

"As I said before, I doubt this. But even if it is so, I am not responsible. Wine is a good gift and I am not the one to withhold it as an evil thing. With those who abuse it must lie the responsibility. As well might you ask to have the light of heaven shut out."

"And so I would in particular cases of disease, such as you have mentioned."

"I cannot know who are or who are not afflicted with either an hereditary or acquired love of intoxicating drinks, and, therefore, I can attempt no discriminations. I know wine to be a good thing, and, therefore, I will continue to use it and also set it before my friends. If any abuse the natural blessing, with them must rest the consequences. I will act right as far as I am concerned. If others act wrong, they are alone to blame."

Finding, after repeated attempts to do so, that he could make no impression on the mind of Mr. Fielding, the individual with whom he was conversing changed the subject.

In his views Mr. Fielding was perfectly sincere. He was a man of great self-control, integrity of purpose, and independent feeling. He was proud, too, in his individuality, and this led him to act with less reference to his conduct as affecting those around him than might otherwise have been the case. His cellar was stocked with the best of wine, as pure as it was in his power to obtain. This was used habitually in his family and invariably set before his friends.

Mr. Fielding had an only daughter, who was a favorite with all who knew her. Her face had a gentle beauty, that, once seen, impressed itself upon the mind and lived there as an image of purity and loveliness. Her name was Rose. It so happened, about the time Rose attained her nineteenth year, that she met a young man named Forrester, the son of an old friend of her father's who lived in the West. In early life Mr. Forrester and Mr. Fielding had been almost inseparable, and, in the mind of the latter, the memory of his old friend had always been a green spot. They separated at twenty-five and had never met since.

"I saw a young man at Mrs. Webster's," said Rose to her father, after her meeting with Forrester, "who says that his father and you were once intimate friends?"

"Did you? What is his name?"

"Mr. Forrester."

"Forrester!" exclaimed Mr. Fielding, taken by surprise. "Forrester! Can it be possible. Yes, my earliest and most intimate friend was named Forrester. And so his son is in the city! What is he doing here?"

But Rose could not answer this last question.

Mr. Fielding had a great many enquiries to make as to the young man's age, appearance, character and manners, to all of which his daughter was competent to give little more than half satisfactory replies. At the earliest convenient moment, he ascertained where Forrester was to be found, and called upon him. He found him a young man of education, intelligence, agreeable manners, and, as far as a first interview would enable him to judge, of good principles. His father had been dead for some years, and he conveyed to Mr. Fielding his first knowledge of that fact.

In accordance with a pressing invitation, Forrester returned the call of his father's old friend. It so happened, that Mr. Fielding was not at home, but his daughter received his visit, which, to her, as she had met him previously and he was gentlemanly and agreeable, proved a pleasant one. Even before knowing who he was, on first meeting him, her mind had taken a prepossession in his favor, and on his part the feeling was reciprocal.

After chatting freely and pleasantly for half an hour, Forrester made a move as if he were about to retire, when Rose said, rising,

"Wait a few moments," and left the room.

She soon returned with a small waiter in her hand, upon which was wine and glasses. She did not observe the sud-

den change that went over the young man's face as she entered. Even if she had done so, she would not have comprehended its meaning.

"Will you have a glass of wine?" said she, with a smiling invitation, as she approached Forrester.

For a moment the young man paused, and, to Rose, appeared as if he were about to decline the proffered refreshment, but the indecision was only for an instant.

"If I were an anchorite, I could not refuse it from your hands," said he, as he took the decanter and filled both the glasses that were on the waiter.

"And, now, to your good health and that of your excellent father," he added, as he lifted a glass and raised it to his lips.

"Excellent!" he remarked, on sipping a portion of the generous liquor. "I have never tasted a better wine."

"My father is choice in his selection of wine," was the young girl's simple reply.

Forrester remained chatting with increased freedom for another half hour, in which time he filled his glass twice. He then went away, promising to call again, and expressing the hope that he would be more fortunate in finding Mr. Fielding at home.

The more intimate association with the young man, which this visit afforded, had the effect of giving to the mind of Rose a very favorable impression. To say that she was merely pleased with him would not convey an idea of her true feelings; something about him touched her more deeply, and Forrester was no less pleased with the lovely young girl.

From that time the heart of Rose beat with a new impulse, and a thought of the young man was sufficient to awaken a ripple on the surface of her feelings. She felt towards him as she had never felt towards any man before.

A week elapsed and Forrester did not repeat his visits. Rose had expected him within that time; for, not having found her father at home, she inferred that he would take an early opportunity to call again.

"I have rather unpleasant news," said Mr. Fielding to his daughter about this time. He looked serious as he spoke.

"What is it?" enquired Rose, her own face reflecting that of her father.

"I met young Forrester in the street to-day, so much intoxicated that he did not know me."

The face of Rose grew instantly pale; she made an effort to speak, but her lips quivered so that she suppressed the words that were upon them.

"Oh dear!" added Mr. Fielding, "it is sad to see a man, just in the freshness of his early spring-time, thus abandoning himself to a vice that ruins both soul and body. To think that the son of my old friend should be the victim of so degrading an appetite!"

Peace, which had nestled since childhood in the heart of the fair young girl, spread its wings and departed. A little while afterwards she was alone in her own chamber weeping. If the simple announcement of the fact that Forrester was seen intoxicated affected her so deeply, how much more painful was the conviction, soon after forced upon her, that she had caused his fall.

Rose was on a visit to the lady at whose house she had met the young man a few days subsequently, when the latter said,

"You remember Mr. Forrester, who was here on the evening I had company? I have sad news to tell you about him. It appears from what my husband has been able to learn, that his father was for a great many years before his death in habits of intemperance. And that the son derived from his father a natural fondness for stimulating drinks, which showed itself at a very early age. Before he attained his twentieth year he was, to use plain but true language, a drunkard. The death of old Mr. Forrester, which took place