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A Fragment from a Life History.

(From the *Machias Union*.)

How terrible a thing it is to have the fond hopes of the youthful heart blasted for ever, to have them broken and crushed beneath the weight of some life misfortune—to know, to feel in the inmost soul that the great game of life has turned against us, that we staked our all, and lost it! Ah, how bitter the tears the heart then sheds; how hopeless the grief that wrings the soul. Tears may flow like summer rain, but they bring no relief. Sighs may move the deep current of life, but hope springs in the heart nevermore. Despair, deep despair, calls at the night stars, but terrible as the engulfing sea settles down upon the mind.

I knew her well. She was beautiful; beautiful as the opening rose in a summer's morning. She was pure; pure as the stars in the heavens above us. She was happy; happy as the bee that draws only sweets from earth flowers. Had she died then, she would have been an angel now in heaven. With a noble, generous soul and high thoughts that turned always to the beautiful and good, she was the pride of a large circle of friends, and the admiration of all who knew her. A young man, fashionable and gay, rich in lands and the miser's gold, proud, passionate and bold, saw her, won her young heart, and at the altar, vowed to love and protect her through life. Friends approved of her choice, her father gave them his blessing, and the mother with joy resigned the keeping of her daughter's happiness into the hands of him whom she had chosen. The world dreamed not of woe, but prophesied of future peace and happiness.

This opened their life's new morning, full of promise and golden hope. The rainbow of peace sheds its halo around their fireside. Gold was theirs—they need never strive with the ignoble crowd in the race after wealth; the privilege was theirs to turn their thoughts to higher and nobler pursuits. Friends were theirs, high minded and honorable—they need never associate with the low or the vile. Was not every promise, the world could give, theirs? What more could they wish? With life thus bordered with golden flowers entered they upon their pathway. In the long future of their lives what see you? That beautiful wife, whose education had been the constant care of a wise father and fond mother, and who had now articulated the irrevocable words that made her another's, we see, as the years move on, changing into the comely matron, with a happy family of bright-eyed children surrounding her. And him who had taken upon himself the holy task of watching over the welfare of one so pure and good, and who had sworn before high heaven that her happiness should be his end and aim in life, him we behold fulfill-

ing his high mission, training those children for happiness here and hereafter, to become bright lights in this world, angels in that to come. Who does not love to admire such a picture? Such families are the dwelling places of angels and the hope of society and the world. Ah, would that we might draw the curtain here. Would that the actual, rightly drawn, were always thus. Alas, that this may not be.

The tempter entered this Eden of happiness and the man became his victim. He possessed not the fortitude to withstand temptation. He held the same views that thousands now hold, and their barks are daily being wrecked on the same rock that proved his ruin. He thought it no wrong to empty the social glass with his friends; but ere he was aware the serpent's coils were around him; soon the fascination of the bar-room tempted him from his fire-side; and the coarse laugh and obscene jest of his boon companions became music in his ears. The appetite he had formed, he could not control. He saw the whirlpool he was fast approaching, but alas could not gain the shore. How think you felt that wife? The morning of existence scarcely passed; and the bright hopes on which she had hung her future happiness, snapped asunder one by one as the terrible truth forced itself upon the mind. How deep in her heart rankled that arrow barbed with poison from the intoxicating cup held in the hand of a husband. With tipping came gambling, and a consequent neglect of business and loss of property; and soon he became, that loathsome thing, a drunkard. Oh, how wildly did that wife entreat of him never to touch the cup more! How madly she importuned him, not only for herself but for one dearer to her than her own life their child!

"Would to God," cries the unhappy man, "I had never drank;" and flees to the grog-shop to drown his woes in the cup. That first social glass was the fatal step—the course from thence was ever downwards till the man was a beggar. From one of the kindest of husbands he became one of the most abusive.

Now who may picture the feelings of that wife? Nursed in the lap of luxury and ease, proud in spirit and in birth—educated, intelligent, intellectual—formed with the finest and strongest feelings; but frail like women, always—with high hopes and a yearning soul, doomed to behold that structure of happiness which her life had been spent in raising; and which had been the object of her existence to bring to a perfect completion, fall crumbling before the fell blows of that demon, ruin. And she, the high minded, and the good, was a drunkard's wife. The rainbow hopes of her early youth had been blown away by a drunkard's breath. The rising joy of her young heart had been stifled by a drunkard's bruta-