

they sat chatting over their work that night.

Kate Earle was a merry laughter-loving girl of twenty; brown hair, that curled and danced about her head defying all control; witching brown eyes, and the ripest of red lips; while the rich color was constantly coming and going in her cheeks. The prime article in her creed was, unbounded faith in "John." She was at this very moment holding forth on his numerous virtues to the demure little figure in black, so quietly rocking to and fro as she listened. She had heavy, dead-black hair, brushed back from her temples in rich waves; a face that was perfectly colorless, except at rare intervals; and a mouth that had, as John said, a wistful sweetness to it; but the charm of the face was the eyes—deep blue eyes, that had a world of meaning in them when they were lifted to yours.

It was a marvel to Kate to find one two years younger than herself, who seemed, as she characteristically expressed it, "old enough to be her own grandmother." She did not know that Franc Lester had gone through an ordeal, when she gave up her home for the sake of her principles, which had developed the womanliness in her character as nothing else could have done. Before John returned they were fast friends; and destined to be helps to each other in the battle of life.

The next day Dr. McAlpine was called away to attend a sick brother, so it was nearly a month before he saw Miss Lester. John had one or two headaches immediately after the Doctor's departure, for the relief of which he promptly applied to the prescription; and, as he assured himself, it was wonderful how it relieved him. Then he became sensible that evenings out were not so pleasant as evenings at home; and in consequence had no headache next day.

Walking rapidly towards home one evening, with coat buttoned to the chin to keep off the blinding storm, John felt a hand laid on his arm, and turned to meet Dr. McAlpine's familiar face.

"Come right home with me to tea, and tell me all about how you found Hugh."

"Well, I found him poorly enough; but I left him a good deal improved, only still very weak. He had typhoid fever."

Kate met them in the hall, and while they were divesting themselves of their wraps, she said with a nod towards the parlor door,

"There's the greatest fun going on in there. Lawrence was trying to impress our Franc with a sense of his goodness, when, unluckily, he made a remark about drinking that roused the little woman, and she has been ever since pouring down arguments on his devoted head, while he tries in vain to dodge and escape them. It's the greatest fun imaginable; but I'm tired enjoying it alone. Come and hear her."

She ushered them in, and as soon as the presentation was over Lawrence appealed to Dr. McAlpine.

"Miss Lester has been trying to convince me that drinking is a great social evil—in fact, that everybody should quit it."

"A hard task, I should say, to convince you of your duty in that respect," said Allan."

"Well yes," said Lawrence, "I do take a glass now and then, and I feel sure I am no worse for it."

"Are you any better for it?" asked Miss Lester gently.

"Yes, I think I am. You see sometimes when a fellow has been out late in the evening he feels dull next morning; and then a glass sets him up. Then when he is driving in the cold, nothing will keep out the cold like a glass of brandy. Oh yes, Miss Lester, it is undoubtedly a good thing; I think the Doctor will agree with me in that."

"In some instances, yes, Lawrence; but still I quite agree with Miss Lester that it is a social evil. Half the misery in the world is caused by its use, or rather its abuse."

"Will you instance a case in which it is a good thing?" said Franc.

"As a medicine I have often found it very beneficial. In my brother's case I ordered it. He had absurd notions about it, and was determined not to take it; but I persuaded him, and before I came away he was ready for it whenever I brought it to him. He saw its good effects, and came to his senses you know."

"What were the good effects?" asked Franc.