

"Certainly, Allan; it would be a pleasure. Where is he?"

"In here."

"Tell him to jump in and I'll drive him up."

A strange sort of smile passed over Allan's face as he said, "Come in and see him."

John went in, and there, on the floor, lay Hugh, "dead drunk."

With difficulty they got him into the buggy, and John drove home with him. Kate was standing in the porch.

"John Earle, what in the round world have you got there?"

"I've got what was once Hugh McAlpine."

"John! Is he dead?"

"No, but he had better be, poor lad. He's awfully drunk, Kate."

Kate made ready a bed, and Allan coming up, they managed to tumble him into it. For a week those two men labored to get him sober; but all to no purpose. Notwithstanding their vigilance, he would steal a march on them and get whisky. One night Allan came and wakened John, saying, "I'm afraid he's safe to have *delirium tremens*. Stay with him, won't you, John, while I run down to the office for some medicine."

It required all John's strength to keep him in the room while Allan was gone; and then there was no more sleep for either of them that night. Sometimes he was quiet, then again in a perfect frenzy.

Days went by. Sometimes they hoped he was better; and then they feared there was no hope of ever seeing him himself again. At last, his father was summoned: a stern, proud, old Scotchman he was; but when he came to see his beautiful boy so near to death, and so unprepared, his forced calmness gave way, and he groaned aloud in his agony.

It was a calm, beautiful Sabbath afternoon that witnessed the last scene. Without, all was peace. Within, in the chamber of the dying, the most horrid imprecations; piteous calls for help, interrupted by blasphemies that made the by-standers shudder. Altogether it was a scene that cannot be described. After lying quiet a few moments, his eyes wandered around

the room, and rested on his father's face with a look of recognition.

"Do you know me, my boy?" he asked, coming nearer.

"Yes, father," he answered, feebly. Then, seeing Allan, with an effort he raised himself upon his elbow, and cried, "and I know you too, you cursed sneak."

"That is Allan, my boy, your brother."

"Yes, I know it's Allan McAlpine, but he's no brother of mine. You black-hearted scoundrel, you made me what I am with your cursed brandy. I told you plainly that I dare not take it, and you laughed at my squeamishness. Oh, you're a precious villain!"

"Hugh, lad, remember I only prescribed it while you were sick. You know I advised you to stop when you got well."

"O, yes! Set a house on fire, and advise it to go out when it has burned the roof off. There! they're after me—they're coming. Oh! father save me; Al's driving them towards me! Save me! save me! Father—John—Oh——"

A moment of quiet—a quick contraction of the features, and with a pitiful moan he died.

John Earle was powerfully moved. It was the first time he had been brought face to face with death, and he said to himself, "But for God's mercy, that is what I might have been."

Alone in his own room, when all was over, John Earle prayed—prayed as a drowning man prays for help, for he fully realized his sore need; and his prayers were answered, and rest and peace came down into his storm-tossed soul. From that hour John Earle had help in his struggles, and he gained the victory over his besetting sin.

Daily he thanked God; not only for deliverance from the bondage in which he was held by his appetite, but for bringing him to enjoy the peace that passeth knowledge.

Scarcely had the Earles become quiet and settled again, when Fred Landon made his appearance. He found Kate all he had expected, and with John's full consent, won her promise to be his wife.

Allan McAlpine left Denton immediately after Hugh's death, and went to the city.