be heard to the furthest corner of the room.

The speaker was Mrs. Holman, who has since been recognized as one of the most able prohibition speakers in Canada. Her first attempts at public speaking was when she addressed the Ladies' Temperance Association of the town of Bayton, of which she was president, and then she was inducted to talk to the Sunday-school children upon the same topic. Her friends were so much impressed with her ability as a speaker, they urged her to come out and publicly address meetings upon this subject. At first she could not be persuaded to do so; the ordeal was too severe, for she was naturally sensitive, and her refined mind shrank from appearing upon the platform, where she would be subjected to the taunts of rough and vulgar men. But finally her sense of duty overcame every restraining influence, and she came forward as the eloquent pleader for the wretched drunkards and their wives and mothers, and their poor, helpless children, the last mentioned of whom, as she eloquently expressed it, were subjected to unmentionable and almost unimagined indignities, and had to suffer untold, misery through the curse of intoxicating liquor.

She, upon the occasion to which we refer, said:--"Friends, we have gained a great victory to-day. There has been in this struggle, arrayed upon opposite sides, light against darkness, philanthropy against, selfishness, virtue against vice, heaven against hell; and I do thank God for the help He has given us. The prayers of the vast majority of the great and good in our land, of the poor, suffering and wretched wives and mothers, have been ascending like an incense of a sweet-smelling savor in our behalf to-day; from many a sad heart whose life has been made wretched and whose home has been made desolate, has gone up the prayer, 'God help the Temperance Cause.' These prayers have been answered." And she added, looking upward: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory for Thy mercy." Her face shone with a seraphic glow, as she thus offered the glory and praise unto Him to whom all glory belongeth; and she seemed, like one of old, to be holding intercourse with God. The impression that these words, with their concomitant action, had upon the meeting was indescribable.

"But," she added, "something whispers to me that the hardest part of our fighting is yet before us. Our victory has been secured in a manner so easy that I think they intend to make the greatest resistance now when we imagine we have nothing to do but enjoy its triumph. I have been informed they intend to fight the Act in every possible manner, and, as they are inspired by their selfishness, you may rest assured they will not be very particular as to the means employed to accomplish their end. I have reasons for believing that the greater part of the hotels, and groggeries in this county will not only be kept open to sell, in defiance of the law, but also to give rum away, when they can in no other manner accomplish their diabolical purpose of making men drunk. This town and county is to be made a perfect saturnalia of drunkenness, and the Licensed Victimizers--I cannot call them by any other name--promise to pay all the cost, though it should amount to a hundred thousand dollars. Friends! What care they for the misery and crime this cruel, heartless course will entail upon this country? They are utterly regardless of the men who are now pure, who may be degraded and wrecked, both in soul and body, and sent to drunkards' graves and a drunkard's eternity. They think not of the poor wives who will be beaten and bruised, and it may be murdered, by husbands who have become besotted and brutalized by drink; nor of the poor, innocent little children who will be neglected and have to endure barbarity and hunger because of this course. Their traffic has entirely hardened their hearts; they care not who suffer so they prosper. God will require a fearful reckoning from them some day.

"Now, friends, it is for us to do our duty--to work, to sacrifice, to suffer, and, having done all, to stand. Let us each and every one resolve that now we have carried this Act, that when the time comes for it to become law it must and shall be respected; and that those who violate it with impunity shall be punished.

"I congratulate the men and women who have prayed and worked in the good cause for the success which has crowned our efforts. Let us be firm to our purpose, and let nothing daunt us or keep us from performing our duty, and God will uphold and bless the right."

When Mrs. Holman sat down there was loud applause, and many were the vows audibly registered that, God helping them, they would be true.

Just then an old lady, with hair of snowy whiteness and a face which, though beautiful with the goodness and benevolence which it expressed, was marked and seamed with care, arose. Her trembling limbs had scarcely strength to sustain her body, emaciated though it was with care and suffering. She attempted two or three times to speak, but not a word escaped from her quivering lips; and the tears gushing from her eyes followed each other in quick succession down her cheeks; and, finally, her pent-up feelings found expression in short, convulsive sobs. Her inability to speak because of her emotion had a greater power to move the meeting than the most fervid eloquence could have had. Soon there was scarcely a dry eye in the room, and many were sobbing in sympathy with her inexpressible woe. Her voice was finally heard, and though low and quavering, the sweetly modulated tones indicated a cultivated mind and loving nature:

"I thank my heavenly Father," she murmured, "for this day's victory. He only knows what I have suffered; Rum has blighted and ruined my fondest anticipations. It has changed a life radiant with joy into blackest desolation. It robbed me of peace in my young womanhood. It made my middle age one terrible struggle with poverty and despair, and has left me in my old age--bereft of all my natural supports--like an aged tree in a desert; withered and alone.

"I had a husband, and God and my own heart know how pure and true he was. It first robbed him of his manhood and his purity, and then murdered him. No tongue can depict, no mind can imagine, the torture, the agony I suffered during the years that he was sinking deeper, deeper into the unholy abyss; nor my utter despair when they brought him home to me dead, slain by rum, and I was left with my helpless little ones to struggle on alone. And now my only son, for whom I toiled, and wept, and prayed, and who was--as many of you know--worthy of a mother's love, is a wretched drunkard. Oh! I pray that this victory may be the means of his salvation, that my grey hairs may not go down in sorrow to the grave."

When she took her seat there was not a person in the room but was visibly affected.

Several others made good speeches, but one of the most telling of the evening was made by the Rev. J. H. Mason. He, though a young man, had won for himself an enviable reputation as a brilliant preacher and humble Christian worker. In fact, he had manifested, by what he had accomplished and by the hold he had gained of his people's affections, that he was eminently qualified for the position he occupied.

He was now pastor of the most influential church in Bayton, and had thrown himself, heart and soul, into the campaign which was now ended. He said he had borne calumny and insult in the cause, and expected he would still have to endure it; but, God helping him, he would, in the future as in the past, do his duty, and had no doubt but every one who had worked for the end now accomplished would do the same.

They were about to close the meeting when a man arose and asked permission to read a communication from the *Globe*. Permission was given, and he read amid the profoundest silence, the following:

"A BAYTON MAN KILLED ON THE RAILWAY TRACK! THE LAST OF A WILFUL SON.

"The engineer of the morning train from Belleville thought he noticed something upon the track, shortly after leaving the city. He whistled down brakes, and the train was stopped. Upon going back the horrible discovery was made of the dead body of a man, with both legs cut off just above the knee.

"The body was lying on the south side of the track, face downward, and the remnants of his legs on the inside between the rails. Upon his head was a wound which may have rendered him senseless at the moment of the fatal occurrence. The man was well dressed and appeared to be respectable. It is supposed he fell from the train which had immediately preceded the one by which he was found. The coroner was sent for and, upon searching the dead man's pockets, nothing was found but a letter, enclosed in a mourning envelope, and addressed to Willie Fleming, Bayton. The letter reads as follows, and founds the only clue to his person and character:

"BAYTON, June 20th, 187--.

"MY DEAR SON WILLIE,--"I received your letter last week, after I had almost given up hope of hearing from you again. My son, remember that 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' Please do not cause your poor old mother again to suffer such pain and anguish.

"My darling boy, you have had another warning not to indulge in strong drink. I would to God, my son, you would take it. Your course is cruel, and is slowly but surely killing me. God forgive the man who first led you astray, and the men, some of them in high position in this town, who have helped on the work.

"Oh! my son, I long to see you, and my daily prayer to our heavenly Father is that you may become--as you once were--pure and good. I hope you are now steady and giving good satisfaction to your employers. No more at present from your heart-broken MOTHER.

"P.S.--Write as soon as you receive this, and it will save me a great deal of mental anguish. M. F."

When the man had finished reading, he said: "Most of you know that that communication brings me the news of the awful end of my only brother. I am on my way to break it, as gently as possible, to my mother, but I could not resist the impulse--even in this hour of awful woe--to come in and read it to you all, that you might be influenced to greater zeal and nobler sacrifices in the temperance cause. You know how bright his prospects were a short time ago, but he has been murdered in his prime by whiskey, and I have no hesitancy in saying that the man who was the chief instrument in his destruction is a hotel-keeper in this town who is the strongest opponent of this prohibition movement.

"Oh, friends! be true to your principles, that many may be saved from a similar fate; and pray to God for my poor old mother, for I am afraid this will break her heart."

"I have one request to make," said the Rev. Mr. Mason, "before this meeting breaks up: Let every person in this room who has heard that communication read, which comes laden with anguish to a broken-hearted mother, and sorrow to such a large circle of relatives and friends, now enter a solemn vow before high heaven, to do all they can to banish this our curse from this town and country. All that will thus promise, please stand upon your feet."

In an instant every person stood up.

"My friends," said Mr. Mason, "remember your vow; and remember, this sad case is only one of many thousands. Oh!

what millions of lives have been and are still being blighted! What hearts are being blasted and broken by this fearful traffic! May God give us all power to resist temptation, and throw all our soul into our endeavors in this cause. Let us now sing, as we never sang before,

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

After singing, the benediction was pronounced and the meeting broke up.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH THE READER LISTENS TO A TETE-A-TETE BETWEEN MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

A mother and daughter were conversing on what would appear, from their earnestness, to be a very important subject, in a cosy drawing-room of a beautiful brick villa, situated in the suburbs of Bayton. Their surroundings would lead the careful observer to the conclusion that they were in easy if not affluent circumstances. Though the effect of the room's furnishing would cause one to be possessed with the idea that there was more wealth than refinement;—there was too much coloring, too much gauze and glitter, to be reconciled with any considerable degree of aesthetic taste or true culture.

The elder of the two was dressed in a manner that would better become a miss of twenty than a matron who was on the shady side of fifty; and the young lady, though not displaying the ingrained vulgarity of the mother, was not costumed with that simple elegance that would indicate a refined taste.

They were the wife and daughter of John Sealy, Esq., whom we have already introduced to our fit readers.

"I don't think, Luella," said the mother, "you should hesitate for a moment in deciding between Bill Barton and Mr. Ginsling."

"Neither do I, mother; but while I would prefer the former, I should judge, from your accent on the 'Bill,' your preference would be given to the latter."

"It certainly would, Luella; for what has Barton to offer a young lady of your wealth? He has neither looks, nor money, nor position. I think he had a great deal of assurance to come to see you, in the first place. He knows my opinion in regard to the matter; and, if I am not mistaken, thinks about as much of me as I do of him, and that is not saying a great deal."

"What has Ginsling to offer, mother, besides his bloated face and aristocratic airs? And then he looks nearly as old as pa."

"He is a gentleman, Luella, and is from one of the most aristocratic houses in England." Mrs. Sealy particularly emphasized the fact of his being of an old family; for, like all artificial and vulgar natures, she would have made any sacrifices to be related in any way to those whom she endeavored, though ineffectually, to copy. "As to age, Luella," she continued, "though he may be a few years older, that does not signify. I prefer to see a husband a few years older than his wife. Your father is ten years older than I am, and yet, I am sure, the difference is not particularly noticeable, though I do not think time has been particularly severe upon me." And the lady viewed her rather good-looking face in the glass, and, from the complacent look that swept over it, one would be led to believe the answer to her interrogation was to her eminently satisfactory.

"Mother, all I have to say is, I love William Barton, while I cannot help loathing Ginsling. You say the former has neither money, nor position, nor beauty; though in regard to the latter assertion, it will be sufficient for me to say we differ. But if he has neither of these he has brains, and manhood, and purity."

"I don't see anything particularly smart about him, Luella; and in regard to purity he is, I suppose, on a level with, the average young man about town."

"Now, ma, it is not fair to speak of him in that manner; for I am sure you know of nothing but what's to his credit, and if Ginsling is what you term a gentleman by birth, he certainly is not one by instinct; though no one can truthfully make such an assertion in regard to William Barton."

"As you just remarked, Luella, there may be difference of opinion as to which is by nature the greater gentleman, but, as I said before, I can't conceive how he had the audacity to come to see you, in the first place."

"I guess he wouldn't have come if he had not received some encouragement; and I am sure, ma, he is not only my equal but my superior in every respect."

"You don't mean to say, Luella Sealy," said the mother, with what seemed at least indignation, "that you were so unmaidenly as to make the first advances to this young man. If I thought you were capable of doing such a thing I should be ashamed of you. It would be bad enough if he were your equal, and a gentleman, but when he is a mere bank clerk and a person of no position, how you could descend to do so is beyond my comprehension."

"Mother," said the daughter, while a quizzical smile lit up her face, "when pa came to see you did you not encourage him, or in some manner give him to understand that his visits were not altogether distasteful to you? From what I have heard pa say, I should rather think you did. Now, ma, I rather liked William Barton; and while I did not tell him so, he seemed in some manner or other to find out my secret, and I have not tried to deceive him."

"But, Luella," said her mother,--not replying to her daughter's mischievous reference to her days of romance and love, for, like many other ambitious, scheming mothers, if she ever had such a foolish emotion as love, she had forgotten it, or else she had been led to believe it was all Moonshine; and if a girl only married wealth and position, she thought love would come,--"what is the use of acting so foolishly? If you marry William Barton you will have to leave the set with which you are now associating, and if you degrade yourself by a *mesalliance* you will drag us down with you."

"You had better wait, mother, until he asks me to marry him."

"No! I want to talk it over now, and then you will be prepared to act like a sensible girl. If Barton wishes to marry you it is because you have money, and he will bring you nothing in exchange but degradation. How the McWrigglers will sneer if such a thing happens! They schemed and plotted until they got Captain Merton to marry that baby-faced Elaine; and because he is an officer in the English army and the youngest son of a gentleman, they have been putting on airs ever since; and they are now so stuck-up there is scarcely any living for them."

"I am sure, ma, they are welcome to him, for I hear he does not use her very kindly when he is in liquor, which is most of the time."

"Oh! I guess that is like a great deal of what people say--scandal. I am certain since that alliance they have moved in society into which they could not gain entrance before. Now, if you marry Stanley Ginsling, as he is first cousin to Lord Fitzjinkins, we will have the *entree* to society to which they dare not aspire; and then the airs of superiority can be on our side, not theirs."

"So, ma, you would have me marry a sot, who is twice my age, and whom I detest, in order that you may have a paltry advantage over one who, when she calls, you kiss and use the most endearing epithets in your vocabulary, in order to express your friendship for her. To tell you the truth, I don't see much in what you call 'our set,' to encourage me to sacrifice myself in order to remain in it. When you meet you are all honey, smiles, and kisses, and you profess to be the dearest of friends; and yet you are constantly endeavoring to gain some petty triumph at each other's expense, and then to relate it in such a manner as to cut and cause envy and jealousy. 'Our set,' ma, is too superficial and spiteful for me to wish to remain in it."

"Your remarks, Luella, are the reverse of complimentary; but I am not going to be angry. If you don't like the set you are in get above it. If you only become the wife of one who, some day, will become the Hon. Stanley Ginsling, you will be lifted out of anything of that kind."

"You mean dragged beneath it, ma. It would be a nice thing to be a drunkard's wife."

"O there is no fear of that. The majority of men drink before they are married. All they want is a good wife, and then they settle down; and as to that, I have been told that Barton drinks. So there is as much danger with one as the other. You had better be sensible, dear, for your father will feel like disowning you if you marry Barton, and he has set his heart upon a match between you and Mr. Ginsling."

"Mother, I don't believe William Barton drinks; and it is wrong to repeat as fact what is nothing but malicious scandal. I also think it is very unkind of you to threaten me, and thus try and force me to marry one I despise. Surely, since I will have to live with the man I marry, I should have some choice in the matter."

After she thus spoke she abruptly left the room in a passion of tears.

The mother did not introduce the subject again, but it was constantly in her mind, and she knew Luella would not forget it. She understood her daughter's weak points, and had no doubt if she persevered she would gain her end. In fact, though Luella Sealy was in every respect, except in narrow strength, her mother's superior, yet her intellectual and moral nature was not all golden--there were some parts of baser metal, and even of clay, in her composition. As the

reader will conclude from her conversation with her mother, she possessed more than ordinary intelligence, which was subdued and chastened by the emotions of a warm, loving heart; and if uninfluenced she would have proved true to a friend, even though it caused her self-sacrifice and suffering. But yet she was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made, for she was weak, being easily persuaded, and withal a little selfish; and though she would endure a great deal for friendship's sake, yet when the opposing forces came on thick and fast, and persevered in their effort--when that opposition came which would have caused a stronger nature to be all the more real--she would yield to the opposing forces and desert the one who trusted her, leaving him to endure scorn and contumely alone.

She had met William Barton at a party, and, being introduced by a mutual friend, was fascinated by his manly bearing and intelligent, racy conversation. And he, as his blood tingled at coy cupid's whisperings, soliloquized: "She is the most intelligent and charming girl I ever saw." They met several times at parties during the winter, and he became marked in his attentions, which she did not discourage. And soon--at least on his part--the friendship ripened into genuine love; and she, as the sequel will show, though for a time carried down by the force of an opposing current, really entertained for him an undying affection.

William Barton was the son of respectable parents who resided in Bayton. They were comparatively poor, but managed to give their son a good business education. He had entered as a junior clerk in one of the banks of the town, and, by strict attention to business and a natural adaptation to the profession chosen, had risen to a position of considerable responsibility.

He was a young man of more than average ability, not strictly handsome, but possessed a good figure and pleasant, intelligent countenance, though the lower portion of the face was disappointing, for it did not denote decision of character or massive strength. And the face was an index of the man, for he was so intelligent, kindly and gentle in his manner, that he was a favorite in society; but he was volatile, and easily influenced for good or evil.

As he was moving in the best society of the town when he met Miss Sealy, her father and mother did not, at first, object to his keeping company with their daughter, though his attentions were very marked indeed. But when Stanley Ginsling appeared upon the scene, and they learned he was the scion of an old and aristocratic family--a near kin to a live lord--their vain, selfish, and artificial minds became excited, and they determined, if possible, to have the latter allied with the house of Sealy, then they turned against Barton.

From this time Mrs. Sealy especially gave the latter to understand his visits were simply tolerated, and Mr. Sealy took no pains to conceal the fact that something had transpired to change his views in regard to him.

Barton went one evening determined, if possible, to discover the cause of their coldness. He was received by Luella with her usual cordiality, but by her mother with marked discourtesy bordering on rudeness. He was scarcely seated when Mr. Sealy came in, accompanied by Stanley Ginsling; and as Mrs. Sealy received the latter with special attention, which, was all the more noticeable because of her icy reserve in Barton's case, the latter thought he understood the situation.

"Can it be possible," he soliloquized, "they are anxious to get rid of me that the coast may be clear for that drunken loafer?" The thought at first could be scarcely entertained, it seemed so monstrous; but before he left he had substantial reasons for believing that Mr. and Mrs. Sealy were actually scheming to make a match between Ginsling and Luella.

Barton and Luella were both sitting on the sofa, when Mr. Sealy and Stanley Ginsling came in, much to Mrs. Sealy's disgust, and she managed to separate them several times during the evening by resorting to the manoeuvres which never fail an accomplished female tactician; but as her daughter invariably returned to her seat near Barton, she was determined to make a final effort that should not fail.

"Luella," she said, "will you kindly favor us with a little music? Give us that duet Mr. Ginsling and you rendered the other evening. You have a magnificent bass voice, sir," she said to Mr. Ginsling, in her most dulcet tones; "will you not kindly assist Miss Sealy?"

"Your will is my pleasure," Ginsling replied, "though I would rather sit and listen while Miss Sealy gives us a number of her varied and delightful selections. The last time I was here I thought her playing was exquisite."

"Mr. Barton will excuse you," said Mrs. Sealy, after a significant pause, and her tone conveyed the idea that the remark was merely a cold conventionalism.

"Certainly," he replied.

Luella reluctantly left her seat on the sofa and took her position at the piano. The mother had certainly manifested the astuteness of an accomplished artist, for she had not only separated her daughter and Barton, but by her manner wounded his sensitive nature, and had also given Mr. Ginsling to understand that, if he wished to pay his addresses to Miss Sealy, his doing so would be eminently satisfactory to her parents.

Barton's position, after what had occurred, was an unenviable one, for he was placed in the cruel dilemma of either remaining in a home where his presence was not agreeable to the host and hostess, or abruptly leaving without having an understanding with the one he so dearly loved. He chose the latter alternative, and burning with indignation, but with cool exterior, he took advantage of the pause which ensued after Miss Sealy and Ginsling had finished their duet, and politely took his leave. Luella, though she knew it was contrary to her mother's wishes, accompanied him to the door and bade him an affectionate goodbye.

These events transpired on the day previous to that on which the mother and daughter engaged in the conversation which is related in the commencement of this chapter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BARTON'S DESPAIR, AND WHAT IT LED TO.

It would be impossible to give an analysis of William Barton's feelings as he walked rapidly away from the Sealy residence upon the night in question.

In the evening he had gone to the home of one whom he had looked upon as his betrothed bride, with calm confidence. True, he had not as yet asked her to be his wife, though he had vowed again and again he would do so; and had determined that very evening he would get her to give the pledge that should bind them for ever. He had no misgivings as to her answer. He had, however, lately been somewhat pained by Mrs. Sealy's not receiving him with the cordiality that she once did; but he had not thought there would be serious opposition to his suit. He argued: "Luella certainly loves me, and will be as true as the needle to the pole, and her mother will give way when she is convinced that if she does not she will be sacrificing her daughter's happiness." But when he left, this calm assurance had been succeeded by positive fear; his joy by agonizing doubt; and dread and disgust, jealousy and fierce hatred, reigned supreme in his soul.

"To think" he soliloquized, "they would bring her down to the level of that disgusting brute; that they should actually scheme to entrap him as a husband for Luella, while they have driven me away from their home by slights so little concealed that I would be a fool if I did not take them; and I have either to give her up or else become the rival of that degraded being. I will never do it. I will see Luella, and tell her she must decide at once between us, and take a decisive stand in the matter. I saw a sneer upon the licentious mouth and a leer in the bloodshot eye of the reptile as he saw me treated so cavalierly. If I had him here for about five minutes I would settle this matter with him. And then I thought Luella's parting was not as warm as usual. Was it my jealous fears, or has she really been influenced? Her failing is that she is too easily persuaded; and if her father and mother are very strong in their opposition to me, may she not yield? Oh, this would be the crowning sorrow of all! How could I bear up under it? How can a mother become so forgetful of her own bright youth as to sacrifice a pure, lovely daughter on the altar of brutal lust, in order to satisfy a shallow and selfish vanity?"

William Barton's estimation of the woman whose daughter he passionately loved, was anything but flattering to her. He did not attach the same blame to Mr. Sealy, because he believed the latter had been influenced by his wife, and in this he was correct; for Mr. Sealy had no ambitious designs when he first introduced Stanley Ginsling to his home; but after his wife had unfolded her plans to him, he approved of them. What had considerable influence with him was the fact that he had learned, through Ginsling's lawyer, that the former had inherited a considerable fortune by the death of a maiden aunt, and, therefore, was not only a gentleman by birth, but would have the wealth to maintain a style essential to that dignity. Neither of the worthy pair ever considered for a moment the pain it would cause the young man whom they had received, at least without disapproval, and had, by so doing, to a certain extent encouraged. Nor did they even for a moment consider that their daughter might also be involved in that suffering. They only thought of working out their own selfish schemes, as thousands of other selfish parents have done, and no doubt are still doing. Mr. Sealy at first had some misgivings, as he well knew Ginsling was, as he put it, "addicted to drink." "I know," he said, "he is far from being perfect, yet he is much the same as society men in general, and I am not a model of propriety myself. No doubt but a few years will tone him down and make him a model husband."

Barton walked rapidly on, he scarcely knew or cared whither. The excited state of his mind seemed to propel him to celerity of flight. This quickness of movement acted as a safety-valve, and let off some of the pressure.

He came at last to a small hotel on the opposite side of the town from whence he started. It was situated in a cosy little bower in the outskirts, and was called "The Retreat." And rumor had it that many of the so-called gentlemen of Bayton were wont to resort thither to get on a genteel debauch, and to engage in the innocent diversions of euchre, poker, and whist, and it was said a great deal of money changed hands here on certain occasions.

Barton was well acquainted with the proprietor--Joe Tims by name. He certainly would not have been mistaken for a teetotaler. He was, however, considered a model landlord, because he would not sell liquor to a man after he was drunk; though he never hesitated to furnish him with as much as he would pay for until that stage was reached. Barton had frequently been there before; for he was a young man who would take a glass with a friend, and had once or twice in

his life been intoxicated. In fact, he belonged to the great army of moderate drinkers.

When he came in front of the hotel he heard voices within, and acting upon the impulse of the moment, he opened the door and entered.

As he stepped in he found several young men, with many of whom he was well acquainted, standing in front of the bar, glasses in hand, just about to drink. The one who was "standing treat" hailed him with, "Come, Barton, take something," and, being in a reckless mood, he said, "I will take brandy." The decanter was handed to him, and he filled his glass more than half full, which was noticed by the landlord and young men present, and thought for him very singular.

After he had drained his glass, he said, "Come, boys, it's my treat now! What will you have?"

They again stepped up to the bar and each took his glass. "I will have some more brandy," he said, and he again took twice the quantity that is usually taken.

"Be careful, Barton, my boy," said Tims; "that brandy is 'the real old stingo,' and will set you up before you know where you are. I don't want you to think I care how much you take, but would not like you to do something for which you will be sorry afterwards."

"I guess his girl has gone back on him," remarked a young man by the name of William Stewart. "I hear that English snob, Ginsling, is now shining round there, and that pa' and ma' favor his suit."

Several of the others, with the same want of good taste as had been manifested by Stewart, joined him in giving expression to a number of coarse jokes and vulgar witticisms.

Barton stood as if stunned for a moment, and then, with a frown, said: "Gentlemen, you will oblige me by changing the subject."

As he requested, the subject was allowed to drop by those present, but not before they had stung poor Barton almost to madness.

"My God," he thought, "then it has come to this, that she for whom I would sacrifice my life, through the folly of her parents has become the object of the coarse, vulgar witticisms of bar-room loafers! The thought is almost unendurable."

William Barton was too sensitively organized to pass through his present fiery ordeal without terrible suffering. We have already said he was kindly and gentle, but under this he had an intensely passionate nature; which, combined with an extreme sensitiveness and a rather weak will, constituted him, of all persons, less calculated to endure the peculiar trial to which he was now subjected. He was, in fact, one who, under such circumstances, would display his weakness, and give a man with a cold, selfish, unfeeling nature, every advantage over him. The night in question he drank until Tims positively refused to give him any more.

"No, Barton," he kindly said, when the former had taken his fifth or sixth glass and asked for another; "no! you are not yourself tonight, and have taken more than is good for you. I am now using you as I would have another deal with my own son under similar circumstances."

Barton became wild and foolish; in fact, if he had carefully thought out the best mode of procedure to give his enemies the advantage over him, he could not have improved upon his present course.

He was assisted to his home that night in a state of maudlin intoxication, to awaken next morning with an aching head and remorse gnawing at his heart, for he had, to his other sorrows, added the thought that he had disgraced his manhood and lost his self-respect.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CONSPIRATORS PERFECTING THE DETAILS OF THEIR CONSPIRACY.

It was a month or two after the events narrated in the last chapter when there was another meeting at the Bayton House of those who were the principal opponents of the Dunkin Act. It was an informal gathering, convened for the purpose of having an exchange of views as to the best method to adopt to prevent the Act from being successfully worked, and also to bring it into general disrespect and contempt. Of course the proprietor, John Rivers, was present; and beside him were Sealy, Townly, Sims, Porter, Tims, Ginsling, McWiggler, Bottlesby, Flannigan, and a disreputable lawyer by the name of Murdon.

The Act had now been law for over a month. Some of the hotel-keepers had desisted from selling for the time being, while others sold as usual, and, as a consequence, had been informed upon and were summoned for trial. They had to appear the day following their present meeting. "I have been as good as my word," remarked Rivers. "I said I would not quit selling for a single day, nor have I. They are to have me up to-morrow. Let them do their best. I'll give them all they make."

"What will you do," said Tims, "if they fine you, as they are likely to do?"

"I am not fined yet, and will not be if my friend Murdon here can prevent it; but if I am, I will appeal to the county court, and I know the judge will postpone his decision as long as possible. Then, if he decides against me, I will appeal to a superior court, and, I can tell you, it will take time and money before the case is settled. But we will talk this over after a while; let us now attend to the business for which we have more particularly met to-day; that is, how we can best turn public sympathy against the Dunkinites."

"I thought," remarked Sealy, "that was all settled at our last meeting."

"So the outlines were; but we have to-day to arrange in regard to detail," said Bottlesby.

"Well," said Ginsling, "I should say the best means to adopt to accomplish our purpose is to consult as to the men in the different localities whom we think can be approached. Then we should consider how this is to be done, and who, in the several cases, will be best to do it."

"That's just it," said Townly; "I could influence a man that some one else could not approach, while he would have power over another where I would utterly fail."

"I see," remarked Porter, while a cynical smile curled his sensual lips; "we are to say to as many silly flies as possible, 'come, walk into my parlor;' and if we cannot induce them to come ourselves, we are to employ some of our imps to accomplish that purpose; and, when we get them there, we are not to let them off until they are thoroughly soaked. We are then to turn them out as finished specimens, to illustrate to the public the efficacy of the Dunkin Act. Is that your game, gentlemen?"

"Yes; that's about the idea," answered Rivers. "I admit it seems rather hard, and may involve some suffering, and I am sorry we have to resort to such means to accomplish our ends; but the temperance fanatics have driven us to this, and upon them rests the responsibility."

"If that is your game, gentlemen, you can count me out," remarked Bill Tims. "I have been in business now for a great many years, and I never have yet sold to a man when he was drunk. I don't purpose to begin now. I can assure you, gentlemen, it means too much suffering for women and children."

"I have thought just as you do," said McWiggler, speaking for the first time, "and must yet admit it seems rather hard; but, you know, 'Violent diseases require violent remedies.' You are well aware if the Dunkinites succeed, you and all your fellow hotel keepers will be ruined. So it is a matter whether the ruin shall come to your home or possibly to the homes of those to whom you sell. In such a case I should not be long in coming to a decision. In this world every man is for himself. It is for you to take care of yourself, and let the Dunkinites take care of their *proteges*. The fools are bound to drink anyway, and their wives and children must suffer sometime, and it might just as well come now as in a few

months hence. If it becomes a matter whether my wife and I shall suffer or somebody else and his wife, I can assure you I am going to take care of myself and those belonging to me every time."

"Tims is wonderfully squeamish," sneered Rivers. "If we had been permitted to do a legitimate trade, it would not have come to this. I have invested every cent of my capital in the hotel business in this town, and my place is not yet paid for; if this Act is a success, my property will depreciate in value nearly half, my trade will be ruined, and my wife and children will be little better than paupers. Now, as Captain McWiggler has put it, if I am to decide whether my family is to suffer or the family of some other man, I take it, if I don't care for my own I am a miserable fool. The one thing for us to consider is how we can defeat the Dunkinites, and we must not be very particular regarding the means we employ to accomplish our object."

"The question for us to settle now," said Sealy, "for it is no use wasting time in argument, is what individuals are there in the different localities that can be made tools of for our purpose? The best course, I think, to pursue is that suggested by Ginsling; that is, to make a canvass of the different localities, and see who can be influenced. To commence, who can be used for the purpose in Bayton? Come, Rivers or Bottlesby, you are better acquainted here than I am; name over a few."

"You had better do it yourself, Sheriff," answered Rivers.

"Well," said the sheriff, "if you are too modest to do it, here's at it. There are Morris, Dr. Dalton, Ashton, Flatt, McDonald, Smith, Murphy, McLaughlin, and Stewart."

"You forget to mention the name of the would-be son-in-law of our friend Sealy--Bill Barton." As he said this, he looked with a quizzical sneer at Sealy and winked at Ginsling, but neither of them appeared to notice the remark.

"Who are there in your locality, Townly?" he asked.

Townly mentioned several persons he thought might be approached, and added: "I am certain, though some of them are keeping straight at present, all that has to be done is to put liquor before them, and they are bound to take it every time."

"What I can learn by the inquiries I have made and by observation," said Murdon, the lawyer, "is this: the temperance party are having quite a jollification because a number of those whose names have been mentioned have kept sober since the Act came in force. I also learned that a great many who gave a reluctant support to the Act are now pleased they did so, because, as they say, it has been the means of keeping these men from drinking; and they argue, if it has been effective in their cases it will be just as effective if it is adopted all over the Province, or even the Dominion. Now, if the men you have named are led to get on a bender or two these very persons will be led to change their tune, and will condemn it as a failure just as emphatically as they now endorse it as a blessing."

"That's just it," interjected Bottlesby. "Why, I was talking with Old Gurney this morning, and the old fool at once mounted his usual hobby. He pointed me to Ashton, Morris, and Dalton, who, he said, were keeping sober since the Act came in force, though they were going rapidly to destruction previous to that time. Now I know, and so does every one that is not blinded by fanaticism, that no power on earth will long be able to keep these fellows from drinking, for if whiskey is to be had they are bound to have it. If we use them as tools to accomplish our purpose we will only be shortening the agony of both themselves and their friends."

"Then, gentlemen," said Rivers, "let us now consider how we can best accomplish our object. I suppose those who are most familiar with the parties of whom we have spoken, had better be left to use their own discretion as to how they shall bring about the desired result."

"Ginsling can give a good account of Ashton and Dr. Dalton. Can't you?" said Bottlesby.

"I'll try," he answered, with a diabolical leer. "All I can say is this, in one of the cases I have frequently tried and never failed, and I think I'll manage the other."

We will not trouble our readers by repeating any more of their very interesting and disinterested conversation. Before they separated, every locality in the county was canvassed over, and every man who had been an unfortunate victim of drink, but who had kept sober since the Act came in force, was to be approached by the one who would be the most likely to succeed in influencing him to his fall. In fact, they concocted a scheme that night that was worthy of Satan himself. They also had a special conference with Murdon, the lawyer, so as to be prepared for the coming trials, and several who had been subpoenaed were brought in and questioned regarding what they actually knew, and also posted

as to the manner they could best evade the questions which would be put to them, without swearing to that which was actually false.

"If I cannot frighten them half out of their wits," said Murdon, speaking of the magistrates who would try the cases, "then I will miss my guess. The most of them know but very little of law, and are easily bothered. It is my intention to browbeat them all I can to-morrow, and then dare them to convict. You must be specially frightened, Sealy."

"I guess you'll find me equal to the occasion," he replied, with a knowing wink.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. BROWN'S OPINION OF THE TRIAL AND THE PRESIDING MAGISTRATES.

"I told you it would be a farce, did I not? How could it be otherwise, when a man like Hubbard was the presiding magistrate? His sympathies were entirely with those who had violated the law; and though he made an effort to conceal his bias, the attempt was a failure."

"I agree with you, Mr. Gurney; the whole thing, to me, seemed like a put-up job, and the bench were like children in the hands of that crafty lawyer. I never witnessed a greater exhibition of imbecility than was manifested by both Hubbard and Broban. They appear to have studied law to about the same extent that Sealy has the Bible, and you have an idea of about how much that is."

"Yes, Mr. Brown, I have an idea! And I also have an idea there was an understanding between Murdon and Sealy. The fact is, the bench consisted of two old geese and a fox. Two of them were lukewarm supporters, who would 'damn it with faint praise;' and the third was a rabid opponent, and he was the only one who was qualified, either by native or acquired ability, for the position."

"But I thought, Mr. Gurney, that both Hubbard and Broban were strong supporters of the bill. I know they voted for it. But I was surprised that they were chosen to try these cases. I considered them incompetent to do so. In fact, I have often wondered that men so utterly unqualified were ever appointed to the position."

"In regard to their being supporters of the Dunkin Act," said Mr. Gurney, "they, like many others, voted for it because they found it popular to do so; at the same time, I believe, they wished it to fail, for their sympathies were entirely with the drinking party, and if it is a success they will deserve no credit for it."

"From what I saw yesterday, I must agree with you, Mr. Gurney. I am sure they did not wish to convict. But how was it that Squires Stebbins and Griffiths did not try these cases?"

"In my opinion, Mr. Brown, they were afraid to act. They said important business called them away; but I am almost certain they made business in order to escape the duty. I understand they have been subjected to a species of bulldozing. Being both of them merchants, they were threatened by the liquor party with a loss of custom if they acted, and they had not enough backbone to stand the pressure. I have also been informed that their wives, who were in abject terror, met and had a consultation, and concluded it would not be safe for their husbands to act, as there had been threats of personal violence and of injury to property; so, under these influences, 'important' business was manufactured for the occasion. They have thus escaped the responsibility!"

"Yes," said Mr. Brown, "and left those two non-entities to be gulled by Sealy and bullied by Murdon. I must again express my surprise that such incompetents should have been appointed to their positions."

"They are specimen bricks of the big batch the Government turned out a year or two ago. Why, do you not know that they manufactured magistrates by the wholesale? Many of them were appointed--not because of their qualifications, for they were notoriously ignorant--but because they wished to reward them for services to the party, and to insure their loyalty in the future."

"I am afraid," said Mr. Brown, "when you have to depend upon such broken reeds, and have so many other obstacles to meet, you will find it difficult to successfully work the Act."

"Yes, we will have to meet and overcome difficulties; but we have anticipated this from the first. I must confess, however, that I was disappointed at the attitude of some who, I thought, would be its strongest supporters. I find they are craven-hearted, weak-kneed, and afraid to give active assistance. They say it will injure their business; so it is a matter of selfishness with them. If it fails, it will be because of the half-hearted support we receive from so-called respectable temperance men and moderate drinkers. I know the Act is far from perfect, because the liquor party in Parliament succeeded in introducing clauses that somewhat weaken its effectiveness, and they now attack it because of these very defects. But with all its defects, we would succeed in working it if we had the sympathy and hearty support of all its professed friends; without this, though it came forth with the stamp of the Infinite, it would fail."

"You think we have too many of the genus mollusk in the temperance ranks, Mr. Gurney? These creatures, with, no backbone, infest and curse the Churches of to-day, and I have no doubt they will prove the greatest curse to the temperance cause. A half-hearted friend in the citadel is more to be dreaded than a foe without."

"Yes, Mr. Brown; more to be dreaded, and generally more to be despised."

"I understand, Mr. Gurney, the liquor party are jubilant over the result of the trial. I heard Captain McWiggler expatiating upon it this morning, and he said the Act and all sumptuary laws of similar character are a humbug."

"I have no doubt he will say so," answered Mr. Gurney; "and so will all unprincipled demagogues. They are willing to pander to the liquor interests, or anything else--no matter how low and demoralizing it may be--if it only helps them to power. I understood what he was at. He said to Mr. Martin, 'I told you it would end in a fizzle;' and then continued talking to him in a similar strain for some time: and when he was through, the latter said 'he thought he was about right.' But you know as well as I do, Mr. Gurney, that Martin is weak, and easily influenced."

"Yes, I know it, Mr. Brown; and all such men as he is will be approached, and, if we keep them on our side, it will be by making the Act a success from the first. In regard to yesterday's trial, I am willing to admit it was a great failure of justice, or, to use McWiggler's classic language, 'a fizzle.' But he knew, as well as we do, what led to that result; for, as I remarked a few moments ago, the whole proceedings were a farce. Between the vexatious objections of Murdon, the pettifogger, who had charge of the defence, and of Sealy, who, I believe, had entered into a conspiracy with the former to defeat the ends of justice by browbeating and cajoling the other two magistrates, the trial was made a complete fiasco."

"And there was some rather crooked swearing done there, was there not, Mr. Gurney?" asked Mr. Brown.

"Swearing! I should think there was! I shuddered as I listened to the evidence of some of the hotel-keepers and the miserable creatures they had degraded by their traffic. I was always aware that whiskey was a fearful demoralizer, and I have seen some striking illustrations of the fact before; but the swearing done yesterday by men whose word a few years ago would not have been questioned, has demonstrated, as nothing else could, its power to deprave. Why, they twisted, and quibbled, and tried in every possible manner to evade the questions put; they swore they were not certain the liquor they drank was intoxicating, when it was evident to all who heard them that the statements they were making under oath were untrue."

"Are you not now more dubious as to the result than you were before the trial?"

"Yes; I am willing to admit I am not so sanguine as I was," Mr. Gurney replied. "What with weak or else utterly profligate and unprincipled magistrates; with opponents of the lowest and most vicious instincts, who have poor creatures that are completely under their control, and seem so lost to every vestige of honor as to be willing to swear to anything in order to screen those who furnish them with liquor; with a large percentage of the press prostituting its power in assisting our enemies; and with timid and vacillating friends to help meet this determined and unprincipled opposition, I must confess I am somewhat troubled. But the thought of such men as Ashton, Morris, and Dr. Dalton, with their stricken and despairing families and friends, nerves me for the conflict, and makes me resolve that, trusting in God, I will fight it as long as He gives me strength to do so; and, when I die, God will raise up those who will take my place and the place of those with whom I am associated. I am certain, in the end, our cause will succeed. It may not be during my life. It may be long, long years hence, when the cause of temperance shall ultimately prevail--but it will prevail some time. We must remember that 'one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;' and, though this prevalence of evil and the triumphing of the vicious may cause us to be impatient and cry out in our anguish, 'How long, O Lord, how long?' yet God will sweep away the scourge from our land, like He swept away slavery from our mother and sister lands. It is for us to pray, and watch, and work, and leave the rest with God; and some day there will be a great shout, and we will cry, some on earth and some in heaven, 'God has gotten us the victory?'"

"Well, Mr. Gurney, I, like you, believe that temperance will ultimately prevail; but I do not believe it will be in the near future, and I am afraid this attempt will be a failure. If we try to push legislation faster than public sentiment will warrant us in doing, we will defeat our object and help the enemy. In my opinion, there will have to be years of agitation; and the great masses, who are either indifferent or antagonistic, will have to be enlightened, and their sympathies enlisted, before a law like the present can be run successfully. I have to-day conversed with men who professed to favor our side, and yet they expressed great sympathy for Rivers because he was fined, and some of them gave it as their opinion that the Act would end in failure. I believe the farmers are very much annoyed because the tavern-sheds are closed against them; and some say, if they had to vote again it would be to reverse their former one. The fact is, there must be

a strong public sentiment in our favor if we successfully cope with those men who have their capital invested in the business, and who will fight with the vigor that selfishness and desperation ever impart. To-day's trial indicates we have desperate and unscrupulous foes to meet, and that they can find miserable and degraded tools in attendance to do their dirty work, and help them defeat the ends of justice."

"I am more sanguine than you are," said Mr. Gurney; "and while I am willing to admit that the imbecility of the magistrates who professed to be our friends, the coldness on the part of a great many who, I expected, would give us enthusiastic assistance, and 'having done all, would still stand;' and the manner in which both the tavern-keepers and their degraded tools, as I believe, perjured themselves, have made me a little less confident than I was before yesterday's exhibition. Yet I am still of the opinion the Act can be made a success. I, at least, am determined to do all I can to make it such."

"I, like you, Mr. Gurney, was astonished at the reckless manner with which some gave evidence yesterday, for while I was certain the defendant in each case was equally as guilty as Rivers, he was the only one who was fined, the others clearing themselves by equivocation, and what, at least, appears to me very much like perjury. And that miserable Grogson evidently was posted to swear straight through. I was amazed at his flippancy and his evident willingness to swear to anything that would screen those who had received him."

"I am not surprised that you were, Mr. Brown; for we know that Dr. Dalton and Ashton had no reason to swear to anything that was untrue, and we do not believe they would be capable of doing so, if they had, and they both swore that Grogson, and, in fact, the whole party, drank liquor on the night in question. So the latter actually perjured himself to screen a man who has taken hundreds of dollars from him, and is, more than any one else, responsible for his being the degraded wretch he is at present, and for his wife and children being in the most abject poverty."

"I remember him when he was in comfortable circumstances and considered a respectable man," said Mr. Brown, "and rather a fine young fellow. He was illiterate, of course, but possessed good native talent and a fund of humor which seemed almost inexhaustible. He was a good business man for one whose early opportunities were but limited; and his tact and shrewdness largely compensated for what he lacked in other respects. He married an estimable young girl from the neighborhood in which I was raised; but he took to drinking, and from that time degenerated very rapidly, until he is the degraded creature you saw yesterday. His cronies have very appropriately given him the sobriquet of 'Whiskey Jemie.' I understand his wife and children are existing in utter poverty--brought, by his abuse, to be abject specimens of squalor and rags."

"Yes, Mrs. Holman and my wife were to his shanty the other day, and found them actually in need of the necessaries of life; and some time ago, when Mr. Mason took them some food, Grogson waited until he was out of sight, and then meanly ate up what had been brought for his starving wife and little ones, and though Mrs. Grogson was ill at the time, and part of what was brought was prepared especially for her; yet the brute devoured every morsel. And I heard they were laughing at Porter's, because, as they put it, he had 'sold the parson.'"

"I believe Rivers has appealed, has he not, Mr. Gurney?"

"Yes! on the ground that the law is *ultra vires*. It is appealed until next month, when the case will come before Judge McGullet, and, as he is entirely in sympathy with the antis, I have no doubt he will decide in their favor. Then we will have to carry it to a Court of Appeal, when we hope to obtain justice."

"I have no doubt but you will," said Mr. Brown; "but, in the meantime, they will continue selling liquor, and, having no license to pay, they will endeavor to have a perfect carnival of drunkenness. When they think it is time to strike, they will circulate a petition to have the Act repealed, and the great majority, who will only look at the effect without stopping to consider the cause, will be in sympathy with them, and they will carry the appeal by an immense majority. Do you not think so?"

Mr. Gurney remained in an attitude of deep contemplation for a few moments, and then answered:

"Such may be the case; but we will have to throw our best energies into the work, and leave the rest to God. If we do our part and remain faithful to each other and the cause we have espoused, we will have done what we could; and if our efforts are for the present fruitless, we shall, at least, have no reason for regret."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE INSULT TO ALLIE ASHTON—HER GALLANT DEFENDER.

Six months have elapsed since Mr. Gurney and Mr. Brown engaged in the conversation as presented in the last chapter. During that period there had been a great many hotel-keepers tried and fined for selling liquor, though numbers had escaped through the utter depravity of both them and their miserable dupes; and also because, in a great many instances the magistrates who presided were utterly incompetent to try the cases.

The hotel-keepers had pursued to the letter the diabolical policy they had agreed upon; that is, they had defied the law, and sold liquor with reckless impunity, having, when fined, appealed, and then continued selling and giving it away until they had literally accomplished their object, and flooded the country with liquor, making a perfect carnival of drunkenness and debauchery. They could afford to be lavish in their expenditure, as they had a wealthy corporation to back them in their iniquity.

Among those who had been enticed to fall was the unfortunate personage who is the chief character in this story. Ginsling had been successful, and Richard Ashton had once more been led astray.

Ruth had scarcely become convalescent when this occurred, and was again completely prostrated. The family were now only kept from want by the earnings of Eddie and Allie, though Mr. Gurney and other friends were exceedingly kind, and did everything they could, without wounding the sensibilities of Mrs. Ashton, to help her and her family.

Ashton was now completely demoralized. He had become so depraved by drink as to have lost all self-respect, and seemed to be regardless of the condition of his family. He had not only desisted from bringing anything in to help support them, but the miserable man had, again and again, stealthily taken some souvenir of other and happier days, and pawned it in order to procure liquor.

He had also become so completely transformed by drink that, in his wild, drunken frenzy, he would be cross and even abusive to his wife and children; and there was that shadow of a great sorrow ever lowering over them, and that wearing unrest and fear that is ever the patrimony of those who are the inmates of a drunkard's home.

It was now a providential thing for them that Eddie had procured a situation with Mr. Gurney; and that Allie, though she was so young, was able to turn her musical accomplishments to account, and give instruction in music to several pupils. They, by their united earnings, as we have before intimated, managed to keep the wolf from the door.

Ashton was now most of his time absent from home, drinking at some of the hotels or groggeries, and he had become so utterly degraded that even Ginsling, the man who had been the chief instrument of his ruin, would avoid him; and Rivers and Porter, and the other tavern-keepers, would turn him out on the street, as they did many others, in order to demonstrate that the Dunkin Act was a failure. At such times he would stagger home if he was able, which was not always the case; and once or twice he nearly perished from cold and exposure. Eddie frequently had to search through the groggeries to find him and lead him home.

One evening, just at twilight, as Allie was returning from giving a lesson to one of her pupils, she had to pass by Porter's hotel on her way home, and, when opposite the bar-room door, she heard her father in loud conversation with some one inside. Impelled by an impulse to rescue him from impending evil, she opened the door and walked in. She found herself in the midst of a bar-room full of drunken, ruffianly-looking men, a long row of whom were standing at the bar, with glasses in hand, while one of their number was proposing a toast of the grossest character. To her dismay her father was among them. She stood for a moment or two hesitating what to do, and she trembled violently, and experienced a sinking sensation as she found every eye turned upon her. The voice of him who was proposing the toast was instantly hushed, and every glass was lowered and placed on the counter. There was a dead silence for a few moments, as all seemed intuitively to understand they were in the presence of innocence and refinement; in fact, of a being superior to themselves, and one who was not accustomed to such surroundings.

"Do you wish to see me?" said Mr. Porter.

After a moment's hesitation, in order to gain control of herself, Allie answered his question in true Yankee style; that is,

by asking another. She asked, with great dignity--though she had to assert all her will-power to conceal her agitation:--

"Are you the proprietor?"

"I am," said Porter. "Will you not step into the sitting-room?" he said, with rough kindness; for naturally brutal as he was, even he for a moment was toned down by the presence of the fair young girl.

"No, thank you," she answered. "I came in to ask my father to come home. I heard his voice as I was passing by, and thought if I stepped in and asked him he would not refuse to accompany me."

In a moment there was a marvellous change in the manner of Porter, and he asked, in reply to Allie, in a coarse, ruffianly manner:

"Are you Ashton's daughter?"

"I am, sir," replied Allie, straightening herself up, the manner of the question, more than the words, causing her cheeks to flush and indignant fire to flash in her eyes.

"I wish, then," he continued, "you would take the drunken fool home, and keep him when you get him there. I have been bothered enough with him lately."

"Why, then, have you, and others in your business, enticed him to drink? He would not have been in the sad state he is to-day, sir, if he had not been tempted to do wrong. Would to God, for my poor mother's sake" (and as she mentioned her mother's name her eyes filled with tears), "he would never again put foot in this place. Father!" she said, walking over to him, and putting her hand affectionately on his arm, "you will come, will you not?"

"Yes, my girl, I will," answered her father, who, though very much under the influence of liquor when she so unexpectedly made her appearance, seemed considerably sobered by what had transpired. He also keenly felt the degradation of having his pure, gentle young daughter in a place with such surroundings.

"I will, my girl," he reiterated; "and what you said was true. I was waylaid and tempted, and I believe it was all planned by him and others of the same profession. Had it not been for this, you would not have found me here to-day, and would also have been spared this degradation. But if I and others had not been weak their schemes would have failed."

"If you or any one else say I enticed you, or employed any other person to do so, I say, in reply, it is a lie!" said Porter; and he not only looked at Ashton as he spoke, but also at his daughter.

Ashton was maddened by the insulting remarks which were evidently intended for both. He turned almost savagely to Porter, and said:

"You dastardly ruffian! if you were not a coward you would not insult a young girl." As he said this, he struggled to get away from Allie, as if he would fly at Porter; but she threw her arms around him, and, crying piteously, begged him to come home.

"Oh, father!" she said, "I want to leave this horrible place. Oh! don't say anything, but come home."

"You had better leave," said Porter; "and if you were not an old man, and your daughter was where she should be--at home--I would knock you down. I would allow no man who was able to defend himself to say so much to me without making him sorry for it."

"You wouldn't," said a tall, athletic young man, stepping forward as he spoke. "Well, I will give you an opportunity to make good your words. I say that the man who is contemptible enough to make use of the language you have, in the presence of a young lady, is a bully, a brute, and a miserable coward. Now, make good your boast."

Porter, stung by the epithets applied to him, sprang with the fury of a tiger at the young man who thus defied him; but if he expected to surprise him by the suddenness of his attack, or to crash him with his vast bulk, he counted without his host, for the young man, with the agility of a cat, stepped to one side, and, as he did so, struck Porter such a blow that he fell to the floor as one dead. He then turned to Allie as if nothing had happened, and said, with gentle courtesy:

"Miss Ashton, this is no place for you; if you will leave, I will accompany Mr. Ashton and you home."

"Oh! is he dead?" she said, as she viewed with anxiety and alarm the prostrate form of the brutal ruffian.

"You need not be in the least alarmed about that, miss," said one who was bending over him; "Joe Porter ain't so easily killed as that; though I tell you, that young fellow's blow is like a kick from a boss. He did hit him a stunner, but I must say he just got what he deserved."

Just then Porter, in whose face they had been sprinkling water, began to show signs of life and to mutter fearful oaths against Ashton, Allie, and the young man who had so nobly championed their cause.

"Let us go," said Allie; "let us leave this awful place. Come, pa, for he will soon be up. Oh, how can you frequent such a place as this is?"

When they stepped outside, they found the twilight was deepening into darkness. Allie thanked the young man for his gallant conduct, but would not accept his proffered escort: she said she did not wish to trouble him further. As they parted she shook hands with him, as did her father, and bade him a cordial good-bye.

"I am very much obliged to you," said Mr. Ashton to him, "and shall never forget your kindness; but I hope you may not get into trouble for your valor in our behalf."

"There is no danger of that," he said; "I am abundantly able to take care of myself. But, sir," he continued, "if you will allow one who is young enough to be your son to put in a word to you in the way of advice, I would say, do not be found again as you were to-night. My dear sir, you are altogether too good for such company as that; and then, you involve others in your own degradation."

"I know it, sir; I know it too well. I take your advice as it is intended, and hope I may yet receive strength to follow it; but I have failed so often that I dare not make a promise. God bless you sir! Good-bye."

The young man stood looking after Ashton as he disappeared in the darkness. Allie had started a little before her father, and had not therefore been a listener to their conversation. She had to call into a store to make a few purchases, her father promising to meet her at the shop-door and accompany her home.

"There," soliloquised the young man, "is another poor fool who, possessing bright parts, is just about destroyed by drink. How many thousands there are, even in this country, just like him--going to ruin themselves at lightning speed, and dragging their families with them! What a beautiful girl his daughter is! What a figure! What eyes and hair, and what a beautiful complexion! How cultured and intelligent she appeared! She cannot be more than fourteen or fifteen, and yet she seemed to have the thoughtfulness and self-possession of a woman. The idea of one possessing her refinement being in the den of Old Joe Porter! I must endeavor to be better acquainted if we establish a business here. It was fortunate I went to make that enquiry. I guess Porter will not forget me for some time."

CHAPTER XXXI.

RICHARD ASHTON AND LITTLE MAMIE—MAMIE'S DREAM.

After Allie had left her father she hastened on, determined to get through her shopping as quickly as possible, so as to be ready to accompany him home. She now began to doubt if she did right to leave him, even for a moment, for might he not now be led by his appetite to some other groggery, and then what would be the result! She hastened out, and rejoiced to find him waiting for her, and together they silently wended their way home.

It was not their old home, for they were forced some time previous to this to remove from it to one that was much less pretentious; for now they had to exercise the most rigid economy.

Their present abode was a little rough-cast storey-and-a-half house, consisting of a main building and an addition. The main building contained three apartments down-stairs, one of which served for dining-room and parlor, and the other two were bedrooms. The up-stairs had not been finished, though they had managed to fix it up so that Eddie could sleep there; and by the mother's and sister's industry and skill it had been made quite comfortable; but it was not to be compared to the beautiful room which he possessed in his old home.

The addition contained the kitchen and pantry; and though very cold in severe weather, it served the purpose for which it was intended.

The principal apartment in the main building was very small; but though such was the case, and Mrs. Ashton was still weak and suffering, yet she and Allie had managed to give those little touches in its arrangement which indicated a cultured taste and made it snug and cozy.

The night in question, when Allie and her father came in, Mrs. Ashton was sitting in an easy chair, propped up by pillows. As she sat there, one could see that sickness and worry had wrought terrible ravages during the last year. Her thin, white face looked all the more ghastly because of her large, dreamy eyes; and her hands were so white and thin that they seemed as though transparent. Her hair, which had once been so golden, was now shimmering with silver; and no one who had known her a few years previous would recognize her now as the same person. Surely she had passed "under the rod." The suffering she had endured would have turned the rich purple wine of some women's natures into vinegar, and the drunkard's home would have been a miniature pandemonium; but it had not been so in the present instance. Ruth Ashton had borne her sorrows meekly; and, let me ask, what sorrow is greater than that which she had to bear? She had seen the man that she loved for his noble and manly attributes, ruined by strong drink; his bright intellect robbed of its lustre, and his loving heart made sluggish and cold. What shame she felt! For did not she and the children share in his degradation? What humiliation of spirit they endured! But she never spoke other than kindly to her husband. He had not the trite excuse of thousands of worthless husbands who are neglecting their homes and spending their money in the groggery, while their families are existing in squalor and famishing for bread. He could never say he was driven to drink by the naggings of a querulous wife; for though tried almost beyond human endurance--so tried, that the poor heart was well-nigh broken, and her flesh had almost failed--she never changed in her manner towards him, but was still the kind, loving wife she had been from the first.

When he and Allie came in, every eye was turned upon him to see if he was, as usual, intoxicated; and when Mrs. Ashton saw that he was almost as sober as when he left home, her heart was filled with joy.

"Hurry up, Mamie," she said, "and give your papa a seat. Take his hat, dear, and get his slippers. If you are not too tired, Allie dear, hurry up with the supper."

Ashton was touched by the thoughtful kindness of his long-suffering wife, and he went over to where she was sitting and tenderly kissed her. "You have been a true, good wife to me," he said; "God never blessed a man with a better one. So sinned against, and yet so forgiving; so faithful, so loving." Tears were in his eyes as he spoke, and then he gently kissed her again; but Ruth never uttered a word. He sat down on a chair which was near the table, and, leaning his head upon the latter, wept bitterly.

Little Mamie, who had grown considerably during the last year, had lost her baby manner, and possessed a mind much

too mature for one of her age. She now spoke quite plainly, and seemed to understand the circumstances in which they were placed nearly as well as her elder brother and sister. She had of late always waited until she discovered what was her father's condition before she made any advances. If he was intoxicated she would sit, mute as a mouse, in the corner, with a look of thoughtful sorrow upon her face; but if he were not, she would steal gently up to him, climb upon his knee, and then, leaning her head upon his breast, kiss and fondle him, and coax him to tell her a story, or sing her one of his numerous hymns or songs.

And he always seemed happy to be the slave of this his youngest and frailest child, who, by her gentle witcheries, had so wiled herself into his affections as to have a power over him that no one else possessed.

He had not been sitting at the table long ere she gently crept up to him, and, climbing on to his knee, lifted his arm, and then nestled her cheeks to his until her streamlets of gold mingled with his grizzled locks.

"Oh, papa!" she said, "don't cry--please, don't cry. I pray to God every morning and every night that He may keep the naughty men from giving you drink, and I am sure God will hear me; then you will be as you used to be, and mamma will not cry as she sometimes does now."

Mamie little thought how her words went home to her father's heart--what feelings of shame and remorse they awakened.

"Oh, papa!" she said, "I had such a wonderful dream last night. I dreamt I was in heaven, and it seemed such a beautiful place. There were flowers far more lovely than any I ever saw on earth, and the trees were filled with birds of all colors; and they sang so sweetly--more sweetly than any I ever heard. And there were thousands and thousands of bright angels, and they had harps in their hands shining like gold. And there were thousands of men, women, and children there, all dressed in white, with something bright and beautiful in their hands. And there seemed to be a great high throne, and some one sitting upon it--just such a throne as mamma showed me the other day in a book, only far more beautiful. And the face of the One who sat on the throne shone more brightly than the sun, and lit up all the place. Oh, papa! I was so happy--more than when I have been playing with Allie among the flowers on a bright summer's day. And the angels struck their golden harps; and as the people and children sang, the music was more delightful than I can tell. I felt I was selfish to listen all alone, and that I must run and tell you all, that you might hear it also. But, just as I was about to start, I looked up, and you were standing by my side, looking down at me. And, pa, you did not look like you do now, but as you used to look when I first knew you--as my own dear papa--only there was no gray in your hair. Then you smiled so sweetly upon me, that I knew you were happy; and your face was bright and shining. I asked you where was mamma, Eddie, and Allie, that I might tell them what we were enjoying, and you said they were not here yet, but would be by-and-bye.

"Then it seemed as if we all left the throne and wandered by the beautiful river and picked the beautiful flowers that were so fragrant. Then I said, 'Oh, papa, I wish my mamma was here!' and just at that time I awoke, and mamma was standing by my bedside, smiling; for, it being morning, the sun was filling my room with light, and little Dickie was singing. I told mamma my dream, and she said she thought it was because of what she was reading to me, and the stories she told me before I went to bed; for, papa, she read that chapter which speaks of the 'great multitude which no man can number, who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' And she read me of the walls so high and beautiful, and of the streets of gold. She said no earthly home could equal it. And she thinks this, with Dickie's singing and the sun's shining, was what caused me to dream such a lovely dream. Do you think it was this that caused it, papa?"

Ashton looked down upon his fair, fragile young child, and, as he did so, he thought how far he had fallen from such purity as she possessed.

"No doubt, my dear," he said, "but your mamma's reading and the stories she told had something to do with your dream. But I think even the angels would come from heaven to whisper in the ears of one so good and beautiful as papa's little daughter."

"Oh, papa!" she said, "I wish we were all in heaven, and then we would be so happy. You would never drink again, because there would be no wicked men to give you whiskey; for mamma said, 'None that are wicked shall enter there,' and then mamma would not cry like she sometimes does now; because there shall be 'no sorrow there, and God shall wipe all tears from the eye.' Do you not wish we were there, papa?"

The tears were trickling down the cheeks not only of the father but also of Mrs. Ashton and Allie. She seemed to them too pure for earth, and fit for the association of those bright spirits of which she had been dreaming.

As her father did not speak--in fact he dare not make the attempt, for if he had he could not have controlled his emotion--her mother said:

"Mamie better not ask any more such questions. Papa, mamma, and all hope to be there some day; but we want to remain to work for and love each other until God sees fit to call us home. Now, my dear, do not say anything more about it to-night, because you make papa and mamma feel bad."

Mamie was subdued into silence, for a request from her mother always exerted a great power over her. She nestled so closely to her father's breast that she could hear the beatings of his heart, which, though he had fallen so utterly, beat only for his dear ones at home.

It would certainly have been a subject worthy of a great painter to depict that pure, beautiful child, sitting upon the lap of her sinful, erring father. Her face so smooth and radiant, his so seamed and gloomy. Her eyes large, full, and deep, with the light of a pure soul finding expression through them; his, blood-red and bleared from the effects of his recent and frequent debauches, and with the despair which was eating, like a canker, deep down in the heart, manifesting its intensity in those exponents of its happiness or misery.

"Papa, your supper is waiting for you," said Allie cheerfully.

"Come, mamma and Mamie, your chairs are ready."

But we will leave this family scene to take our readers back to Porter's hotel.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A BAR-ROOM SETTLEMENT OF A MISUNDERSTANDING.

After Porter had been lifted to his feet, and had completely regained consciousness, he poured out a volley of oaths and foul expletives, and swore dire vengeance against Ashton and the unknown stranger who had championed his cause.

"I'll meet that fellow again," he said; "and when I do, I'll pay him with interest--you'll see if I don't; and if that drunken fool, Ashton ever enters this place again, I'll pitch him out quicker than he comes in. I have it in for him for giving me away to Old Service, and then swearing against me at the trial. Before long I'll get even with him for both."

"If you were to throw him out, Porter, it might be worse for you and better for him," said Stewart. "If Ashton had all the money he has left with you, I guess he would be willing to be put out--and stay out, too. I know it would have been a good thing for me if you, and others like you, had turned me out long ago, and never let me in again."

"I guess, Porter," said Morris, banteringly, "you'll not be in a hurry to meet that young chap again, for, as Tremaine said, 'his blow was like the kick of a horse.' Why, man, he knocked you as clean off your pins as if you had been a skittle! and I'll lay you any amount that he would use you up in five minutes. Don't you think he would, boys?"

Some of the boys to whom the question was referred said they thought he would, while others expressed a different opinion. Among the latter were two or three who were anxious to curry favor with Porter.

There are hangers-on at almost every groggery, who loaf around, day after day, for the purpose of what, in slang terms, is called "spunging,"--that is, they are either not able or not willing to pay for liquor themselves, and therefore sit waiting to be asked to drink by any customer who comes in and is willing to "stand treat." Of course it is to the interest of such creatures as those to be on good terms with the landlord--for it is only by his tolerance they can so cheaply indulge their bibulous propensities.

There were some of this class present when Morris asked his question, and they, of course, expressed the opinion that Porter, if he only had fair play, would be more than a match for his late antagonist, who, they said, had taken him at a disadvantage.

"I'd bet on Porter every time," said a burly loafer by the name of Tom Flatt, "if he only had a fair show. I'd liked to see him try it, at any rate."

"O you would, would you?" said Morris, in a sarcastic, rasping tone; "I believe that, but you would take care not to get into anything of the kind yourself. I never knew a man who was more careful of his own precious carcass. Now, let me tell you, I believe that fellow would clean you both out so suddenly you would be whipped before you knew it."

"That's so," said Stewart. "Why, he was quick as a streak of forked lightning."

"If I were you, Morris," said Flatt, "I'd shut up. A man who lets his wife lick 'un, and is afeared to go home because she'd pull his hair or broomstick 'un, shouldn't talk to other men about being cowards. I'd like to see my wife touch me."

As he spoke about his wife beating him, he doubled his ponderous fist and assumed a fierce look, which would lead one to conclude he would be a perfect hero under such circumstances.

What enabled Flatt thus to taunt Morris was the fact that one night the latter had come home frenzied with drink, and was very abusive to his wife and children. Indeed, he became almost uncontrollable, and began to smash up the furniture, when his eldest son, with the assistance of his mother, watching his opportunity, had overpowered and bound him. The story in some manner had leaked out, and the present occasion was not the first time he had been twitted about it.

"We know all about thee, Tom," said Tremaine, in answer to Flatt. He lived next door to him, and therefore understood the relation in which he stood to his family better than any one else did. "Thou art brave as a lion when thee's got that

little wife of thine to thump, but thee's not so valiant when there are men around."

Morris now stepped forward and said: "Don't say a word, Tremaine. I want myself to settle this score with Flatt."

As he spoke he was trembling with excessive rage, and his eyes were blazing with the baleful fire which burned within. He was a man of powerful physique, and, when partially intoxicated, was quarrelsome and dangerous; and it was a surprise to those who were present that Flatt, who was a great coward, dared to taunt or provoke him. This could only be accounted for from the fact that the sarcastic words of Morris had so stung him as to throw him off his guard, and he therefore did not manifest his usual discretion when talking with one who had the power to defend himself.

"You just said," continued Morris, "that I allowed my wife to broomstick me and pull my hair, and that I was afraid to go home. Now, you are a liar," he hissed between his teeth, with the vicious venom of a rattlesnake, "and a sneak, and a sponge, and a coward; and if there is any manhood about you, defend yourself." As he said this he sprang at Flatt as a panther might spring on his prey.

There was a terrible scuffle for a moment or two, and several voices shouted in chorus: "Make a ring, and let them fight it out." How strange it is that so many who call themselves men love these brutal exhibitions--especially when they are not principals!

A ring was formed, and the two men, who had fallen on the floor, were tumbling over each other like bulldogs: they were hitting and gouging each other, and all the time swearing most horrible oaths. In fact, they were more like wild beasts than men.

"Enough! enough! For God's sake take him off!" said Flatt. "Take him off, or he'll murder me!" he again groaned out hoarsely, and the blood and foam oozed from his mouth and flew in flakes over his murderous antagonist.

Two or three seized hold of Morris and pulled him off, and it was well they did, for certainly he would have killed the miserable wretch whom he had at his mercy. All his latent ferocity seemed to be aroused, and he would never have stopped short of murder. As it was, he struggled and swore at them who interfered, and endeavored again to assault the half-throttled ruffian whom they had just lifted to his feet.

They took Flatt to another room and washed his face, when it was discovered that both of his eyes were very much discolored, his upper lip split, and his nose so battered that it corresponded with his name. In fact, he had been so changed in a few moments that his most intimate acquaintance would scarcely recognise him.

Morris had come out of the affray with barely a scratch or two. His attack had been so sudden and so ferocious that Flatt, though he was the larger man, had little chance to defend himself.

Joe Porter had been behind the bar when the events which we have described occurred; for the blow he had received had so shaken him as to leave him incapable either of resenting the taunts which he had flung at him by Morris and the others, or of interfering to stop the bloody affray which was the sequel to his own little affair. In fact, he did not have any special anxiety to risk his own precious person again. He, however, managed to signal to his son, a young man who had come in during the *melee*, and he went for the town constable. It was not long before that personage arrived, but the fight was ended. Porter gave him to understand he would rather no arrests were made; so he sent them to their respective homes, at the same time giving them to understand if he caught either of them engaging in a row again they should not escape so easily.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE HOUSE AND FAMILY OF MORRIS--HE NEARLY KILLS LITTLE HARRY.

When Morris arrived at his home after he left Porter's, he found tea ready, and his wife and children about to partake of it. When he entered, the children, who were always anxious as to the condition of their father, discovered immediately that he was in a state which would cause him to be on the alert to discover some slight or insult which would justify him in being cross.

"Why did you not wait tea for me?" he asked gruffly; "you must have been desperately hungry when you could not wait for a few moments."

"Now, Henry," answered his wife, "you know it is an hour after our regular tea-time; and I am sure, if you will only think of it, you will remember that lately you have been very irregular in your habits. We have several times waited tea for you until it was almost spoiled, and then you did not come."

"You knew well enough I would be here in time to-night, because before I left I told you I would; and it is no use of your trying to get out of it in that manner. I ain't a fool."

"I don't remember, Henry, your promising to be home for tea; and if I did, I could not have depended upon your promise, for, you know, lately you have disappointed us so often that we can no longer trust your word. Oh, Henry! I only wish I could trust you as I once could, and then there would not be a happier woman in Bayton."

"I don't want any of your snivelling, Nell," he said; "I'd rather have something to eat."

The supper was eaten in silence, the children being afraid to speak, and Mrs. Morris's heart was too full for conversation. She sat silently rocking in her low arm-chair, the tears welling from her eyes and chasing each other down her cheeks. She had noticed the scratches upon her husband's face, which he had received in his recent fight. She did not ask him how he came by them, for she well knew how violent his temper was; but she was almost certain he had been mixed in some low bar-room affray, and this thought pained her beyond measure.

When they were married he was a blacksmith in good circumstances, and carried on an extensive business; but he had for the last few years been drinking deeply, and, as a consequence, had so neglected his business that most of his customers left him; and this, with what he spent in drink, had so reduced him in circumstances that he and his family were now very poor. He had desisted from drink when the Dunkin Act came in force, and for a while his home was cheerful again, for a great sorrow was lifted from it, and his steady habits were bringing in money sufficient to purchase many little comforts which had been wanting during the time he was indulging in drink. But this did not last long, for he was one that was selected as a victim by the antis, and they soon succeeded in making him succumb to their wiles. I will not enter into a lengthy description of how their hellish purpose was accomplished, suffice it to say that in his case, as well as in Barton's, Ashton's, Dr. Dalton's, and many others, the conspiracy was, from the diabolical standpoint of the antis, a success. All over the county men were entrapped into drinking by the nefarious means employed, entailing, in some instances, horrible murders and deaths from accidents and exposure; and the misery which helpless women and poor little innocent children suffered will never be known on this side of the judgment. The victims fell easy preys to their wily seducers, for when a man once contracts an appetite for spirituous liquors it is, in nine cases out of ten, easy to tempt him again to his fall; and none knew this better than those who were engaged in this conspiracy, for they were old and experienced hands at the business.

Mrs. Morris keenly felt her present position. She had belonged to a very respectable family--being naturally of a proud, imperious disposition--and to think that she and her children had been reduced to poverty and rags through the drunken habits of her husband, had almost broken her heart. But this evening, when he came in with the marks on his face which led her to believe he had been engaged in another bar-room brawl--for this was not the first--the sense of their disgrace came upon her with such overwhelming force as to bow her proud spirit to the earth.

During the day she had been visited by her sister's husband, whom she had not seen for years, and she had experienced that humiliation which those only can understand who have been in circumstances of comfort, if not of

opulence, and through the misconduct of others have been brought to poverty and disgrace, and, under these changed conditions, are visited by those they have known in the days of their prosperity. The early opportunities of her brother-in-law had not been at all superior to that of her husband; but he was now rich, residing in a palatial home, and the thought that he had found her such a victim of poverty and neglect, added to her accumulated bitterness.

Her husband, as he sat eating his supper, ever and anon cast his eyes to where she sat--her tears seemed to irritate him more than words could possibly have done.

"I don't see, Nell," he said, "why you should sit there sulking after that style. I guess I'll go back to where I came from, I do hate a person to sulk."

"I am not sulking, Henry," she replied bitterly; "but I am heart-broken with grief and shame. It was bad enough, surely, for me to be compelled to suffer the disgrace of being a drunkard's wife, and of being, with my children, dragged down from respectability to poverty and rags, without having to endure the thought that my husband--through his drunken, quarrelsome habits--had given people the opportunity to bruit his name through the country as a bar-room bully."

While she was speaking, her eldest son had entered the house. He was almost a man grown, and was a fine-looking, athletic young fellow. He, as well as his brothers and sisters, had suffered a great deal from his father's cruelty, and Mrs. Morris had frequently screened them from her husband's wild fury; for, though he had often threatened, he had never so far forgotten his manhood as to strike his wife. His son had lately decided not to endure any more abuse, nor, if he could prevent it, would he allow his father to maltreat his brothers and sisters. He acted upon this resolve when, on another occasion, as we have previously stated, he, with the assistance of his mother, had prevented him from smashing up the furniture; though, in order to do this, they had to overpower and bind him with ropes. Of course they could not have succeeded had he not been very drunk. Morris at other times in his wild frenzy acted as though he had just escaped from bedlam. So foolish had he been, that there was scarcely a door or a piece of furniture in the house which did not bear some mark of these seasons of desperation.

The son immediately saw that his father was in his most quarrelsome mood, for his eyes flashed fire; and no sooner had Mrs. Morris stopped speaking, than he replied in his most rasping tones:

"I want you to shut up, Nell, and if you don't I'll make you. I suppose, now Jim has come, you think you can run the establishment; and because you succeeded in tying me up the other day, you imagine you can do it again. I was drunk then. You had better try it on now if you think you will be able to complete the contract."

"Oh, Henry!" replied Mrs. Morris, "you know well enough that all we did was to prevent you from destroying the furniture and abusing the children, when you were so drunk as not to know what you were doing. Why do you go away and disgrace us, and then come back drunk to abuse us and make home wretched."

"It was thrown in my teeth to-night by Tom Flatt," he continued, without noticing what his wife had said, "that you and that precious son of mine, who is now sitting there grinning, tied me up the other day and whipped me. I guess he won't tell me that again in a hurry, as I nearly finished him; and I gave him to understand if he did I should complete the job. Now, I suppose, Jim, you want to try it on again; if you do, just come along--I'm not drunk now!"

"Now, father, why can't you behave yourself? You know we only prevented you from doing something you would be sorry for afterwards."

When Jim thus spoke he did not intend to be impudent to his father, but; on the contrary, to allay his temper; but his words had just a contrary effect, for the latter immediately sprang to his feet and said, while his eyes were blazing with passion:

"How dare you speak to me of behaving myself? Things have come to a pretty pass when you dare thus to dictate to me. This comes from your mother encouraging you to disobey me. Now you take your hat and go, or I'll make you."

"I am not interfering with you, father; and if you were yourself you would not want me to go. If you let the others and me alone I will not say a word to you."

"Leave the house this minute," his father roared, "and don't dare to bandy words with me."

"Father," said the son quietly, "I'll not do it. I am not going to leave my mother and the rest here alone to be abused by you."

"You say you won't!" he hissed between his clenched teeth; "but you will, or I'll break every bone in your body."

As he said this he ran around the table to the place where Jim was standing; but the latter, nimbly avoiding him, dodged to the other side of the table, while the rest of the children ran screaming into another room. Mrs. Morris attempted to expostulate, but her voice was lost in the general confusion; and Morris had become so enraged that he was literally frothing at the mouth. He chased Jim around the table for a few times, but his efforts proving abortive, he, in his mad rage, seized a heavy glass tumbler and threw it, with all his strength, at Jim's head.

"Look out, Jim!" screamed his mother, in a voice of horror, and the boy dodging, the tumbler just grazed the side of his face; if he had not done so, it would have taken him square in the mouth, and would certainly have knocked out most of his front teeth, if it had not broken his jaw.

But, though Jim fortunately escaped, Harry, the brother next to him, was not so fortunate, for he happened to be standing behind--almost in line with Jim--and the tumbler, which missed the latter, struck him with terrific force just above the temple, and, glancing therefrom, struck the window-sash behind, shattering two of the panes to atoms from the force of the blow.

The boy, with a groan, sank to the floor, turning deathly pale as he did so, and in a moment the blood began to trickle down his face.

"Oh, Henry!" exclaimed Mrs. Morris, "you have killed Harry! Oh, how could you throw a tumbler like that? Jim, bring some water quickly."

The mother bent over her boy, who lay as one dead; and, as Jim came with the water, she bathed his head with it and sprinkled some upon his face. But their efforts to bring him back to consciousness were in vain, for he lay breathing heavily, but still insensible.

Morris, after seeing the effects of his reckless folly, stood for a moment as one stunned. He was no longer drunk, but a sober and deeply-penitent man. His boy lying there as dead, appealed to his father's heart as no words could have done, and he now would willingly have sacrificed his life if he could have recalled the events of the last half hour. He came up to the bed, where Jim had carried Harry, with face almost as white as that of his wounded boy, and whispered: "I have not murdered him have I, Nellie dear? Oh! my God, I hope I have not murdered him!"

And then, in his anguish, doing what he had not done for years, that is, sinking on his knees in prayer, he cried, as his bosom heaved with agony:

"O God! spare my child, and I will never drink again!"

Then, rising, he looked at Harry for a moment, and as there was no indication of consciousness, he said to his eldest son:

"Jim! run for Dr. Dean. I am sure, my boy, you will not linger a moment longer than there is need of your doing. Life and death may depend upon your haste."

Jim ran, and in a few moments returned with the doctor, who examined the boy, and said to the group who were so anxiously awaiting his decision:

"His skull is not fractured. I think it must have been a glancing blow, and I will soon bring him to consciousness. It was a providential escape, however; for if the tumbler had come direct, and struck him a little lower down, it would have killed him."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Morris.

"You may well thank Him," said the doctor, "for it certainly was a narrow escape for both of you; that is, you just escaped from being a murderer, and the poor boy here from being murdered. I have often warned you, Morris, against drinking, and told you it would end in some terrible catastrophe. I should think you would now reform."

"God helping, I will."

Dr. Dean was a very strong temperance man, and had been an active supporter of the Dunkin Act. He had, in fact, used all the power of his intellect to make the legalized selling of liquor a thing of the past; he was also an accomplished and eloquent platform speaker. His friends, after earnest solicitation, had obtained his consent to come forward as a candidate for Parliamentary honors. So he was at the present the recognized opponent of Capt. McWiggler, whose superior he was both morally and intellectually.

After a while he succeeded in resuscitating Harry. The latter opened his eyes, and as he did so they fell upon the doctor.

"Where am I, mother?" he enquired. "What is the matter? What is the doctor doing here?"

"Never mind now, Harry dear," she said; "you have been hurt, and if you are very quiet we will tell you after a while."

Having shut his eyes as if he were satisfied, or as if he were too weak to pursue the enquiry any further, the doctor felt his pulse again, and remarked: "He will be all right in a short time." He then gave them instructions as to how they should proceed in case of contingencies, and turning to Morris said: "I believe you have signed the pledge more than once, and a few moments ago you remarked you would never drink again. Did you mean it?"

"I did, and, God helping me, liquor shall never enter my lips again."

"Here is a pledge," and the doctor produced one. "Will you sign it? I always carry one with me to use on such occasions as this."

"I will, sir. And I am thankful to you for your interest in me. Pray for me, that I may receive strength to keep it."

Morris signed the pledge with trembling hand, and no sooner had he done so than his wife, throwing her arms around his neck, kissed him. "Thank God," she said, and then, casting her eyes heavenward, she prayed: "O, my Father, aid him to keep his promise."

"You kept sober," said the doctor, "for several weeks after the Act came in force, and then you were, with several others, tempted to drink."

"Yes," said Morris, "I was coaxed to drink by the sheriff, though I was weak and foolish to listen to him."

"It was a vile conspiracy," continued the doctor, indignantly, "and I am certain that some of those in the county who are now infamously degrading the most important offices in the gift of the Crown are among the conspirators. I am personally acquainted with numbers who were seduced to their ruin by this devilish conspiracy, entailing an amount of misery that it is impossible to estimate."

Before the doctor had finished speaking, Jim, who had been sent to have a prescription filled out, came running in with a look of horror on his face. "They are looking for you, doctor," he said, "to go down to Flatt's. They say Tom has murdered his wife."

"Another victim," said the doctor sententiously, and then he hurried away.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TOM FLATT'S HUT--A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENE IN WHICH HE MURDERS HIS WIFE.

When Flatt arrived at the hovel where his wife and children burrowed (for they could scarcely be said to live) he found them in the most abject misery. But I will ask my reader to accompany me to it.

Imagine a log shanty, twelve by sixteen in dimensions, roofed by troughs, or what appeared to be halves of hollow logs. The back of the shanty on the outside was not originally more than six feet high; but as the logs which formed the sides, and ends had so rotted that by their own weight they had settled considerably, it was now much lower. The shanty contained two windows, which were ornamented by having two or three old hats used as substitutes for panes of glass, and the panes which were not broken were so cracked and splintered that they were in eminent peril of being blown out at every violent gust of wind.

But the exterior of the shanty, dilapidated-looking though it was, gave no conception of the squalor and wretchedness which its walls confined. I will introduce my readers to the inmates.

Mrs. Flatt was an undersized, dark-complexioned little woman, who at one time possessed considerable personal beauty; but she had been so worn by toil, hard usage, and insufficient food, that she now appeared little else than skin and bone; in fact, she as much resembled a mummy as a being through whose veins throbbed the blood of life.

In different attitudes--on the clay floor, on the two miserable beds, and on the old broken chairs and benches of the hut--were distributed six children. They, if possible, were more squalid and wretched-looking than their mother; for though it was midwinter, not one of them was so fortunate as to possess a pair of shoes, but they had frequently to run out from the hut into the deep snow in their poor little bare feet, which were red, cracked, and bleeding from the cold. The miserable rags in which they were clothed did not serve to cover their nakedness; and their blue, pinched faces pathetically spoke of want and neglect.

The youngest of the number was a babe, some five or six months old; she was lying in a creaky old cradle, which squeaked when rocked as if uttering a discordant protest. She was a poor, pallid, little thing, that scarcely seemed to have strength to utter her low moan of pain, as she lay famishing for the nourishment which the now starved mother was unable to supply. The next older was barely able to toddle round on the clay floor; and they ranged up from that until the eldest of the six was reached, who was a bare-footed, bare-legged girl of eight. She was, however, so dwarfed through rough usage, insufficient food, and exposure, as to be little larger than an ordinary child of six.

"Mamma! I want a piece. I'se so hungry!" cried the third child from the youngest--a little boy, about four years of age. "Oh, mamma! I do want a piece."

"And so do I, mother," cried the next, a little girl of five. "Oh! why don't dad come with the bread?"

"Piece, mamma, piece!" whined out little Katie, the next to the youngest. "Piece, mamma, piece!" she cried out again piteously, as she toddled over to her mother, and, hanging on to the skirts of her dress, looked up with a famished longing that made the latter sob convulsively.

"Oh, children!" she said, "mother would give her darlings bread if she had any, but there is not a crumb in the house; no, dears, not one poor crumb, so I can't give my children any now; but I hope your father will come home and bring some bread with him; and if he does, then you shall all have some. Don't cry, now--you make mother feel so bad."

"Mamma," said Nannie, the eldest girl, "I wish father was dead."

"Hush, child," said the mother sharply; "you must not talk so." But in the mother's reproof there was an utter want of the emotion of horror at the astounding and unnatural wish of the child. It seemed as if she was reprov'd for giving utterance to her thoughts--not for entertaining them. In fact, the mother had often in her heart entertained similar sentiments, and wished that her drunken, brutal husband were dead.

When they were first married, Flatt had treated his wife well for a time, and they lived as comfortably as people of their

means and limited stock of intelligence generally do. But he began to indulge in drink, and from that period until after the Dunkin Act became law, he seemed to be predominated with the instincts of a brute. He worked but little at his trade, which was that of a brickmaker, and the small amount that was earned by him was mostly squandered in drink. Mrs. Flatt tried to keep her children from starving by taking in washing; and very frequently the brutal husband and father would return from his drunken orgies to eat the scanty meal she had toiled so hard, with weary body and reeling brain, to procure for her children. If, under such provocation, she ventured to protest, she would be answered by blows, and many a time she had been beaten black and blue by the brutal monster.

After the Act came in force he had remained sober for several weeks, and there was comparative cheerfulness and comfort in the hut where he resided; the children, during that brief period, had plenty to eat, and they did not dread his coming home for fear of a beating. But it was not long before he was brought again under the force of his old habits. He was, in fact, met by those who had been appointed to induce him to drink; and they were as successful in his case as they had been in the other instances which we have mentioned. From that period, the life of Mrs. Flatt and her children had been utterly wretched.

Is it strange she had lost all affection for the brutal ruffian who had the right, by law, to call her his wife? or that his neglect of both her, and their children, his kicks and blows, had driven out even the last vestige of respect, and that now detestation--yes, even intense hatred--had taken full possession of her soul? And once, or twice, as he lay in his drunken slumber, utterly in her power, the awful thought had possessed her that she could, in a few short minutes, revenge herself for all his abuse by taking the life which had so utterly cursed and blighted her own. And then, when, coming to her better self, she meditated upon the sin of harboring such thoughts, a feeling of horror crept over her and chilled, her blood; when, throwing herself impulsively on her knees, the cry had gone up from her heart:

"Oh, my Father! save me from temptation."

The reader, after this explanation, can easily understand how it was she rebuked her child for giving expression to her thoughts rather than for entertaining them.

"But, mother, I do often wish dad was dead, and I might as well say it as think it," said Nancy.

"And so do I," boldly chimed in little Jack, a precocious and manly little fellow of seven, who very much resembled his mother; "for if he was dead he could not beat you and thump us until we were black and blue, mother. And he would not eat up everything from us, and drive us all out into the snow."

The mother sternly rebuked the children for talking in that manner. "No matter how bad he is," she said, "he is your dad, and it is very sinful to be talking after that style.

"Hush, children!" she whispered; "I guess here he comes!"

In a moment the only noise which could be heard in the shanty was the low moan of the baby, as it lay in the cradle, while from the outside could be heard the heavy, uneven thud of advancing footsteps.

"Drunk as usual!" whispered little Jack; "now look out for thumps and bruises. Oh!" he whispered through his clenched teeth, "I wish I were a man, then he wouldn't beat us like he does now, for I wouldn't let 'un do it."

"Take the baby, mother, and run over to Tremaine's," said Nannie;
"I'm afraid he'll kill you."

"No, Nannie, I'll not run; if he kills me I can't help it; I'll not run away any more. I'm afraid it will come to that some day, but I will stay and take care of you all, no matter what happens."

The children had just managed to crawl under the two dilapidated beds when their father lifted the latch and stumbled into the room.

"Oh! what's the matter, Tom?" said his wife, as at a glance she took in his disfigured face.

"What's that to you?" he replied with an oath. "If you'd get me something to eat, it 'ud show more sense than asking what's none of your business."

"There is not a bit in the house," she replied, and then, stung into reckless madness by his asking for food when he had spent for whiskey the money with which he had promised to procure it, she continued bitterly: "The children have been crying for something to eat for the last two hours, in tones that would melt the heart of a stone, and I hadn't a

crumb to give 'um, and you, who have been spending on drink what should have bought it for them, have the brazen impudence to come home drunk, demanding food. Go to the cupboard and get you some, if you think there is any there."

"Now, Nance, I don't want any of your chin music, but I wants you to get me suthin' to eat. You can't fool me; I knows you has got it in the house."

"God knows, Tom, there isn't a bit. Do you suppose if there was any I would let the children be crying for it and not give it to them? If you think so, you don't know me yet; for I can tell you it would have been given to them two hours ago, and not saved for one who allows his own flesh and blood to starve, while he spends that which would furnish them with bread for rum in a rum-shop."

The reader might be ready to assert, after reading this connubial wrangle, that the fault was not all on one side, but that Nancy's sharp tongue was in some measure responsible for Tom's drinking; that, in fact, if she had not been such a termagant he might, at least, have been an average husband. But if you have so concluded, I will endeavour to disabuse your mind; for Nancy, before she married Tom Flatt, was a smart, good-tempered lass, but his continued neglect and abuse had vinegared all her sweetness, and she was not of that temperament which could bear ill-treatment without giving expression to her feelings. If, in her youth, she had been surrounded by different associations, and then married to a man who could have appreciated her, she might have developed into an intelligent, loving woman; but the terrible wretchedness of her life, brought about by the faults of her husband, had turned all her nature into bitterness.

And let me ask any of my gentle readers if, under similar circumstances, honeyed words would have been uttered by you? If you had suffered such treatment, and not only you but your children, who were bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, do you not think you would protest? If you were being dragged down into the slough of poverty, disgrace, and wretchedness, and you knew that he who was thus dragging you down could, if he were a true husband and father, place you in a position of comfort and respectability, but who was devouring from you and your children food that you had earned by the most menial drudgery--by the sweat of body and brain--and leaving you all to nearly famish for bread, would you not remonstrate? Nay, would not feelings of outraged confidence, of soul-anguish, sorrow, and shame coin themselves into bitter chiding words which you would be powerless to repress?

How many thousands of sweet, pure souls, who, in their innocent maiden days, were the embodiment of gentleness and affection, have, after marriage to some brute in human shape, been brought, by years of neglect and abuse, to become that which is among the most maligned and despised of all creatures--a scolding wife.

We must, in all fairness, admit that such Nancy Flatt had become. Her nature, as we have said, was intense, and she had endured a great deal in her early married life. At first she would gently remonstrate, but as years rolled on and she had not only to suffer neglect and abuse herself, but her helpless little ones also, her remonstrances became tinged with the acidity of her soured nature; and finally as toil, neglect, and hunger reduced her to the haggard, dejected creature we have presented to the reader, she would meet Tom's oaths and blows with her only weapon of defence, and pour out sharp, rasping words from her woman's tongue.

"I tell you what it is, Nance," said Tom, in answer to her chiding; "I want you to shut that jaw of thine and get me some grub, or I'll make you wish you had never been born."

"You have made me wish that a thousand times, Tom," she answered with passionate bitterness. "See that wasted arm," and suiting the action to her words she stripped up her sleeve; "look at my fleshless face--what has brought me to this but starvation and drudgery? Hear the moaning of that helpless babe in the cradle, crying for nurse that starvation has dried up. Oh, Tom! how can you spend your money in whiskey when you know we are starving at home? You knew when you left this morning there was not a morsel of food in the house, nor money to buy it, for you have not brought in a cent for weeks, and you promised when you left to come right back with bread, but instead of that you have spent the day in drinking whiskey and fighting with great hulking loafers like yourself, and now you come home to abuse your wife and children. You are worse than a brute; for brutes do provide for their own flesh and blood, while you have nothing better than oaths and blows for yours."

With fearful oaths Flatt sprang forward to answer his wife's passionate arraignment of his conduct by the method he usually adopted on such occasions--that was, by the irresistible logic of his ponderous fist. As she saw he was about to make the rush, her first impulse was to open the door and run for safety, for well she knew, from a terrible experience, that when he was aroused he had the ferocity of a brute with the temper of a demon. But as she was about to do so she saw he did not heed the cradle which lay in his way. The danger of her child caused the mother to be heedless of her own, and, with the wild cry, "Look out for the babe, Tom!" she sprang forward and snatched it from the cradle, thus

bringing herself into the power of the furious brute. In his mad rage he picked up a trowel which, unfortunately, lay near him, and, as his wife was rising with her babe, he struck her with terrific force upon the head, the sharp corner of the instrument cutting through the flesh and imbedding itself deep into the skull, carrying the hair with it.

"Oh, Tom! you have killed me!" she groaned, as she fell forward on her face, covering her babe as she fell. But even in that terrible moment she must have had some thought of it, for she managed to shift over on her side, clasping it to her breast as she did so.

All the ferocity in Tom's brutal nature seemed to be aroused, and the sight of his wife's blood running down over her forehead and dyeing with red the pallid face of his child, which one would think might have moved even a demon to pity, only seemed to arouse the latent tiger within him, for he struck the prostrate woman again and again, until she settled heavily on to the floor and was limp and still. This act in the tragedy was complete, for Nancy Flatt was dead, and her infant lay clasped in her arms bespattered with the life-blood of its dead mother.

The children, who had been cowering under the beds, witnessed the terrible scene, and though they were frightened at their father's and mother's jangling, as they thought it would result in the latter being beaten--which was usually the case--at first they kept perfectly still, for fear of what the result might be to themselves if they drew their father's attention. But when he struck their mother with the trowel and she fell forward with her face bathed in blood, they gave vent to their terror in wild and frantic screams.

"Oh, dad!" cried little Jack, almost fiercely, "you've killed our mamma." And as he thus spoke he stepped boldly out and faced his father, seeming to have lost all fear in the presence of the calamity that had befallen them; and then he and Nanny escaped from the house and ran over to Tremaine's. When they reached there Nannie, who had outrun her brother, burst into the door and said in a ghastly whisper, which appeared all the more horrible because of her pallid face, over which her hair was streaming in tangled masses, giving her a ghost-like appearance:

"Oh, Mr. Tremaine, dad has murdered mother! Run quick, sir, and see!"

Just then little Jack came up with face as pallid as Nannie's, and though panting for want of breath managed to say:

"Dad struck mother with the trowel!--and cut an awful gash in her head!--and her face is all covered with blood--and I think she is dead."

Tremaine, who was really a noble fellow, though he unfortunately did indulge in strong drink, immediately ran over to the shanty, and when he arrived there he found the children's fears were well founded, for a spectacle so ghastly in its details met his view that, strong man as he was, he stood for a moment as if bereft of motion, and even thought.

Nancy Flatt was lying stark dead on the floor, and her babe, which was yet muttering its low moan of hunger, was clasped close in the arms of its dead mother, and was dabbling in the blood which had flowed from the wounds in her head and face.

Tom was not to be found. He had evidently realized, when it was too late, what would be the consequence of his terrible crime, and had fled to escape the Nemesis, in the form of avenging justice, which he knew would soon be on his track.

I will not, however, enter into the details of his capture, imprisonment, trial and execution; for Tom Flatt was executed for the murder of Nancy, his wife; and on the scaffold he, as thousands of others in similar circumstances have done, blamed his wife's murder, his own sad fate, and his children's orphanage, to love for strong drink.

Reader, was Tom Flatt alone responsible for the murder of his wife, or were there not others who, at least to some extent, shared with him that responsibility? Could the man who sold him the liquor, or he who manufactured it, or the Government who drew revenue--which to all intents and purposes was blood money--from its sale, or the intelligent electors who, in the exercise of their franchise and by their sympathy, endorsed that legislation, escape all responsibility? My dear reader, ponder this question, for great issues are involved in your conclusion.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JOHN, JUN.'S WEDDING--BARTON'S MURDER--LUELLA SEALY'S SUICIDE--GINSLING'S TRAGICAL DEATH.

The truth of the aphorism of Solomon--"Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein"--is verified by multiplied examples the wide world over every day of the year, and it received a very striking verification in the events which we shall chronicle in this chapter.

The reader will recollect that the leading mind among the conspirators was John Sealy, Esq. He was the one who suggested the infamous scheme, which was afterwards adopted, of leading as many poor unfortunates as possible to drink. He did not calculate that into the pit which was thus dug for others he himself, or some member of his family, might possibly fall. But we anticipate.

His only son, John, jun., had been associating with low companions and conducting himself in a manner that was not at all satisfactory to him, John, sen., or to Mrs. and Miss Sealy; and, to crown all, they had every reason to believe he was actually paying his address to Miss Angelina Porter, a daughter of Old Joe Porter, who kept the groggery. This, of course, was very distasteful even to Mr. and Miss Sealy; but language would fail us in any attempt we might make to delineate the utter consternation of the high-toned Mrs. Sealy when she became satisfied that the rumor was founded on fact. She had again and again remonstrated with him, but without effect, as he had treated her remonstrances with good-natured contempt; and when she resorted to harsher means and applied contumelious epithets to his intended, he returned a Roland for her Oliver, so that she, finding it was useless to try to influence him, sulkily retired from the encounter.

But though baffled in that direction she was determined not to give up; for she thought if she could not accomplish her object by one method she would resort to another, and thus she might possibly succeed. She, in fact, determined to address a letter to Miss Porter, to see if she could not influence her. Acting upon this impulse, the vain and foolish woman sent her a very insulting epistle, such a one in fact as could only emanate from a coarse and vulgar mind.

Miss Porter treated it with the contempt it merited, and did not even mention to John, jun., that she had received it; and he might have remained in blissful ignorance of his mother's folly had she not in her insane fury spitefully said to him: "I have sent the low, designing thing a letter, giving her to understand what we think of her, and what she may expect if her schemes are successful and she entraps you into marrying her."

That information drew the retort from the dutiful and affectionate son that Angelina Porter was his mother's equal in every respect, and that she need not "take on such airs" and make such a fuss, because the former's father kept "a low groggery," as she termed it, when she knew that her own father (that was his own maternal grandfather) made all his money at the same business; "and you know, mother," he added, "grandfather was not a bit superior in any respect to Joe Porter, though you so affect to despise the latter."

"You know you are saying what is not only false, but also insulting to your own mother," she answered; and now she was weeping bitterly. "I knew you had become low in your aims since you had associated with the set you now think so much of, but I did not think you had become so abandoned as to scandalize your own dead grandfather."

"But, mother, you forget you are scandalizing one who is nearer to me than grandfather was to you, and that you sent her a low, scurrilous letter, full of bitter taunts and insults, which you intended should annoy her."

"If she gets you," his mother answered, with a sneer, "I guess she'll forget it. I want to inform you," she added, and she had reserved this broadside for her final effort, "if you marry that low creature I'll disown you, and I know your father will cut you off with a shilling, and let you go to her and her low, drunken sot of a father to find a living."

"You and father can do as you please and so shall I," he almost savagely retorted; "but dad had better sweep his own doorstep before he complains about his neighbor's being dirty, for he is not very select in his own company; and if he does not keep a groggery, those which are kept in this town have few more attentive customers. I only know of one who can claim to excel him in this respect, and that is he whom you have, by your schemes, almost compelled poor Lou to accept as her affianced husband. I mean that distinguished member of the bloatocracy, Stanley Ginsling."

Consistency is a jewel, mother, you know and if you are consistent, you will not come down on me for marrying one whose father you term 'a sot,' and at the same time scheme to ally your daughter to one who is a perambulating whiskey barrel."

Mrs. Sealy did not try to answer her son; she felt, in fact, if she were to attempt it, she could not possibly do justice to the subject; so she gave him what she intended for a withering look, gathered up the skirts of her dress, and swept majestically from the room.

That evening she had a long consultation with her husband in regard to the matter, the result of which was a very stormy interview between the father and son, when the latter, having been threatened with disinheritance if he did not break off from all association with the Porter family, gave the father to understand as it was a matter that more especially concerned himself, he should observe his own mind in regard to it, and his father might dispose of his property as it pleased him.

The climax was reached when the residents of Bay View--for that was the name of their villa--heard that John, jun., and Angelina Porter were married. He had, in fact, the license in his pocket at the time he held his interview with his father, and had gone directly after to the groggery of his intended father-in-law, and having secured the services of the Rev. John Turnwell, the ceremony was privately performed.

Porter and his son-in-law celebrated the wedding by getting gloriously drunk. This caused the young bride intense pain; for though she had been long accustomed to such scenes, it came closer to her when her own husband was involved.

John, jun., did not go near his father's residence, nor indeed take any steps towards reconciliation, for, he said, "the old man will come around all right after awhile." He, for the time being, kept bar for Joe Porter, and was one of his most bibulous, though not one of his most profitable, customers. In fact, he was generally intoxicated each day by noon, and before night was stupidly drunk.

His father, who really thought as much of his boy as it was possible for a man with such a nature as his to think of any one, heard he was going rapidly to destruction, and felt some effort must be made to save him. He had a conversation with his wife in regard to the matter, and though she declared she would never forgive her son for marrying into such a low family, as she knew it would subject her to the cynical and sneering remarks of some of the set with whom she associated, yet she concluded it was better to make the best of the matter, and not, by a course of coldness, drive him utterly to destruction; so she agreed with her husband when he said he thought he had better go and see him, and, if possible, wean him from his present debauch.

Mr. Sealy owned a farm of two hundred acres, which was situated on the shores of the bay, about two miles east of Bayton. It had been the old homestead, and he had always intended to will it to his son; but since the memorable interview, when the latter had spoken so defiantly, and then followed up his words by forming the alliance against which his father had warned him, Mr. Sealy, in his anger, determined to carry out his threat, and cut his son off without a cent. But when he found he was likely, if left much longer with his present surroundings, to degenerate into a dissipated loafer, he relented, and now determined to offer it to him if he would settle there immediately.

The fact was, that now the evil effects of drink was brought home to him, and his only son was one of its victims, he suffered very keenly indeed, and was willing to humiliate himself and make considerable sacrifice to save him.

With this end in view, he went to Porter's quite early one morning, for he was almost certain he would have to be there before his son had an opportunity to indulge to any extent, if he expected to find him sober.

When he arrived at the groggery Old Joe had just opened up, and was taking his morning drink, which his trembling hand indicated he sadly needed.

"Good morning, Joe," he said.

"Morning," replied Joe, gruffly, in answer to the salutation.

"Where is John, Mr. Porter?" This question was asked in Mr. Sealy's blandest tones, for he was sufficiently acquainted with human nature to perceive nothing would be gained by being cross.

"He hasn't come down yet."

"Will you kindly tell him I would like to see him?"

"Yes, I will. But won't you have a glass of something to drink as an appetizer? You must have been up early."

As Porter spoke he handed down a black bottle labelled "Old Rye Whiskey."

"I don't care if I do take a smile," Sealy replied. And taking the bottle from Porter's hand he poured a tumbler half full, and drank it down as if it were so much water.

"I will now run up-stairs and see if John has tumbled out yet," said Porter; and suiting the action to the word, his bloated face and burly form disappeared through the door.

In a few moments John, jun., appeared, his face bearing palpable traces of his last night's debauch.

I will not enter into a lengthy narrative of the interview between father and son; suffice to say that everything was amicably arranged, and in less than a month from the date of the interview, John, jun., and his wife were settled in the old Sealy homestead.

For awhile Mrs. Sealy was cold and distant, but finally she became reconciled, and frequently visited them with her daughter, who from the first had treated her brother's wife with kindness, having found her an amiable and well-disposed little thing, who would have made some man a good wife. But she was not composed of stern enough stuff to have influence upon her husband.

John, jun., certainly did not indulge in drink, after his removal from his father-in-law's, to the same extent as he had previously done, but yet he had got to be such a victim to the habit as now to become intoxicated at every favorable opportunity, which not only caused his wife excruciating pain, but was also the source of annoyance and sorrow to his parents and sister. But though Mr. Sealy was sorely troubled by his son's conduct, and was led to realize, at least to some extent, the worry and shame that is associated with having a near relative an habitual drunkard, strange to say it did not seem to change his views in the least in regard to the drink traffic, for he still remained as stern, and uncompromising an opponent of teetotalism as ever.

It was about a month after John, jun., and his wife had commenced housekeeping that Miss Sealy came to spend a week or two with them. She, in fact, thought she might have a restraining influence upon him, as he had genuine affection for her, whom he had always found to be an affectionate sister and true friend.

While she was there, Stanley Ginsling, who, without loving, she had been coaxed and badgered into recognizing as her affianced husband, came to see her.

John, jun., had, previous to this time, frequently met him since the day when, conversing with his mother, he had employed such stinging epithets to express his opinion of him, but had now changed his mind. In fact, he now thought he was rather a good fellow, and had promised to use his influence to overcome his sister's evident aversion.

Ginsling brought with him a flask of brandy. It was the same flask that he used when tempting Richard Ashton at Charlotte, and he and John, jun. indulged so freely of its contents as soon to be considerably under its influence. Miss Sealy perceived the state they were in, and blaming the former for leading her brother to thus debase himself, gave him to understand his presence was extremely distasteful to her, and that he might consider their engagement broken off; for, no matter what influence might be brought to bear, she had made up her mind, after what had just transpired, she would never marry him.

Her brother, in his drunken foolishness, had gone in to remonstrate with her; but now, thoroughly aroused, she had requested him, in indignant terms, to mind his own business. "It is bad enough," she said, "to be disgraced by a drunken brother, without running with eyes open into greater misery and degradation. I told him our engagement was broken, and I meant it."

John, jun.'s wife also rebelled. She had borne a great deal with patience; but when Luella came in weeping bitterly, the former rated her husband soundly, and told him, "If there was not a change for the better she would leave him." The two women had then retired to the parlor, and the two men went out into the kitchen to smoke.

"I don't see what is the matter with Lou," said Ginsling; "she is as cross as a badger. She gave me my walking-ticket, and told me not to return again. I wonder if she has seen Barton lately?"

"I don't think so. I know he has not been permitted to go to the old man's; though I heard dad say he has been seen several times hanging around there, but he never goes near except he is drunk, which now is pretty nearly all the time. I

suppose you heard he had lost his position in the bank?"

"Yes, I heard. The fact is, I told Smith, the manager, I was surprised he had not turned him off long ago."

"I tell you what it is, Ginsling, he was pretty badly gone on Lou, and I believe she liked the beggar. But I never took any stock in him; and if I were the old man, and he came hanging round, I'd shoot him like a dog."

"And so he should. I know, for my part, I would not be annoyed by the drunken nuisance. I only want a good opportunity to pay a debt I owe him, and then he shall have it with compound interest."

Ginsling was quite under the influence of liquor when he made the remark in regard to Barton, and the one to whom he was talking was far from sober. They could both see the mote in Barton's eye, but failed to remove the beams from their own.

When Ginsling spoke of owing Barton a debt, he referred to an incident which had occurred some time before. He had been one evening in "The Retreat," which, my readers will remember, was kept by Ben Tims; and while he was there William Barton had come in, just enough intoxicated to be reckless, and Ginsling himself was far from sober. The latter said something which the former eagerly construed into an insult, and to which he replied by knocking him down. Tims had then interfered, and led Barton into another room, leaving Ginsling to stagger to his feet as best he could. The latter, after picking himself up, went to the wash-room and staunched the blood flowing from his nose, which Barton's blow had made more bulbous than usual, washed all traces from his face, and then left; but before he did so, he vowed he would be even with him yet.

"You had better look out, Barton," said Tims; "that rascal will have his revenge if you give him any chance, and I believe he is as treacherous as he is cowardly. I'm glad you hit him though, only I'd rather it hadn't happened in my place."

"He gave me an opportunity I was waiting for," replied Barton, now seemingly almost sober. "I'll risk all the harm he is likely to do me."

Tims knew very well how it was with the poor fellow, but he had too much good taste to refer to it.

It was of this bar-room squabble Ginsling spake when he said he "owed him a debt which he was determined to pay back to him with interest."

John, jun., who was cognizant of the facts, remarked, "If he were in his (Ginsling's) place, he'd be even with him yet."

"I can't help but suspect that he has seen Lou lately, and I am half inclined to think she likes him yet; if she didn't, she would not have used me as she has done to-night."

"She may have," said John, jun.; "but the reason she was so huffy to-night was because you were drunk. But who's that?" he suddenly exclaimed--"I believe it is Barton!"

As he spoke, he drew back his chair from the window, and gliding therefrom, stealthily crept to where he could observe all Barton's movements, but where the latter could not possibly see him. Ginsling also arose as stealthily as possible, and glided behind John, jun. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and they could see almost as plainly as if it were day.

"Yes; it is Barton!" whispered Ginsling; "and I believe he is drunk."

"I wonder what the idiot is going to do?" questioned John, jun.; "here he comes towards the house."

"Let him come," said Ginsling; "I guess we will be ready for him."

Barton staggered towards the veranda--which extended around three sides of the house--and after one or two attempts to step up on to it, was at last successful; then, muttering to himself, he came towards the window, where the two men were observing him.

"Hush!" said Ginsling, "he seems to be having an interesting soliloquy, and possibly we may hear what he says."

In the dead stillness of the night Barton's low mutterings could be heard distinctly:

"I am bound to see Luella," he said; "I know she loves me, for she has told me so a hundred times, and she is too pure and good to lie. I saw her coming here this morning, and I am determined to see her and hear my fate from her own lips."

Oh, Luella! I am sure you love me, and if you will promise to be mine I will swear never again to let a drop of liquor pass my lips."

He looked ghastly in the moonlight, his pale face with its background of jet black hair hanging in tangled masses down upon his shoulders giving him a weird appearance. He became fiercer in his gesticulations as he continued his strange, wild soliloquy.

"I must know to-night from her own lips or I shall go mad."

"He's that already," whispered Ginsling. "Mad as a March hare."

"There will be no sordid father and mother to interfere with us here! They want to sell you to that craven-hearted sot, Ginsling; but he shall never have you, for before that shall happen I will strangle him, even if I have to hang for it."

As he thus spoke he advanced closer to the window. But he suddenly clasped his hand over his heart and exclaimed: "Oh, Luella, I'm shot!" and the same instant, the report of a pistol sounded sharp and clear on the still night air.

The shot was fired by Ginsling, who, maddened by the epithets Barton had applied to him, had drawn a pistol, and, before John, jun., could interfere, had fired through the window straight at his advancing, antagonist.

"Oh! you have done for him, Ginsling," said his companion, "and we will both be arrested for murder."

"But you can swear," replied Ginsling, "that he threatened to murder me, and was advancing to break through the window."

Just then the front door opened, and Luella Sealy ran around the house on the veranda to the spot where William Barton had fallen; for, after receiving the shot, he sank gradually to the ground. When she reached the spot her frantic screams sounded through the house, and echoed and re-echoed over the quiet bay.

"Oh, William! my darling," she exclaimed, "has he murdered you?"

As she thus spoke she sat down upon the floor of the veranda, and lifting his head into her lap kissed him, her fair hair hanging in dishevelled masses as she did so.

Barton, however, was too far gone to respond by word, but Luella could see by the light of the moon, that cast its flickering rays on the scene, a look of joy for a moment illumine his eye and then pass away forever: for William Barton was dead.

Luella Sealy was taken to her room that night a raving maniac. The sight of any member of her family made her furious; and she accused them in the fiercest tones of murdering her darling William. After awhile she became more calm, seeming to be quietly slumbering, and, under the circumstances, they thought it would be safe to leave her for a short time. Her father, acting upon this idea, left her alone for a few moments while he went to call his daughter-in-law to come and remain with her; but when he returned to her room she was gone. In a moment all was excitement, and every part of the house was searched, but she could not be found. As, however, they ran round the veranda they found her under the window, on the spot where William Barton had been murdered, lying cold and dead, with a ghastly gash in her neck, and her white garments dyed red with her life-blood. A razor, the instrument with which she had accomplished her self-destruction, was clutched, with the grip of death, in her red right hand.

Ginsling was tried for the murder of Barton; but as John, jun., swore the latter was about to enter the house to attack him, and, therefore, the shot was fired in self-defense, he got off with a short imprisonment. But after leaving the jail he found that it would be neither agreeable nor safe for him to reside longer in Bayton, as almost all of the inhabitants shunned him, and the friends of Barton vowed vengeance against him. He accordingly left to reside in the town of M---. He did not live long after leaving Bayton. He went down to the quay one night, when he was, as usual, so intoxicated as to have a very unsteady gait. Unheeding the warnings of a companion he would venture too near the edge; a sudden gust of wind came, he was carried off his equilibrium and fell into the lake. His companion did all he could to save him, but as there was a storm raging at the time, his efforts were unavailing. He said Ginsling's bloated face appeared for a moment in the hollow of the waves, and with an agonizing tone he cried to God to save him; then a huge wave, more mighty than its fellows, engulfed him, and he sank in life to rise no more. A few days after his corpse was found floating upon the water. "Accidentally drowned" was the verdict at the inquest, and he was buried in a nameless grave, with no loved one or friend to drop a tear on his last resting-place.

Mr. and Mrs. Sealy were completely prostrated by what had transpired, and retired from active life to hide their sorrows

from the world; they are, I believe, so living at the present time.

John, jun., soon vacated the house by the bay, some of the more ignorant saying he did so because it was haunted by the ghosts of William Barton and Luella Sealy. The house is now standing idle, and is known to the children of the neighborhood as the "haunted house," and many say that, in the night, two white figures are seen walking on the verandah, and that frequently the stillness is broken by the sound of a pistol, and the agonizing shrieks of a woman in the anguish of a terrible fear.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SOME OF THE CHARACTERS WHO HELPED THE REPEAL--A HOODLUM'S VICTORY.

We have only given the reader one or two of the more prominent of the tragic events which transpired after the passing of the Dunkin Act, but a volume of ten thousand pages would fail to tell of the suffering that was endured in hundreds of homes, by wives and mothers and little helpless children; or how far the wave of evil extended that was set in motion by the antis.

When six months had passed they thought it would be a good time to strike, as they were certain a majority of the voters were not satisfied with the working of the bill. There had been a great number of trials similar in character to the one we have already noticed; and though, in numerous instances, those who were notorious for their open and flagrant violation of the law escaped, because of the questionable evidence given by themselves and the wretched creatures who had been subpoenaed as witnesses, yet a great many were convicted and fined. They then carried out their pre-concerted scheme--appealed to the court over which Judge McGullet presided, and he postponed, from time to time, his decision. While the cases were thus remaining *sub judicia*, the hotel-keepers were selling and giving away liquor, thus making as many drunk as possible, and blaming the Act for the result. This, of course, produced the effect they desired upon the great mass of the unthoughtful, who began condemning it as a failure, and clamoring for its repeal.

The judge now gave, as his decision, that in his opinion the law was *ultra vires*, which, of course, postponed the punishment of the culprits until a higher court should settle the point at issue.

The liquor party were now jubilant, and the judge was toasted by them as a "brick," as his "just decision enabled them to laugh at the fanatics:" and as they now sold liquor with impunity, even a great many of the pretended friends of temperance began to lose heart, not possessing sufficient mental acumen to look back of the effect to the cause which had produced it.

A special meeting of the Bayton Branch of the association was convened at the Bayton House, and a great many of the members of that--in a Picwickian sense--honorable fraternity and their friends were present. But there were two who had formerly taken a very active part in its deliberations, who were now conspicuous by their absence: these were John Sealy, Esq. and Stanley Ginsling. The former had retired from public life to hide his disgrace and sorrow in almost monkish seclusion; while the latter had, before this, gone to "that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns."

The name of the former was mentioned, and a motion of condolence was unanimously passed expressing sorrow for his affliction; but it did not seem to occur to any present that the very traffic they met to defend by such unprincipled means had been instrumental in bringing about the result they affected to deplore; and no sorrow was expressed for the horrible murder of poor Mrs. Flatt, the orphanage of her children, nor the treacherous slaying of William Barton.

Reports were received from all parts of the country of the success which had attended their efforts in plying their traffic--in other words, the number they had succeeded in tempting to their ruin; and many a laughable story was related with great gusto, of how they had "fooled the fanatics," and had succeeded in getting on a jolly tear certain individuals whom the Dunkinites had fondly persuaded themselves they had reclaimed from intemperance. But not one seemed to ponder for a moment upon the lives that had been ruined by their machinations, nor upon what homes had been made wretched, what suffering had been entailed, nor what souls had been eternally lost through the success that attended their devilish treachery.

"Let us to business now, gentleman," said Rivers; "and permit me to remark we have two questions to consider. The first is, Could the repeal be carried at this time in the county? and the second is, If so, what means will it be best for us to adopt in order to make it a grand success? I will simply say that I am as certain as I can be of anything in this world of contingencies, we could carry it now with a sweeping majority."

"There is nothing surer than that," said Bottlesby. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously carried, that the attempt to repeal the Act be made at the earliest opportunity.

The question next considered was, What is the best means to adopt to make success certain?

"I suppose you will employ the Dodger?" said Bottlesby. "He is a whole host in himself, and though he values his services rather highly, it will pay in the end to employ him."

It was moved, seconded, and carried that his services be secured.

"The next thing to do," said Capt. Flannigan, "is to hire all the busses in the town; and all the rigs that can be secured in the county, then run them on the day of the election. We must spare no expense, for we will get all the backing we want. This is a test county, and the eyes of the whole of Canada are upon us, and the association knows it will pay to spend money here, for if we succeed in carrying the repeal in this place it will deter other counties from trying it, thus it will save thousands of dollars in the end."

"I am instructed by the president of the association," said Rivers, "to say that we need not spare expense for either speakers, horse hire, or liquor, if the money is judiciously distributed. So you see we need not be afraid to go ahead, as we shall have good backing."

"I move a vote of thanks to the association for its generous offer," said Joe Porter.

"I second the motion," said Michael Maloney, the keeper of a low groggery in the purlieu of the town.

The others present, who held both the mover and seconder in contempt, would much rather the initiative had been taken in this matter by men of little more respectability--for there is such a thing as caste even among grog-sellers--but as Porter and Maloney had taken the matter into their own hands, the others, though with bad grace, had to accept the situation, and it was put and carried unanimously.

That night the whole scheme was mapped out. What men could be approached, and who could best influence certain voters. They also decided how much each would be called upon to sacrifice, that the necessary ammunition might be furnished to carry on the campaign, and how much would be required from the funds of the "association." Captain McWiggler, the expected M.P., announced that a celebrated speaker from the west who, like himself, was a candidate for parliamentary honors, had intimated to him his willingness to assist them in the campaign, if his services were required. This announcement was received with uproarious applause, and it was moved, seconded, and unanimously carried, that this magnanimous offer be accepted with thanks.

That night the usual banquet was held, and all those who were present in the afternoon, and a great many invited guests who, of course, were sympathizers, were also present. Among others Judge McGullett was toasted because of his fearless, upright, and impartial decisions, and Captain Flannigan sang, "He's a jolly good fellow," etc., the others joining in the chorus.

Their drunken orgies were continued into the small hours the following morning. It is not, I suppose, necessary to state that during this period there were numerous songs sung--some of which, to say the least, were not of a high moral order--and speeches were delivered whose senselessness were only equalled by their blatant untruthfulness, when attacking men and women who were working and suffering for the welfare of their fellow-men, and the honor and glory of God.

I do not think it necessary to enter into the details of the campaign, which came on at the appointed time; and which, although the real and true friends of temperance did all that men and women could do to retain the law until it should receive a fair trial, ended in the complete triumph of the liquor party.

Augustus Adolphus Dodger, as usual, did yeoman's service for those who employed him, and prostituted his really fine speaking talent to the base purposes of giving impetus to a cause that every year--in England and America--is sending over a hundred and fifty thousand human beings to drunkards' graves and to a drunkard's eternity, and which is costing civilized Christendom every year over a thousand million of dollars. He proved to be a complete master of that shallow sophistry which generally carries the unthinking multitudes; and none knew better than he how to appeal to the selfish instincts of those whom he was addressing. He demonstrated to them, as they thought conclusively, that the Temperance Act would have the effect of entirely destroying the market for their barley and rye, and even depreciate the price of their farms. Of course his nonsense was received as it should be by the educated and thoughtful; but it was not to these he was appealing, but to the ignorant, illiterate masses, and upon them it had the effect he desired.

Personally he was held in contempt by many of the respectable among those whose cause he, for hire, advocated.

They admired his talents while they despised the man, and would no more associate with him than English gentlemen would with a demagogue who, because they knew he could influence a certain class, was hired to do the dirty work of their party. In fact, he was despised by the better class of hotel keepers, and was always called the "Dodger" by them, being viewed in much the same light as the treacherous miscreant was by the Italian nobleman of the dark ages, who, because he was skilled in the use of the stiletto, was employed to remove a hated enemy.

Capt. McWiggler and his western friend were also on the ground, speaking and working to carry the repeal. It was well understood they were catering for the liquor vote, and were willing to resort to any means, however low, to accomplish their end.

Not only were these unprincipled hirelings, and would-be M.P.'s, on the stump, to assist the liquor party in their endeavors, but, astonishing to relate, there was also a minister of the Gospel, who was actually engaged as a co-adjutor of these men and their drunken battalions. The person to whom I refer was a certain Mr. Turnwell. Dryden's picture of a celebrated personage in his day would equally serve as a description of him; for he certainly was "everything by turns and nothing long." He had, in his early manhood, belonged to a certain church, and owed the education and the culture he possessed to it; but because that body did not, as he thought, recognize his exalted ability, nor give him such charges as a man of his exceptional powers should occupy, he left them in disgust, and from that time forward was their most rabid opponent. In the charge he occupied immediately preceding his present one, finding that his leading men were in sympathy with the Dunkin Act, he gave it his actual support--stumping the country in its behalf--and even after coming to Bayton he spoke in favor of it; but receiving a hint from some who financially, were main pillars of his church, he suddenly veered round and became one of the strongest champions for its repeal. If he had possessed the smallest modicum of good sense he would, after changing his views--remembering his former course--have remained neutral, or, in a modest manner, have endeavored to convince men he was influenced simply by his convictions; but he was so lost to good taste and what he owed to his holy office, as a professed priest of Him who said, "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh," as to take the stump as a blatant opponent of what the great mass of the good and pure of the county were advocating in order to arrest the ravages of the greatest curse that ever destroyed mankind. He soon became a recognized leader of the rum party, and there is no doubt he influenced some, as he was constantly quoting Scripture and twisting its meaning to suit his purpose, conveniently forgetting to mention those passages that would consign the major portion of those whose cause he was advocating to everlasting infamy and woe. As might be expected, the party he was assisting pointed to him as a model clergyman; many of them who had not read a passage of Scripture for years, having shaken the dust off their Bibles, turned to the verses to which he referred, and when in the taverns, so intoxicated as to be scarcely able to stand, they, with maudlin utterances, and serio-comic grimaces, would unctiously quote these hackneyed texts in the pauses which intervened between their drinks.

The night the returns came in the liquor party, finding they had carried the county by a large majority, had a grand torch-light procession, and the "Dodger," with Capt. McWiggler, his western friend, Ald. Tope, the president of the association, Rivers, Bottlesby and Capt. Flannigan, were elevated into an open "bus," and drawn by their enthusiastic admirers through the principal streets of Bayton. They had hoisted a broom in the front of their vehicle as an emblem of their victory.

"What does that mane, Mike?" queried one of the army of ragged, bleary-eyed tatterdemalions of his mate.

"Why, don't you know, Patsy," replied his friend, "that it manes our party have made a clane swape of the cowl-d-wather men?"

As the procession swept on the band played "See the conquering hero comes," and Augustus Adolphus Dodger, who was vain enough to suppose it was all meant for him, stood smirking, smiling, and raising his hat to the mob of the "great unwashed" with as much pride as if he had been a mighty hero receiving the homage of his countrymen after returning from a splendid victory.

If a stranger had formed his opinion of the citizens of Bayton from those who made up that procession it certainly would not have been a favorable one; for respectable men in the ranks were the exception, not the rule. It appeared, for the time being, the denizens of the lowest dens of the town and the surrounding country were holding a drunken Saturnalia; for, as numerous kegs of beer were rolled out into the street and tapped, while liquor of a much stronger character was furnished without stint, it was not long before it was almost literally a huge reeling mass of drunkenness. Ever and anon some hero, smitten by the deadly shaft of king alcohol, would tumble from the ranks of the ragged regiment, his place being immediately supplied by another volunteer, who was also willing to vigorously tackle the enemy, though he should fall in the conflict.

It only required a slight effort of memory to decide as to the vast superiority of the virtuous Christian band, who were victors in the former contest, to the reeling host of Bacchanalian revellers, who were now, with howling songs of exultation, celebrating their victory. And yet in some of the leading journals the next day there were editorials rejoicing over what they termed "the triumph of liberty," though, if they were open to conviction, they had but to observe the character of the majority of those who were celebrating their conquest to conclude it was for the time being a supremacy of vice over virtue, of brute force over principle, and of selfishness over philanthropy. How respectable papers of acknowledged ability could join in the brutal shout of the ruffianly host--thus lending their powerful influence to sweep away the barriers which the good and true had been endeavoring to erect, that the onward tides of vice, crime, and misery, might be kept back--we will allow them to answer? We will observe, however, that in our opinion, it is not an indication of wisdom in a great public journal to array itself against the great forces of temperance and morality; for we believe it will discover, possibly when it is too late, it has destroyed its influence with those whose good opinion was best worth possessing.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

DEATH OF LITTLE MAMIE—A PROMISE.

As we have for a time lost sight of Richard Ashton and his family we will now return to them. He had become almost an imbecile, being a complete mental wreck, his family having to watch him as they would a child to keep him from obtaining liquor. He was now so weak in this respect that he would actually steal away, if he could do so without being observed not returning until he was brought back completely intoxicated.

They had become quite poor; for though Mr. Gurney was giving Eddy a good salary for one of his years and experience, yet, as Allie, who had become weak from worry and over-work, was forced for a time to desist from giving music lessons, his earnings barely sufficed to procure life's necessities.

Little Mamie was now becoming quite frail. She had in the early part of the winter contracted a severe cold, which, having settled on her lungs, congestion had ensued. She, after a protracted illness, was now convalescent, yet it was evident she was not long for earth, but, like a beautiful flower, was slowly fading away.

"Mamma," she said one day, "I am going to die. Oh, how sad it will be to leave this beautiful world, and papa, and you, my mamma, and Eddie, and Allie! But," she added, "I am going to the beautiful home of which I was dreaming, to be with Jesus, who loves little children. And then in a little while you and papa will come, and we will live in one of the 'many mansions' which Jesus has gone to prepare. I shall not be long with you here, mamma; but you will come to be with me. Eddie and Allie will be coming too, some day, when God calls them, and we will all be home together."

Her mother was deeply moved, but endeavored to conceal her emotion from her little daughter.

"My darling must not talk of leaving us; we could not spare our little Mamie. No doubt, dear, but you will get better, now the spring is coming, and soon you will be out with the flowers."

Mrs. Ashton had to endure the agony that an intelligent, loving mother must always experience when an almost idolized child, that she could press to her heart forever, is fading from her. She could see her dear, loving, bright little daughter—who was very precocious, talking more like a girl of ten than one of only five—slowly, almost imperceptibly, failing every day, and every day becoming more bright and beautiful; but it was the beauty of the flower that was to bloom but for a few hours, and then whither and die away.

One day in the spring, as she was looking at her mother, who was working among her flowers, she began coughing violently; Allie, who had been attending to her household duties, now joining them, stooped down to help her, but as she did so she saw her face was of deathlike pallor, and that the blood was slowly oozing from her mouth, staining her pale lips with its crimson tide.

"Mother! come quickly," she said, as she lifted Mamie in her arms and ran with her into the house. She gently laid her on the sofa, and then wiped the blood from her lips.

Mrs. Ashton, when she reached the sofa, found her heart beating violently; but she resolutely forced back her emotion, so that she might not agitate Mamie. As she took her eldest daughter's place, she whispered: "Go to the garden, dear, and tell your father to run for the doctor. He must make haste, for I am afraid Mamie is dying."

Allie ran for her father, but, though he was there a short time before, he could not now be found. The fact is, the wretched man, who had been working in the vegetable-garden, had been watching all morning for an opportunity to steal away and get a drink. Finding the coast clear, when Mrs. Ashton and Allie had gone in with Mamie, he, like a truant child stealing away from its parents, glided out on to the sidewalk, and hastily made his way to the nearest groggery.

Allie told her mother her father had disappeared, when the latter requested her to hasten and tell the doctor to come immediately, as the case was very urgent.

The doctor, when he arrived, endeavored to quiet Mrs. Ashton's fears by assuring her there was no immediate danger;

"but," he gently continued, "she will not long be with you--two or three days at the longest, and she may not linger that long."

When Eddie came home he went for his father, and found him in Flannigan's groggery with several others who were unfortunates like himself. At the voice of his son, he straightened himself up as well as he could in his intoxicated condition, looking at him with a sort of dazed, stupid stare; but as Eddie went over to him, saying, "Come, father, we want you at home," he took his arm and walked quietly away.

When they arrived at the house, Eddie took him round the back way so as not to disturb the dying child, and after requesting him to be as quiet as possible, as Mamie was seriously ill, he then went in and told his mother his father was safe at home.

Eddie and Allie wished their mother to rest for a time, as they thought if she did not do so the fatigue and worry might result disastrously to her. But she was firm in her resolve not to leave the bedside of her dying child, so that all their solicitations were in vain.

Mrs. Gurney came to remain all night with them, so Eddie and Allie retired. Mrs. Ashton was very grateful for this practical expression of sympathy for this noble Christian woman. Mamie passed the night quietly--not suffering excessive pain, but they concluded she was growing weaker, the end being not far off.

She was peacefully sleeping about five o'clock, and Allie having awakened joined the watchers; she, with the assistance of Mrs. Gurney, finally prevailed upon her mother to lie down, and, if possible, snatch a little sleep. About six o'clock Mrs. Gurney noticed there was a change for the worse in the little slumberer, and she had just remarked it to Allie, when Mamie languidly opened her large blue eyes--which now shone as if they reflected the light of the heavenly land--"Mamma! Mamma!" she called in a low but very distinct voice.

Allie bent over her and asked, "What is it darling? Mamma has gone to lie down for a little while."

Mamie closed her eyes for a moment, and then opening them, said, "Call her, and call papa and Eddie, for I think I am dying."

Allie quietly left her side to call her mother. Eddie having just arrived glided silently into the room, and then went to call his father. He experienced difficulty in awakening him, who, though he appeared to be in a stupor, no sooner heard that Mamie had asked for him, and that she said she was dying, than he, having dressed, made haste to go to her. When he arrived in the room he eagerly asked his wife, "Is Mamie worse? You had better make haste, Eddie, and run for the doctor."

Mamie looked up as she heard her father's voice. "My own dear papa!" she murmured; and then she continued, "don't go, Eddie; if you do I shall never see you again, for I shall have gone home before you return."

"Papa, Mamma," she said, "each of you give me a hand." Her father taking her right hand and her mother her left, she continued, "Papa, I want you to promise me you will never drink again. I am going to be with Jesus, and when I look down from heaven I want to see my papa good, and not doing anything to make my mamma grieve so, because then I shall grieve too. I know I shall feel so sorry when I am in heaven, if my darling papa is out with the naughty men drinking; for my mamma will come some day to meet me, but the Bible says no drunkard can enter there; so if my papa dies a drunkard I shall never see him again. Oh papa! shall I meet only my mamma there, and will not my papa come too? Shall I look and look for papa, and never find him?"

She paused for breath, looking inquiringly at her father. The effort had evidently taken from her most of her rapidly failing strength, and every individual in the room was sobbing before she had finished speaking.

"God bless you, my darling!" replied her father, "I will promise never to drink again, and God helping me, I will keep my promise."

"Kiss me, papa, mamma, all." They each lovingly kissed her, she murmured "thank you for--" but she could say no more, her eyes speaking the gratitude her failing voice could not utter. Her eyes closed for a moment, and then slowly opening, she, turning them upon all, faintly whispered, "Good-bye," and then they closed never to open again to the light of this life. She lingered on as if sleeping quietly with a sweet smile of peace irradiating her face, and sank gently to rest, so gently they could not tell the exact moment of her departure.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

RICHARD ASHTON MURDEROUSLY ATTACKED--HIS DEATH.

Richard Ashton faithfully kept the promise made to little Mamie; for he never touched nor tasted liquor again. His struggle was a desperate one; but as he was determined, by the help of God, to conquer, he succeeded. Mr. Gurney again employed him, but in a subordinate position; and though there was subdued sadness in the house, because they missed the prattle of their lost darling--missed her sunny face and cheery songs--yet even in her death she had left such a benediction that they were still experiencing its blessedness months after she had passed away. It was her dying request which had influenced her father to change, and he was truly changed; for not only had he, as we have noticed, conquered his appetite for strong drink, but he had so completely repented of the past as to have become a devoted Christian, and was trusting that through the merits of his crucified Redeemer he would, one day, meet his little daughter in heaven.

But trouble, dark and terrible, was again to visit the home of the Ashtons, and this time it was the poor lost sheep who had lately been gathered by the Good Shepherd into the lower fold, that was to be translated--though by a cruel death--to the green pastures and still waters of the homeland above.

One very dark night as he was returning home from the store, where he had been detained later than usual, having reached the back street on which his house was situated, and when within a short distance of it, as he was passing an alley he was suddenly struck a terrific blow on the head, which felled him senseless to the earth. The ruffian who had attacked him was not content with knocking him down, but continued brutally kicking him after he had fallen, and did not desist until his victim was lying still, as though dead.

"I guess that settles the score I have against him," muttered Joe Porter, for he it was who had made the murderous attack. "I'm thinking they'll have a good time finding out who did it. And he'll be some time before he swears against me again. If I only had that young dandy here that took his part I'd settle with him, too. No man ever meddled with me yet without suffering for it, for I hold spite like an Injun, and I'll have satisfaction out of him if I swing for it." Thus muttering to himself he glided off into the darkness.

Eddie, when on his way home a few moments afterwards, saw, by the light of his lantern, a man lying on the sidewalk; and, on closer inspection, what was his surprise and horror to find it was his father. The latter's face was all covered with blood, and though he seemed to be still insensible, he began to groan as though conscious of pain. Eddie ran to a neighbour's, and procuring the assistance of a Mr. Thompson, and two grown-up sons, he asked them to kindly carry his father home, while he would run ahead and prepare his mother for the shock which must certainly ensue; for he wisely concluded, if on their entering the house she should come to the door and meet them carrying what would appear to be the lifeless body of her husband--in her present delicate state of health--the effect would be most serious. He broke the news to her as gently as possible, but he had uttered but a very few words when she concluded something alarming had occurred. "Oh, Eddie!" she exclaimed, as all color forsook her face--leaving it as white as marble--"what has happened? Is your father dead?"

Eddie answered in the negative, but said he had been hurt, though he hoped not seriously. Hearing Mr. Thompson and his sons coming with his father, he ran to meet them; his mother, having by this time mastered her emotion, was now quite calm and prepared for the worst. They bringing him in laid him on the bed, and Mrs. Ashton, immediately getting a towel, began washing the blood off his temple, knowing the water would likely have the effect of restoring him to consciousness. She had not continued it long before he awakened out of his stupor and faintly asked: "Where am I? What has happened?"

Mrs. Ashton replied, "You have been hurt, dear, but lie still, and don't agitate yourself now, for you will know all about it after awhile." He shut his eyes at her request and lay perfectly still.

Eddie, in the meanwhile, had gone for the doctor, and in a few minutes returning with him the latter proceeded to examine Mr. Ashton. He found him very seriously, if not fatally injured. He had been first struck on the temple by a cane or club. This blow of itself was sufficient to do him very grave injury, but it had been followed by brutal kicks on the prostrate man's body. The doctor pronounced two of his ribs broken and his spine seriously injured.

"Will he recover, doctor?" asked Mrs. Ashton. "I would like you to give me your honest opinion as to what you think the result will be."

"We must leave results with God," Mrs. Ashton. "He has been brutally beaten, and what I fear most is the shock to his nervous system. His constitution was so seriously impaired previous to this attack that I have the gravest fears as to the issue."

He never arose from his bed; though he lingered for several days, and gave his wife and family the sweet consolation of knowing his whole trust was in Christ, through whose merits and intercession he expected to have an abundant entrance into His kingdom. Before he died his ante-mortem statement was taken, when he said he just had a glimpse of the person who struck him, and he believed his assailant was Joe Porter.

He remained conscious to the last, and the parting with his wife and family was very affecting. He asked Eddie to be faithful to his mother, which he promised to be. "Oh, Ruth," he said, "I have been a very unfaithful husband. Rum has been our curse, but I know you forgive me, darling." He then kissed them each; asking them to meet him in heaven, and in a few moments after quietly departed.

Thus died Richard Ashton, in the flower of his manhood, a victim of the drink curse; for rum had broken his constitution, robbed him of his intellectual vigor, reduced him and his family almost to beggary, and he was finally murdered by one of its vendors. He was endowed by his Maker with a bright intellect and a loving heart. In his early manhood he fell heir to an ample fortune, and was blessed with as good a wife as God ever gave to man; but rum, "cursed rum," had blighted all his prospects, made life a failure, and was instrumental in bringing him to an untimely grave.

They buried him by the side of little Mamie in the beautiful Bayton cemetery, "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, to wait the resurrection of the just."

Joe Porter was arrested and tried for the crime, but, as several of his creatures swore he was present in his bar until after ten o'clock that night he was acquitted; though the public believed he was the criminal, and he was despised and shunned by all but the lowest dregs of the populace.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MR. GURNEY SPEAKS HIS MIND--DEATHS OF DR. DALTON AND AUNT DEBIE.

The antis were wild with joy because of their complete triumph; and certainly, looking at the result from their standpoint, they had cause to rejoice, for their victory was far-reaching in its results. It strengthened the opponents of temperance throughout our fair Dominion--yes, beyond its bounds--while it certainly had a depressing effect upon its staunch supporters, for they were well aware the failure would not be attributed to its true source --that is, the bitter opposition it had met with from its unprincipled opponents, the lethargy of many of its pretended friends, and from other causes which we have already mentioned in this book. But it would be published "from Dan to Beersheba" that it had received a fair trial and, after being "weighed in the balance and found wanting," had been spurned from the county with contumely by the intelligent electors.

"I told you it would never succeed," said Bottlesby to Mr. Gurney, just after the repealers had gained their victory. "The fact is, Mr. Gurney, while every one respects you personally, because they know you are an honorable and upright citizen, having the best interests of the public at heart, they think you are a little off on this matter of total prohibition. I tell you such a law will never be successful, because people will not stand to have their private rights invaded in such a manner. No man has a right to dictate to me what I shall eat or drink; and it is because the intelligent electors have thus thought, this tyrannical bill has failed."

Mr. Gurney thoroughly despised the speaker, because he knew he was a low, cunning knave, and a thorough-paced hypocrite. He was also aware of the part Bottlesby had taken in opposition to the bill; that he was one of the chief concoctors of the hellish scheme which had for the time being proved so successful, and that in giving the reason he did for its defeat he was simply lying. Mr. Gurney thought, therefore, he would take advantage, of this opportunity to "give him a bit of his mind," and lead him to understand he was not ignorant of the means employed by the rum party to accomplish their purpose.

"It would probably have been better, Sheriff," he said, "not to have entered into any discussion in regard to the matter; but as you have thought fit to do so, and have advanced what you say is your opinion as to the cause of the failure of this bill, you must not feel aggrieved if I plainly give you mine. And as I have listened with patience until you were through, kindly do not interrupt me. Now, I do not believe, as you say you do"--and Mr. Gurney laid particular stress upon the *you say*--"that the Act was a failure because men would not have their private rights interfered with--though I know there are many who are so selfish as to be willing to allow thousands to perish rather than practice a little self-denial; but that is not the reason of its failure. It failed, sir, because there was a vile conspiracy against it; and what made the conspiracy successful was, that among the leading conspirators were officers of the law--the very men without whose active co-operation it was impossible for it to be successful. Allow me to illustrate what I mean by an anecdote: A few years ago there was a gang of desperadoes, who operated in one of the south-western states. They robbed every one with perfect impunity for several years, all attempts to capture them proving abortive, for they seemed, in some mysterious manner, to get notice of any move made in that direction. But, strange to relate, the people in that section did not cry for the repeal of the law against stealing; on the contrary, they determined to vigorously use the means placed at their disposal until those who had violated its precepts had received the punishment they merited. At last one of the desperadoes, having been taken ill and expecting to die, revealed the secret of their successful evadence of the law. It was because there were some in league with the outlaws who were officers of the state, who, being in a position to know, would warn them when any attempt was to be made to capture them. Now, sir, this is a case in point; for I have no doubt there has been a huge conspiracy to defeat the Dunkin Act in this county, and among the conspirators there have been many whom, forsooth, we must look upon as the guardians of the law."

"Why, sir," broke in Bottlesby, "there have been among those who opposed the Act ministers of the gospel, and numerous others, whose characters are above reproach.

"I admit there have been, and these, no doubt, conscientiously oppose all coercive measures, but in my opinion, such are comparatively few in number. The opponents of the Act are principally those interested in the liquor business, whose craft is in danger; the great body of their poor, miserable victims, comprising among their number the vilest elements of society: designing politicians, who pander to the liquor vote; and the great mass of the indifferent, who will throw their influence upon which ever side they are led to believe their interest lies. The liquor party have appealed to

their selfishness; and because this class is not as rule intelligent, by employing such orators as Dodger, and by a lavish expenditure of money, they have succeeded for the present in getting their support—but, I warn you, it is only for the present. The masses are becoming more enlightened. With enlightenment there will be broader views of duty—of what they hold to fellowmen and what to God. They will then be able to place the proper value upon the shallow sophistries of the paid demagogues, whose mission is to mislead them.

"I ask you to mention to me one appeal that was made to anything high or holy by Dodger or either of his conferees the other day. You cannot do so, because they only appealed to the passions, prejudices, and selfishness of those whom they were addressing. You have gained the victory now, and we view it with sorrow, though not with despair; for we will, by the help of God, pass the Scott Act in this county, which is, I understand, a more mature piece of legislation than the Dunkin Act. Its framers, having been active participants in several temperance campaigns where the latter has been on trial, have embodied in the new bill what they have learned by experience and observation; even not failing to learn something from the rabid and unfair criticisms of their opponents. We, who have wrought and toiled to drive the liquor curse out of the country, lose nothing in a pecuniary sense by your victory—we had a higher purpose in view than our own gain. It is the poor, miserable inebriates, and their wives and children, who will suffer; and when the news of your victory was flashed over our Dominion, it caused sorrow to visit the hearts of thousands of the purest and best, while a fiendish howl of exultation went up from every low groggery and brothel that the tidings reached."

Bottlesby stood like one stunned, as these words of indignation and scorn flowed from the lips of Mr. Gurney. He made no attempt to reply, but grew angry as he realized that the latter was well aware of the active part he had taken in the plots of the rum party; finally, cursing him as an old fanatic, he walked rapidly away.

About the time the conversation which we have related occurred, Dr. Dalton had an interview with Mary Fulton, who had once been his betrothed bride. She had been visiting some of her friends in Bayton, and Dalton called to see her, but so absolutely was he the slave of his appetite as to be under the influence of liquor when he did so. He begged her to reconsider what he considered her cruel decision, and to receive him on the same terms as of old; but she kindly though firmly refused to accede to his request. With tears in her eyes she told him she loved him yet, and should never love another; "but," she added, "I cannot place the slightest reliance upon your word, you have broken it so often; nor will I ever marry one who is so addicted to drink, as it would, in the end, involve us both in bitterest misery."

He left her that night in a state of desperation, and she was the last person who saw him alive. For a short time his absence was not commented upon, as he frequently absented himself for lengthy periods from his boarding-place; but as weeks passed away and there were no tidings of him, the anxiety of his friends became intense, and advertisements were inserted in the leading papers asking him to reply, if alive. Receiving no response, a reward was offered for any information regarding him; but this also proved futile, and a year passed before they had any idea of his fate. One day a boy who was gathering wood on the beach, which separated the bay from the lake, when going into a thick grove of cedar bushes which grew luxuriantly there, was stricken with horror to see a ghastly human skull grinning at him. He immediately ran to Bayton to tell what he had found, and he looked almost half-dead with fright at his discovery.

Those who went back with him searched and found in the skull the mark of a pistol ball, and buried in the sand, 'neath the skeleton fingers, was found a Smith & Wesson revolver. In the side pocket of his coat his wallet was discovered, with its contents untouched, and among numerous other articles was a letter addressed to Charles Dalton.

Thus perished, at the early age of twenty-six, one who possessed a bright intellect and noble nature, but who had, after being the source of inexpressible sorrow to his friends, been brought to an untimely and dishonored grave through the drink curse.

Mary Fulton now dresses in deep mourning, and still remains faithful to her vow never to marry. She says her heart lies buried in the grave with Charles Dalton, and her pale, sad face seals the testimony of her lips.

When Aunt Debie was informed of the doctor's death she said—"Did I not tell thee, Phoebe, two years ago, when I dreamt of them plucking the ears of corn, that Dr. Dalton would die before long? Thee sees it has come troo, and I've never known it to fail. I wonder if James Gurney would laugh now?"

As the old lady spoke it would be difficult to conjecture which was the predominant sentiment of her mind—sorrow, because of the untimely death of Dr. Dalton; or a certain feeling of triumph, because her predictions had proven correct.

Aunt Debie always claimed credit for her prophetic powers if any person happened to die of whom she had dreamt; and if they did not, she asked her auditors just to wait and time would vindicate her. Of course the old lady was correct in that, for, if they waited for a sufficient length of time all would die."

"Thee told it as straight as could be," said Phoebe. "I was sartin it would come troo, for I never knew thee to fail. But what a blessing it was that his mother died before this terrible deed was committed." Genuine tears shone in the eyes of Phoebe as she thus spoke.

"Yes," said Aunt Debie, "God is sometimes like Jacob when he blessed Joseph's children with crossed hands. We say, at some visitation of His providence, that seems hard to us, 'Not so, father;' but He knows where He is placing His hands. It was in mercy that He took Rebecca that she might not have to bear still greater sorrows. She is better where she is, and I shall soon be with her; then these eyes shall no longer be sightless, but shall be brighter than in youth. O! I long to be where I shall see the King in His beauty, and the glory and loveliness of the Father's home; where, these deaf ears being unsealed, I shall hear the rapturous music of those who surround the throne and swell the rapturous songs of the redeemed."

Aunt Debie's wish has since been granted, and she has gone to meet the friends of her youth in the land where they will part no more.

CHAPTER XL.

CONCLUSION.

Six years have passed since the events narrated in the last chapter transpired. Judge McGullet, Sheriff Bottlesby and Old Joe Porter, have in the interval been summoned to attend the last assize. The latter died of delirium tremens, and it was whispered around that his family were afraid to bring a physician, because he raved so of the treacherous slaying of Richard Ashton. The judge was said to have died of brain fever, and the sheriff of inflammation; yet it is an open secret that drink was the real agent in their destruction.

Rivers, Ben Tims, and the others whom we have mentioned, are still plying their nefarious trade, which will in all probability ultimately involve themselves and their unfortunate customers in a common ruin.

The temperance men are not disheartened, but intend ere long to try and pass the Scott Act, which has more grip to it than the Dunkin Act, in King's County; for in every county the friends of temperance can apply to Government for the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate, from whose decisions there can be no appeal. So the antis, as they have found to their cost in several counties where it has been tried, cannot trifle with it as they did with the latter. The liquor party know this to be the case, and so they have lately held a monster meeting, which was presided over by the chief distiller in the Dominion--a man who has become a millionaire by the manufacture of that which, no doubt, has destroyed thousands of men, caused untold misery in thousands of homes, and sent, God only knows the number, to a drunkard's hell. What he has manufactured has, no doubt, prepared many men to murder their wives; mothers to neglect, starve, and even destroy their children; and, I have no hesitancy in saying, I believe has caused more wide-spread devastation and ruin in this Dominion since its establishment than what has been caused in the same period by those two destructive agencies--flood and fire combined. The meeting was convened for the purpose of taking steps to fight the Scott Act in every county where it was submitted, and it was there resolved to employ the "Dodger" to again take the stump as the champion of their life-destroying traffic.

"I can assure you, gentlemen," said one present, who had lately come from a county where the Scott Act was in force, and who had been fined until he was forced to give up the business, "you are not fighting the Dunkin Act this time, for it was a thing without vertebrae or claws; but the present Act has both; yes, and teeth, too, as I have found to my cost. What we have to do is to resort to every means to defeat it; for if it once becomes law in a county then we are done."

Before the meeting closed forty thousand dollars were subscribed by those present to stubbornly contest every inch of ground, and if possible still to keep, this fair province under the demon rule of "Old King Alcohol."

The liquor party in King's County are not so confident as they endeavor to lead people to think they are, as may be gathered from the following conversation between Rivers and Capt. McWiggler, M.P. He has gained the coveted position; but it is the opinion of the most intelligent men in the riding that the whiskey-horse, which carried him to victory this time will utterly fail him in the next campaign.

"I hear," said Rivers, "that old Gurney and his set are determined to pass the Scott Act in this county, and Murden says it is a much more perfect bill than the Dunkin Act was."

"Yes, I believe they are," said McWiggler, "and, as far as I can learn, it is about as perfect as any sumptuary law can be; but Toper says they will have that fixed all right. George Maltby, M.P., member for Eastmorland, is going to introduce a clause next session, if possible, which will utterly destroy it. The clause stipulates that there must be a majority of all the legal voters; and as there are hundreds who cannot be induced to go to the polls, you can easily see, if this amendment carries, it will make the Act as good as nil. Maltby could not have been elected had it not been for the help he received from the association, and he will do anything to retain their good will; for it is only by their favor he can hope to win again."

"But supposing he does not succeed," said Rivers, "what will you do then?"

"I don't think there is much danger of that in the present house. In fact we have calculated pretty closely, and have every reason to be satisfied with the conclusion at which we have arrived; but if he fails we hold another trump card."

Allsot, in the senate, will introduce a rider to it, which will be so heavy as to break its back."

McWiggler laughed at his play upon words, manifesting the fact that one person, at least, could enjoy his attempt at wit.

We will now bid a final farewell to these worthies. Their plots have so far been successful, but the end is not yet. The untimely death of the majority of those who were their associates in iniquity should, one would think, be to them as the handwriting upon the wall, to warn them, what would be their fate if they still persisted in their course. But such men seem to forget that God's word, which is certain of fulfilment, says:

"The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

"The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming....

"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green-bay tree.

"Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

Mr. and Mrs. Gurney still reside in Bayton, and his business is the most prosperous in the town. They have not grown weary in well-doing, but are now actively engaged agitating the public mind for the submission of the Scott Act in King's County, and they ardently hope they will live to see the day when a prohibitory law shall be passed in our Dominion, and the liquor curse shall be banished forever.

Mrs. Holman is still actively engaged in helping on, with pen and voice, the good cause of temperance, and has deservedly won for herself a continental fame.

Eddy Ashton, who is a fine specimen of handsome, intellectual manhood, has, by his business tact and energy, so ingratiated himself into the good will of his employer that he has now for over a year occupied the position in Mr. Gurney's establishment which was formerly held by his father. He removed with his mother and sister to the house which was their home the first happy year they spent in Bayton, and it is as beautiful and cosy as ever.

Allie developed into a beautiful and cultured woman, and shortly after they were again settled in their old home, desisted from giving music lessons; there were, however, for some time those mysterious preparations which are the certain precursors of a wedding. And a wedding, my dear young friends, in due time there was. Allie was the happy bride, the bridegroom being Frank Congdon, the young man who so chivalrously came to her rescue when she was so grossly insulted by the brutal Joe Porter. Congdon's father, who was a retired merchant, had had extensive business transactions with some of the Bayton establishments. It was to settle some old standing accounts that Frank first went there, and, while taking a stroll for the purpose of viewing the town and its surroundings, he went into Joe Porter's to make certain enquiries, and met with the adventure which we have already narrated to the reader.

He had at that time formed such a liking for Bayton that he resolved, with his father's consent, to purchase a partnership in one of the leading dry goods firms in the town, of which he is at the present sole proprietor, and doing a flourishing business.

He had not been long there when he sought out Allie, who had made such an impression upon him that it was a case of love at first sight. Closer acquaintance served to deepen that impression; for he, who was himself a noble, intelligent young fellow, when he became more intimate loved her, not only from a mere passing impulse or fancy, but from a deep and ever deepening respect for her intelligent, womanly, self-sacrificing nature. In fact, they became affianced lovers, and the wedding day came as such days do. Mrs. Gurney insisted upon furnishing the trousseau, and there was a small but select company at the wedding.

As Allie stood by her husband a fair young bride, her mother, in memory, went back to a wedding that took place over twenty-five years before in the dear home land, and she prayed that the daughter might not have to "pass under the rod" as she had done.

Eddie is still unmarried, and lives with his mother. And Ruth is now happy, though that happiness is mellowed by the sorrows through which she has passed, and the memories of the loved ones she has lost; but the hope of meeting them again is the rainbow that spans the sky of her existence, shining out radiantly in her hours of mist and gloom, enabling her to say, even when most cast down: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Friends, we will now say farewell. The sad tale which you have read but faintly conveys an idea of the misery,

degradation, and sin which is caused in thousands of homes by this blighting; withering traffic.

Oh, rum! cursed rum! I hate it with intensest hatred: for it dims the brightest intellects; it sullies and makes impure the most spotless and the best; it spares neither frail and unprotected womanhood, innocent childhood, nor hoary age; it enters like a serpent the Eden called home and seduces its inmates to their fall, thus turning this paradise of love into a hell of fiercest passions and intensest hate; it entails upon the drunkard's children in their very existence a patrimony of depraved appetites and unholy passions; and it supplies the prisons and lunatic asylums with a large percentage of their inmates, the gallows with its victims, and hell with lost souls. If what he has written will be effective in winning any from the ranks of the indifferent, or from the ranks of those who oppose prohibitory laws, to become active, energetic workers in the cause of temperance, and what he is convinced is the cause of God, it will amply repay

THE AUTHOR.