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## THE DRUNKARD'S WIFE.

"Harry, if this is the way you continue to come home night after night, I cannot bear it much longer—I will not bear it."

Then the man addressed lifted up his heavy eyes, as he asked with a curse and a silly smile—

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going to do something, Henry, and that before long. I've tried to be a faithful and loving wife to you—I have striven to keep your house in order, and to welcome you here—but my spirit is breaking down—I shall have to give up soon."

"Pho! don't you know you're going to reform me? Isn't it the duty of a wife to stay by her husband through good and evil?"

"Yes, where the evil does not come through yielding to vice, debauching soul and body. If God sent you sickness, or if through your own miscalculation or heedlessness, you became suffering and poor, I would go with you hand in hand, were the path ever so rugged. But as it is, you are defiling what I loved, and yourself destroying every spark of affection that I ever possessed. I am too proud to perform menial offices for a drunkard, I freely confess. Were you a poor wandering beggar, sick, and staggering weakly to my door I could wash your very feet, and willingly do what lay in my power to save you—but I cannot and will not bear your staggering drunkenly to your bed, sitting up till morning dawns, half-crazed with apprehensions—seeing you in this or that danger, and to do offices that are too revolting to be thought of. I was educated to habits of neatness; and when I married you, I thought I should go with one who would aid me in being pure—who would keep me from coming in contact with anything gross or demoralizing. Instead of that I married but a boy of man's statue," she added bitterly—

"with a weaker than a child-mind—led by the nod of a drunkard and the dramseller, and respecting his wife so little that he dares to come reeling into her presence with words that no wife should hear."

"You are sick of me then, eh?" murmured the drunken man, drowsily.

"I am sick of your ways, Henry, and have been for years. My better nature revolts against your bloodshot eyes, bloated face and fetid breath. "Oh! Henry!" she cried passionately—"we have been married ten years, and as I view that relation, we should be ten times happier and love each other ten times more than when we first promised that which united our destinies. Instead of that I find myself wishing I had never seen you."

"You do, eh?"

"Yes, I do. I never said this before, but I am desperate. I have tried all means my woman's ingenuity could invent to reform you. For years I never met you but with smiles—no matter what your condition. I thought, surely my gentleness will reform him, and in time reform him. When I remonstrated it was not with anger—you can testify to that, and, oh, Henry, how often you promised to reform. I even forgave you what woman seldom forgives, a blow, because you were not conscious, through drink, of what you did. I was patient after I laid two of my darlings under the sod, because their blood being poisoned by your vile habits, they had not the strength to rally when disease came. And even when your occasional speers, as you call them, became weekly, nightly, I was patient—but that was the patience of despair. Now I have decided. I will no longer sit by a drunkard's hearthstone—and I declare to you that it would be a happy hour to me to feel that you have gone over that door-sill for the last time."

The woman's face was pale—pale as that of a corpse. It was evident that a passion—a deep, white-heat passion, had mastered her better mood. It glowed and flamed in her sunken eyes—it trampled in her fingers, convulsively working; it swelled in her veins that stood out on her broad forehead, and in corded masses sprang from her delicate wrists.

The man all this time was looking down.

He was very handsome, but his flesh was pallid, his eyes as he raised them, lusterless, his lips without color. Sometimes he seemed to writhe as his wife spoke; he was not so much under the influence of drink as she supposed; but there came a look in his face as he lifted it, that blanched her own still more.

"So—it would give you pleasure, would it, to see the last of me?"

The candle-light flickered—it was burning down to the frame that supported it, and at every expiring effort, a lurid redness flashed over the small room—over those two white faces—over the innocent beauty of a little girl lying in profound slumber near by.

"Henry, I wish it had pleased God to let me follow you to the graveyard, rather than to see you the wreck of what you once were. Better the death of the body than the ruin of the soul."

"Well, my lady, if that's been your wish, you needn't have been so long telling it. I've been willing any time within the last five years to leave, and glad of the chance. No wife shall say to me that when I went over her threshold for the last time, it would be a happy hour for her. I wish you every possible joy of your release, madam; I am now going out of your door for the last time."

As he spoke he sprang from the room. The cold wind streamed in for a brief second, and put the candle-light out—the chamber was buried in darkness.

Not a sound came from the woman's lips, as she sat there, for a long time. Then, when thought had racked her soul beyond the power of silent endurance, she moaned and sobbed and wept as if her very heart should break.

"Mamma," cried a little voice in the darkness—"are you here, mamma? is that you crying?"

"Hush, my darling—hush—and sleep; it is very late."

"Has papa come yet? I want to kiss him."

Oh! how that innocent question smote her heart! She had driven one whom her little child could still love, still caress with infantine tenderness, from his home. For a moment her pulse almost stopped with horror, as she remembered the calm, steady way in which he took leave of her. She hurried to strike a light. It shone directly upon the portrait of her husband, as he was on his marriage day; and clasping her hands, she stood breathless, scanning those almost faultless lineaments. Then a fearful thought took possession of her; "Oh! I was too hasty," she cried. "I have said too much, and may have his death to answer for."

Springing to the entrance, she flew down the stairs, unlatched the door, and standing on the stone step, called the name of her husband repeatedly.

"Oh! which way could he have gone?" she wailed, striving to look through the thick darkness, and feeling the sharp drops of a fine rain striking against her face.

Out she sped in the stormy night; ran breathlessly, first to one corner, then to another; but not a sound, save the distant baying of watch dogs, could she hear. Almost frantic, she flew up the street, peering into the dark porches of the houses. It was nearly midnight, and she met no one off the way. Recalled to herself, at last, by the wet clinging of the garments around her limbs, and the chill tremors that shot through her frame, she sobbingly took her way homeward and entered to find her little Mary grieving and calling for father and mother.

"But why didn't you bring papa? I want to kiss papa," cried the child.

"My Mary will never kiss papa again, I fear," murmured the sorrowful woman, soothing the child in her arms.

That night of long intense agony! That watching for the morning! When it came—that pale, haggard face, that looked out from the window, so tearless—so stony—yet so awfully grief-struck!

A violent fever succeeding prostrated the mother, and when she arose from the brink of the grave, they dared not tell her till

months of convalescence had established her health again, that two weeks after Henry Remington left his home, a bloated and disfigured body, supposed to be his, though there were but few marks of recognition on the corpse, was found in the river.

Even then, as she learned the sad truth, reason almost fled, and from that hour Helen Remington was a changed woman. Gathering her household treasures, she sold the pretty tenement that was her own, a gift from her father, and bought a very small cottage with a few humble rooms. Thither she moved with her little daughter, whose artless prattle about papa stung her poor heart sometimes almost to madness. Relatives and friends offered her a home, but though most keenly sensible of their kindness she refused them all. She wished no eye but that of God to be witness of her daily grief, and thus chose a life of independence, embittered though it would ever be by remorse.

Ten years passed by, and yet Helen Remington lived in her desolate home with her daughter, a mourning and sorrowful woman, bearing about her the consciousness that her passionate words, her want of Christ-like forbearance, had sent a soul unprepared into eternity. She still dressed in deep mourning, and those who saw her said that such sorrow must be genuine, for her dark eye was sunken and dim, and the hair, though yet abundant, was mixed with threads of silver.

Ella—now growing into womanhood—attended the village academy. It was a long distance from her home; but one day she returned with her face flushed more than usual, and standing in front of her father's portrait, she exclaimed,

"O! how like it was!"

"What are you speaking of, Ella?" asked her mother.

"As I was coming home, mother, I saw a gentleman who looked so much like poor father. And he kept his eyes on me till I had passed him."

"Who could it be, I wonder? Where did you see him, Ella?"

"At the corner of the avenue, opposite our academy. He was in a carriage, and the horses—there were two—stood quite still, as they had been standing a long while. He looked at all the girls as they came out, but at me, I fancied, more than the rest."

"It was only your imagination, my dear," said her mother quietly, though her heart was strangely stirred.

"But, indeed, mother, he looked so much like father's portrait—you can't think how exact it was like! only he was more portly, and not as fair. But he had the same color in his cheek."

Helen Remington's heart beat faster—but it was not because of hopes or fears. No—the never-to-be-forgotten scene of that last night came up so vividly before her, that a low cry of anguish escaped her lips, and she hurried from the room.

The next day Ella came home with a new story. The stranger, who was so like her father, had visited the school, and conversed with the teacher, who, at his request, had sent home a small sealed note by her. Ella was very pale, and trembled as her mother opened the mystic paper. No sooner had Mrs. Remington glanced at the handwriting than all consciousness left her, and she fell back in a fainting fit. Ella, frightened, and unknowing what course to pursue, ran for the nearest neighbor, and in a short time her mother's room was filled with sympathizing though inconsiderate friends.

"The paper, child, the note," were the first words the mother uttered, when she came to consciousness. "Blessed note—he is not dead then. I did not kill him. I am not a murderer. See—here is his own hand writing!"

"MY DEAR WIFE—I am no longer a drunkard—will you receive me back to your love now that I have conquered myself? Most humbly do I ask this boon, conscious that I do not deserve it—but I promise that, in time to come, I will be a faithful, loving, temperate husband to you, God helping me."

At that moment the door bell rang. El-

la ran into the room where her pale mother sat. There were tears on her cheeks as she cried,

"Mother—he has come—my father, whom we all thought dead—he wants to see you."

Leaning on the arm of her daughter, the repentant long suffering wife tottered down the stairs; he heard the step—sprang impatiently forth—and wife and daughter were clasped to his bosom.

"Have you forgiven me?" was the sobbing question. "I sent you from me with cruel words no Christian should utter. O! my husband! that this has resulted in mercy, is of God's most loving kindness alone. I have died a thousand deaths since I thought you buried you after the waves had given you up. Can you ever forget my cruel, unchristian words?"

"Freely, dear Helen, and only wonder how it was possible you bore with me so long. Most freely, since it has led to my reformation. God be praised—I am a slave no longer. You need never fear that I shall fall again into that accursed sin—for I have, as I trust, placed myself under a powerful Protector—even under the care and guardianship of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"But where have you been all this time, father?" asked Ella, her gentle eyes shining with happiness.

"In a foreign land. In the first heat of resentment, I walked to the city. I did not reach it till near morning, and there finding an old sea captain, a friend of mine, ready to sail to China, I recklessly took passage with him, as he had often implored me to do. Once out upon the great ocean, leaving home as I thought forever, reason came to me. I began to reflect upon my past life, and I could see nothing but crime against society, my wife and family, and my God. There I made a resolve, that with help from on high, I would become the man you once thought me, Helen—that I would never return till I had conquered myself. Many dangers awaited me, but I passed through them all. I went to the golden country, and while there alone, wretched, sick, and miserable, I found the great gift that has made me what I am—the gift of redemption through our Saviour. Now, I will make home happy. Here will I erect an altar of praise and thanksgiving to Him who has so wonderfully kept and returned me to you."

The whole village was in an uproar as the news spread. Countless conjectures arose as to whose was the body they had found, but the identity was never established. Henry Remington was welcomed as one from the dead.

So flowers blossomed once again along the path of her who had been that most unfortunate of all beings—a drunkard's wife.

Watchman and Reflector.

## MESSAGE OF GOVERNOR WORTH.

(Concluded.)

### FREEDMAN'S BUREAU.

The condition of society produced by the sudden emancipation of the black race, in numbers over one third of the entire population of the State, and the exemption of this class from the operation of our laws, civil and criminal, except as administered by a military tribunal, instituted by the Government of the United States; and also claiming and exercising jurisdiction over all white citizens in matters criminal and civil, wherever blacks may be concerned, is at once anomalous and inconsistent with the ancient constitutional authority of the several States. This tribunal, known as the Bureau of Freedmen, was established during the late unhappy war for the supervision and management of all abandoned lands, and the control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen from rebel States or from any district of country within the operations of the army, under such rules and regulations as might be prescribed by the head of the Bureau, and approved by the President, and was directed to continue during the war of the rebellion, and for one year thereafter."

Its authority is derived from that clause of the Constitution which authorises Con-