

of the same day. The large dining hall was brilliantly lighted. All the college students and many invited guests were there. It was a dinner of honour of the young man, the leader of his class. The schoolmaster heard the toast of the evening proposed, and the wild enthusiasm and clinking of glasses with which it was received. He saw the young man thus honoured, moisten his lips with a sip of wine from the glass before him, and, rising in his place at the right of the chairman, commence to speak. But the first words were scarce uttered when again, in an instant, the scene changed.

He saw a room half darkened to exclude the brightness of the afternoon sunshine that was without. On a bed within the room lay a woman on whose face death had evidently laid His strong hand. Though the countenance was pale and worn with illness, yet it was still unchanged in the maternal gentleness which had softened and beautified it, when the mother, standing by the cot of her sleeping boy, stooped and kissed him. It was even radiant and more softened and beautiful in the strange faint light that shone on it, and to the old schoolmaster seemed to fall upon it from another world. At her bedside knelt her son, older by three years than when he stood upon the college platform and pronounced the valedictory. His head was bowed over the cold hand he held in both his own, and between the bursting sobs that shook him, he cried:

"Mother, oh mother, I can not let you go."

"My boy," came faintly and with effort from her lips, "it will only be for a little while. Remember, I am going to that City, and when you have fought the fight and the battle is won your father and I will be there to welcome you as you come for the victor's crown."

He felt a movement and a faint pressure of her hand. He lifted up his head. She was gazing heavenward, her hand, resting on her breast, pointed to where she gazed. The strange light in her face brightened into a kind of glory. She whispered, "There!" Then slowly the light faded. There was one loud, agonizing cry of "Mother!" But she heard it not. She had entered the City.

Again the scene changed. There was a court-room crowded to its utmost. In the dock sat a man on trial for his life. The evidences were all in. The counsel for the prisoner was concluding his address to the jury. He was the same man whom the old schoolmaster had seen in all the scenes that had passed before him—still young, though three years had passed since he knelt by the bedside of his dying mother. He spoke, and as his voice, full and rich as some cathedral organ touched by a master hand, now swelled into eloquent denunciation of some perjured witness, the hearts of his hearers quickened and their eyes flashed in responsive sympathy; and again as it sank almost to a whisper, yet so distinct and tremulously clear that it thrilled to every corner of that vast room through silence broken only by sobs, strong men, moved by the power and pathos of his appeal, wept like children. But, even as the old man looked, the scene moved.

It was the evening after the trial. The barristers attending the court were seated at dinner. At the table head sat the judge. Addressing the counsel

for the prisoner he congratulated him warmly on his defence, and added: "You must be fatigued with such an effort. This is very superior brandy I have here in this decanter. Will you take a glass with me?" And the schoolmaster saw the young man bow his thanks and fill and drain his glass. But immediately again the scene shifted.

A room cosily furnished and with all the taste and beauty which naught can give save the touch of a woman's hand. On a low rocking chair by a table, near a shaded drop-light, sat a young wife reading aloud in low sweet voice to him who, on the other side of the table reclining in an easy chair, sat listening. Presently he interrupted her.

"Vera, is there any of that brandy left?" She lowered the book, looked at him an instant, then rising went to him, seated herself on his knee, rested her hand upon his shoulder, and with the other upon his forehead, bent back his head and kissed him. Then persuasively she spoke:

"My boy, you don't want any I know, now do you?"

"I am afraid, little girl," answered he, "I must plead guilty. I suppose it is because of the long steady strain of the past two days' work, but I feel exhausted and think a glass of brandy would refresh me."

A look of trouble shaded her face a moment. Then, linking her arm in his, she said "Come, till I show you something."

Lifting him with gentle force, she led him into the adjoining room to the side of a little cot where, with chubby hand thrown over the coverlid, a little child lay in the sweet balmy slumber of infancy.

They both watched the little form lovingly some moments, then she whispered,

"Harry, if you have no fear for yourself, are you not afraid for him?"

He started and stepped back. "What! little girl, you don't think—you surely can't mean—Why, Vera, do you think I shall ever become a slave to wine—a drunkard!"

"No one ever thought he would become such," she answered. "But there," as she saw the look of pain in his face, and threw her arms about his neck so that her head lay on his shoulder, "do not be grieved. But I have been so much in fear, and am afraid now. I cannot help it. It is so dreadfully dangerous a thing to touch."

Moodily he stood a moment, then rousing himself he said, "Well, little one, we won't have the brandy, then. I'll take this instead;" and, bending down, he kissed her.

Again the scene moved on. In the same room, late in the evening, alone, heedless of the open book lying in her lap, sat the same young wife. Her sweet face was a shade paler than it was, and an anxious look rested over it. Presently she catches a sound. She listens intently. It is a step coming up the gravelled walk. In an instant she is at the open door. The old schoolmaster, watching, sees a man enter. It is the same familiar face, but it is flushed with the excitement of wine. He sees the anxious look in the wife's face settle into one of pain. Then the picture moved onward a little, and the old man seen, by a strange power, though in the darkness of the night, a woman's tears gently falling on a pillow; and then a slender figure rise, and, kneeling by the bedside, pray

in whispers long and with an earnestness almost convulsive, while in the still night watches no other sound is heard save the deep stertorous breathing that marks the sleep of one under the influence of wine.

Then this picture, too, faded; and after it in quick procession scene after scene, extending over two years' time, passed in review before the old man. Present in them all was the same familiar face, but not one in them all did he see that face again flushed with wine. He saw the sweet gentleness of the young wife's face again unclouded.

Then came one picture that lingered longer than the rest. Grouped in a large room were a number of men. There had that day been a grand political dinner. Enthusiasm had run high. Speeches had been made, toasts drunk and wine flowed freely. Scarce one man in that group but had more or less deeply drunken of it. Then the old man saw among the group that one face he had seen throughout flushed and excited as on that night two years before. Scarce had he beheld when an angry word was spoken, and the face flushed the deeper crimson of wine and passion combined. Then he saw a force and sudden blow and a man fall, in his descent striking his head on the arm of a chair. He saw the bystanders raise the fallen man all limp and unconscious. He saw a surgeon hastily summoned, having made his examination, shake his head ominously. And he saw the assailant with face now no longer flushed but sobered and blanched, and he heard his almost wailing cry, "My God! have I killed him."

Then this picture vanished and in its place the old man again looked upon a crowded court-room. In the dock with bowed head and haggard face sat the man whom he had heard pleading for the life of another, now himself on trial for taking the life of a fellow-man. There was stillness, followed by a sudden movement in the crowd, the jury-men entering with their verdict. They fled into their box. The crier commanded "Silence!"

The clerk asked, "Gentlemen, are you agreed upon your verdict, and who shall speak for you?"

The foreman rose and spoke, "Guilty, with strong recommendation to mercy." Scarcely were the words pronounced when the scene again vanished.

Then, as before, the events of two years passed in quick moving panorama before the eyes of the old man. In all he saw the same familiar face confined in a prison cell. Every fortnight, the limit allowed by the prison rules, there appeared there the sweet and gentle face of the young wife; ever, while in the cell, cheerful and bright and full of love; and ever, on leaving it, sorrowing and in tears. Then he saw one scene that stood out more vividly than others of that time. All day long, with scarce an interval of rest, the prisoner had paced his cell. Two days had passed since, in the usual course, he should have seen the face dearest to him of all things on earth. At evening, two letters were handed him. One, in the hand he knew so well, he tore open with nervous yet ravenous impetuosity. Its date was two days old. As he read, a strange sense of suffocation and sinking at his heart came over him. The words were few.

"Dearest Harry,—Our boy is ill—

very ill. When he is better I will come to you.—VERA."

Then, nerving himself to the effort, he tore open the other letter. It too was brief and almost brutal in its bluntness.

"Your son died yesterday of fever. Your wife is very ill with the same disease. She is delirious, and the doctor gives no hope. She calls for you incessantly."

With a cry, the man sprang to his feet. "My God! must I be caged here, and—?" The utterance ended in a groan, and he dropped down on the bedside and sobbed in all the fearful agony of a strong man whose heart was breaking.

Then the old man saw come forth, three weeks later, from the prison door a man so aged by grief—so broken and haggard—so desperately wild—so reckless—so crazed by sorrow, that it would have been but common charity to have restrained him there till he had recovered enough of calmness and reason to make it safe to leave him with himself. Then the picture faded.

Five years went by as time speeds in a dream, and the old man saw another picture, fearful in its vividness. It was past midnight. In the ill kept, dingy sitting-room of a low country inn, before an open fireplace in which smouldered a few embers, had sat for hours scarce moving, with his chin upon his hand and his elbow on his knee, a man with the battered, dissipated and wretched look characteristic of the common drunkard. He was alone. In the faint flashes of the firelight the old man could distinguish the features of the face, and though bloated and disfigured until they were but the wreck of what they once had been, there were still visible the traces and lines which marked those of the child that had twined his arms about his mother's neck in that pleasant sitting room long before.

Presently the man rose, went to the door of the room, and softly closed it. Then he took down from where it hung on brackets on the wall a musket. He examined it carefully to assure himself it was loaded. Then he cocked it, rested the stock upon the floor, placed the muzzle against his forehead, and pressed his foot against the trigger. With a sharp click the hammer fell—but that was all. Impatiently he raised the weapon to again cock it, when he noticed the cap had fallen off. He stooped to search for it in the dim light, and as he did so a little book fell from the pocket of his coat upon the floor. He started, picked it up—open as it fell,—and his eye caught the words written on its fly-leaf. He gazed at them a moment, then, replacing the book in his pocket, fell again into the chair by the fire, and sat there long in his former brooding attitude. At length he slowly rose, replaced the gun on its brackets, and, taking his hat, stole quietly out into the night and walked rapidly away.

Again the scene changed. It was a beautiful Sabbath evening, in all the mellowed softness of a country mid-summer. A shabbily-dressed man, with look and mien hopeless, weary and broken, pushed open the gate before the quiet church on the outskirts of the village. He walked straight to where, secluded and half hidden by the surrounding foliage and white memorial stones, three graves lay side by side. Casting himself down by these, he threw his arms over the