



THE SEDLEY FAMILY.

THE
SEDLEY FAMILY;
OR THE
EFFECT OF THE MAINE LIQUOR LAW.

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PREFACE.

IN sending this little volume before the public, the Author would respectfully inscribe it to the friends of Temperance. Should the incidents related awaken an interest for the cause, or carry a conviction of the utility of the "Maine Law" to the mind of one individual, the writer will feel amply repaid for the time spent in gathering the facts and preparing them for publication. It is hoped that this simple story will be found suitable and interesting for Sabbath Schools.

THE SEDLEY FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

“ Ah, sad was her lot ;
For far from a dwelling stood her own little cot,
Her children too young to be left all alone ;
And yet her last loaf, her last crust, was gone ! ”

“ MOTHER, do give me a piece of bread,— one little piece, mother, — for, O, I am so hungry ! ” said a little boy of five years to his mother ; and faintly, indeed, he spoke. For the last three days he had been but scantily fed, and was suffering from a faintness such as those only who have fasted long can understand.

He looked up imploringly to his mother ; but his eye directly fell, as he said, “ No matter, mother, I ’ll not trouble you, for it is about time for me to go to bed, and I shall not feel hungry when I ’m asleep ; — and then, mother,

the angels will watch over me, and perhaps dear papa will come home in the morning, and I am sure he will bring us some food."

It was painfully touching to see the pale face and the hollow cheek of that poor little boy, as he raised his clear blue eye so imploringly to his mother; and even more so, to see how readily he understood the meaning of the tear that fell from her eye,—for he gave her no time to answer, before he proposed the best remedy, under the present exigency. Young as he was, he understood that tear; for sorrow and want were not new things to him, and his simple yet perfect trust in an overruling Providence he discovered in his expression, "The angels will watch over me." Well would it be for us all, if we possessed such faith. How many dark hours would be brightened—how many clouds would be found to have a "silver lining"!

O! how closely did that mother press her boy to her breast, as she laid him upon his pillow that night! and, kneeling by his couch, she fervently prayed—"O! Father in heaven, forgive me that I have for a moment doubted thy love, thy care; that I could forget that He

who heareth the cry of the young raven would not forsake us! From the lips of my child I have been reprovèd; and O, Father, forgive me, and give us thy aid;—but for thy care, we must all perish! Help me to put my trust in Thee!"

The mother arose and hastened to the window; she gave a long, anxious look upon the dreary waste without,—but vainly she looked. Nothing met her eye but a dull November scene; the brown earth, the tall, bare trees, creaking and moaning in the wind, and the sky overcast with dark, heavy clouds, portending a storm. O! sad, indeed, was the situation of that desolate woman! The cottage in which she lived betokened poverty; yet the utmost neatness and order pervaded it. She was alone, with her three little ones, and two miles from any dwelling, save two or three cottages quite as humble as her own. About a week previous to this time, her husband left home to go to a neighboring market to purchase provisions for the family, and was to return the same evening; but until this time she had anxiously and vainly watched for his return. She had

sparingly and more sparingly dealt out the little food her house afforded, until now; and her last loaf—her last crust—was gone! Her children were too young to be left alone safely; the eldest but eight years, and the youngest but three months old, beside the little boy, of not quite six years, who had gone to bed supperless. And what could she do? She felt that she could not longer endure listening to the cries of the infant; and she felt, too, herself almost perishing with hunger; for, in distributing her scanty store, the smallest allotment was invariably for herself. Again she approached the window, and strained her eyes as if she would penetrate through distance, through hills and clouds even, to discover the object of their search; and as vainly as before. Claspings her hands, she exclaimed, "O, will he never come? and must we—must we all perish with hunger?" Her little girl, who had been out to gather a few sticks of wood, at that moment entered the room, and heard her mother's exclamation. "O, no, indeed, no, indeed, dear mother! you shall not die of hunger. You have a little money left, and let me

take it and go to the store and buy some bread," said the child. "My child, my child, you cannot go to-night," said the mother; "for see, 't is quite near night, and a long two miles to the nearest market."

"O, mother, I can run so fast that you will hardly miss me before I am back again!"

"But, my child, look at those black clouds, and listen to the wind. A snow-storm, I am sure, is at hand; and you could hardly brave such a cold night, and it will soon be dark."

"But, mother dear, don't you remember, before we moved here, how far I used to walk to school, and sometimes when it stormed?"

"Yes, yes, my child, but you had some one to go with you; and you forget how sick you have been. O, no, you are not equal to the task; we must wait until morning; and then, if your father does not return, you may go."

At this moment the infant awoke, and was seized with a violent fit of coughing, for at the time it was suffering from whooping-cough. The mother administered an opiate as soon as possible, which she had before found of benefit; but, after the coughing ceased, the child kept

constantly moaning, and the agonized mother knew it was from hunger. She dared not leave it to go herself for food, for within a few days it had been strongly threatened with convulsions almost at every attack of the cough. And what could be done? Her own anxiety, added to the slight, meagre diet she had been obliged to subsist upon for a few days, had almost entirely checked the flow of nourishment nature provides for the infant; and she felt that her babe could hardly survive until morning, unless some nourishment was provided. Again the little girl urged her mother to let her go. "Why, mother, it is not late; it only seems so because it is cloudy; the sun is an hour high, and I will go very quick. I am well now, and very strong, and can run very fast. O, do let me go — do, mother!"

"But, my child, the wind blows so hard, and it is so very cold — and yet — and yet —"

"O, mother, you will let me go! I can stop at Jane Thompson's, when I come back, and 't is but a mile there. And perhaps she will go with me; and then we'll run so fast; and, O, mother, I can bring home a loaf of bread, and

a little bag of peas; and then we'll have some supper; and you can have a nice cup of tea. Then we'll wake little brother up, for he went to bed too early, and perhaps father will come; and, O, we'll be so joyful!"

The child, in her anticipation, already began to feel joyful herself; but, looking up to her mother, she saw her countenance so distressed that she threw her arms about her and said, "Don't, O, don't look so unhappy, dear mother! — God will take care of us; and He will protect me, if I go."

Again the mother felt reproved for distrusting the hand on which she had so long leaned; and, saying, "My child, to His care I will commit thee," she rose, tied on her cloak and hood, gave her the last dollar she possessed, and let her depart.

CHAPTER II.

"A home of love she has left for thee,
To wander by thy side."

EARLY in life, with promise as fair as ever maiden cherished, Emily Carlton, beautiful and an only child, left a happy home, to share the fortunes of Frank Sedley. They had grown up together in the same village; were school-mates and friends from childhood. Neither could remember the time when the society and friendship of the other was not preferable to any other. Frank was a good scholar, kind, generous almost to a fault, affectionate and manly, but impulsive. He was one of those children whose characters depend upon the influences about them. Easily led, good society and good influences developed many virtues in Frank Sedley's character, which, had he been taught to rely upon himself, and to act from principle rather than impulse, would have

ripened into everything that was noble. In early life good influences were thrown around him, his moral feelings were brought into exercise. A most excellent mother early taught him his religious duties, and she particularly dwelt upon the law of love. And Frank seemed to love everybody; there was no malice or ill-will in his nature.

His father was a merchant; he had made a respectable fortune, and some time previous to Frank's marriage he had retired upon a farm, which he wished his son to cultivate. Being the youngest child, and an only son, it seemed expedient, almost necessary, for him to remain at home. His sisters, older than himself, were married and settled in distant homes. His mother died a short time before Frank's marriage; and he was of just that disposition that nothing could induce him to leave his only surviving parent, if he chose that he should remain with him.

Under such circumstances, and at twenty-two years of age, Frank Sedley took home the young and lovely Emily Carlton, to be the sharer of his joys and sorrows. But, alas for

poor Emily! she too soon found the sorrows. As the sun rising in full glory and directly entering a cloud, a tempestuous day follows, with now and then a gleam of sunshine, so was life to her. Yet, such a day often closes with as glorious a sunset as the brightest promise of morning could give; and, thank God! the sunset of life promises to be as bright to Emily; yet, we will follow her a while through its clouds, ay, its tempests, and watch her as she stems its tide, buffets its waves, and rejoice that her anchor is sure.

Soon after his marriage Frank's father died, leaving the farm to him; and that was an unfortunate day, the beginning of sorrows. Shortly after, a chance to engage in manufactures in one of our new but thriving villages was offered him, where the pure element seems to do the work of hands, if the head and pocket are long enough to guide and support it properly. But, alas for Frank! his head was not long enough for the one, and, to begin with, he must mortgage his inheritance for the other; which he did, after accepting the offer, and soon removed to the village.

Here he was thrown into different society from that to which he had always been accustomed; and he was neither strong enough in principle, nor sharp enough in calculation, to meet the attack made either upon his morals or his pocket. The result was, that in less than a year he failed, his money was gone, and strong inroads made upon his truthfulness. He believed that he would scorn to do a mean action, or a dishonest one; and yet, in his perplexities, it was very comfortable and pleasant to call in at that door, always open, so beautifully lighted up, and where congregated so many apparently merry hearts; to hear a good joke, talk over the news of the day, to discuss politics, and perhaps to take a social glass, and thus for a time to quiet or forget those perplexities.

Late hours soon followed these frequent calls. Those kind attentions he once used to bestow upon his young wife gradually relaxed. Midnight often found her watching the dying embers, with a blanched cheek and tearful eye; and when she heard his footsteps approach the door, not joyfully, as formerly, did she hasten

to meet him, but tremblingly did she await his entrance, fearing the harsh word, and dreading the stern or cold look, that sometimes met her. And yet, gently and kindly she ever spoke to him. Though often tried and perplexed, she never failed in her duty as a wife. She studied to make home pleasant and attractive, and to win him back to rectitude by kindness and attention, rather than by reproof and neglect. Frank was not yet an habitual drunkard. After a night's sleep he always arose discovering the same kindness and affection as formerly, and sedulously inquired into every want for the comfort of his household, and provided as far as his limited means would admit. It was only at night, when his day's labor and care were over, that he listened to the tempter's voice, and caught at the baits thrown out for his destruction. And often did he bitterly repent, and resolve to break away from the society into which accident had thrown him. Often, too, did Emily, aware of the stronger temptations to error that were about him here than in their early home, urge him to return. But Frank's spirit could not brook

such change. His own farm was gone,—or, rather, sold,—and it was too humbling to his pride to take his young wife back to her parents, and be himself dependent upon them in any degree. And, to her urgent and repeated entreaties, he always told her that his affairs were in too unsettled a condition to leave; and then he would resolve to exert himself to find some lucrative employment, and to resist the fatal cup. He succeeded in his efforts so far as to find employment as a clerk for a manufacturing company; and less often did he return under the influence of the greatest evil that overshadows our beloved country. His prospects seemed to brighten; and about this time a new incentive to action, to exertion, to virtue, was presented him, in the birth of a son. A new tie bound him to home; a better spirit was awakened; and, when his work for the day was over, instead of dropping into the inviting saloon, as formerly, he hastened home, to watch and admire the constantly developing beauties of the little one, and to soothe and comfort his wife in her enfeebled state of health, and to give heed to the many little offices of kindness that his really affection-

ate spirit could discover as necessary to the comfort of those so dependent on him. The subject of his waywardness, until this time, had never been alluded to, by either Frank or his wife. But now, when brighter hopes and better feelings were dawning upon him, he resolved that he would never be enticed from home again by evil company, nor taste the poisonous cup; and, more than that, he acknowledged his misconduct, begged her forgiveness for the past, and promised that he would never again thus give her cause for sorrow.

About this time, Emily's father died; and the estate, with the exception of her mother's dower, fell to her. She directly proposed to her husband to return to the home of her childhood,—to occupy the old house, and to live with her only surviving parent, whose declining age she felt she could soothe and comfort. But Frank was now receiving a good salary; and he felt unwilling to sacrifice that, and labor again upon a farm. Emily, of course, gave up her cherished plans, and took her mother, in an enfeebled state of health, to her own home. Within the year, however, she was called to

pay the last sad duties to her only parent; and, with an aching heart, she saw her laid by the still fresh grave of her father. Two years fled by, and a daughter was added to their little family. Frank had remained true to his resolutions. With the little fortune Emily had inherited, he had been able to establish himself in business, and he was thus far successful. He was industrious and prudent, though ever ready to lend a hand in any enterprise of benevolence that offered itself to him, and had really become an energetic, useful man. Emily was a pattern housekeeper. Amiable and gentle, she won the affections of every one who knew her. It might truly be said of her, that "she had only to be known to be loved." Her hand was ever open to distribute of her store to the needy, and her heart to sympathy for the suffering. Many a home of poverty was made comfortable by her bounty, and many a sad heart cheered by her kindness and sympathy. She lived the religion she professed. "She visited the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and kept herself unspotted from the world." She did not "live for herself alone,"

but was ever ready to sacrifice her own comfort for the good of others. Believing much in the influence of woman over society, she exerted herself to throw good influences around her, and therefore entered actively into every plan that could be suggested for moral and intellectual improvement.

CHAPTER III.

“Lead us not into temptation.”

ONE day a lady, a friend of Mr. Sedley's family, called on Emily, and told her that the Temperance Society of the town were making efforts to get as many signers to the temperance pledge as possible, and requested her to add her name to the list.

Emily replied that she had already signed a pledge.

“But we should like your name affixed to this, notwithstanding, as it may carry much influence with it,” replied Mrs. Raymond, for that was the lady's name.

“Certainly I will do it, then,” said Emily, “if I may have the smallest influence in enlisting others in the good cause. But will you leave this until my husband comes in? I should like him to sign it, also.”

Mrs. Raymond left the pledge; and, as soon

as Emily was quietly seated with her husband in the evening, she handed it to him, requesting him, at the same time, to sign it,—not in the least doubting that he would readily do it. But she was disappointed in her expectations.

“No, my dear, I don’t wish to put my name to this pledge; yet I would not hinder you from doing as you like about it.”

“But, my husband, you certainly approve of temperance?”

“Most certainly, wife.”

“Then why not exert your influence in the cause?”

“Why,” said Frank, “I don’t believe my name would carry with it any influence.”

“But,” said Emily, “Mrs. Raymond told me that a number of young men were waiting only for some who were older, and then they were ready to sign it. O! I am sure the name of every intelligent person carries with it much influence.”

“But still, my good wife, I don’t wish to bind myself by any such pledge. I think I am strong enough to resist the evil, without pledging myself in this way.”

“And yet,” said Emily, “the Saviour bade his disciples pray that they might not be ‘led into temptation;’ and if there is one point of the ‘Lord’s Prayer’ of more importance than another, that part of it seems to me to be the one. O! husband, we do not know our weakness, nor our strength, until temptation comes; and it is, I am sure, the part of wisdom to avoid it, if possible.”

“Why, Emily, you are getting to be quite a preacher! Well, I wish all of our preachers were as honest as you are.”

“No, no, Frank, I did not intend to give you a sermon, nor a lecture; but still I confess I feel deep interest in the cause. It may not be necessary for you or me to pledge ourselves thus; but there are many young men who might be stayed from ever tasting any strong drink, by pledging themselves not to; and, then, they would be in no danger of cultivating a relish for it. O! Frank, every one has not had your nor my experience.” Here Emily hesitated. She had made an allusion unintentionally to what they neither of them now ever spoke of; and, looking up, she saw a

blush upon her husband's face; — but she added, "You can do as you please. Still, I wish to sign the pledge."

"O! certainly, certainly, I would have you, by all means, if you choose; though I should not have the least fear that my good wife would become intemperate, if not pledged to temperance," he added, playfully. "No, no," he continued, "I am not so foolish as to wish or expect my wife to think and believe just as I do. No,—I should not respect you as much as I do, if I did not know that you thought independently; and I would have you act so, too, at least in all matters of conscience."

"Well, then, husband, I suppose I must sign it alone, for I am not so humble as to believe I have no influence; and yet it would give me a great deal of pleasure to see your name on this paper before mine. I believe it is right for me to act independently; and yet, perfect sympathy between us, I am sure, is desirable, of all things, when it does not conflict with principle."

"To be sure, to be sure, wife; and my name shall be there, if it will give you any pleasure,

— though still I don't believe much in pledging myself in this way."

"There, now," said he, after writing his name, "now write your name underneath; though, in my heart, I believe a little brandy would do you good, if the doctor does not advise it. It would give some color to your pale lip, and some strength to your trembling hand."

Emily retired to rest that night happy; for, though her husband had not discovered the least disposition to take what he had now pledged himself not to "taste, touch or handle," unless absolutely necessary, for three years, still, she felt that it was being on the safe side to put all barriers between him and temptation possible.

The following morning Emily went out to return the temperance pledge to Mrs. Raymond. At the door, as she stepped out, she met an old man, who was sawing wood, and whom her husband employed. Emily knew him to be a man of intemperate habits; yet, living with his son, who took the greatest possible precaution to keep every kind of intoxicating beverage from him, much of the time he

was steady,—and when so, he was a man of good judgment and of fine moral feelings. But he had an appetite that he could not control, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, did not control, if temptation to gratify it was in his way. But we will have the old man's own confession.

After addressing him, and making a few remarks in her usual kind way, Emily observed, "I have just been putting my name upon the temperance pledge." Holding it still in her hand, and offering it to him, she added, "Have you ever seen it? Perhaps you may like to sign it, also." The old man took the paper, and looking up to Emily, said, "Have I ever seen a temperance pledge?—have I ever seen it? Why, my good lady, you may hardly believe it; but I have not only seen it many times, but just as many have I put my name to it, honestly hoping that it might be a restraint upon me,—for, lady, I know my infirmities, and as deeply deplore them as any one can,—yet I have just as often broken my pledge. No, lady, the drunkard is not the one to sign this. Let those who deal in the soul-ruining traffic sign it, and let them pledge themselves not to sell it, and

the moral blot that is upon our fair country would soon be effaced. God knows that I would rejoice in a pledge, or in a law, or in anything that would prevent my ever tasting again what has been my ruin; and not mine alone, but of thousands whose prospects in life were once as fair and bright as yours are, lady. But do you see yonder cloud fast approaching the sun? Just as well might you try to stay the wind that is driving it with such force, as to stay the drunkard from drinking, when what his morbid appetite so intensely craves is offered him."

A pang shot through the breast of Emily as the old man said this, for she knew that her husband had once indulged the same appetite; but, looking up, she said, "But what, then, can be done? I had hoped much—very much—from this."

"O, well," answered the old man, "this may do some good; and," he added, at the same time brushing away a tear, "'t is well for such as you to sign this;—and as soon as your children can write their names, let them write them on that paper,—it may prevent

them from ever tasting what can do them no good, and may much harm. Take an old man's counsel, lady. Never allow a drop in your house. The doctors may tell you it is good for medicine. But better, far better, that the body should die for want of it, than that a taste should be cultivated that may ruin the soul."

CHAPTER IV.

"O, glorious is the rising sun
Pavilioned in its blushing glow ;
Too soon, alas ! dark, threatening clouds
Hang lowering o'er the vale below."

If we pass over a few years, we find a family again in trouble. Many happy hours, many bright days, many joyous hopes, had Emily known during the years fled by; but now they were things that were,—the remembrance of them but aggravating her present sorrows, the contrast too painful to be dwelt upon. At the time of which we are writing, Emily was the mother of four children. She was a happy mother,—a happy wife. Her path had been as bright, her cup as full of happiness, as often falls to human lot. But that cup was to be dashed from her, and one equally full of sorrow take its place. A dark shadow crossed her path; and, had it not been that "rays from the light of God" penetrated through that

shadow, and elevated and sustained her soul, she must have sunk under its influence. But we must take a slight retrospect, and then will proceed with our story. When Frank Sedley was about nineteen, he became much interested in religion, and soon made a public profession, and became a communicant of the church of his native village.

For a number of years he was an active, useful member. He possessed deep religious feelings, lived up to his obligations as a Christian as far as human eye could discern, and adorned his profession in word and deed. After, however, he removed to his present home, various reasons existed to withhold him from obeying the injunction of the Saviour to "do this in remembrance of me." At first, there was no society or church in which he had much sympathy; then, for a time, he neglected or forgot his duties as a Christian, and, indeed, by his own misconduct, proved himself not a true disciple of Him whom he had professed to follow. But now better thoughts and feelings were awakened in him. A sense of his religious obligations came upon him, and he made great

exertions to build up a religious society of his own faith. With the coöperation of others interested in the same cause, he was successful. A small but neat church was erected, a young minister settled, and a church organized; and Frank Sedley and his wife became members of it.

Emily rejoiced in the privilege she felt it would be to sit again at the "Lord's Table." For near ten years she had but occasionally enjoyed such privilege; and, though she thought little of external religion, without the Christian spirit, and the "high thought of being in fellowship with God," or in any ordinance that was observed from habit, still she felt it to be in the way of duty to observe whatever might keep alive a sense of her obligations to God; and she rejoiced in her heart that the privilege of attending to the ordinance of public worship, and of commemorating the death of the Saviour, was again offered her.

That Sabbath morning on which the sacrament was to be administered for the first time in the new church arose in unclouded beauty. So calm, so clear, so still, it seemed as if nature

itself was enjoying a day of holy rest. It was one of those beautiful, balmy days of autumn, that we occasionally have directly preceding the fall of the leaf. A glorious sunlight fell upon the trees, already clothed with a royal richness of foliage, already decked with the rainbow hues, that light up for a few days the dying year. The orchards were bending low with ripened fruit, the golden treasures of the harvest, while the hill-sides were still covered with green verdure. All sound of labor was hushed, and the stillness was unbroken but by the music of the little streamlets that glided playfully along, and the notes of Nature's choristers that in sweet melody fell upon the ear, while the soft, balmy air seemed to infuse its own spirit into the feelings. It was a glorious Sabbath morning, — a fitting time for the incense of the heart to rise in grateful acknowledgment to its Author. Such incense rose from the heart of Emily Sedley, as she walked to church on this lovely morning with her husband and children. Her heart seemed almost to overflow with adoring thankfulness, as she looked up "through nature to nature's God," and blessed the hand

that had "cast her lines in such pleasant places." She let not a remembrance disturb her, that a few days would change the scene,—that a strong breeze would disrobe the trees of their rich covering; that dark, gloomy clouds might rise between her and that brightly-beaming sun; that a blast might sweep away all that was now so lovely. No such recollection came to throw a chill over her grateful enjoyment,—to dampen the present pleasure. And, indeed, it was most happy for her that she could not look into the future — her own future. Yet the beauty and brightness of this day, and the change that would so soon come over the face of nature, was but a true picture of her own fortune. It was well that she knew not what a "day might bring forth,"—for, alas! on this Sabbath-day an incident occurred which proved but a stepping-stone to untold evils,—a door opening to pain and suffering, which, but for her firm trust in God, would have crushed her to the earth.

There, at that communion-table, to which Frank Sedley sat down in all sincerity and honesty of purpose,—and in humility, withal,—that latent thirst, which waited but for a taste

to develop itself, was roused. He knew it not. He knew not that he was thus diseased,—for disease is the true name to call it by,—and unconsciously, innocently, he kindled the fire which waited but for the application of the match, pointed by alcohol, to burst into a flame,—a flame which resulted not only in the destruction of his property and his fair fame, and blasted his moral influence, but involved in it the happiness of his family, and levelled him even lower than the brute. It happened very unfortunately that on that very evening Mr. Sedley's head clerk was to be married, and himself and wife were to attend the wedding; and there again he drank a glass of wine. Since he rose above that first enticement, and broke from the fetters that were fast binding about his soul, he had never allowed himself to taste of spirituous liquor,—not even to drink a glass of wine. But here it was offered; and that taste at the communion-table had produced a restlessness, an uneasiness; his nervous system seemed to be unstrung, and his power of resistance weakened. He had not moral strength to refuse, under his present state of excitement,

and therefore added fresh fuel to the flame that was already kindled. A glass of wine excited him more than it would most persons. Indeed, of a very sensitive temperament, it took but very little to throw him off his balance; and this was sufficient to do it. Before he retired to bed that night he took a glass of bitters, saying at the time that he did not feel quite well. Emily saw and understood the excitement he was under, and urged him not to take the bitters; but he did not heed her advice nor entreaties. A restless, uneasy night followed; and, when he rose in the morning, he seemed hurried and impatient. Sometime in the course of the forenoon, very unfortunately, he met one of his associates of former days, of saloon memory. He turned suddenly to avoid him, but it was not so easily done.

"Ay, ay, my good fellow! how d'ye do,—how d'ye do? You seem to be shy of me. Why, we used to be good friends; but I suppose, since you have become such a strong temperance man, you thought best to cut my acquaintance. Come, own up; you did n't mean to speak to me, did you?"

"Well, really," said Frank, "I was somewhat in haste, and did not care to stop to speak to any one."

"But, still, I would like to have a talk with you."

"Well," answered Frank, "I have no objection to that, if you will not detain me too long."

"Now," said his companion, "I want to know if you had not spunk enough to do as you had a mind? for I know you didn't have a mind to sign the temperance pledge, on your own hook. Now you wonder how I know so much about it; but Ned Jones — Raymond's hired man — has told me all the news, since I come home, and there have been strange things done here within the last three or four years, to be sure."

"Yes," said Frank, "we have had some changes; but, having been here constantly, they don't appear so strange to me as they probably do to you. But where have you been living, all of this time?"

"O! I've seen considerable of the world since I left this town. But I want to know

what you signed that pledge for. Because your wife told you to, hey? I guess my wife won't come it over me in that way!"

"Ay, are you married?" said Frank.

"Not exactly; but I meant if I ever was so unlucky as to have a wife."

"And yet I think you would not call it unlucky, if you should get a good wife," said Frank.

"So, you'd advise me to sign away my liberties, as you have done; for, in these days, it amounts to giving up your freedom, to get married. Now, I don't suppose you'd dare to drink a glass of wine, — unless, to be sure, your wife said you might, for your stomach's sake."

"I don't think my wife would object to my drinking a glass of wine, if I chose."

"No; I know you don't like to own that she would, nor that she drives, though you pretend to hold the reins."

"You do not know my wife," said Sedley, somewhat disturbed at this kind of conversation.

"No, I don't know her, to be sure; but I know you well enough to know that you would

never have signed that confounded silly temperance pledge, unless somebody put you up to it; and somebody, too, that you were afraid of. O, pooh! a man is n't half a man, that can't keep straight without pledging himself thus."

"And yet," replied Frank, "there is no harm in the pledge, nor in signing it, that I know of. I have signed nothing that would hinder me from taking a glass of wine, or brandy even, if I felt that I needed it."

"But you must ask the doctor first, and take it as you would a dose of calomel, for medicine."

"No,—I should not even feel it necessary to consult a physician. My own judgment would be all the doctor I should seek."

"Yes, yes; but your judgment would be, that you must ask your wife, first; — and I don't believe you'd dare to think you needed it, unless she said you did."

"Well, now, to prove your opinion incorrect, I will tell you that I think a glass of wine would do me good now. I do not feel quite well, and

a little stimulant, I have no doubt, would do me good."

"But you would not dare to drink it."

"Most certainly I should," said Frank.

"Well, then, just step in with me at the corner, and take a glass of wine, for old acquaintance' sake."

And Frank Sedley fell! He had not strength to resist the temptation offered him. His pride revolted at the suggestion that he dared not use his own judgment, but was governed by another. Heretofore he had avoided this man, and others of the same class. Occasionally, however, he was obliged to meet them in the way of business, but he had no companionship with them. The one whose conversation we have related had been absent from town for three or four years. Frank knew of his return, yet had not seen him; and his first impulse was to avoid him, when they met. Had they met a few days previous, Mr. Sedley would neither have cared for his sneers or listened to his invitation; but a spell seemed to have come upon him. The taste the day previous, and the repeated indulgence of it, had

thrown him off his balance. The fellow seemed to throw a fascinating influence over him, as it is said the serpent does about the bird; and Frank was fairly caught in a net that was destined to fetter his soul, and drag it down to the lowest step of moral degradation. He drank a glass of wine with his companion. Under the excitement of that, he was easily persuaded to take another, and another still; and, when he returned home, it was to plant a thorn in Emily's pillow, that drove sleep from her eyes, and gave her a dread of the future, that, notwithstanding her faith in the goodness of God and the love and care of her heavenly Father, she could not overcome.

We will not attempt to follow Frank Sedley, step by step, in his downward course. It was much the same, as almost every person has seen, if he has had much intercourse with society, or has taken the pains to watch the path of the drunkard. It was by no means an isolated case.

There is not, probably, a single grave-yard in New England, which, could it speak, would not give evidence of many whose youth gave as fair

promise of vigorous and useful manhood, as the best and most actively useful men we have among us did; but who blasted their moral powers, deadened their sense of right and wrong, defaced the image of God in which they were made, and levelled themselves even lower than the brute creation! And how? Go and ask that man who stands behind that row of decanters, tumblers and wine-glasses, and before those hogsheads, pipes, demijohns, &c.,—go and ask him how! If he answers truthfully, he will say, "I deal out the liquid fire! I sell them the health-destroying, the soul-ruining, the heart-breaking beverage. I give the glass that is overflowing with the bitterness of life!" And, would you know what he gets in return, the answer would be, "My pockets full of gold! ay, full of gold!" Ask that man, that rumseller, to put in the balance the gold thus gained on one side,—in the other place the sorrows, the tears, the broken hearts and the wretched homes, the full grave-yards and the ruined souls, the price of his gold,—and then count its weight!

But to return to our story. The interest

Mr. Sedley had taken in his business gradually weakened, until he gave but little heed to it. His affairs soon became disordered; his family expenses were larger than his income, after a few months' dissipation, would meet. Those attentions that made up the comfort of life in the family circle were neglected. He had been one of the kindest husbands and fondest of fathers, and it was a sore trial to that once happy family to feel this neglect. He was not often irritable, as occasionally he had been soon after his marriage, when under the influence of the intoxicating cup, but was stupid. His face grew of a livid paleness, and he would sit for hours without moving, apparently asleep; and perhaps for whole days he would not speak, unless spoken to. He seemed neither to heed the still affectionate words of his almost broken-hearted wife, nor the fond caresses of his children. The children took the impression that he was sick, and would ask questions like this: "When will dear papa get better?" or, "When will father get well?" He had formerly been in the habit of taking his oldest children to the store, occasionally,

with him; and they were always delighted when they could go out with their father. Now he never proposed to them to go; and when they would ask him to take them, he always denied them, saying he was too busy; and their mother never encouraged their going, knowing it was doubtful how he would return.

It happened, however, that it was necessary for her to send her oldest son, Charles, one day, to the store, of an errand. She bade him go and return as speedily as possible, which he did. It seems that a poor woman, who some time previous had done some sewing for her family, called upon Mrs. Sedley, to receive her pay, while the child was absent. The woman told a story of her troubles, and also of her necessities. Said she: "My husband used to be kind, and supported his family comfortably; but since he has taken to drinking he spends every cent of his earnings for what does no good to him, and brings a great deal of trouble to me. I work very hard, ma'am, but 't is but a scanty living we get."

"And do you have to support your family yourself, with your own earnings?" said Mrs. Sedley.

"Yes, I have it all to do. I wish to send my children to school, this winter; and I have been trying to fit them out comfortably with clothes. I have managed to get everything but shoes, and, ma'am, that was why I came to you."

"I regret very much that you were obliged to do so," said Mrs. Sedley; "but I supposed my husband had paid that bill, or I certainly should have attended to it myself."

In about an hour Charles returned, saying that his father was not at the store, and that he could not find him. Mrs. Sedley seemed quite as much troubled, in not having the money to pay her, as the woman did, not to receive it. However, their children being of about the same age, she gave her two or three pairs of shoes that her own children had worn, and some other articles of clothing, promising to call and see her the next day. After the woman had gone, she made some inquiries of her little boy about his walk.

"O, mother!" said Charles, "I had a nice walk; but I never saw such a looking place as father's store is. O, mother! you don't know

how dirty it is. There were a lot of men in there, and they talked so loud that I was afraid of them; and, mother, I heard one of them swear. Do you suppose father would have let them made such a noise, if he had been there?"

"I hope, my dear, your father does not often have such men in his store; but what were they doing?"

"O, some were smoking, and I went into the back store, and saw four men out there playing cards."

"Playing cards, Charles! What! in your father's store?"

"Yes, mother; but father, you know, was n't there. But, mother, I don't see what made it look so dirty; the ashes were all over the hearth, and there was a great burnt spot in the floor. I wonder the store didn't get burned down."

With a suffering interest did Mrs. Sedley listen to her little boy's recital. Each word gave her cause for new anxiety; yet so schooled were her feelings, that she scarcely discovered the least emotion to her child. But she reflected much upon what he had told her. That

her husband gambled she could not believe, —and yet, the condition which the child described the store as having been in, those rough men, and the cards, altogether told a story of deep recklessness. And what could be done? What could she do?

With more than usual solicitude she watched for her husband's return that night, and while waiting she resolved that she would make an effort to do something; she would try again, as she had often done, to lift her husband from the low, degraded state into which he had plunged. She resolved to counsel him,—to lay before him the suffering, the misery, he was bringing, not only upon himself, but upon his family; she raised her thoughts to Him who alone is able to save,—she asked for strength to do her duty, and calmly, patiently, she waited hour after hour, until the hour of midnight; then her husband came, but not in a state to be reasoned with. Remembering what her little boy had told her about the fire at the store, and knowing that her husband was in no condition to take care of it, she could not go to bed herself until she knew how

the store was left; and yet she reflected that it was just as safe this night as, probably, it had been before. The night was very dark, and scarcely a proper time for a female to be out. Still, Mrs. Sedley was not a nervous or timid woman, and, conscious that her motive was a good one, and bent on knowing the truth of her little boy's statement, she determined to go herself to the store. She waited until her husband was asleep, took the keys out of the pocket of his overcoat, and a lantern under her cloak. The night was very dark, and the store a mile distant from her house; yet, nothing daunted by either, she started on her painful errand. At this late hour she thought she should not be liable to meet any person; and she did not, until she turned the corner of the street to which she was going. There she saw a man crossing the street opposite her husband's store. She stepped back a few paces, to avoid him, if possible; still, she could see him, and, by his manner of walking, she knew that he was in a worse condition than her husband was on his return. As he approached towards where she stood, he stopped a moment,

looked round, and reeled off another way. She hastened on, and soon reached her destination. To her surprise, she found the door was not locked; carefully she opened it, and entered. She had taken some matches and a lantern; but she had no need of either, for two or three lamps were left burning on the counter. A cold shudder came over her as she cast her eyes about that room, once a place of such perfect neatness and order. From appearances, it must have been but just deserted; and the man whom she saw had probably been left by her husband to take care of the fire, locking up, &c. She knew that the clerk, also, had a key, a duplicate of the one she had; but yet, that could not have been the clerk; she knew him a faithful and most excellent man, and the one she met was certainly intoxicated. True, she could not see him very distinctly, but she heard him singing and muttering to himself in such a way that she was confident it could not be the faithful clerk of former days. "And can it be that this is the scene of midnight revels?" said Emily to herself. A feeling almost of suffocation came

over her, as she looked about the room, and found an answer to her question involuntarily asked. There were tables with empty tumblers upon them, cards, and gammon-boards. Lamps left burning, some dimly, but others smoking, and added to the smoke from the lamps was that of cigars. The fire was still burning, and the embers had fallen upon the hearth. And was this the first time the building was ever left thus? and, if not, what had saved it from being destroyed by fire? Mrs. Sedley had seen enough to convince her that the story of her little boy was not at all exaggerated. She could not endure looking any further, but, hastily taking care of the fire and extinguishing the lamps, she went out, locked the door, and hurried home.

CHAPTER V.

"O! what shall the drunkard stay,
When kindness, love, and pledges fail?"

ON the morning following Mrs. Sedley's visit to her husband's store, she asked and received of him the money needed to pay the poor woman for her labor; and as soon as her husband had gone out, she hastened to her house to discharge the debt. She did not stop, however, to enter the humble dwelling, as she at another time would have done, to lighten the cheerless path of the unfortunate occupant by words of kindness and sympathy. She had another errand of mercy on which she was bent, and she felt unwilling to delay a moment until it was executed. She had thought much and long on what she could do to save her husband; and the result of her deliberations was, that she would go to Mr. Raymond, a gentle-

man whom she knew was actively interested in the cause of temperance, lay the case before him, and solicit his counsel and advice as to what course she should take to accomplish her purpose. It was, indeed, a painful task to Mrs. Sedley to break the subject of her visit to that gentleman; but, she was a calm, self-possessed woman, and when she had undertaken anything from a sense of duty she would not allow her feelings to interfere with her judgment. After she had introduced the subject of her errand, and stated some features in the case, "Now," said she, "what can be done? What can I do to save my husband from utter ruin?"

"I think," said Mr. Raymond, "that he once signed the temperance pledge; did he not, madam?"

"Yes, yes, but he has broken it; and I have found, by sad experience, that it does not avail much for one who has once indulged the appetite to sign a pledge; in this case it has certainly proved of no use whatever," said Mrs. Sedley. "But is there no way by which he

can be restrained from getting any intoxicating liquor?"

"Well, I think there may be," replied Mr. Raymond. "I will make an effort,—I will see what can be done,—I will do anything in my power, Mrs. Sedley, to save your husband; for I always highly regarded him, and it has really pained me to learn that he had stepped aside from his former habits of temperance and rectitude. I was not aware that he was much given to intoxication, as you represent, or that his business was suffering from his neglect. It must be quite a late thing."

"Yes, quite late. It is, I think, not more than three months since he drank his first glass; that seemed to overcome his strength, or power of resistance. O! if there was any possible way to prevent his getting it, he would be the same kind husband as ever,—the same kind father! Is such a thing possible?"

"I hope it is. I do not know as there is any one who sells liquor, but those who are licensed. They can be requested not to sell it to him."

"But why is any one licensed to traffic in

an article productive of so much evil? They do not, they cannot, know the misery, the suffering, it entails upon society."

"I do not think the gentlemen who are licensed in this town sell it with wrong motives. There are many purchasers of spirituous liquors who are temperate men; and, on second thought, I believe those who are in the frequent habit of getting intoxicated must be supplied from some other quarter; but I will inquire into the matter."

"But," said Emily, "why cannot we have a law to prevent the sale or the manufacture of an article, the use of which is so much abused?"

"You must be aware, Mrs. Sedley, that there are many mechanical purposes for which it is used, and for which it is highly necessary; and a vast amount of regular business would be interfered with, by a law of that kind."

"But the sale of it, if it must be manufactured, I should think might be limited to those purposes."

"It would not, I think," replied Mr. Raymond, "be practicable, even then. The public

is not prepared for such a law. People will not be driven. It is easier to 'coax than drive,' and moral suasion will have the most influence, and the best. Our Temperance Societies are doing just what we need,—slowly, perhaps, but surely."

"O, Mr. Raymond! you do not know how much intemperance, and how much consequent suffering, there is among us. You have not the personal experience of its evils that — that some have."

"No, that is true, I have not much personal experience in the matter, but still I know and see its evils, and make great exertions to remove them; and certainly I have seen some most happy results from my efforts. What we want," continued Mr. Raymond, "is to get public opinion against using spirituous liquors as a beverage; and, if you look back a few years, you will see how much it has changed."

"Not in my experience," said Mrs. Sedley. "In my younger days I scarce knew that such an evil existed."

"But I can remember when every rich man

must have his wine at dinner, and, perhaps, his brandy, and every poor man his rum. Now, these are entirely out of fashion. O, the evil will die out of itself, since public opinion is so much changed, if we do not undertake to drive it out too fast."

"But, O," said Mrs. Sedley, "how many will be ruined first! and I cannot see why a law would not cure the evil at once."

"Why, my dear madam, a law could not be sustained; and we had better not have laws, than such as cannot be sustained."

"And yet," said Mrs. Sedley, "we have laws that are every day broken, and good laws, too. Certainly you would not have the law against stealing repealed, because it is so often violated."

"No, no; 'Thou shalt not steal' is a command of God."

"And," replied Mrs. Sedley, "to love our neighbor as ourselves is equally one of God's commands, and just as binding on us to keep; and, truly, a law that would be the means of saving so many of our neighbors from ruin, not only of the body, but of the soul, would be

carrying out the principle of love to a great extent."

"And yet," said Mr. Raymond, "such a law, I am confident, could not be enforced. Our present laws regarding intemperance are not properly sustained, and I am not for having another. I know there is an effort making in other states to have a law that shall regulate the sale of alcohol; but I would sooner go for the repeal of the present law against intemperance than enact another that cannot be sustained."

"But, my dear sir, every man who professes to be a friend of temperance would, I am sure, sustain such a law; and you say that public opinion is against intemperance. Then, I see no reason why a law which, if enforced, must necessarily prevent intemperance, should not be strongly advocated by every benevolent person."

"Mrs. Sedley, I would rejoice in my heart to have it in my power to forward any enterprise that would check — nay, stop — the evil where it is; but men will not be driven. No, — we cannot drive men into goodness or tem-

perance. Moral suasion must do the work. It will do it, I am confident, in time; and let us use it, and not trouble ourselves about a law, for I must insist that we are better off by far without any, than one that can never be sustained."

"Why, sir, on the same principle, then, you might say we should be better off without the Bible,— we'll have nothing to do with God's laws, and we'll throw the book away; for surely not one of the laws it contains is kept to the letter. Every day, every hour, is witness to their abuse, to their violation, and by almost every individual. Yes, by every individual; for not one of us lives up fully to the laws of God."

"Your remark is too true, that none of us keep the laws of God to the letter," said Mr. Raymond; "and —"

"Excuse me, sir, for interrupting you." said Mrs. Sedley. "I had no idea of entering on a debate of this kind. I know we have not, nor can we have at present, a law to prohibit the sale of liquor. And I probably should not have spoken of it, or perhaps have thought of

it at all; but quite recently I received a letter from a confidential friend of mine in Maine, in which she says there is a prospect of such a law,—or, rather, the subject is under agitation now in Maine,—and she has strong hope that the law will be enacted, and quite soon. That letter awakened an interest in my mind, for anything that may check intemperance is to be desired. But to discuss the matter was not the object of my visit to you at all. It was rather to ask your advice as to what measure could be adopted, under present circumstances, to save my husband."

"Perhaps, Mrs. Sedley, it would be well for me to have a conversation with your husband. He might listen to my advice; he might be reasoned with."

"I should feel under great obligations to you," said Mrs. Sedley, "if you would talk with him. But it must be in the early part of the day; I do not think at any other time he would listen to reason, or heed advice."

"Very well; I will take that opportunity. Upon consideration, I do not think it will avail much, to forbid or request those men licensed

to sell from supplying him. He must get spirit where it is sold privately, for we have taken great pains to stop the retail of it by the glass. Those bar-rooms and saloons that formerly enticed so many have quite recently been shut up; but I will look into the matter, and make every possible effort for his good."

After thanking him for the interest he expressed for her husband, Mrs. Sedley bade him "good-morning," and returned home.

CHAPTER VI.

"A sweet bud plucked ere it opened to the day."

AGAIN Mr. Sedley returned at a late hour, and his wife braved a stormy night to look after the store. She found it in much the same condition as the night previous, and took the same care. The following afternoon he did not go out as usual, but sat for a long time, as if in deep thought. His children were at play in the same room; and his little boy climbed up into his lap, saying, "I wish papa would get well, and then he would play with us; — won't papa ever get better?" The father answered, abruptly, "Yes, child, when he is dead; and I wish I was now!" The poor child, not exactly understanding his meaning, jumping down, ran to his mother, saying, "O! papa says he will get better; and then he'll love his little Willie again, won't he?" These words seemed to rouse the father. He arose, caught the child

in his arms, pressed a kiss upon his forehead, and said, "Father loves his little boy better than he can think!" and burst into tears. The action and the words were so unlike anything he had said or done of late, that his wife caught at them, as a drowning man would at a straw. A hope was awakened in her that he might still be restored to virtue, to temperance, and truth. She knew there was a reason that kept him at home, contrary to his usual custom; for, previous to this time, he had not spent a half-day in the house for many weeks. As she suspected, he had seen Mr. Raymond. That gentleman met him in the morning, as he was going out, and quite early, before he had reached the place where he obtained his customary morning dram. Mr. Raymond accosted him in a familiar, pleasant way; and, after walking a short distance, drew Mr. Sedley's arm within his, and requested him to step into his office with him, as he would like to have a little conversation with him, and there they would be undisturbed. As soon as they were seated, Mr. Raymond opened the subject upon which he wished to converse. It was no other

than Mr. Sedley's late misconduct. He touched delicately but feelingly upon it: spoke of his disordered affairs in a business way; of his neglected family; and pointed out the certain result of such a course, if persisted in. And then he appealed to him as a husband, a father, a citizen, to desist from such a ruinous course. He spoke of his duties to God, of his religious profession, of his duties to his family, to society and to himself, as a moral and accountable being. Mr. Sedley, being naturally very sensitive, was now easily touched. He had not taken his usual stimulating glass, but was really suffering from the depression and faintness every drunkard feels after going by his accustomed time of feeding the appetite created by habit; and he was more easily touched than probably he otherwise would have been. He did not pretend to deny anything; he did not attempt to justify himself,—but rather confessed his errors, confessed his weakness in not resisting what he knew must inevitably ruin him, and promised to avoid the society into which he had thrown himself, and also to abstain from every intoxicating drink. Mr. Ray-

mond was a good friend to Frank Sedley, and to his family. It took some moral courage to break the subject of this conversation; but he braved it, and did his duty, or what he thought was his duty, at the time. But he did not his whole duty; he did not follow it up; for, when he found Mr. Sedley did not give full heed to his advice, notwithstanding his ideas of the great power of moral suasion, he gave him over as entirely reckless, and past hope. For one day Mr. Sedley had not put the intoxicating cup to his lips; and at night he was sober, and discovered something of his former kindness and interest in his family. As for his wife, one single kind word, one affectionate look, from her husband, whom she had idolized almost, awakened fresh hope that he might yet be to her what he formerly was. His neglect of herself and her family had not diminished her affection, but she felt towards him rather as a mother feels towards a beautiful child suffering under a loathsome disease. A feeling of pity added to that of love. But little sleep did she get that night, but lay revolving over plans that might interest and arouse her husband from the sort

of lethargy into which he had fallen. She well knew that it was not from premeditated or wilful malice towards herself or children that he brought this suffering upon them, for a more affectionate, kind and loving heart, never throbbed in human breast; but that indecision that early characterized him, that easily-influenced disposition, was the moving power of all her troubles. She well knew all this, and she never blamed him, nor reproached him, though his waywardness had brought upon her untold suffering,—but she sought to win him back to rectitude, and made every effort to shield him from disgrace. She never spoke of him to her children but with the utmost respect, and kept them as much as possible from seeing him in his worst moments. As she lay sleepless through that night, she thought much of the cause of all this trouble. She did not look at the matter as many would; she did not blame or fret at him; she never accused him of neglect, or abuse; she never turned a cold ear to his wants or requests, nor discovered a cold heart in her actions; — but the same kind and gentle tone ever greeted him,—the same atten-

tion to his comfort she bestowed at all times, and everything that would make home pleasant and attractive she gathered around him. Perhaps he heeded none of these things; still she relaxed not in what she considered her duty towards him whom she had promised before God to “love and cherish.” That promise was made and registered in heaven when, in the freshness of youth and the buoyancy of hope, her young heart was bounding with love; and should she break that promise now? How could she love him, when he seemed dead to every moral feeling? Who shall weigh woman’s love?

“Yonder star, so brightly glowing,
See how beauteous, wondrous fair!
Clouds ’twixt us and that may hover,
Still the star is glittering there.”

Yet, how could she cherish him, when degraded to a level with a brute? Even as the mother nurses and cherishes her sick child; and, more than that, she felt it was her duty; she knew it was duty; and to Mrs. Sedley whatever duty pointed out, that was her pleasure to do. She considered, too, that kindness

would be a more powerful agent in winning him back than reproof; and, indeed, kindness was a law of her heart, and the action of her life. That her husband's intemperance was a disease, rather than a vice, she felt convinced. That first glass bore the seeds of all his trouble; it might have been wrong for him to taste the first time; still, he did it ignorant of the baneful effect it would have upon him. Appetite had not taken so strong hold upon him but that it could be overcome, and was. The birth of a first child brought with it a tie that bound him closer to home and its sacred influences than that of his appetite to the intoxicating cup. A few days of abstinence weaned him, as a child is weaned from the mother's breast; and, with a restored energy, he was able to rise above it, resist the appetite, and shake off its pernicious influence. Then "the first glass" was tasted the second time; and Mrs. Sedley knew that it was innocently done, and she knew that he could not control the influence it had upon his brain, and felt that he was hardly responsible for his actions, when committed under an excited, even maddened

brain. "And now," thought she, after reviewing the past, "now, while my husband is partially free from such influence, what can be done? What plan can I adopt? While one link of the dreadful chain that is bound about him is severed, what can be done to wrest the whole from him?" She felt that, if she could remove him for a time from the influences to evil that she knew encircled him here, he might gain strength to resist them; and now, while he had been kept from them for one day, was the time to carry some plan for removal into effect.

In the morning, therefore, she proposed to him to take herself and children to their native village, for a visit. She had ever been in the habit of visiting occasionally her early friends, and she had not for some time. Mr. Sedley readily acceded to the proposal, and quite early in the morning arrangements were made to go. Mrs. Sedley was delighted to see her husband enter so fully and pleasantly into her plan; something of his former cheerfulness seemed to beam upon his face, and he discovered an interest for the children that he had not for months. The youngest child had

through the night been quite restless and uneasy, but towards morning had fallen into a sound sleep. Mr. Sedley made some remark about the child's sleeping so late, and said he would go and rouse little Lizzy himself. He directly returned with her in his arms, saying, "My dear, I'm afraid the baby is sick; her flesh seems very hot; I do not believe we shall be able to take our ride to-day." The mother took the child, and found that she was indeed in a high fever; she was, evidently, too unwell to go out, and, of course, the journey was given up for that day. Mrs. Sedley was greatly disappointed; for, added to her anxiety for the little one, was the dread of the effect a visit to his store would have upon her husband. His cheerfulness and affectionate manner during the morning seemed to his wife like a bright sunbeam falling upon a darkened way, or a green spot in a desert. She felt that she could not have that bright hope which his kind manner had awakened blighted again; and yet, he must go out, and how would he return? To hasten his return home, however, as he bade her "good-morning," on opening the door

to go out, she requested him to come in quite early, as she feared they might find it necessary to call in medical aid. "Little Lizzy," said she, "seems to me quite ill; her breathing is hurried, and her flesh very hot; I do not like her symptoms at all." "Very well," said he, "I will not be gone long; but perhaps I had better call on Dr. Winship, as I go directly by his office, and request him to call this morning."

"Perhaps we had better wait a little," said Mrs. Sedley; "she may brighten up by and by; she was disturbed in her rest last night, and it may be only a feverish habit caused by loss of sleep."

"Very well, my dear; I believe you will be the best doctor for the baby, after all," said Mr. Sedley, and went out.

Mrs. Sedley used but very little medicine in her family, and seldom called for medical advice; she believed generally that proper diet and careful nourishment was better than the use of drugs. Her children had occasionally been ill,—sometimes a feverish habit would hang about them for a few days; but quiet and

care had as often been effectual in restoring them, and the remark was often made that "Mrs. Sedley's children must be very healthy, for she never had to send for a doctor." The secret of their good health was, in their having a good mother,—a judicious mother,—who used her reason and judgment, rather than suffer her indulgent fondness and foolish fears to run away with them. Mrs. Sedley hoped in the present case that her usual management might be effectual in allaying the fever of the little girl; but she was disappointed; the child rapidly grew worse, and, after waiting until three o'clock in the afternoon, she despatched her eldest son, Charles, for the physician. O, how slowly the hours rolled by, as she watched over her little one, looking, impatiently almost, but vainly, for her husband's return! The illness of the child had increased, until now it was in a raging fever. A redness came over the skin, and the mother began to fear that her little one was attacked by that disease most to be dreaded of anything, scarlet fever. The lips became parched, the mouth was red and kept open, and with great difficulty the little sufferer

seemed to swallow the simple nourishment offered. When the doctor arrived, Mrs. Sedley was in almost as high a fever as her child; she feared she had delayed sending for medical aid too long, and that, added to her anxiety for her husband and watching the momentarily developing symptoms of scarlet fever in the little one, had excited her nervous system more than, with her usual calmness and self-possession, she often suffered it to be. Dr. Winship, after examining the patient, pronounced the disease what the mother feared, the scarlet fever, and of malignant type.

We will not go into the details of the sickness of this child, nor of the two next older, who were soon prostrated by the same virulent disease. Any one who is conversant with it, particularly when it attacks children, young children, can imagine the suffering of this family, when the three were prostrated, better than we can describe it. To add to the suffering ten-fold, was the father's indifference; for, though partially aroused to better feeling and better deportment at the moment disease entered his family, one visit to his store upset the

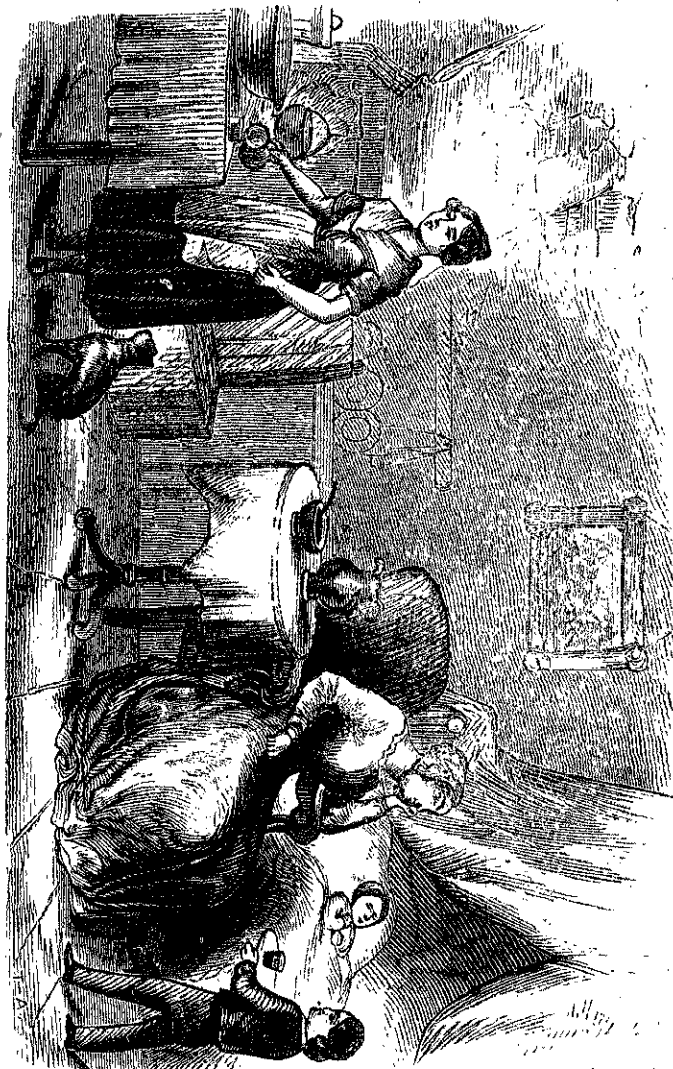
whole. There he beheld with a clear head and an aching heart the disordered state of his business; for one day's abstinence from the fatal cup had partially thrown off the paralysis of feeling an indulgence in it had occasioned. There he saw everything neglected, dirty, confused. He felt confused himself, perplexed and amazed, at the condition in which he found everything. The clerk, who had served him faithfully for a number of years, some time previous had left Mr. Sedley's employment to become the head and owner of a similar establishment in a neighboring town; and the vacancy was filled at this time by John Blake, the reckless and unprincipled fellow we introduced in the conversation regarding Mr. Sedley's signing the temperance pledge. It was, no doubt, his influence that brought his present employer to the condition we find him in now. He had contrived to wind himself about Mr. Sedley,—into his favor, his interests, and into his pocket,—until, cool and calculating (for a glass of spirit did not affect him as it does many), he had filled his own purse, while emptying his on whose ruin he was bent, and at

the same time professing to be his firm friend. In the perplexity he felt in seeing his store and business in such a disordered state, Mr. Sedley needed only the glass that drowns all such perplexities in forgetfulness to be offered him, to set matters all right. With Blake at hand, he had not to wait long. One day's rest from the exciting beverage he had so long taken was not sufficient to throw off its influence upon the system or the mind. His brain was not free from the deleterious effect every physiologist will say alcohol has upon it; and he really had very little power over his actions. The consequence was, that at night he returned to his family a stupid, even senseless piece of matter; dead to every feeling of kindness, affection, or even interest, that in the morning had seemed to be wakening into life and action.

We will pass over two or three days,—days of trial and suffering, indeed,—and then look in upon the afflicted family. There sits the mother, pale as the sick child in her arms, but calm and tearless. The two elder children are together in an adjoining room, both in a raging fever. A faithful Irish girl, who for a number

of years had been a domestic in Mrs. Sedley's family, is nursing them. For three days and nights the mother had not been undressed. When urged to retire by a kind neighbor who would take her place, that she might get a little rest, she would heed the request; but sleep had fled almost from her. She would return in a few moments to administer to the necessities, first of the one and then the other; but the little one seemed to require the most attention. Everything that nursing and medicine could do seemed to fail of effect. The child is dying! The physician was present, and the eldest boy was kneeling by the side of his mother, almost convulsed with weeping, for he knew that his little sister was dying. The child had lain quiet, as if asleep, for a little time; but now it started, looked up to its mother, and raised its little arms as if it recognized her. The mother bent her face towards it, but the arms directly fell powerless, a sweet smile played about the face, there was a faint quivering of the lip, and all was over! The child had gone to add another gem to the coronet of Him who said, "Suffer little children to

"For three days and nights the mother had not been undressed."—Page 74.



come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Then a flood of tears came to Mrs. Sedley's relief; she laid the child in the cradle, folded its little hands upon its breast, imprinted one long kiss upon its marble brow, and saying, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be His holy name," she arose, took her little boy by the hand and left the room, but not to sit and weep over her loss; she still had active duties resting upon her, and she let not her own sorrow prevent her fulfilling them. She tried to soothe and comfort her little boy. She told him that his little sister was no longer suffering, but was at rest; that God had called her home, and they must feel willing to let her go where she would be far happier than she could have been here.

"My dear boy," said Mrs. Sedley, as he continued to weep, "your little sister is only the earliest gone to a better home; we shall all go some time, and she will be there to welcome us; she is an angel in heaven, I have no doubt, at this moment."

"And will she watch over us, mother? Will she be our guardian angel?"

"I hope so, my dear; and now you must wipe your tears away, and go and see Nelly and Willie. You know they are poor sick children yet, and you must not let them see you cry."

"O, mother, will they die too?"

"I hope not, my dear; the doctor thinks their symptoms are much better to-day. I hope God will spare them to us. He is our Father in heaven, you know, and he will 'do all things well.'"

Thus, the mother, in trying to comfort her child, found balm for her own wounded spirit. She "wept not as those without hope," for her trust was in the "Rock of Ages."

CHAPTER VII.

"She knows — that mother — that the child lost to her
Has been found and cared for by the angels; —
She knows that the fragile flower which faded on her
Bosom hath sprung into lovelier life and sweeter bloom
In the 'garden of the Lord.' "

WE will pass briefly over the funeral of the little child, with its attendant circumstances, and the sickness and recovery of the two elder children. The disease with which they had been attacked, though stubborn, gave way at length to the remedies applied, and both were convalescent. The funeral was private as possible, on account of the sickness in the family; and the little one was carried to its last resting-place, without father or mother following to see it laid in its little grave. The eldest daughter was lying at the time as if trembling between life and death; and, while one child was being carried away from her sight forever, as far as earth was concerned, the mother was watching

over another, expecting every moment the thread of life would break. But she was spared that trial. That night the disease took a favorable turn; the child was better. But where was the father? Stupid, dull, senseless, — more dead, if possible, than his child just carried to its long home. He took no interest either in the living, the sick, or the dead. Kind friends took upon themselves the offices and duties that belonged to him, — and he slept; and we will let him sleep, and leave him for the present.

The children were fast recovering, excepting Charles, the eldest son. He was not attacked violently by the epidemic, but had a slight sore throat, which, while the other children were so very sick, was thought but little of. A few days, Mrs. Sedley thought, and a little care, would restore him to his usual state of health. Still, after the other children had quite recovered, a low fever seemed to hang about him, and a slight cough she occasionally noticed; but the child she knew had not lived in his usual regular way during the illness of the other children. He had often acted in the capacity of nurse; and a

more careful and gentle nurse never arranged the pillows, or watched over and contributed those soothing attentions so necessary to the relief and comfort of the patient, with more tenderness, than did the little boy of but nine years of age. He was somewhat precocious, and seemed thoughtful and considerate beyond his years during the trying scenes which of late he had been witness to. He looked pale, very, and seemed to lose his appetite; but the doctor apprehended no danger from the symptoms, and only advised rest, while his mother supposed his illness arose from fatigue, and grief for the little sister he had lost, which time would subdue and correct. In a few days the soreness in his throat left him, and the fever attending it, and he was thought better. Still, he seemed indisposed to take any exercise, but would sit quiet and thoughtful, occasionally asking questions about his little sister. His mother would answer him; but, thinking depression of spirits was the cause of his feeble state of health, tried to divert him by talking on cheerful subjects, and always spoke of their loss in a cheerful way. She took him out, and

tried to amuse him; and, as he seemed at times to brighten up, and was more cheerful, she thought he was doing well. But, alas! she was mistaken. Her boy — her beautiful boy, her first-born, the child that had wakened into life that holiest feeling, a mother's love — was fast ripening for the tomb. That golden tie that bound this treasure to her soul must be broken — the link severed. As the bud not yet in blossom is cut down by an untimely frost, so her child must soon be wrapped in the snowy robe, and laid in the silent earth. He was nipped while yet in the bud. And it was meet that he should thus early die. He was too lovely, too beautiful, to bloom amid the trials and cares of earth.

But we anticipate. Charles Sedley, almost imperceptibly failed; and when his cheek began to look flushed, and his eye grew bright, his mother, unused to such symptoms, thought he was better. He had not much pain, and he was so gentle and uncomplaining, that one could hardly fancy him so fast going out, for he seemed to but peacefully fall asleep. One day, when his mother had been answering some

of his questions about his little "angel sister," as he now called her, after sitting as if in deep thought for some time, he looked up to his mother, and said,

"O! mother, how I wish father was just as he used to be! Since I've been sick, I've thought a great deal about him."

"How, my dear?" said his mother; "what have you thought?"

"Why, somehow, mother, I've thought that father was n't sick, exactly; for, O! he is so altered, mother!"

"Yes, my dear; your father has changed very much within a short time," said Mrs. Sedley.

"But, mother, I'm afraid" — and the child hesitated.

"Afraid, Charles? — What, dear, are you afraid of, — that he will not get better?"

"O! mother, I don't like to say; I don't like to tell you what I am afraid of."

"And yet, my child, I never wish you to be afraid to tell your mother anything you dare to think."

"Well, then, mother, I am afraid there is

something wrong about father; for, when little sister died, he did n't seem to care anything about it. And, mother, I'm sick now, and I care — and I care a great deal about you, too. And why should n't father, then? for it seems to me that he don't care anything about you, either."

"O! I hope he does, my dear!" said Mrs. Sedley; and she added, as she wiped away the starting tear, "still, it is a great grief to me to see your father in the condition that I do see him in."

"Well, mother, I know it makes you feel bad to talk about it, or to hear me; and I'm sorry to grieve you. Don't cry, mother,— it troubles me to see you; but I do wish father was kind to you, for then I should n't have anything to trouble me. You would n't cry, then, either."

"My poor boy!" said the mother, "you are kind to me, and that is a great comfort."

"I know you love me; and O! mother, I love you dearly. And if father only did, and was kind to you, as he used to be, why,

then — then — it would n't trouble me so much to — to leave you, mother!"

"Leave your mother! — leave me! Why, my child, what do you mean?"

"O! don't look so troubled, mother — don't! But you have told me that God took little sister home; and, somehow, I feel as if he was calling me. And, mother, if it was n't for leaving you unhappy, I should love to go and live with little sister."

"O! my child, don't think thus! You are not very sick,— not at all as your little sister was. Why, you'll be well, my dear, in a few days."

"O, no, no! I must go. I feel as if God was calling me; and I feel as if little sister was waiting for me. You told me she would be ready to welcome us there. O! mother, she comes to me in the night, and she beckons to me, and she says they are all ready for me. And, O! she looks so sweet and beautiful; and, mother, dear mother, I am all ready, only I want you to be willing to let me go."

The truth, at this, seemed to burst upon Mrs. Sedley's mind, and a feeling almost of suffoca-

tion came over her, as she felt that her boy must die. She exclaimed, almost involuntarily, "I cannot let you go. My child! my child! you must not die!" Trembling from head to foot, she sprang towards him, put her arms round him, and then gave a searching look at his face, as if she would read there proof of what she had been saying. "O!" said she, "God will spare me such an affliction."

A shadow seemed to pass over the countenance of her boy, as he looked up and saw her agonized countenance, and heard her expressions. "O! don't, mother; don't look so; don't look so distressed! You told me that 'God would do all things well.' And, O! mother, he will take care of you when I am gone. He will comfort you."

The mother, recollecting herself, loosened her arms from about him, and said, "Yes, yes; 'He doeth all things well,' and will not try me beyond my strength."

From that hour the boy rapidly declined. And, O! how that mother watched over her child,

"As the soft light of heaven seemed shed o'er his face,
And his delicate form wasted slowly away!"

As the autumn-leaf grows brighter until the blast sweeps it from his parent stem, so did her child seem to grow more beautiful, and his mind brighter, until his gentle spirit took its flight. One night he had fallen into a quiet sleep. He had seemed better through the day, and a hope was cherished by the mother that he might yet recover. He seemed to sleep so quietly that, worn out as she was with watching and care, she threw herself upon the bed by his side. She was soon roused by a soft, sweet tone, that, as she listened, she found was the sick child, singing the words of a beautiful little song he had learned. She only heard this line:

"O! See, mother, see!
The bright, blessed angels are waiting for me."

He directly waked; and, seeing his mother bending over him, said, "I shall soon be there, mother. I just thought I saw the angels coming for me."

He rapidly failed; and, ere the sun had rose

and set again, his spirit had gone to join the angels he thought were waiting for him. He slept much through the day, until about three o'clock, when he seemed to rouse up. "Mother," said he, "I must bid you good-by. O! it is so misty before my eyes! What is it, mother? I cannot hardly see you. O! let me kiss Nelly and Willie. And where is father? O! where is father? Do ask him to come and kiss his little boy once more!" A number of friends were assembled about the dying child, and Mrs. Sedley requested one to go and find his father. For a few moments he was quiet again, as if asleep, when suddenly he roused. He whispered, "Mother, mother, good-by; — mother, — father!" He looked up. A smile of radiant joy lighted up his face. He gently pressed his mother's hand clasped in his, and "went up with the angels that waited for him." Not a struggle, — not a groan, — but placidly, peacefully, he went to sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

"With such a woful weight of misery laden,
As well might challenge the great ministry
Of the whole universe to comfort it."

AT this moment the father came reeling into the room. He seemed too stupefied to comprehend wherefore he had been summoned. He stared vacantly at one, and then another, of the friends who had come to stand by Mrs. Sedley through this trying hour, for a few moments; then, moving towards the child, muttered something about his not being so well, — but, losing his balance, he staggered, and reeled, and finally tumbled, like a dead weight, upon his once idolized boy! Yes, there was death! — death, indeed! Moral death, side by side with physical death; and how much more awful, more terrible, was the picture, or rather the reality, of the one than the other! The father, loathsome and revolting in appearance, dead,

morally dead; every green leaf of feeling dried up,—seared by that curse of curses, alcohol! O! ye traffickers in that deadly curse! Even your hard hearts must have been pierced by the shriek of the wife, the mother, and the wail of those more than fatherless children! Even such hearts as yours must have felt sick at a spectacle so revolting as that drunken father stretched out upon the fair form of his lifeless child! Mr. Raymond, who had let the father into the room, seemed at first perfectly paralyzed at the horrid sight; but, prompt to his duty to the mother and children, recovering himself, he gave her his arm and led them out of the room;—and then, after seeing the father conveyed to a room apart from the family, he began to revolve in his mind what was best to have done to save the family from such revolting, awful scenes. Something must be done with and for Mr. Sedley. Something must be done to separate him from the beastly cup; and what was it? It was in his own store; and if that was destroyed, there were enough who would gladly deal out the poison to him. He thought of his conversation with

Mrs. Sedley on the temperance movement in Maine. He saw that a pledge was not sufficient to save, or even stay, the ruin of the unhappy soul, possessed of the fiendish appetite. Yes, fiendish; for, if the arch enemy is not coiled up in the cup, how else can a man destroy himself and those he loves for his appetite, if there is not something demoniac in this bitter, withering curse? He thought of that law, and he hoped it might yet be practicable. As for Frank Sedley, he could think of nothing that would separate him from the ruinous cup but the county-house. Yet he hardly dared to speak of that to his wife. It must be trying to her spirit to have her husband carried, like a felon, to the House of Correction! The dreadful state of intemperance into which his friend had fallen had been so sudden that Mr. Raymond could hardly realize that it was so; and he could not but feel powerfully the contrast between Mr. Sedley's condition, a few months ago, compared with the idea of his being confined in a place for correction. But what could be done? He consulted with Dr. Winship, who was still in the room where lay the inanimate

form of the beautiful and once idolized son of the object of this conversation. "Now, what had we better do?" said Mr. Raymond. "What course should you advise? The man is all but ruined now, and will be quite, unless something is done. What plan would be better than the one proposed?" "That fiend of a clerk is the one that ought to go," said Dr. Winship. "O! these tempters, these traffickers, who hold out the snare for the gold they may get, should be the ones visited by the law. They should be the men confined—imprisoned. Where are they? I confess it hurts my feelings to see one naturally so noble-spirited, so open to every kind and generous feeling, as Frank Sedley, shut up with felons. Raymond, I am beginning to think very favorably of the temperance movement in Maine; and I wish in my heart we could have the same here. If our laws fell on the right heads, that wife and those more or worse than fatherless children, would be spared this sore trial to their feelings. But we will talk with Mrs. Sedley."

The afflicted mother and wife well knew that her husband would never reflect until separated

from temptation; and she knew of no other way to bring him to himself than the plan proposed, and also that he had made himself amenable to the law. And, trying as it was to her soul, she acquiesced, and her husband was carried to the House of Correction!

CHAPTER IX.

A REMOVAL.

THE death of her eldest son — the child of so many hopes, the child of such promise, cut down in the morning of life — was indeed an afflictive dispensation to Mrs. Sedley. Yet that religious peace and trust that had sustained her in other trying hours did not fail her now. She could think of her child as numbering one among the "bright, blessed angels," who he thought were calling him to join them; and she could say, "It is well with the child."

But the shock she had received at the death-bed of the loved one was almost overpowering to her. She almost sunk under it. Yet the soft voices of the little children still spared to her roused her, and she exerted herself to soothe and comfort them. The realities of life called for attention, for action, and she met the call with her characteristic firmness and self-control.

She attended to the wants of the family. She arranged with her own hands the burial-suit for her little boy, the last dress he would need. She took the last look of that sweet face, "beautiful even in death;" and followed him, as he was borne to his last, long home. The season, the day, seemed appropriate for the occasion. Spring was just lifting the drapery that winter had thrown over the decay of nature. A bright April sun shone upon the scene, and the genial influences of a soft southern breeze were awakening into life again the treasures that had been so long hidden. Spring was again returning, and it whispered of hope to the stricken mother. Ay, let it whisper of hope! Beautiful, beautiful, indeed, is the return of spring, for it brings with it, not only its own treasures, — its daily and hourly unfolding beauties. Not alone its sky, transparent azure, and the "green sward's violet breath;" not alone its bright sunshine, and the flower-cup's glow, the dancing rivulet, and the melody of birds, — but it whispers of hope. It comes as a messenger of hope for those heart treasures that we have seen wrapped in the snowy robe, and laid in the

silent earth. Some, as the fragile snowdrop in the very dawn of life; some, as the bright and promising rose-bud, ere it had but half expanded; and others, vigorous and useful in the prime of manhood, cut down as a healthy plant by an untimely frost. Yes, the return of spring speaks of hope to the stricken heart,—to the heart that would otherwise be left desolate by the oft-repeated sundering of the golden ties that bound its treasures there; for, as the blade springs up, and earth is covered with a new verdure, shall they not rise and bloom again, even in an unfading bloom? As the plant dies, and the germ lives to revive again and assume a new and more beautiful form, still recognizable by us, so may we not feel that the friends of whom we have been bereft may rise, and, in a new and fairer form,—even a spiritual body,—be recognizable by us? When we, too, shall have sailed over the wide ocean of life,—when we have stemmed its tide and braved its billows with the eye of faith fixed steadily upon the star that shall guide us to that unknown and by us that untrod shore, and when we have finally reached that shore, will

they not be there to welcome us? — to welcome us home,—to a home that shall no more be broken, where shall be no more sundered ties, no more frosts and snows, no tears, nor pain, nor care. And why should we mourn for those “who have but the earliest left for a better home”? When we see the suffering friend at last sink to rest in a peaceful, quiet sleep, even the sleep of death, and know that the loved form can no more feel pain or sorrow, and trust that the freed spirit has “bounded away to realms of unending day,” why should we grieve? And yet the tear will fall,—the heart, perhaps, will be agonized. A link is severed, a golden chain broken, and we must weep, but not as without hope. We would not indulge a selfish grief. There is no heart with but one tie; and, while we are all children of the same Father, with our hearts full of love to him, and to them, we have active duties enough to perform, to forbid our indulging in a selfish sorrow. It is better to let the wound heal, to “look aloft” for aid and comfort, and He who has said “Thy days shall be as thy strength” will not leave us comfortless.

But to return to our story. When the funeral was over, and the disarranged household "put to rights," the vacancies made by death and the absence of her husband were strangely felt by Mrs. Sedley. Fatigue and care had worn much upon her health, and she found her strength giving way under the pressure of her anxiety for the future. For a few months her husband had been wasting his property by carelessness and bad bargains. His creditors, alarmed when they heard where he was, hastened to secure their claims; and, in the course of a few days, an attachment was made upon all of his property. The house in which he lived had been built but a few years; and, having been built for himself and under his own supervision, every convenience and comfort were attached to it. Possessed of fine taste, he had taken great pains in laying out a garden and grounds about it. It was painful to Mrs. Sedley to feel that all this must be sacrificed, all sold under the hammer. And yet she would keep back nothing as long as a claim was unsatisfied; and even her furniture she offered, and all except what was absolutely necessary for an

humble way of housekeeping was to be sold. Yet she could not understand how her husband had so fast ruined himself. She knew that, though he was not what would be called very rich, still he had a competency,—and where was it? And what could she do? She felt that she must rouse herself to action,—and what should she do? While undecided what step to take, what course to pursue, she received a letter from her husband. He addressed it to his "heart-broken wife;" and well might he think she had been tried enough to break the heart, unless something higher than earthly love and earthly hopes sustained her. And such a letter! It was enough to have warmed up the whole fountain of love and tenderness, if it had ever been chilled. It breathed the deepest penitence and grief for his misconduct,—reproached himself with having been the cause of the death of Charles, his once dearly-loved son, even the idol of his heart. "And now," said he, "now that my brain is clear, and I can think and feel, I bitterly repent my folly, my worse than folly,—my madness! I can see that I am ruined,—ruined as far as

business matters are concerned. I remember how my store appeared when I saw it at one time with a partially clear brain; and I know that my own recklessness, with the help of that villain whom I have employed, must have ruined me. And now what can I do? I dare not trust myself again among the scenes and into the society which have proved so fatal to me. I dare not trust to my own power of resistance. And, O! what can I do? Can I ever show myself again in the presence of my ever patient, kind, but, I know, broken-hearted wife? O! curse me not, curse me not, Emily; but pray for me,—pray for your repentant husband!" And thus he went on, breathing penitence and contrition. He begged her to write him, for he never should dare to go into her presence again, until he received an assurance that she could forgive him, and would receive him, and help him resist such evil habits.

This letter, so full of penitence and regret for his misconduct, and still discovering affection for herself and children, touched Mrs. Sedley to the very soul. She wept for him as if

the whole fountain of tears was broken up. She prayed for him with all the fervor of a trustful and believing heart, and she acted for him with her usual promptness and decision. The letter suggested to her mind the expediency of her leaving the town, and all the scenes to which her husband had been accustomed. At first, she thought of her early home. The house in which she had spent her sunny childhood and her happy youth still belonged to her. It had not gone, with the rest of her little property, to help fill the rumseller's pocket, as everything else had seemed to go that her husband could get possession of. She still held a deed of it; and yet the house was rented, and she reflected that it would be painful to her husband to go there in his present condition, or rather when he was at liberty to return to his family. No; she felt that she had better go where he was entirely unacquainted. At last, she thought of her kind friend in Maine. She remembered her repeated invitations to visit her. She had, moreover, been urged by her many times to remove there. The lady, whose name was Willard, a distant connection of Mrs. Sedley,

knew of her husband's intemperance. Having had her own hopes, her fair prospects and her young affections, blighted by the same evil, she knew well how to sympathize with Mrs. Sedley; and being sanguine that the "new law" would be effectual in removing the evil, she urged her friend to come where the law might save her husband. Until now, Mrs. Sedley had seen no way by which a plan like this could be affected; but now she thought it might be practicable, and the best thing she could do in her present emergency. She consulted with her friends, Dr. Winship and Mr. Raymond, and both of them advised her to carry her plan into execution.

"Go there, yes; go to Maine, Mrs. Sedley," said Dr. Winship, "and you will save your husband. He is not a vicious or wilful man, not by any means, and that law they have got there will do the work that our temperance societies and pledges can never do."

"Why, doctor," said Mr. Raymond, "you undervalue the moral power and influence of our exertions in the temperance way, I think. The temperance societies have done a great

deal of good, I think; and signing the pledge, I know, has saved many a young man."

"I don't doubt it. I don't doubt it in the least, Raymond," said Dr. Winship. "I know they are good, as far as they go; but they don't go far enough,—not yet, they don't; but when they get us a law, a law that will shut up the grog-shops, and stop the traffic in the vile stuff, they'll 'hit the nail on the right place,' square on the head."

"I cannot exactly agree with you yet about the law, doctor; yet it may be well for Mrs. Sedley to go to Maine; I do not believe the law will hurt her or her husband, and it may be, as you say, effectual in saving him. At any rate, a change of scene and society will be the best thing in the world for both of our friends, in my opinion."

"Yes, yes," said Dr. Winship; "your strength and health have had a heavy tax laid upon them, Mrs. Sedley, and it will do you good to change the scene; and now, as you will be necessarily somewhat upset here, and will probably be obliged to move, I think the step proposed the very best you can take."

"And still, I do not know about the propriety of my leaving," said Mrs. Sedley; "everything is unsettled, and—"

"Mrs. Sedley, I shall be very happy to take charge of anything you may intrust to my care," interposed Mr. Raymond, "and assist you in any way that lies in my power."

"Allow me, also, to offer you my assistance, Mrs. Sedley," said Dr. Winship.

"Gentlemen, I have already given you both more trouble than it will ever be in my power to repay; still I shall gladly accept your kind offices, if I need any assistance. I suppose my first step should be to go to Maine, and see if I can find a place for us; and yet," continued Mrs. Sedley, "perhaps it would be as well to write to my friend first, and advise her of my plan."

The last arrangement was thought the best, and in the course of the following week Mrs. Sedley received an answer to her letter. Mrs. Willard was a widow, without children, and lived with a nephew of the same name. She was quite advanced in life and an invalid, yet a very kind, benevolent woman. In answer to

Mrs. Sedley, she urged her to come to her immediately, expressed much sympathy for her in her desolate situation, and said she should esteem it a privilege to assist her as far as it was in her power. She was in feeble health herself, but her friends would welcome with much pleasure their distant cousin, and would counsel and assist her in whatever arrangement she might make for the future; and, until such time as she could carry into operation some arrangement better, their house was open to herself and little family.

Mrs. Sedley immediately made preparations necessary for a removal, and gladly accepted Mr. Raymond's offer to accompany her. Some days previous to her going away, when talking with her faithful domestic about the new home she was about seeking, "but," said she, "Kate, I am very sorry to have to part with you."

"Part with me, ma'am?" exclaimed Kate, in astonishment.

"Yes, Kate, I see no other way; necessity will compel me to."

"And, ma'am, won't you let me go, too? And who will look after the childers?"

"Well, Kate, I think I shall be able to do that myself; you know we have but two left now."

"Indeed, ma'am, I know what a deal of trouble we've had, and I'm so lonesome after the baby, and when dear little Charley died! O, ma'am, that child was an angel, with his kind ways and his sweet talk; and I'm getting as thin as a shadow after him, and you are all worn out."

"Yes, Kate, we have had many trying scenes to go through with, lately," said Mrs. Sedley, as she wiped the tears Kate's allusion to her children had brought into her eyes, "and you have been a faithful friend to me; I shall never forget you, Kate, never; but I shall soon get rested, and can do all the work our little family will require."

"O, ma'am, there's no use in tryin', you can't do alone; and my heart would be for breakin' after the darlins, and little Willie would cry his eyes out after Katie clever, as the darlin' calls me. O! 't would break my heart, 't would break my heart, to be after parting with the childers!"

"Still, I see no other way, Kate, for me to do. I know the children will miss you very much, for you have been very kind to them; but you can get a good place here, and I cannot afford to pay you as I have done."

"And suppose you don't pay me, ma'am? I know how things has changed, well enough; yes, yes, things is very different now from what they used to be; but I'm not the one that'll desert you in your trouble. Myself won't do that."

"But, Kate, you cannot work without wages."

"For one year I can, ma'am; and that's not saying much for a body that's been paid and cared for as I've been. O, ma'am, you would n't be for going to break my heart in this way!"

Mrs. Sedley was, as Kate said, "quite worn out," and her health was anything but good. She hardly knew how she should be able to manage alone, unaccustomed to hard labor as she had ever been; still, she knew not how she could ever remunerate Kate for her time. But the faithful girl seemed so unhappy, that she

felt as if she could not leave her behind ; and she concluded, to the girl's delight, to take her with her. She selected out of her furniture all that she thought would be absolutely necessary for housekeeping, and saw it packed ready for her whenever she found a place for it. A few nice articles, also, she kept : a little table that was purchased for Charles, and a bureau in which were packed his clothes, she felt as if she could not part with ; and the cradle in which her children had all been rocked, and in which the little one was laid after death. These articles had a value attached to them that rich carpets, sofas, &c., had not ; and she kept them. Mrs. Sedley shed no tear at leaving her new house, her pleasant garden, nor the many comforts that surrounded her once happy home. The thought that by leaving them she might save her husband more than balanced the pain she would otherwise have felt at leaving the place where, indeed, she had found kind friends. But when she went to take a last look at the little graves ; a deep sadness came over her spirit ; it was hard, indeed, to leave them, and she wept. The mother wept, and yet she was

not comfortless ; she could look beyond those little mounds, beyond the lowly beds in which reposed the once beautiful and loved forms of her children ; for the gems that made those forms dear to her were not there ; they were not mouldering in decay, but were jewels in her Father's house. Their little barks had sailed swiftly over life's sea, and how many rocks, shoals and tempests, they thus escaped ! They had not to go out into a rough world, seeking a new home ; for they were safely landed on a better shore.

“ There, by bright waters and green pastures led,
Where change comes not, and tears no more are shed,
They dwell in peace, nor longer need they roam,
For in a Father's house they 've found a blessed home.”

CHAPTER X.

THE RETURN.

IN the course of a few weeks, Mrs. Sedley, with her family, was established in a quiet village in Maine. She had succeeded in finding a small cottage quite near Mrs. Willard. With the little furniture which she saved for herself, and a number of articles which her own industry and ingenuity enabled her to manufacture, she had contrived to fit up her house in a neat, tasteful manner. The several boxes in which her furniture had been packed she had converted into tabourets, ottomans, lounges, &c., covering them with a piece of patch which some time previous had been purchased to cover nicer furniture of the same names. After she had finished them, and the house was set in order, "Now, Kate," said she, "I think my husband will think that we

look about as pleasant as when we moved into our new house; at least, he will think we look very 'comfortably fixed.'"

"O, indeed, ma'am, he will," said Kate; "you have such a beautiful taste. Nobody but your own self would have ever thought of fixing those old boxes into such pretty furniture."

Again Mr. Sedley joined his family. We will pass over the first interview between himself and wife with merely saying that he was penitent and sober as one could wish or expect. It was a matter of wonder to him how, in such feeble health, his wife could have accomplished so much in so short a time; and said he to her, after admiring her arrangements, "You have set me an example for industry that I hope I shall follow." To his inquiry of Kate how she and her mistress had managed to do so much, "O, sir," said Kate, "'when there's a will there's always a way;' and my mistress always has a will to make the most and best of everything." Mr. Willard, the gentleman who had kindly received Mrs. Sedley into his own house, had exerted himself for her until

he found her comfortably established in the cottage; and after her husband had joined her, he took the same interest for him. He tried to find him employment by which he could support his family; and one day he called upon Mr. Sedley, and told him that he had found a situation where, until perhaps he could do better, he could be employed, and would be paid a respectable salary. It was in a grocery, and quite near them. "Mr. Maitland is not," said Mr. Willard, "so good a temperance man as I could wish; but still, since the late law has passed he has not sold spirituous liquors, as he formerly did. He never was what would be called an intemperate man; still, he has sold it, and, I suppose, has made a good deal of money in selling it. He says," continued Mr. Willard, "that he is in need of a clerk just now, and I know of no chance better for you, at present, than that."

Mr. Sedley was glad of any employment by which he could support his family, and gratefully accepted the situation. His property, sold under the hammer, had hardly been sufficient to satisfy the claims made upon it, and he

was poor; he felt poor, and somewhat discouraged. It needed all of his wife's firmness, energy and cheerfulness, brought into exercise, to raise him from the depression into which he had fallen. He bitterly mourned for the loss of his children,—reproached himself for having reduced his family to poverty,—for having brought so much suffering upon his patient and devoted wife. "O, Emily!" he would say, "how, how have you endured all this? how have you lived under such trials? and how can you still love me, when I have been the cause of all of your suffering?" Mrs. Sedley made every effort, at such times, to soothe and cheer her husband. She was not disposed to magnify evils nor to overlook blessings. Her husband was restored to her and to himself, and she felt that now he was safe; for she thought his only weakness or serious failing was in not properly controlling his appetite; and here, she supposed, it would be impossible to obtain the means for gratifying it. "And now," said she, "while our prospects seem to be brightening, let us not be weighed down by memory's clouds, nor by

anticipation of future ill, but rather let us enjoy, with grateful hearts, our present blessings. Mrs. Sedley, at the time of leaving Massachusetts, had received the rent for her own house. Not having been paid for some time, it amounted to quite a little sum. This, added to the wages her husband received weekly, gave them quite a comfortable living, though very humble compared to their former style.

Summer approached; and, though to our friends it seemed to advance with lingering steps, it came, at length, with its soft airs and its sunny skies, its rich verdure and its fragrant flowers. Nature unfolded her treasures with a bountiful hand; and Mrs. Sedley (who was a true lover of nature) welcomed them with delight. And another treasure was given to her in this season of sunshine and flowers,—one that seemed to take the place of the little one who she felt was now blooming in a “better land.” A little daughter was added to the family circle in which death had recently made two vacancies. “And,” said the affectionate Kate, “sure we must call her Lizzy; and, when she

is a little older, it will seem as if we had the poor little creature back again.”

A more attentive or affectionate husband never watched over the sick bed of his wife than Mr. Sedley. For many weeks his wife was confined to the bed, and her anxious friends were fearful she never would rise from it. Very slowly she recovered. She had kept up when many would have sunk; and, when at length she was prostrated, it took time and most careful nursing to restore her. Now, health was returning, and she was able to enjoy the fresh air, the pleasant season, and the fragrant flowers. Mrs. Sedley found warm-hearted and kind friends in Mr. Willard's family. During her illness they had been attentive, watched with or nursed her as necessity called, and took her children to their own house, to relieve their mother from any care. Other friends Mrs. Sedley had not made; and, in their reduced circumstances and present situation, she cared not for many acquaintances. Home was the centre of attraction to her. There her affections, her hopes and her strong sympathies, clung; but, with a heart expansive as hers,

open to every kindly emotion, to sympathy with the suffering, to joy with the joyous, and glowing with love to God and love to man, she indulged in no selfish pleasure. A large field and great moral dearth was before her; and, whenever she could lend a hand in spreading or advancing the principles of temperance, liberty and truth, she rejoiced in doing it. Still, the life, the soul of happiness, she felt was found in the domestic circle. Never weary in discharging the duties devolving upon a wife and mother, her care and affection never slumbered. With an eye open always to the comfort of any one in any degree dependent upon her, she found her own happiness in seeking that of others. Cheerfulness ever beamed upon her face, and her kind words fell like music upon the ear. Her efforts were untiring to make all happy about her,—to make hers a home of love,

“A home of love,

A blessed type of a brighter, better home above.”

In her intercourse with the Willards, the temperance question was frequently a subject of conversation. The operation of the new law

was a question of deep interest at this time to them all; and even Mr. Sedley discovered great interest in having it enforced. “But,” said he to Mr. Willard, when one day they were conversing upon it, “I believe the law is evaded yet by some. There are men frequently in the store who, if I am not much mistaken, use intoxicating liquors. I hoped the law would be effectual in stopping the use of it as a beverage altogether.”

“And I have no doubt it will, eventually; but we must keep our eyes open, and not relax in our efforts in the temperance cause. The work is not wholly done yet; but this law will stop it, after a while. It must, I am very positive of it. But where do they get it? Our Vigilance Committee must be on the alert.”

“Being but little acquainted here,” replied Mr. Sedley, “I can have no idea about where it is obtained. I only know that it is somewhere about us.”

“It cannot, I think, be kept in this neighborhood,” said Mr. Willard; “but I know there are men in the North Village who would brave almost anything to gratify their appetites.

There's Wilder,—Spofford Wilder,—he is a sly, artful fellow; and, though I don't know as he would sell it himself, I have no doubt but he would plan for others who have not his long head. He makes a tool of Piper and a half a dozen others in the same village, who would be honest men if it were not for rum; but Wilder has a long head, and is a dangerous fellow."

It was evident to the temperance party that traffic in liquors was secretly carried on, and yet no proof could be found to convict any one. It was known that at a celebration on the fourth of July a number were intoxicated, but where they got the article was a mystery no friend to temperance could solve. Mrs. Sedley knew not of these things, for her husband feared it might give her unnecessary anxiety, and she was still feeble. He felt himself strong enough to resist the evil, even though it came in his way. Yet he made every exertion to have the law enforced,—“For,” said he, “I shall certainly be safe then; and, though I now feel strong enough to resist, I have found, by sad experience, that it is better not to be led into temptation.” One evening, in the latter part of

July, Mr. Sedley returned home at night earlier than usual, saying to his wife, as he entered the house, that he felt quite unwell,—that he had through the afternoon suffered much from sickness at the stomach and severe pain. Mrs. Sedley gave him some warm tea, and he went to bed, and for a time seemed relieved, and fell asleep; but, in the night, he awoke in very severe pain, and directly vomited, and for two or three hours he continued vomiting at intervals. He was in excessive pain, and could keep nothing on his stomach he took for relief. His wife, fearing he was attacked with cholera morbus, became alarmed, as all her efforts to relieve him failed, and called up Kate to go for a physician. Mr. Sedley told her, however, that she had better send Kate into Mr. Maitland's, and request him to step in. He was the nearest neighbor, and the doctor lived too far distant for Kate to go in the night. “O!” said Mr. Sedley, “I would not trouble any one, but I do not feel as if I could endure such pain until morning; and Mr. Maitland, I have no doubt, will be willing to go for the doctor, when he sees me suffering thus.” Kate ran

with all possible speed on her errand, and in a few moments Mr. Maitland was in the room. "I would not have troubled you, sir," said Mrs. Sedley, as the gentleman entered; "but my husband seems so ill that I became quite alarmed, and it is so far to Dr. Goodwin's that I did not like to send Kate."

"O, don't make any apologies, ma'am," said Mr. Maitland; "I shall be very glad if I can be of any use to you. But how is your husband? I knew he was not well when he left the store, but I did n't dream that he was going to be really sick."

Mrs. Sedley took the gentleman into the room where her husband lay almost convulsed with pain. "Why, Sedley," said Mr. Maitland, "I'm sorry to find you in such a fix,—but what's the matter?"

Mrs. Sedley explained to him how he had been, and what she had done for her husband. "But," said she, "his stomach seems to reject everything."

"O!" said Mr. Maitland, "I think I can prescribe for him. A slight touch of cholera morbus; that's it,—that's it. I've just had

such a turn myself; only a few days ago; and I know just what to do for him. A little brandy and water will check the vomiting, and then he'll soon be relieved. Have you any in your house?"

"Not a drop, Mr. Maitland; but is not there anything else that will answer the same purpose?" said Mrs. Sedley.

"I don't know of anything else in the world that will give him relief like it. Why, it always cures me, and I am very subject to such turns. Why," continued Mr. Maitland, "'t is the very best thing in the world for him."

"But had we not better send for the doctor?" said Mrs. Sedley.

"O! there is n't the least need in the world of it; and it's ten to one whether you'd find him at home; and it would take an hour to get him here; and 't is too bad for the poor fellow to suffer so."

"But I have no brandy."

"Never mind, never mind; I've plenty at home. Why, I always keep it for medicine. There's no harm in that, you know; I'll just

step home and get some,—and in two minutes I'll have something that will stop that."

During this conversation Mr. Sedley was suffering from nausea, and when Mr. Maitland left the room he was vomiting.

He had just thrown himself back upon the bed, almost exhausted, when Mr. Maitland returned. "Mrs. Sedley," said he, "just give your husband about half a glass of this, with about as much water; not all at a time, though."

Mr. Sedley, hearing the prescription, said he could not take it.

"O! yes, yes; you must. It's just what the doctor would give you, I know; for he gave it to me the first time I was attacked, and it relieved me at once."

Mr. Sedley still persisted in refusing it, and his wife did not urge him at all. Still, she was greatly alarmed, and knew not what to do. Again Mr. Maitland urged his taking the brandy. "No, no," said Mr. Sedley; "I had rather die than take it."

"Why, the fellow's crazy!" said Mr. Maitland; "it can't hurt you, Sedley, and try it,

and, if it don't relieve you, why then I'll go for the doctor. But, I tell you, there is no use in that; for I know 't is just what he'd order. Dr. Goodwin is none of your cold-water doctors,—not he. I know him too well not to know that."

Mr. Sedley was relieved for a time, after vomiting; but when another attack of pain came on, his suffering was so intense that he was persuaded to take the brandy. The stomach did not reject this, as it had everything else, and in course of half an hour he had taken the half-glass. Mr. Maitland urged Mrs. Sedley to retire, saying he would stay with his patient; but, her husband being so much relieved, she told him that she would not trouble him further. "O! 't is no trouble,—none at all," said Mr. Maitland; "it is getting towards morning, and I shan't go to bed again. I may just as well sit here, and you look too feeble to lose much sleep. You will be sick, next."

Mrs. Sedley was persuaded to leave her husband to be watched over by Mr. Maitland, and retired to another room to rest. She left her

husband asleep; and, though rejoicing that he was relieved, she feared for the effect the medicine would have upon him. And yet, thought she, I need not fear for him, for he cannot get it only for medicine. Mr. Maitland watched over his patient well; and, when he discovered the least symptom of returning pain, the brandy was ready, and his nurse no longer found an unwilling patient at the repeated doses. In the morning Mr. Sedley was better. The brandy had been effectual in allaying the sickness and pain. "There was no doubt but it did him good," as Mr. Maitland said, for the time being. And so is prussic acid used sometimes, and with the very best effect; and, though it is a deadly poison, taken in small quantities, too, it does not carry that bitterness — that bitterness to the soul — that there was in that half-glass of brandy! It required some gentle medicine to remove entirely the disease by which Mr. Sedley had been attacked. "Wash it down with a little brandy and water," said Mr. Maitland, "and you'll be on your feet again before night." But, O! did that man know how much suffering, how much misery was pro-

duced,—the effect of that "little brandy and water,"—would he, determined to evade the law as he was, would he have prescribed it? With how much care, how much judgment, should anything which possibly might be so productive of evil be used!

With her husband restored to himself, and discovering a heart full of kind and generous emotion, Mrs. Sedley could have looked calmly on, and seen his eyes closed to every earthly scene. She could have watched over him, as the pulsation of his heart ceased, and his hand was cold and powerless in death, and have been ready to say, "'T is my Father hath done it. His will, not mine, be done." But to see him in a stupor worse than death, caused by the indulgence of the appetite roused by that half-glass of brandy, was more than she could look upon with calmness. Though, with her soul lifted above the trials and cares of life, she could say "Thy will be done!"—still, there was agony—deep, heartfelt agony—in seeing that mind, so generous, so noble, when unclouded, so lost to everything that was good, blackened by the horrid cloud that hung over

it! The pint of brandy Mr. Maitland, in his generosity, left for his friend, saying, as he left it, "When you have drank that up, there is enough more to be had where that came from," was soon drank up, and Mr. Sedley was able to go out. It is not necessary to go into the details of the way in which the law was evaded,—a law which, thank God! laden with blessings as it is, is showering those blessings now over every city or village it covers. It is not necessary to say how it was evaded,—how the bane, the bitterness of life, was greedily swallowed. But, with a man who would take it himself daily, and help others to it, and even secretly sell it, there were ways found, and Frank Sedley was a third time a loathsome drunkard! Every exertion that could be made was made by Mrs. Sedley and her friends to keep him from getting the liquid poison, and to find who supplied him; but to no purpose. The salary due him was drank up; home, wife and children, were again neglected, and poverty stared them in the face! The quarter's rent was due, and a hard-hearted landlord demanded the money. He was one of those heartless,

merciless money-getters, who, counting their gain, are satisfied, though it is the price of sleepless nights, aching heads, and aching hearts. And yet he was a strong temperance man; and, when Mrs. Sedley told him that she could make out enough to satisfy his claim in a few days, he stormed, and swore that he would n't have such a drunken vagabond for a tenant of his, at any rate, and that in one week the house must be cleared. There was no way to do but for Mrs. Sedley to find another place. Mr. Willard and his wife were away at the time, and would not return until after the week was past; and, being but little acquainted, she knew not what course to take. She had become doubtful of the character of Mr. Maitland as regarded morals, and did not like to apply to him for aid or counsel. At last she thought of her physician, Dr. Goodwin, and consulted him regarding a house, or two or three rooms, that she might occupy until she had time to look about herself. To her inquiry, he told her that a small cottage, about two miles from his house, was vacant,—that the man who had formerly occupied it had recently died, and his

wife had gone to some of her friends. Said he, "I know all about the matter, for the man was a patient of mine, and the house and an acre or two of land is all the property he left in the world. His wife is anxious to rent it, for she could not live in it alone, and she would be glad of the small sum she might receive from renting it. And," he added, "I know of no other place." Knowing of no better, or rather of no other way to do, Mrs. Sedley told him she would take the cottage; and it was well for her, perhaps, that she knew not the character of the people who were to be her neighbors. With one or two exceptions, the men were habitual drunkards; and, worse than that, in a few instances there was too much sympathy of taste between husband and wife. And, if there is a sight or a scene on earth that would make the heart shudder, it is a drunken woman. A lady, in speaking of the operation of the Maine law on that village, after enlarging somewhat upon its blessings, described the effect thus: Said she, "I never approached the village but I was met by a rum-jug, a red nose, a reeling man, dirty, squalid chil-

dren, and ragged, miserable-looking women. Strong fumes of tobacco and rum greeted me, and the air was made vocal with profanity. But now," continued the same lady, "that whole village seems to have bleached out. The cottages are many of them painted; the women and children are clean, and the red noses have fairly faded out. Why," said she, "there is just as much difference between that village, before the operation of the Maine law, and the present time, as there is between a cold, drizzly November day, and a bright, sunny June morning." To this same village Mrs. Sedley was compelled to go, not knowing how she should support herself. And, be it remembered, that it was before the law that had since bleached it out, dressed up the mothers, fed the children, and steadied the trembling, reeling forms of the fathers, had found its way into those dens of iniquity where the monster was concealed. To this village Mrs. Sedley went. Her husband was no longer employed by Mr. Maitland. He was unfit for writing, or care of any kind; and he, who had been instrumental in dragging him down, offered no hand to lift him up, but

rather secretly aided him in getting what would keep him down. Mrs. Sedley exerted herself in sewing, which her friends obtained for her, and but a scanty support would the fruits of her toil give her. Her husband would work, in the early part of the day, at anything he could find to do; but all he earned was as soon spent. After she was fairly settled in the new place, she felt that she must dispense with the further services of Kate. It was a trial to her to part with the faithful girl; and she felt, situated as she was, that she should miss her society, as well as her labor. "And now, Kate," said Mrs. Sedley, "I shall have to let you go; and I think I have found a good place for you, where you will be better paid and better cared for than I can do for you."

"O! ma'am, I should rather work for you for nothin' than to go to the best place in Maine; but I know you have mouths enough to fill without mine, and nobody but yourself to earn anything, since poor Mr. Sedley has fallen into such a bad way again."

"Well, Kate, you can do better than I have been able to do by you for a long time, and you

can keep quite near us yet. Mrs. Goodwin will be glad of you, and she is a very good woman."

"O! ma'am, they don't go for the law there, and I am sure I can never serve a body that opposes what you want so much."

"No, Kate; Mrs. Goodwin is not opposed to the law. I have heard her talk about it. Her husband is, I know."

"Well, ma'am, I suppose I may as well go there; but, if you or the childers are sick, I shall come to you."

"Very well, Kate, come and see us as often as your work will admit of your leaving; and, if brighter days should ever dawn upon us, why, then, perhaps, you may come and live with us again."

Quite soon Kate was established in her new home; but it was so unlike the home she left, that she was, as she said, "lonesome after her old home." Mrs. Goodwin was a very good woman, but she had many children, and Kate had a great deal of hard work. Still, whenever she could leave, she would go and spend an evening with her friends, and always con-

trived to carry some little nice thing to the "dear childers." And these evenings were pleasant to Mrs. Sedley. She lived now a solitary life, indeed. She had few neighbors, and such as she had were to be avoided, if possible; and her friends (the Willards) were too far distant to often visit her; still, they did occasionally, and sometimes brought her cheering tidings of the operation of the new law. "We have succeeded in discovering one of the dens in which the monster was had," said Mr. Willard, in one of his visits, "and we emptied a number of barrels; and, thank God, there is so much less in Maine!"

"But yet, it is, I am confident, kept somewhere in our village," said Mrs. Sedley. "My husband, certainly, does not have to go far for it."

"Yes, there is another place suspected, and before many days I think we shall know the truth. That simple fellow, Augustus Newcomb, has betrayed his employer, and, if he knows any other place, he'll be pretty sure to let it out."

"And do you think, Mr. Willard, there is

as much exertion made to enforce the law as there should be? O! sometimes I feel as if I would go myself and plead with those men who are suspected, to give up the traffic; and yet, confined as I am, I can do nothing."

"O, Mrs. Sedley, we will find them out before long; it is impossible for them to keep secret much longer; we are pretty sure where it is kept now, and who supplies those who could not get it but for the management of some long heads."

"I know of no one more interested than our own faithful Kate; and if the simple fellow you spoke of as having betrayed one, knows of another place where the evil is hid, she will try to find out through him the place. He works for Dr. Goodwin occasionally, and she says she has both ears and both eyes open when he is about. 'O,' said she, when she left me last night, 'I'm bent on turning the creature inside out.'"

"Very well; I hope in my heart Kate may be successful."

Every exertion that possibly could be made to stop the traffic in intoxicating liquors, by

enforcing the law, was made. Still, the whole neighborhood seemed to be supplied with something that made them indolent, poor, miserable. Yes, with but few exceptions, every roof in that village covered poverty and deep misery! Under many were disappointed mothers and wives, hungry children, and drunken fathers and sons! Disappointed?—Yes, many were sorrowing in disappointed hopes. They had looked forward to “that law” as to a star rising in glory, that would brighten and cheer the desolate paths, the darkened way they had so long trod; and now they began to fear that its rays never could penetrate through the dark, heavy clouds that hung over them, and would at last set in darkness! But let us learn how a law so full of promise, and yet so slow to yield its rich harvest, was evaded; how it was held back from doing the good desired,—from lighting the darkened way, from healing the wounded spirit, from comforting the anxious wife and mother, and from saving the drunken father and son!

CHAPTER XI.

A CONVERSATION REGARDING THE RIGHTS OF FREEMEN.

To be enlightened somewhat on the question of the delay of the good promised by the Maine Liquor Law, we will listen to a conversation held by a knot of hatted bipeds; for that is as good a name as we can afford with which to dub the honorable quartet, or rather spirited quartet, who are standing in front of a low-roofed building on Mosquito Plain, which, for our present purpose, we will call Liberty Hall. They are faithful and loyal subjects of his Majesty, old King Alcohol. We may call them spirited in more senses than one, for they are fighting manfully for their liberties, taken from them by the passage of a late law; but more especially by being imbued with the high spirit of their king.

"Take away our liberties?—here's what'll let 'em know they won't come it over us in that way yet, eh? Tell us what we shall eat and drink?—They look like it, with their black coats and their long yarns, don't they? Don't look so down in the mouth, Zeke; here's a good strong arm, that'll keep the critter in hearin'. I tell ye, I'll have him, and smell him too, if I have to fight! Yes, yes, I'll fight for my liberties; that's what I will, as long as my name's Joe Blake!"

"I like your spunk," said Gus Newcomb; "it's a free country, and I mean to have my liberty. I'd jist as lives load my gun and go out Sabba'-day mornin' just as the folks are goin' to meetin', and shoot a crow, right in the face and eyes of the parson, as not, if I'm a mind to. I'd jist as lives as not, 'cause I have done it 'fore now. I tell ye what, it's a free country, and I'll have my liberty! I swow I will!"

"But, Gus, you fool, what s'pose you'd do if you'd had your liberties all taken from you, as I've had?" said Zeke Piper. "You

would n't be so ready to brag of what you'd do, I guess."

"Ah, that's only because you wan't cunnin' enough," replied Gus. "I know who's got enough of the good stuff left yet, and they won't find it out by me; I can tell 'em that aforehand."

"Brag away, Gus, but I guess you would n't feel so much like bragging, if you'd had three or four barrels of the 'real' turned out before your eyes."

"That was 'cause you wan't cunnin' enough," said Gus. "I guess they'd never found it out by me."

"Stop your nonsense, Gus! But what's to be done about this business, Wilder?" said Piper.

"Prosecute the rascals for wasting property,—valuable property!" interposed Newcomb, "and be more cunnin' next time."

"Prosecute the rascals?" Why, don't you know, Newcomb, that the law is on their side? the very law that we're fighting against?" said Spofford Wilder, "but we'll have it repealed, yet!"

"Repealed? I guess it will be repealed; and that before long, too. We need n't be scared to death yet; while we have such men as Square Gaines, Doctor Goodnow, Maitland, and a lot more of the upper kiver, we're safe; only we shall have to cut down a few of their apple-trees, first. I tell you what; if Deacon Jones don't get that nice young orchard of his nabbed, and that 'fore many days too, you need n't call me Joe Blake!"

"You must cut 'em down some Sabba'-day night, afore Monday mornin', then; it would be cunnin' to do it 'fore the crows are up," said Newcomb, "and they shan't find out by me who done it, I swow!"

"I guess you would n't feel so full of spirits, Gus, if you 'd lost so much spirits as I have," groaned Piper. "I 'se one that don't let 'trifles annoy me;' I said so when my wife died; but I'll be hanged if this an't a little more than I can bear! I can generally keep a pretty stiff upper lip; but sich an awful waste as that was! O, it went right to my heart to see it! I've hearn 'em tell about great water-falls, but that ar' rum spillin' over was the

greatest fall that ever I see! O, them glorious barrels full!—'t was too bad!"

"Well, well," said Wilder, "there's no help for it now, and you must stick to your text, that 'trifles don't annoy you;' and, after all, those few barrels are only a trifle to the quan'ty we've got safe yet. And we'll be generous with you, Piper; we'll make up your loss; but we must be more careful, and outwit the knaves, for the future. But who the deuce let it out?"

"I guess 't was somebody that warn't very cunnin'," said Newcomb. "They couldn't find it out by me, faith!"

"But, Gus, did they go to you to find out where it was kept?"

"Eh, I guess they did n't do nothin' else; but I was a little too cunnin' for 'em, that time."

"But, Gus, what did you tell the devilish spies?"

"Tell 'em?" said Gus. "O, I went all round the gould, and did n't tell 'em much o' nothin'. I was a little too cunnin' for that time; faith, I was!"

"But what did they ask you, Gus?"

"Well ye see, t' other day Deacon Jones came to my house, and brought his wife. Well, my old woman was pretty glad to see 'em, for she goes for the law, and is dreadful thick with them kind of folks, you see. So they went to palaverin' over her, and tellin' her how slick she'd get along now, 'cause she could keep the enemy out o' the house. Well, you see, they thought I did n't hear 'em; but I heard every word they said; 'cause, when I seed 'em comin,' I guessed what they was arter, and, faith, I cut right round the house into the back room, and stood behind the door. Well, they crowed so much about killing the enemy, that, I swow, I could n't stan' it any longer; and I popped in my head, and says I, 'Not as you knows on; the enemy an't so dead yet!'"

"Gus, you fool! what d'ye tell them that for?" said Blake. "But what did they say then?"

"Why then, you see, they went to palaverin' over me. They told me how much better off I should be, and said I ought to help kill the enemy. So then they went on to tell how

they were sarvin' the law on the sly ones, up the country. So says I, 'I guess they won't come it over us in that way! if they don't look out, they'll get the law sarved on themselves; 'cause 'tan't constitutional; I know 'tan't! it's a free country! and I go for liberty! Why,' says I, 'everybody has a right to do jist as he's a mind to, and drink what he's a mind to, too! and I guess some folks do, in spite of 'em!'"

"Gus! Gus! I'll bet you're the man that let the cat out," interrupted Piper, "now, now, Gus!"

"No, I did n't! so you need n't be so scared yet, 'cause I did n't do no such thing! I'se a little too cunnin' for that —"

"Well, well, go on Newcomb," said Wilder, "and let us know how you managed them."

"Well, you see, arter I said 'some folks did have their liberty,' they set up another crowin', and begun to ask me if I sold the critter; and, says I, 'there an't an innocenter man in this town than Augustus Newcomb himself! I guess you'd be pretty lucky, if everybody was as innocent as this gentleman.' Then, you

see, they went on to pump me again; but, says I, 'Now, Deacon Jones, you may jist as well stop, for you won't catch me so! I won't tell,—I swow, I won't! 'cause I promised Zeke I would n't, and, faith, I never will!'"

As Newcomb concluded the last sentence, Piper, boiling over with rage, flew at him, exclaiming, at the same time, "You're a mean traitor, Gus!" and had it not been for the interference of Wilder and Blake, he would have levelled him at once; but Blake caught him by the arm, and Newcomb dodged some rods away.

"Let him go," said Blake; "he's a poor simpleton, and all we've got to do is to look out for him."

"Yes, yes," said Wilder, laughing, "we must look out for the fellow; but that joke is too good to be lost. Ha, ha! —'I promised Zeke I would n't, and, faith, I never will.' O, it's worth all the rum that has been lost through his folly."

"Hallo, there! what are you laughing at?" exclaimed a new voice, as another red face approached the group.

"They're laughing over my misfortunes!" replied Piper. "'T an't enough that I've had all them barrels leaked out, but they're all agin' me!"

"No, no," said Wilder, and explained to the new comer the state of affairs.

"Well, now, I tell you what it is, gentlemen; I've pretty much made up my mind to turn over a new leaf. I don't believe there is any good coming of our going against the law."

"Well, Squire, I should like to know how long it is since you came to such a sage conclusion," said Wilder. "It seems to me that it was only last night that I saw a jug filled, which, I presumed, was for your own private use."

"Well, if it was, I did n't drink out of it last night, at any rate. It was as much as I could do to help Sedley home. I needed a clear head to do it; but, I declare, it made my heart ache to see that wife of his; if my wife would speak as kind to me when I'm sober as she did to Sedley, drunk as a dog, as he was,

I'd never give her cause to speak cross again, never ! ”

“ Well, I should like to see your wife good-natured once, Thompson,” said Wilder, sneeringly ; “ it would be something new under the sun, I reckon.”

“ She used to be good-natured enough once, and I don't blame her much, if she is cross, sometimes. I've been thinking a good deal about this rum-drinking to-day. Ever since I saw Sedley's wife, I really pitied the woman. There she was, all alone with them three little children. The boy has got the whooping-cough, and the oldest girl, I should say, is a real sick child, and a little baby, too, to take care of. Well, it was late, and she looked as pale as a sheet. But,” continued Thompson, “ she spoke just as kind and soft, somehow, as an angel ; and, thinks I, this is too bad ! I tell you, Wilder, what it is,—that woman an't been used to living so ; they say she was a rich girl, and used to live in style.”

“ Well, suppose she did ? I'm not responsible for what Sedley does. If a glass of rum makes a brute of him, it don't follow that it does of me.”



“ She spoke just as kind and soft somehow as an angel.”—Page 142.

"But I tell you, Wilder, 't an't right! It an't right to let him have it so; and I, for one, am willing to let the law take its course. I know I should be better off, if I did."

"Well, well, you may go and preach temperance to those who like it, Thompson. I call myself a right sort of temperance man, for nobody ever saw me drunk; but I am not going to be told, at this time of day, what I shall drink, or what I shall not!"

The man — Thompson — thus silenced, turned upon his heel, and left the others to devise a new plan by which the article of all this conversation could be secreted. They came to the conclusion, however, that a safer place could not be found than where it was now hid, and it was best to let it remain; but, fearing both Thompson and Newcomb now, they would represent to them that it was moved out of the village.

Thompson was the nearest neighbor to Mrs. Sedley, and something like her husband. He was a kind, generous-hearted man, but did not control his appetite; but yet a glass of liquor did not upset him, and he was very seldom in-

toxicated. He, however, opposed the new law, and drank enough to give him a red face, and provoke a not very amiable wife. The scene at Mr. Sedley's, which he described, touched his feelings, and he never after opposed the law. His friends, suspicious of him, avoided him, and their neglect was perhaps his salvation.

It was true that Mrs. Sedley's children were sick; the whooping-cough was very prevalent, and little Willie had it slightly. Helen had the same disease when quite young, and of course was not liable to take it; but now she was sick, with strong symptoms of lung fever. The mother had never realized so fully as now what true poverty was,—what it was to want the necessary comforts of life. All of her time was monopolized by family cares, and she knew not how they were to be supported through the coming winter. She had eked out, with the most sparing economy, the little she had earned, and her only hope for the future was in the ultimate success of the "Liquor law;" and even this seemed to advance with such tardy, lingering steps, that at times she felt almost discouraged lest it should never reach her. Enduring

her trials uncomplainingly, and ever seeming cheerful, Mr. Willard knew not the poverty to which she was reduced; and even Kate knew not the worst. Her kind heart would really have been "breaking after her mistress' troubles," had she known that she was sometimes hungry, and denied herself food, that her little ones might not be shortened. Kate was confined almost entirely at home, and for weeks, perhaps, could not find a spare evening to visit her old friends; and thus Mrs. Sedley, accustomed, until quite recently, to comparative luxury, and surrounded by friends, was left almost desolate,—almost deserted. One star gleamed along her path, in the hope of the final triumph of the law. But that star was not all that sustained her through the poverty, sorrows and trials, that encompassed her. "Though cares like a wild deluge came, and storms of sorrow fell," she could look above them all; and, with the eye of faith fixed on One who is mighty and able to save, she could cast all at his feet, and find the peace that all the darkness around her could not dim.

CHAPTER XII.

“All is dark to sorrow.”

IN the course of the week following the evening on which Thompson had led Mr. Sedley home, and found the family sick and suffering, Helen had recovered from the fever under which she was but for a few days prostrated, and was able to assist her mother in her household cares somewhat; but the infant discovered symptoms of whooping-cough, and required the mother's attention most of the time. It was now November,—bleak and cold. Mr. Sedley contributed not at all to the support or comfort of his family, but was rather a weight of care and anxiety, and constantly making inroads upon the little fund Mrs. Sedley had saved; and the prospect before her was dark indeed. Much of the time she could scarcely obtain the necessary comforts of life. Confined as she was with her sick children, she could make no

exertion herself for the support of the family. Through Kate and the kindness of Mrs. Goodwin, she had obtained sewing, at which the midnight lamp often found her diligently employed; but now she had neither work nor time at her command.

The whooping-cough was not confined to her family. Little Willie had taken it when, some few weeks previous, he had accompanied Kate to her present residence for a visit. While there, one of Dr. Goodwin's children had a slight cough, which was supposed the effect of a cold. It proved, however, to be the whooping-cough, and the children were all, one after the other, attacked with it. This confined Kate entirely at home; and Mrs. Sedley missed not only her cheerful face and kind sympathy, but her assistance in procuring work, and the many little comforts Kate, with the consent of Mrs. Goodwin, often brought her. With true benevolence, and with such management and delicacy that Mrs. Sedley should not feel herself dependent, Mrs. Goodwin, learning from Kate much of her former mistress' misfortunes, had often sent her many things that contributed

much to the comfort of her family. "Kate," said she at one time, "make a good large pie, and carry it to little Willie, when you go to see him to-night. And here is a jar of arrow-root; the doctor has just received a new lot, and we think it very nice. She may like it for her baby." At another time, she told her she had better carry the chickens she had promised to give Willie, for it was not best to keep them through the winter. At another still, the turkey one of the little boys had given Kate for her own. Kate, pleased enough to dispose of her turkey thus, had it killed, dressed it, and with a light heart hurried through her work to get time to go on her errand of mercy. Indeed, she never hastened over the rough two miles between Dr. Goodwin's and Mrs. Sedley's, but with a basket as heavily laden as she could well carry. For two weeks Kate had not been able to leave her work, either as cook or nurse, for much of the time she had to fill both offices. In that time, however, she had not been inactive in the temperance cause. She had been true to her remark that she would "turn Newcomb inside out," and watched her opportunity

to "sift the fellow." "Newcomb," said she, one day, when he was sawing wood for Dr. Goodwin, "you and our folks thinks pretty much the same about these temp'rance doin's. The doctor don't believe much in the new law; but how, for pity's sake, does you manage to keep dark, since you had such a spillin'?"

"Faith, I an't a goin' to tell," replied Newcomb.

"O! you needn't be afeared to tell me. Our folks don't go for the law, you know."

"Well, I an't goin' to tell; 'cause, faith, I don't know myself."

"Don't know?" said Kate; "then how do you manage to keep warmed up, this cold weather?"

"I guess I don't saw wood for nothin'; faith, I don't."

"O! that's the way the doctor pays a body, is it?" interrogated Kate, determined to find out all she could.

"Well, I guess 't an't any other. But," said Newcomb, resting on the log he was about sawing, "if you could only see how nice I fixed a wood-pile t' other day. It was the sleekest

place to hide a barrel! We piled the wood right over it, and then only had to roll up a few logs just afore the head; and old Neal himself could n't have found it, I tell you!"

"O! then it's hid in a wood-pile! It would make first-rate kindlings," said Kate; "I shall be after getting some, myself."

"Not as you knows on! You're a little too fast; 't an't best to crow too soon. If I can't see my way clear, I guess as how a Paddy can't."

"I guess a Paddy can see a wood-pile, though," said Kate.

"But you would n't find nothin' in there, if you could. Why, you see they was sort o' scart, 'cause Deacon Jones pumped me; so they went and moved it,—and, faith, they won't let me know where 't is! 'T an't fair, I swow, 't an't! Blake is mean,—as mean as a dog!"

This was all Kate could learn from Newcomb. Still, she found by him that Blake had barrels of the article in question, and an opportunity soon occurred in which she could communicate such intelligence to a friend of the

"good cause," as she called it. Mr. Willard called one morning for Dr. Goodwin to visit his wife, who was ill; but the doctor was not at home. He left his message with Kate, and she communicated her news to him. Mr. Willard directly looked into the matter; he had suspected Blake, and this confirmed his suspicion. Although Newcomb was led to suppose that the barrels were moved, they were still hid in the wood-pile; and soon the last barrel secreted in that village was emptied!

This intelligence, which would have been so heart-cheering to Mrs. Sedley, did not for some time reach her. Her infant was very sick with the whooping-cough, and she was entirely confined at home. For two or three weeks neither Kate or her other friends had visited her, and none of them knew of her suffering condition. She had scarcely provision sufficient to subsist upon comfortably. Her husband would occasionally bring home something in the way of food; but, when she was unable to go out herself, she was frequently compelled to go with but one meal a day. The long winter was before her, and she knew not what was to support

them, or what would become of them. At times, however, she thought there was a change in her husband. For a few days he had seemed not quite as stupid as usual, and discovered a little interest in the sick baby; and at night he was not so dead to everything around him as had been his custom for weeks, and indeed months. She watched his appearance with intense interest, and hailed with delight the least favorable change. One morning he seemed to be brighter than he had been since he took the brandy for medicine, and made some inquiry into the wants of the family. "I must make an effort," said he, "to get a barrel of flour to-day. You told me you were out, yesterday, but I had not time to go so far. I can have Thompson's horse to-day; and Deacon Jones, I reckon, will trust me a few days. Thompson wants me to work for him, and I can soon earn the money."

"O! you had better not get trusted," replied Mrs. Sedley. "I would not get a barrel; I can give you two or three dollars, and you can get a small bag of flour now, and some other things that we need."

After breakfast,—and a frugal one, indeed,—Mr. Sedley left home to buy food for his destitute family. Five days passed, and Mrs. Sedley neither saw nor heard of her husband. Five long, anxious days, she waited, momentarily expecting him, and suffering for the food. He had gone, as she supposed, to buy; and yet no news. He had so often been absent for three or four days together (when he had left her ostensibly for the same purpose), that she had felt no alarm until the fifth day. But now it was Saturday, and where was he? She had not heard of the recent transactions in the temperance cause, and had supposed he must be with Blake, and others of like character. Though it was agony to her to know that her husband was in such society, still there had been no more cause for alarm than many times previous to this. But now it was approaching Saturday night. The last morsel of food her house had contained was gone! Her children were hungry, and herself almost famishing for want of food! Added to this was anxiety for her husband; for, though often away, he was never before gone so long. Where could he

be, all of this time? — what doing? — and what detained him thus? — were questions she often asked herself, and of course they were unanswered. There was a possibility that night would bring him home, but no certainty; and she felt that her children could not live over the Sabbath without food. She had passed before through many trying scenes; and, though many clouds and shadows had crossed her path, she had never looked, as many do, upon life as a great shadow with bright spots reflected occasionally upon it; but rather as a beautiful light, with shadows, sometimes many and dark, falling upon it. Now, however, scarcely a ray of light could she see through the thick darkness about her. That faith in the goodness of God, that had ever sustained her, she still possessed; but it was dimmed by the helplessness of her condition and bodily weakness, and she could hardly be composed or resigned. It was the darkest hour in life that she had ever experienced; and, as it is said that “the darkest hour of night is just before the break of day,” so it proved to her. Light was dawning, and near at hand, though imper-

ceptible to her. A few hours, and many of the shadows were chased away, and faith appeared again as a beautiful light,—a light worthy of its Maker. And, though dark clouds might hover around, it still bore his impress,—the impress of the Infinite—the Almighty!

CHAPTER XIII.

NIGHT AND MORNING.

WE trust the little girl that we had started for the bread so long ago (at the commencement of our story) has not been forgotten, though it has taken so much longer to give a relation of the connecting incidents than for her to fulfil her errand. She called, as she had proposed, for Jane Thompson; but that little girl had the whooping-cough, and so poor Helen had no resource but to go alone on her cloudy, cold way. But the light-heartedness that the thought of carrying bread to her mother and the suffering little brother gave her, made her young feet light, also; and the two miles were tripped over before she was hardly aware of it; and, beside, the strong, portentous wind almost blew her over the ground. That threatening wind, whose sighs and fearful gusts brought terror to the heart of the agonized mother,—

for it too clearly proclaimed the approaching storm,—aided the child in reaching her destination. She bought her loaf of bread and a small bag of peas, which she swung on her slender arm, and started for home. She was detained some little time, however, in the store, so that it was quite dark when she began to beat her way against that wind which had propelled and hastened her footsteps hither, but which now fearfully retarded her return. Her lungs, too, sensitive to almost the slightest wind, from her recent illness, smarted under her efforts to go forward against its fearful gusts, accompanied by snow and sleet, which began to drive furiously in her face. Naturally courageous, she feared neither the darkness nor storm, but would be obliged to sometimes walk backward a little way; and the thought of her mother's welcome when she should reach home made her almost insensible to the cold and fatigue she was undergoing herself; and she was not aware of the danger of her perishing by cold, even when she found herself out of the way, in consequence of walking backward against the wind and sleet. She had

gone some distance on a wrong road, which led from her direction homeward, and lost nearly a mile's travel. Still, she pressed onward when she found her mistake, and had retraced her steps, in spite of the fitful rush of the wind and driving blasts, though at times almost deprived of breath; and her frail form would waver, and her step lose its strength, when, just as a gleam of light from the window of home met her eye, a fearful gust of wind whirled the sleet into her face. As she discovered the light, she exclaimed, "O, how joyful we will be!" and sunk before the blast, and found herself unable to rise.

The anxious mother, all this while, pale and trembling with fear, shuddered at every blast, watching impatiently for the return of her child; but she could not leave the little sick one to meet the returning girl, who she feared would perish in the raging storm. Her feelings rose to agony at the thought that her child might die on the way. "O, my child! my child!" she exclaimed. "What shall I do? What will become of us?" And she was almost startled at the sound of her own solitary

voice, which was the only sound that met her lonely ear, but the low moans of the little sufferer in her arms, and the wail of the wind without. "What can I — what shall I do?" and she walked from window to window, in agony of spirit too bitter to describe; till she resolved to administer an opiate to the child in her arms, and set out in pursuit of Helen. She laid the little one upon the bed, gave the sleeping preparation, and, after watching its effect a few moments, put on her cloak, determined to brave the storm until she could find, or send some one to find, the wandering child. "I may, at least, have time," said she, "to go as far as Mr. Thompson's; and he, I am sure, will readily go in search of my poor little girl, if I do not meet her before I reach his house." At this moment a sound called her to the bedside of the little sick one. Another violent attack of coughing had seized the child; a long whoop followed, and the mother thought for a moment that the little sufferer would never recover its breath. In a short time, however, the breath came and the coughing ceased; but could she leave her baby thus? It might at

any moment have a similar attack, and, if left alone, convulsions probably would follow. She wrung her hands in her distress, and hurried to put away her cloak, hardly knowing what she did. "Heaven help me!" she exclaimed, as the door opened, and the apparently lifeless form of Helen was borne into the room, her cheek and lips as white as the very snow that hung drifted in her hair. "O! my God! she is dead! My child, my Helen is dead!" exclaimed the agonized mother; but a labored sigh escaping the exhausted child, "Merciful Father! thou hast spared me this bitter cup!" burst from the mother, "and my child lives!"

"Yes, yes, Emily! our little girl lives! Thank God, I have saved her!"

Mrs. Sedley looked up in astonishment, as these words fell upon her ear; for, absorbed in her anxiety for Helen, she had not noticed her husband; but, with an unaccountable feeling of relief, she watched the returning consciousness of her child, and applied whatever restoratives were within her means.

In a few moments Helen raised her eyes, and, seeing her mother bending over her, she

clasped her arms about her neck, saying, "O! mother! mother! how joyful we will be; for I got the bread."

"Yes, my dear, we will be joyful; your mother is indeed joyful, for her child is restored to her!"

"And your husband, also! Yes, yes, Emily, my wife, your prodigal husband is restored to you again!" interrupted Mr. Sedley. "A merciful Providence has withheld the liquid fire that was burning up my brain; and once more I am in my senses, never, never more, under God, to lose myself in madness again!"

We will drop the curtain over the scene that followed the reünion of that now comparatively happy family. It was a scene, however, that would have touched the heart of any one, unless entirely hardened, entirely reprobate! A scene that must have removed the doubts of the wavering with regard to the utility of the "Maine Law," and one that it seems to us must have carried a conviction of its blessedness to the most determined opponent!

But, to explain how this happy change in Mr. Sedley's family was effected, we must go

back a little, to the morning he left home. It seems that he started with the intention of obtaining food for his destitute family; but, in passing Piper's house, he met him, and very willingly accepted his invitation to enter and take a morning dram. Under the influence of that, he forgot his errand, his family, and everything else. Piper's friends, true to their promise, had been generous to him, and had supplied him with what he called "life itself," as long as they could obtain any for themselves. He had not a large quantity, however, himself; and when that was drank up, knowing that he could no longer be supplied from the wood-pile, he proposed to Mr. Sedley to go with him to Mr. Maitland's.

"Maitland," said Piper, "is one of the 'big fry,' and, though everybody knows he goes agin the law, 't an't everybody that knows he keeps it under kiver of flour-barrels; them demijohns, inside, is a leetle snugger hid than in a wood-pile, accordin' to my way of thinkin'."

"But I shall be late home," said Mr. Sedley. "Suppose you go to Maitland's, while I

stop at Jones' for some flour, and I'll call over again in the evening."

"No, no," said Piper, "I an't goin' alone, 'cause I don't know but Maitland will be sort of afeared of me; you can manage him better than I can."

The two finally set out together. On arriving there, however, they found that the day before Mr. Maitland had died of apoplexy. They were not so much shocked at this as disappointed; for, with their appetites whetted up to the sharpest point, they neither feared nor cared for death, if they could only obtain what would be sure to give them moral death,—for a time, at least. To their inquiries, they found that the son, shocked by the sudden and awful death of his father, had yielded to the law, and no spirituous liquor could be obtained there. Spurred on by a determination to get it at any hazard, they walked on five miles further, to the next town; and here, too, the law had been effectual in removing the deadly curse. It was too late for our determined and brave heroes to go any further, and Piper proposed to stop over night with an acquaintance of his, and in the

morning they would start again. They found Piper's friend not willing only to give them lodging, but supplied them freely with the refreshing beverage they sought. In the morning they were ready to prosecute their search still further, and Piper's friend, having drained his last bottle in treating his guests, accompanied them. He had a brother some fifteen or twenty miles distant, who, he said, he knew would supply them; and darkness was just closing over the town as the thirsty trio entered. They proceeded at once to the brother of the host of the preceding night; but nothing comforting did they learn from him. He told them, rather, that not a drop of the article they sought could be found either in this town or in its vicinity. Tired with their long walk and fruitless search, they gladly accepted Mr. Henry's hospitality, when he invited them all to spend the night with him. This was the first day, for a number of months, that Mr. Sedley had not taken more or less of what he justly called liquid fire; and he retired to rest that night very sober. He had travelled over twenty miles of rough, frozen ground,—a much

longer distance than he had ever walked at once before,—and he was lame and very tired; his reflections, moreover, were not of the most pleasant nature; but he soon fell asleep. The morning sun was sailing high in the blue canopy when he awoke. He had slept hard, and it was some time before he could recall his recollection sufficiently to know why or wherefore he was in the strange place in which he found himself. In attempting to rise, he found himself too stiff and lame to do it without assistance; but his brain was clear. Painful thoughts, bitter recollections, rushed into his mind. He could remember but little of his past conduct; but he remembered the errand on which he left home, and the destitute, suffering state of his family. "O," said he to himself, "they will all perish for want of food!" He tried again to rise, thinking to hasten home to their relief as speedily as possible. He succeeded so far as to sit up, but one of his limbs refused to walk with lameness. When Mr. Henry found the condition of his guest, he did all he could to relieve and comfort him. Still, Mr. Sedley was unable to

leave for home until Saturday morning. Then Mr. Henry carried him, with his other guests, about ten miles on their way. The brothers, as well as Mr. Sedley, were victims to appetite, but not vicious men; and all, alike, after being deprived of the means of gratifying that appetite, rejoiced in the deprivation. Not so with Piper; he was mulish and cross, and still determined to seek still further. "I'll have you to know that I'm not going to have my rights taken from me in this style! I'll move out of the state," said he; "that's what I will!" And so he grumbled until he reached his friend's house, when he left the party to go none knew whither. Mr. Sedley made the best of his way home, after parting with his friends, stopping, however, for the articles he was commissioned by his wife to buy at Deacon Jones'. He had the same storm to encounter that almost cost the life of his little girl, and he was almost exhausted himself when he heard her faint cry. It was so dark that, covered with snow as she was, he would have passed without seeing her, had he not heard her, and made an effort to find from whence the cry

proceeded. He was successful, as we have before related, and once more Mr. Sedley is at home a sober man. That which alone can stay the drunkard in his downward course (at least, such an one as Mr. Sedley), he had at last found; "the utter impossibility of obtaining the means to gratify the appetite;" an appetite to which the possessor will sacrifice his money, his time, his friends, himself, body and soul!

The law, towards which Mrs. Sedley had looked with so much hope at first, and so much anxiety afterwards, lest it should never reach her, had at length stepped in to her relief, to her great joy, to (we trust) her future comfort and happiness.

To show the utility of that law was the object we had in view when we commenced a relation of the foregoing incidents; but the story would not be complete left thus. We would show how that law has operated,—what has been the result,—the influence it has had in elevating the condition of Mr. Sedley, and those dependent on him.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DRUNKARD'S DEATH-BED.

MR. SEDLEY, we have said, was again a sober man; and, though he reproached himself bitterly for what he called his "reprehensible conduct," still he knew that when the brandy was offered him as a "medicine," he refused to taste it, from a consciousness of his inability to resist temptation when his appetite or his brain was excited, and a determination to avoid anything that might by any possibility excite either. He perseveringly refused it, until excessive pain induced him to yield to the persuasions and entreaties of Mr. Maitland; and, after that, he had no distinct recollection of his management, until he found himself unable to rise, in a strange chamber. The sting of remorse he must otherwise have felt, when, with a clear brain, he knew the utter destitution to which his conduct had reduced his family, was some-

what modified when he reflected that he had been acting under an excited and deranged brain; and, if ever a heart rose in grateful acknowledgment to the Giver of all our blessings, his did for the blessing of that law that had stepped in between him and utter ruin. He did not sit down, however, and mourn over the past, and bewail his present poverty; but he went to work with his might to redeem the past, and to lift his family from their destitute, comfortless condition. Deacon Jones took him by the hand, and kindly cheered him on his way, with offers of assistance in any way that would promote his well-being. Dr. Goodwin visited the sick child, and, brushing away a tear (after hearing of the distress the family had been in, and the cause), said, "Well, after all, though I have sometimes found alcohol a good medicine, I reckon it kills more, in a moral sense, than it cures physically; and, on the whole, I'm inclined to be in favor of the law. At any rate, I'll never go for its repeal."

Mr. Thompson, always kind and generous,—and since the night he was introduced to Mrs. Sedley, and had his better feelings waked up by

the scene of suffering he saw, and the gentle, kind manner of the drunkard's wife towards her drunken husband, a sober, steady man,—employed Mr. Sedley, and generously paid him for his labor. Mr. Sedley, however, as soon as possible, visited Mr. Willard, and related the past circumstances connected with himself and family. Mr. Willard rejoiced over his return to his “better self,” as he smilingly called it. “Why, Sedley,” said he, “I always knew that there was nothing wanting to make you one of the best among us, but the application of that law to your own case, which you say has now met it, and I rejoice in my heart that we have been so successful in our efforts to sustain and execute it. I regret, indeed, to learn that your family have suffered so much; but I did not suppose you were reduced to such extreme poverty. Your wife ought to have told me about it.”

“My wife,” said Mr. Sedley, “will never intrude her troubles upon others, if possible to avoid it; and, when you last saw her, she had not seen the darkest days, but was hoping for better things.”

“Yes, yes; I understand it. She always is cheerful, and has a faculty of making others see the bright side, if there is one.”

“But, indeed, for a time there was no bright side to the picture she had to contemplate; and it is a mystery to me how she endured so much, without sinking,—and she had no one even to sympathize with her in her trials.”

“O!” said Mr. Willard, “I regret much that I had not known of her condition. I might, at least, have sent her relief. My wife has been very sick, and I have been much confined at home, or I certainly should have been over to see her before this. But, Mr. Sedley, what are you doing?—have you any business?”

“Yes; I work for Thompson, just now. But I am not much of a carpenter, and I know he pays me more than I earn; but he is really a benevolent man.”

“Well, you can do better than work with a carpenter, I am sure,” said Mr. Willard; “since Maitland died, his son has dismissed Wilder, who was clerk at the time of his death, and is in pursuit of a man competent to take charge

of the business. You are the very man to fill the place. You understand the business, and the son is a very different kind of man from what the father was.

"It would be a good opportunity for me," said Mr. Sedley. "I should be glad, too, to move my family from our present residence."

An arrangement was soon made with the younger Maitland, and Mr. Sedley was again clerk in the store. As soon as practicable, the family were moved back into the village from which they had been driven in an abrupt way. Mrs. Maitland rented them a part of her house until spring, when they could probably find a house more commodious. No one rejoiced more in the happy change in Mr. Sedley than did the affectionate Kate; and, as soon as possible, she hurried to their house, to express her joy. "And I knew he would be after being the same good man he used to be," said she, "as soon as the wood-pile was upset."

"And, Kate, my good girl, we are much indebted to you for that, and for many other kind deeds," said Mrs. Sedley. "You were a

kind friend to us, in trouble; and, some time, I hope it will be in my power to reward you."

"Not at all,—not at all. I never should have known anything about 'doing as you'd be done by,' if you had n't told me; and, all the while, I was taking a good look-out for Kate Conway herself,—'cause, says I, if we only get the law a goin', brighter days will dawn."

"Yes, yes, Kate; I remember my promise to you, if brighter days ever dawned."

"Well, they're comin', ma'am; they're comin'. And it will be a blessed day for myself, when they get here; for my heart has been breakin' after you and the childers, ever since I left you;—and I'm thinkin', when you get moved, and Mr. Sedley is earnin' something, you'll take me back."

"You shall certainly have a home with us, if we ever have a comfortable one for ourselves, Kate,—you may feel sure of that."

It was without any regret Mrs. Sedley left the house in which she had suffered so much, and the neighborhood in which she found scarcely a congenial mind. In Mrs. Maitland and her son she found kind friends, and her

cheerful conversation and kind sympathy contributed much towards removing the depression into which Mrs. Maitland had fallen, on the death of her husband. She was, indeed, a sorrow-stricken woman. Her two eldest sons had fallen victims to intemperance, ere they had scarcely attained to manhood. One, by being seriously injured by a fall, while in a state of intoxication, from which he never recovered; the other, from a brain-fever, caused by excess. And now the sudden death of her husband gave a shock to her feelings that almost overcame her. The remaining son, however, promised to be a comfort to her in her declining years. He had not followed the example of either father or brothers, but was a strictly temperate man. Until his father's death, he had felt no particular interest in the law. Indeed, he had not thought much about it, only to wish that his father would not deal in the forbidden article; and, as soon as he could, he saw it all emptied.

Health and comfort were again restored to Mrs. Sedley and her family. The bright star she had looked for, had waited for, and had

prayed for, had finally risen, and its bright beams had chased away the dark clouds that had hung over her path.

"O!" said she one day to Mrs. Willard, when conversing upon the evident change in the families of those who had formerly been intemperate, "may the star that has risen so gloriously in the east rise higher and higher, until its beams have penetrated into every dark corner of our country,—and even the whole world."

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Willard, "we would pray that the blessed influences of that law might be felt by every nation; for what else can so effectually stop the sorrow, and suffering, and even crime, that are the fruits of the traffic in the destructive article?"

"And it seems to me that a check to intemperance may hasten the spread of the gospel, and the blessed religion it teaches, most effectually," said Mrs. Sedley. "One certainly could not appreciate its truths, or practise them, when the mind was clouded by intemperance; and many, who have been victims to a depraved appetite, have naturally been blessed

with kind, generous dispositions, and have been susceptible to deep religious impressions."

"O, indeed," replied Mrs. Willard, "we see the truth of that exemplified in many instances among us. Just look into our own church, and see the pews that for years have stood vacant, now full. If, in so short a time, the effect of this law has filled so many pews, what may we not hope from its influence? — if, indeed, there is any good in attending public worship."

"No one can really doubt the good of public worship, it seems to me, or the blessings that attend the Sabbath-school; and we see many children there now, who, a few months since, could not attend, for want of comfortable clothing."

"I know one poor little girl, who toiled under the hot sun diligently all of the week, picking berries to sell, that she might earn money enough to buy a bonnet and shoes to wear to church, and become a scholar in my niece's class; but her father took the money from her, and spent it, as he did everything else, for rum! The child," continued Mrs. Willard, "told me the story herself."

It was always a favorite plan — or, rather, hope — of Mrs. Sedley, that, some time, she might return to the home of her childhood, and occupy the house which still belonged to her; but she had never seen a time when this hope could be accomplished. And, when she heard that the subject of a law, similar to the Maine law, was in agitation in Massachusetts, she rejoiced in the intelligence, and watched, with the utmost interest, the efforts of those interested in the cause; for she felt that, if those efforts were crowned with success, she could safely return to Massachusetts; — and her husband, she believed, would be as willing and eager to return to his native state, and even his native town, as she was.

One day, some time towards the last of March, Blake — of "wood-pile" memory — called on Mr. Sedley, and told him that his brother, who was formerly a clerk of Mr. Sedley, was dead. Said he, "He died a horrid death, — so they write me. He had what they call 'delirium tremens;' and I've been thinkin' that perhaps it was pretty lucky for me that my wood-pile got a tumble down, as it did."

"Ah!" said Mr. Sedley, "is your brother dead? What was the matter of him? Poor fellow! Did you say he died of 'delirium tremens?'"

"Yes, so they say; and I've hearn tell that it was an awful disease! And between you and I, Sedley, I'm thinkin' pretty well of that ere law they've got on to us. At any rate, it works well on me."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Sedley, "we've many of us reason to think well of it, for it has been our salvation."

"Well, raly," said Blake, "I did n't know how much better off I should be, or I'd never have gone agin the law as I did. Why, my wife looks as bright, jist about, as she did when I married her. It makes about as much difference with the wimmin as it does with the men, accordin' to my way of thinkin'; but that ere was an awful death my brother died!"

"Have you received the particulars of his death?" said Mr. Sedley.

"No, not all, only that he suffered awfully! But here's the letter,—just read it yourself."

Mr. Sedley took the letter and read it. It was written by Mr. Raymond, who said he was with the sufferer until he breathed his last, and that he never witnessed a scene of so much suffering before. He added that the deceased left some messages for Mr. Sedley, that he should communicate to him in a day or two. In a few days Mr. Sedley received the promised communication. We will not repeat the letter, but state some of the facts connected with the last hours of the deceased.

It seems that Blake, unprincipled and reckless as ever, after he had completed the ruin of Mr. Sedley, who had employed him as a clerk for a time, went on in the same reckless course. He was seldom drunk, but drank great quantities of spirit, and gambled, with almost constantly good luck, until he had heaped up quite a fortune. One evening he attended a lecture in which a law regarding the traffic in intoxicating liquors was the subject, and after the lecture a debate followed. He — Blake — argued strongly on the negative of the question, and became very much excited. It was a stormy evening; and, after

getting heated, the damp air, on going out, struck a chill over him, which he hardly overcame through the night. He drank pretty freely of brandy, however, and, after a restless night, went out in the morning, as usual. He soon met one of his friends, and, as they crossed a bridge, they stopped to look at the masses of floating ice; for a warm rain had broken it up, and there was something of a freshet.

"Hallo, Jim!" said Blake. "See that horrible great snake!"

"Snake?" said his companion, "I don't see any."

"Why, you fool! where are your eyes?" said Blake; "he's as big as your leg,—and there goes another! Why, the river is full of them!"

"Why, Blake, you're dreaming or drunk! There are no snakes to be seen."

"Dreaming? Well, I dreamed of snakes all night; but, by George, I did n't think my dream would come to pass so soon as all this!"

"O, it's only your imagination, Blake; it is only ice you see."

"You fool! don't you suppose I know

snakes from ice? Here, keep him off! — keep him off! — he's on me! — he's biting my leg!"

And he went to work, as if trying to keep off something. His companion, suspecting something ailed him, took Blake by the arm, and with great difficulty led him home. It was true, indeed, that something ailed him; and something that medicine could not reach, something that could not be cured! The doom that often awaits the drunkard hung over him! The victim was marked! the arrow was sped! the aim of the great leveller was sure! Blake was suffering with delirium tremens; and a more horrid death was seldom, if ever, witnessed. He was never calm and conscious again until a day or two before his death, but was a raving maniac most of the time. Sometimes he would imagine himself bitten by serpents; at others, that dogs were tearing him to pieces; and then, again, he said the devil was dragging him over red-hot coals. There was nothing so dreadful but he imagined himself suffering. At such times it would take three and four men to hold him upon the bed.

In his calmer moments he would talk about those he had ruined, the counsels he had despised, the mother's prayers he had mocked, and the religion he had scoffed at and profaned. After two or three days of most intense suffering, he became calm, and his mind seemed to be clear, though his strength seemed to be entirely prostrated; for a time, however, the physician thought he might recover. He soon, however, found that the system was too much worn down by previous intemperance and dissipation to be restored after the severe shock it had now received, and the patient was fast sinking; and to Blake's anxious inquiries whether he could get well, he finally told him that he must die! And when he found there was no hope for him, then bitterly did he repent his wasted life, his reckless, unprincipled actions, his neglected duties, his past misdeeds! "O," said he, "if I could but live my life over again!—but 'tis too late,—too late,—and I must die! O, I have lived a wretch, a villain! But, doctor," said he, "how long can I live?" To the answer, "A day or two, perhaps." "O, if I may but live one day! Send

for Raymond,—send for Raymond! O, how I have despised that man! but," said he, "he can help me now; he can help me die in peace.—No, no, he can't do that, but he can help me do justice to those I have injured." Mr. Raymond was immediately sent for, and came, at the request of the dying man. "Raymond," said Blake, "you have come to see the last of a wretched, miserable man! I am dying, Raymond; there is no hope for me,—no hope,—no hope!"

"But there is hope for every one," said Mr. Raymond.

"No, no, not for me; you don't know what a life I have lived."

"But there is pardon promised to all who repent."

"O, I have n't time,—I have n't time! 'Tis too late,—'tis too late!"

"But, my friend," said Mr. Raymond, "don't you know that the Saviour said to the thief on the cross, 'This night thou shalt be with me in Paradise'?"

"But he was n't such a sinner as I am; O, no, no! But, Raymond, it is kind in you to

try and comfort me, but 't is too late; but I want to make my will;—you can help me,—I want to make what reparation I can to those I have injured.”

Mr. Raymond drew up a will in legal form, and disposed of his property as Blake dictated. To the sister with whom he lived he gave the largest sum, and to the brother in Maine what to him, in his poverty, would seem quite a fortune; saying, as he named the amount, “Tell that man to take warning by me, and never try to evade the law they have got where he lives! O! it may save him such a miserable death-bed as mine!” The remainder of his property he divided among those whom he said he had defrauded. The injustice he had done Mr. Sedley seemed to be the greatest weight on his mind. Said he, “Sedley was as clever a fellow as ever lived. I was mad at him for signing the temperance pledge, and I was bent on his ruin; I knew his weak point, and I accomplished my purpose; and now, how that stands out before me! O, God forgive me!—forgive me! But 't is no use!—'t is too late!—too late!” And thus he talked; sometimes he

would be so exhausted that the doctor would think he was going; then he would revive again, so that he would go on with his confessions and requests. Mr. Raymond found, by Blake's own confession, that he had managed to entice Mr. Sedley into gambling when he was too stupid to know or care how he played, so that Blake could win every time; “for,” said Blake, “Sedley always refused if he knew enough to reckon two and two.” In this way, he said, he had cheated him out of thousands of dollars; and this explained how Mr. Sedley's property was so suddenly wasted. Blake made Mr. Raymond his executor, and enjoined it on him to see that every cent was paid back to Mr. Sedley of the sum which he specified, and which, he said, he had unjustly taken from him. “More or less,” said Blake, “Sedley deserves all I leave him, for I basely injured him.” And Blake died,—died a miserable death, though the last act of his life was the best he was ever known to perform. The news of the sudden and miserable death of Blake gave painful feelings to both Mr. and Mrs. Sedley. His confession regarding his defraud-

ing Mr. Sedley corresponded with the suspicions of his wife. To get a part of that property back, that was so unjustly taken, was but just; and yet, it was painful, indeed, to reflect upon the end of that man. "My husband might have died with the same disease," thought Mrs. Sedley, "if a merciful Providence had not interposed to save him; and Blake is in the same hands,—a Being of infinite justice and mercy will do what is right."

CHAPTER XV.

"O, if there is a word that thrills
E'en to the very soul, 't is home !
He can but know its fullest worth
Who has sometime felt himself alone.
Home ! 't is the whole, the soul of life,
To which we 're bound by links of love ;
A home of love,—'t is indeed a type
Of a bright and endless home above."

PROSPERITY had again dawned upon our friends. The long winter had passed away, its white vesture was thrown off, and the russet robe it covered was fast giving place to a beautiful soft verdure. The tender blade was springing up, the swelling bud fast expanding into leaf, and the flowers were again waking into life. The ice-bound rill, loosed from its bondage, roused from its frozen sleep, made melody as it gladly leaped among the rocks and through the forests. The sturdy oak and the gracefully

drooping willow had alike yielded to the soft influence of the grateful southern breeze, and were fast clothing themselves with a beautiful drapery. The parting clouds discovered a mild blue canopy above, and nature's joyous minstrels were filling the air with notes of gladness, in sweet harmony. Almost as great a change discovered itself in the situation and prospects of our friends as in the appearance of nature. When the autumn wind laid bare the trees, and all nature was marked with desolation,—when the now leaping rill was bound up with ice, and the storms and clouds hung over us,—so was this family bared of every comfort, and every hope for the future seemed to be frozen up in the heart of the desolate and poverty-stricken Mrs. Sedley, save alone that hope that knows no dying,—that hope that bade her look to the blessed land,

“Where shall no tempests blow,
No scorching noontide heat,
Where shall be no more snow,
No weary, wandering feet.”

Many a time was her spirit faint and weary,

for darkness and sorrow encompassed her, with none to cheer her in her lonely way, save Him who has said “I will not leave you comfortless;” and that hope which pointed to a brighter world, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. And she passed through the fiery trial, purified; stronger, if possible, for the test her patience, her forbearance, her faith, and her love, which knew no bounds, had laid upon them.

Spring, we said, had returned; and even summer, with its soft, balmy breath, its glad sunshine and its fragrant flowers, was at hand. Health, beauty, and youth almost, seemed to have taken the place of the attenuated form and the pale cheek of Mrs. Sedley. Her children were bright, lovely, and joyous as the morning,—the bright June morning, in which we find the family busy, making preparations for another change of residence. The little one was just beginning to try its little feet in the exercise of walking; Willie's laughing eyes seemed to sparkle with fun and merriment, and his round rosy cheek discovered health, as a possession that as truly belonged to him as a

joyous, loving spirit; and Helen, a tall, graceful girl, for her years, with a mild blue eye, and a most quiet, amiable expression, almost the image of her mother at the same age, was busy in household matters, apparently as understanding and apt as many of twice her years. A child in years, she was a woman in appearance, in thought and action.

"Mother," said she, "I am glad you taught me to do so many things last winter, because when Kate comes back, and we have moved to Massachusetts, you say I may go to school; and then I shall not have time to learn much about house-work."

"Yes, my dear, it is well, perhaps, for you that you have been obliged to work; but still there are many things for you to learn yet. I hope I shall be as faithful to you, Helen, as my mother was to me."

"Did you have to work hard, mother, when you were a little girl? Were you poor then?"

"No, no, child; I was not obliged to work, any farther than it was my duty to obey a most excellent mother; and, until the last year, I

never knew how grateful I ought to be to her for teaching me so many things. We can hardly be so situated but that we may, possibly, at some time, be left dependent upon ourselves; and if we know not how to cook a dinner, or make a bed, we should be uncomfortable, indeed."

"But, mother, I should think everybody would know how to do such things as those, when they are grown up."

"There are many, my dear, who, not being obliged to do such things, or even the most trivial matter in the way of labor, never give any attention to them at all; and the consequence is, that, in many instances, becoming poor, they have become miserable."

"But, I am sure, mother, we have not always been miserable when we have been poor. Why, mother, I never saw you unhappy, only when little brother died, and the time when I went to get the bread and like to have got lost."

"Well, my dear, I know how to take care of myself; and, beside, it is our duty to always be cheerful, if possible. It is said that 'effort

is the appointed condition of all good, and labor the necessary means to all excellence.' And I believe such is truth; and I do not think a woman can be called educated, or that she has finished her education, until she understands the various kinds of work necessary to good housekeeping."

"Well, mother dear, you will teach me how to do all sorts of work, won't you?"

"Yes, my child; I should not think I was doing my duty, unless I did. But here comes Kate, trunk and all; we will give her a joyful welcome."

There seemed to be a competition between Kate and the children in expressing joy,—one at her return, the others in their welcome. One said, "Kate shall never leave us again;" another, "Kate, you shall go and live with us in mother's house, way up in Massachusetts;" and the little one pulled herself up by Kate's chair, to get a little notice. Preparations were now making for a removal, and all were busy and full of pleasant anticipations. A few weeks previous, as Mrs. Sedley was sitting with her children, telling them stories of her child-

hood, of which they never wearied, Mr. Sedley entered, with a newspaper in his hand, exclaiming, "Joy, joy, joy to you, my dear wife! The Liquor Bill has passed the House and Senate too, and the Governor has signed the bill. The Old Bay State has come out right, at last. May God bless her!"

"I can fully echo your sentiment," said Mrs. Sedley, "and rejoice at such tidings, if true. But, husband, are you quite sure that your statement is true?"

"Yes, yes; I have the morning paper, and there can be no doubt about it now. And now," continued Mr. Sedley, "you can go home,—yes, home to your own home, Emily."

Never was there a more joyful household than this, on the receipt of the above intelligence. Even the children, scarce knowing why, responded to the general joy. The thought of going home was as bright as the beautiful morning to Mrs. Sedley. A tide of hope and joy flowed into her heart; and, as her mind rapidly flew over the past, back even to the glad, sunny days of her childhood, and her thoughts rested for a moment upon her parents,

in the health and vigor of middle age, and then, with electric speed, to the lowly beds that now pillowed their ashes, a shade of sadness stole over her fair brow, and a tear coursed down her cheek. She wiped it away as soon, however, as she saw her husband's eyes fixed earnestly upon her, and, with one of her happy smiles, peculiar to herself, said, "O! it will be so delightful,—so delightful to live again in that peaceful, quiet village, in that happy home!"

"Will mother let me go, too,—and sister Helen, and the baby?" said Willie.

"Yes, yes, my love; we will all go, and Kate, too," replied Mrs. Sedley; "and we must apprise Kate of the glad news."

It was arranged that Helen should be the bearer of the joyful news to Kate, that she was to be reinstated in the place she had so long been "lonesome after." And at night she returned home with Helen, to express her gratitude to Mrs. Sedley for asking her to come back again.

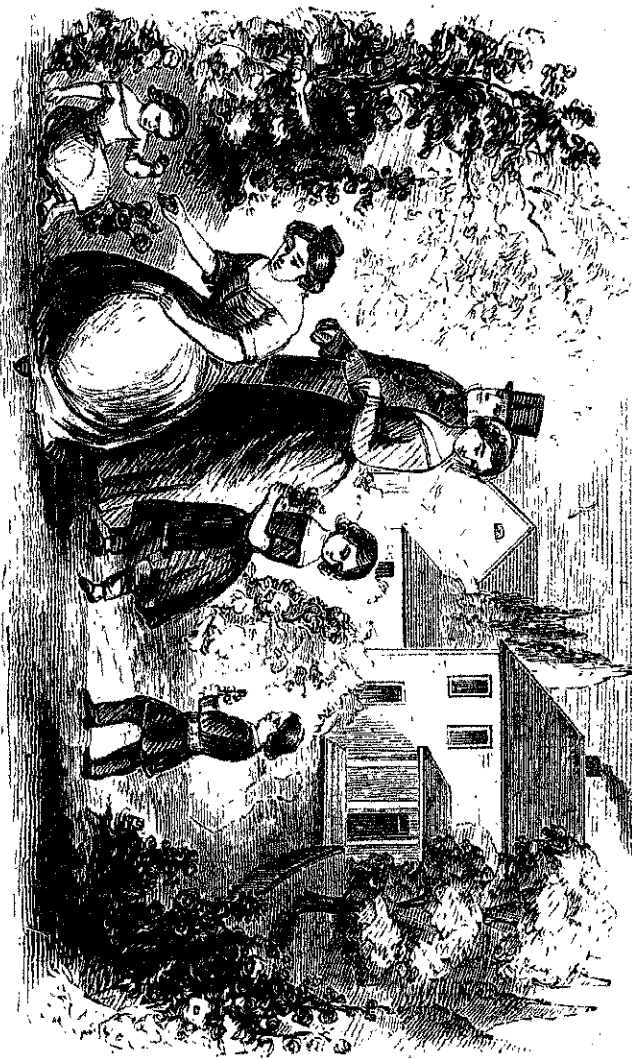
The "old home" had been occupied by a man who was careful and prudent; and the

house was in good order, and the small farm attached to it in a good state of cultivation. With Mrs. Sedley's advice, a few years previous, he had repaired the house with the rent, instead of paying it to her, and had set out a number and variety of fruit-trees, so that the house had "kept its own," and the farm had improved. He was, however, ready to leave it at notice, and considered himself privileged in having occupied it so long under so favorable conditions. The following anniversary of the independence of our country found Emily Sedley, with her husband and children, at home, under the same roof 'neath which she was born. There was some pleasant association connected with every room. Here was the little parlor where she had so often sat at work with her now sainted mother, listening to her pleasant voice, and her maternal counsels; there was the room in which the family assembled, at morning and evening, to listen to her father's voice, as he read from the sacred page, or as it went up in grateful thanksgiving, or in fervent petition for the blessings of life, to our common Father. There had she drank

“Deep from the ‘fount of God,’ the ‘holy spring,’
And gone away refreshed. There her infant voice
Was tuned to sing the praise of Him who gave
Her life. There had she sat,
And listened joyously, as she heard
The servant of the Living God point out
The path to virtue, to happiness, to heaven.”

There was her own chamber, too, looking out upon the very shrubs and trees her own hand had assisted in planting. Again she was moving about in those same rooms, training those same shrubs, and among the friends of her childhood. But little change had been made in the village, during her absence, in its local appearance. Age discovered its marks in the furrowed brow and silvered locks of many of her early friends. Still, it was the same quiet, peaceful village. Her husband was restored to her. Her children were as healthy and joyous as the birds singing among the branches of the noble elms that shaded the smooth lawn in front of the house. “O!” said she to her husband, as she sat on the steps of the piazza, one fine summer evening, watching the children in their frolicsome mirth, “it seems to me now that

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earth is all one 'great light' now. How beautiful, beautiful is everything!"

"Yes, Emily, it is beautiful; and it would be happy if every one could look at life as you do. But very few would have passed through the trials that you have, and expressed such a sentiment. No, no; most would have sunk under them, or have become discouraged, fretful, repining; but nothing seems to try your patience, your long-suffering, your faith, or your love."

"But, my husband, you over-estimate my patience,—my forbearance. I have seen the time when I have been repining,—faithless almost in the goodness of God. My spirit was dark, and, in the shadow that came over it, I could scarcely see a Father's love shining through, or discover the 'silver lining' to the cloud that hung over me. But, thank God! that hour passed away. Never, never may it return!"

"But, Emily, there was a cause for that dark hour. I know when you mean; and, under the sorrows that were heaped upon you. and with the little physical strength you pos-

sessed, surely it was not strange that your spirit was dark. Truly, you had enough laid upon you to make any one discouraged, repining."

"But yet we ought never to repine. Certainly it is wrong to distrust the care and love of our heavenly Father, under any circumstances. He will never lay upon us a burden greater than we can bear; and, however we may be situated,—however great our trials,—we should be always ready to say, 'Thy will be done.' "

"Yet, a Being of infinite love cannot will his children sorrow and suffering."

"True," replied Mrs. Sedley, "but sometimes we need the 'chastening rod;' and the heart, ready to say, 'Thy will, not mine, be done,' would acknowledge his hand in the shadow, as in the sunshine, and bless the chastening rod."

It would be pleasant to linger around this pleasant home, to listen to the cheerful and instructive conversation of Mrs. Sedley, and to look more fully into the details of her well-ordered household. But our purpose was to

show the effect of the "Maine Law" as exemplified in its application to her husband. The happiness, however, of his family, and whatever blessing or comfort we find them enjoying, is owing, under God, to the execution of that law. And, if we look into the families of Thompson, the Henrys, Blake, and go back and pick up Piper and hundreds of other cases, we can see very clearly its blessed results. We say pick up Piper; but he was picked up before we were ready to start in pursuit of him. It will be remembered that he left his companions, when he found them disposed to yield to the law, saying that he "would not thus be deprived of his rights, but would move out of the state." He had not gone so far as "out of the state," before he fell in among thieves, who took from him his money, and left him half dead. Some passed by on the other side, and left him; but a good Samaritan, seeing him, took him from the way-side, and administered to his necessities. And, when he had recovered from his inability to stand up and walk, he gave him money enough to take him to his family; and there he is now, and reconciled to the law that

has not only taken away the cause of his frequent inability to walk or stand up, but his poverty and its attendant evils. Wilder, however, — the “sly, artful fellow,” that Mr. Willard called him, — when “set adrift,” on the death of Mr. Maitland, made the best of his way to Boston, and is now making the best of his “long head” in opposing the law, that is still a subject of much discussion and excitement. He goes hand in hand with those who oppose the law, “because,” they say, “it is better to get drunk honestly than dishonestly.” But let those who say thus help sustain that law, and see if it is not better still to have no chance to “get drunk anyhow.”

A word more, and our story is told. We have not, in these pages, given one of the darkest pictures of intemperance. O! what countless woes, what immeasurable suffering, how many broken hearts and wretched homes, how many criminals and maniacs, are the consequences of intemperance! Scenes more dreadful, more thrilling, than any we have described, are witnessed perhaps every day, and may have fallen under the eye of many of our readers.

Scenes of strife, blood and murder, that follow in the wake of intemperance, we have avoided. The drunken wife, the drunken mother, driving her children before the extended knife from her presence and from home, in fear of their lives, or the half-starved children begging their bread from door to door, because “mother is dead drunk on the floor at home,” and cannot give them food, we have not introduced. Yet such facts have come within our personal observation.

CONCLUSION.

THE incidents we have attempted to describe, in a simple way, are not creations of fancy, but are known to us as facts. There are few persons, perhaps, but have more control over the appetite than Frank Sedley, and few that a single glass of wine would throw off their balance, as it did him. But, O! ye who have never been tempted,—who have never learned to love the glass of wine,—who have never had to battle with an appetite—an appetite that may have descended from father to son,—ye who have never needed to use any self-control,—pronounce not bitterly upon Frank Sedley! Blame him not for possessing that appetite. We would not uphold any one in ever, at any time, giving way to temptation, for we are commanded to “resist it;” and when Frank Sedley allowed himself to take that first social glass, he did wrong. But it was a youthful

folly; and, if there is one person existing in all this wide world who never has been guilty of one dereliction from the path of duty, if he has never done one single wrong deed, “let him cast the first stone.” But when that single act of folly was committed, we are fully persuaded, from existing facts, knowing the effect of alcohol on the brain, that he was no longer responsible for a further indulgence in what produced such effect,—no more responsible than a man confined in an insane hospital is for the various acts in which a deranged state of mind or a diseased brain discovers itself. The appetite, roused in the performance of a Christian duty,—of an obligation enjoined on us by Him who said, “Do this in remembrance of me,”—no one will say was wrong. And still, again, when prescribed as medicine, he resisted taking it until extreme suffering induced him to taste again. Now, if such are facts,—and they cannot be doubted,—is a man responsible for becoming a drunkard, if accident, and not will, develops the taste, the appetite he inherits, the constitutional infirmity with which he is born? And, if he is not to blame,

but is a passive sufferer, is there not a duty devolving upon the friends of such unfortunate persons? Truly there is; and many have been found doing their duty, and are still at their posts, fighting manfully against the great foe of our country!

It has been shown in this story that the law known by the name of "The Maine Liquor Law" has been effectual in saving one man,—one immortal mind from ruin, if only as far as earth is concerned. And this is by no means an isolated case. The village "bleached out" had many inhabitants, both men and women, who are rejoicing in the blessings that law has showered upon them; and not only that village, but every village, town and city, wherever the law is sustained, wherever it is "enforced," are rejoicing in its influence. And now, because there is opposition to it in some places,—because there are men who will violate the law,—because, in some, and even in many instances, there is deception and lying practised, and men get drunk dishonestly,—because cunning and stratagem are employed, and the "wrong-doer may be prospered in his ways,"—shall that

law be repealed? Are there not other laws broken? Is not the thief abroad at night, and the robber in the highway?—the murderer's knife whetted, and the dark deed planned? And yet it is not in the heart of any honest man to will the laws against stealing or murder erased from our statute-books. Should anything that is right in itself be set aside because the multitude even may disregard or avoid the right? Shall the golden rule be erased from the Bible, because men do not obey it? It is said that the law causes more contention and bitter feeling than it brings good. And has not the word of God ever been the cause of bitter feeling? Have not brothers quarrelled over it, and nations warred against each other because of it? And are not the laws it contains every day broken, and by every individual? Why not, then, set that aside? But was any great good ever produced without contention and determined opposition? Was the independence of our country obtained without effort, and the yoke that bound us to a foreign power thrown off without opposition? And can we expect a yoke, that binds the drunkard

to his cups and the seller to his gold, with stronger chains than ever tyrant put upon the neck of his subjects, to be thrown off without opposition?

We find the family of Frank Sedley again in Massachusetts. The mother, happy in the home of her youth, rejoicing in her husband, who was lost,—lost to every feeling of kindness, affection and truth,—but found again!—found walking in the way of virtue and usefulness. The children fed, clothed, and in health; the father an upright, honest, industrious man. In the quiet village in which they live, they see but little of the excitement that is felt in connection with the discussion of that subject which was the issue of our last state election. And yet they know that such excitement and agitation is abroad,—that there is determined opposition in many places to the law that has been their salvation,—that has redeemed them from poverty, misery and disgrace, and raised them to competence, peace, and happiness. They know that there are untiring efforts among many to repeal that law, and are looking on with the most anxious feelings. Shall the

hopes of that family again be crushed? After having suffered so much from intemperance, and having seen the demon driven from their path by the light of the law, shall that law be repealed, and that demon be left to stalk in their path again? In the confidence that they should be protected, and under the shadow of its wing, in their own beloved state, they came hither;—shall they be driven back, or have their hopes blasted again, by its repeal?

May the motives of every man who may ever be called to vote, directly or indirectly, on the repeal of that law, be well weighed before he deposits his vote in the ballot-box! May he make an effort to know what the loss and what the gain! May he count the poverty, the suffering, the widows, the orphans, the broken hearts, the crushed hopes, the ruined fortunes, and the crimes, that must inevitably, sooner or later, be the effect of a repeal,—and the gratified will, the gold of the trafficker, the right to get drunk honestly, the right of a freeman to do wrong,—and add up the two sums separately. Will the one pay for the other?

Should the question come up, during the present session, before our legislature, may every man examine carefully the motive that may induce him to vote for its repeal in the light of the "golden rule." Let him see if it reflects as clear as light the law of love,—the law that says "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"—remembering, at the same time, that St. Paul preached of "righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come."

O, think well before you repeal this law! Look at it in its effect on those whom it has saved, and not on those who are not yet under the shadow of its protecting wing; and wait, wait, and see if it does not well perform its mission; for,

"To gather up, to gather up,
And bear from earth away,
The bane, the bitterness of life
(The law doth seem to say),
My mission is, and on I go,
Lighting the dreary path
Of thousands who have grovelled long
In the way that leads to death!
Cheering the orphan's lonely lot,
Feeding the hungry poor,
Breathing of hope to the desolate,

To the diseased a cure,
Healing the mother's breaking heart,
Hushing the piteous cries
Of starving children, and giving joy
To thousands of wretched wives!
O, ye who would obey the rule
By the blessed Saviour given;
Who would aid your brother on his way
To find the path to heaven;
O! lend a hand, a voice, a heart,
In this great work of love!
Bid "God speed" to it, as you hope
For mercy from above!"

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