

met by stronger and more irresistible temptations than any which had yet assailed him. He soon made his way into society, and was a welcome guest among many of the "first families." With a fine dignified form, his intelligent and beautiful countenance, a pleasing, graceful manner, uncommon conversational powers, and last but not least, his reputed fortune, he was considered a desirable acquisition to almost any circle. He had an artful and shrewd faculty of adapting himself to those with whom he was conversing, so that he could please all. He was a great favorite with the ladies, for how could they help admiring such an 'elegant gentleman,' 'splendid beau,' and 'exquisite singer,' as Arthur Gray?

Many a young man looked upon him as an envied rival, and many a girl's heart beat quick as she saw his large, dark eye fixed upon her, or listened to the flattering words that fell from his lips.

Young Gray had been in the city but a few months, before the sudden death of his father placed in his possession a large property, and from that time his downward career was rapid. He drank more freely of the baneful poison, which invariably has ruin in its train, and as a natural consequence, he played more largely. Was he unsuccessful at cards, another glass and another game were sure to follow, until driven to desperation by ill-success, he rushed on to the byways and highways of iniquity and vice.

Happily for his father, he died before the truth was revealed, but his poor devoted mother lived to witness the disgrace and ruin of her heart's pride, her darling Arthur. She remonstrated with all a mother's tenderness and power, but all to no purpose. He heeded not her words of warning or her tears of anguish.

But he was not content to destroy himself and wring the hearts of his fond mother and affectionate sisters, but he sought and secured the affections of a fair young creature, who, blinded by his artifice, gave him the wealth of her buoyant, trusting heart.

Emma Lee was an amiable, accomplished and beautiful girl, the only daughter of a wealthy merchant, and the pet lamb of both her parents. And she was good as she was lovely. Gentle and unsophisticated herself, she was unsuspecting of others.—Arthur Gray never appeared before her, or her parents, other than a polished gentleman of refined morals, and why should she not suppose him to be what he appeared? Little did she know or dream the subtlety of his depraved heart, concealed by such blandness of manner.

I would here repeat, for the benefit of my fair sisters, the apostolic injunction, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers;" for though Emma Lee did not know the real character of Arthur Gray, yet she did know that she had no reason to believe that he was a member of the family of Christ, to which she hoped she belonged. And too late did she have reason to repent her forgetfulness of this holy command.

Gray was not so blind to his own danger, as not to feel that he could not long maintain his present condition in society, without a speedy reformation.—Conscience and pride often urged him to renounce his vicious habits, but the goadings of self-reproach he could not bear, and he hastened to drown them in the exhilarating glass. It was that fact, together with the rapid exhaustion of his funds, which induced him to urge their speedy union.

It cannot be supposed that all were still ignorant of the fearful risk incurred by the lovely being who was about to give herself to this profligate man, for such he was already believed to be, by many. But if any anxious friend ventured to expostulate with her, they only received an incredulous repulse, for when did a loving heart ever believe an evil report of the object of its affection until forced to do

so by positive evidence? Emma regarded it merely as the calumnious device of some envious rival, and gave it only a passing thought.

Brilliant was the scene, and numerous the assemblage that graced the nuptials of Emma Lee. Bright, joyous and beautiful looked the young bride, as she placed her hand within that of him who stood beside her, with an air of devoted confidence. Her radiant face was overshadowed by no vapor of sadness, for she was not to leave her childhood's happy home.

But amid that throng there were many hearts sadly oppressed by dark forebodings; and the silent tear would start unbidden, as they felt how soon the gladness of this hour would be exchanged for weeping and woe. Not long were their fears unrealized.

There was no longer any check upon his course, for he felt not the restraining influence of pure affection, because its heaven-born flame glowed not in his heart.

Just one week from the evening of their marriage, he was out until a late hour, and anxiously and wonderingly did the bridal Emma await his return. As the clock told the hour of midnight, her listening ears caught the sound of a heavy, unsteady tread on the steps. She thought it was Arthur, and flew to meet him, when she beheld her drunken husband.—Horror-stricken and amazed she approached him, but with a muttered oath he bade her begone.

With a giddy brain and a bursting heart she tottered back to the parlor, and sunk insensible upon the sofa. When she awoke to consciousness she started, as from a fearful dream, breathing the words, "Oh, Arthur, what a horrid dream!" But as she opened her eyes, the dreadful reality again overpowered her, and thus passed the weary hours till morning light. But returning day brought no sunshine for the agonized heart of poor Emma, for with it came another crushing blow, which bowed to the dust the beautiful, blushing rose of yesterday.

Scarcely had Mr. and Mrs. Lee learned from their suffering daughter the awful cause of her sorrow, when an officer appeared for the arrest of Arthur Gray, on charge of forgery. Not yet recovered from the night's carousal, he was hurried away to the hall of justice, and thence to the City Prison, to await his trial. Truly "wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging;" and what will a man not do, when under its influence?

Upon investigation, it appeared that when he had squandered all his fortune in "riotous living," to keep up appearance and indulge his base appetite and passions, he had forged a note to a large amount, no doubt designing at the time, to satisfy the demand with a portion of the dowry he expected to receive with his bride. But in this he was disappointed, and was overtaken by the strong arm of the law, from which he could not escape.

He received the sentence he deserved, imprisonment for a term of years—though in the eye of Omniscience he could be seen no less than a murderer. Broken-hearted Emma! we will linger over her sad story only to say that she drooped like a lovely flower, nipped by an untimely frost, until the kind Gardener transplanted her to Paradise.

Mrs. Gray, the mother of Arthur, never recovered from the shock produced by the intelligence of her son's ruin. She was, at the time of my visit, but the mere wreck of her former self, either in mind or body, and she has since passed away from earth, which was to her, indeed "a vale of tears."

Through the efforts of his friends, Gray was "pardoned out," but he gave them abundant cause to regret the act, and they were at length compelled to return him a prisoner, in the home of his happy, promising boyhood, allowing him only the "liberty of the yard." But even