

There are earnest ones, but weak, who in full confidence in the ordinances of the Lord's house, forgetting that through wine or strong drink they have lost their will power to control their appetites, have approached the table of the Lord, thereby testifying, by partaking of the emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood, their faith in the atonement made for sin, when, alas! the first sip from the deceptive cup inflames their desire for more, and they go on without power to resist, until their sun sets in endless night.

Dear sisters, members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and all who are in sympathy with this great Temperance Reform, let us each and all awake to the duty of the hour, and by voice and pen, give no rest, until this fatal desecration of the "Lord's Table" be swept away.

Tales and Sketches.

THE BURNISH FAMILY.

A PRIZE STORY PUBLISHED BY THE SCOTTISH TEMPERANCE LEAGUE.

CHAPTER II (Continued.)

Mabel thanked her father, expressed her fear that he would be lonely! which he over-ruled by saying, "O, never fear, I am a business man, child; I find my pleasure in my work."

This speech, perhaps, nerved his daughter to say what had been on her mind the last three days. At first she spoke with hesitation; gathering firmness as she went on, she said—

"Haven't you the means to live without this business, father?"

"No, girl; not as I have been used to live, and as I like to live."

"Why not give the business to Frank and Tom? A share of it belongs to their Aunt Annie. Let them have it, and let us, my dear father, live in some little country town. I could teach music, or keep a school, or—"

"Play the fool," interposed her father, with a look of impatience. "Give the business to those rascals, whose father nearly ruined it! Annie's share! poor thing, she is, no doubt, dead. Pshaw! folly! I was told that bringing you up away would make you despise your father's trade, and perhaps your father also."

"Don't say the last—O pray, don't say it!" said Mabel, running towards her father and clasping her hands round his arm. "I do, indeed, hate, loathe, and despise this dreadful business—this traffic, crime and misery. But you are used to it. You don't see it as I do—as I must. Father you say I cannot live in it—that's true! O forgive me for saying I cannot live *on* it! Now I know what it is, I dare not!"

"What does the girl mean? Why, child, you're raving!"

"I mean, father, that I can live by teaching, I know I can; and that to live any longer in luxury, on the proceeds of this business, now that I know it's iniquity, would be a sin against my own soul."

Mr. Alterton looked at Mabel with a bewildered stare, and was silent for an instant. She was about to restate her plea, when he interrupted her by saying, as if partly to himself,—

"Perhaps the best way with this whim is to let it cure itself. A sea voyage, salt junk, and a flogging captain, has cured many a boy of the salt water fever; and you, Miss Mabel, when you find out the difference between being a young lady, and a slave of a governess, will then know which side your bread is buttered."

"Believe me, I'm grateful for all," Mabel commenced.—

"O, no doubt, deuced grateful! after all my determination to keep you out of—that is to make a lady of you, I and my business are to be hated and loathed. Zounds! what was it you said? Hard words! shameful hard words! put as much flummery round 'em as you may."

By this time Mr. Alterton had talked himself into a passion,—thought himself an ill used man on all sides; and Mabel, in tears, sought her own room, feeling that she had lived many years in that one week: that her childhood faded into distance, and that the burden of life, with all its responsibilities, rested upon her. Still, though troubled at her father's anger, Mabel had the answer of a good conscience, as regarded her present resolution and her future plans.

CHAPTER III.

First Steps in a New Path.

"Think not the faith by which the just shall live
Is a dead creed—a map correct of Heaven,
Far less a feeling—foul and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given.
It is an affirmation, and an act,
That bids eternal truth be present fact."

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

The shadow of the cloud, if not the cloud itself, lowered on Mr. Alterton's brow during his journey to Bath with his daughter. He had business at Bristol, and therefore he contented himself with seeing Mabel once more safely housed at Miss Germaine's, and then left, without much delay, intending to take the next train onward. He did this for other

reasons than those of business: he wished to mark his displeasure at the purport of his daughter's conversation the previous evening, and he thought nothing would be so likely to bring her to reason, as he called it, as an air of settled coldness. Indeed, the more he thought it over, the more he was surprised and annoyed. That Mabel should not wish to live at home, he understood and approved. It was the result he had laboured for; but that she should attack the business itself,—"That respectable and wealthy trade, so influential politically, so indispensable socially, so wide-spread in its operations, so substantial in its gains—it was madness! a girl's squeamish freak—a bit of boarding school affectation." No! even as he uttered the words he knew that Mabel was not a squeamish, affected, piece of would-be fine ladyism. She was above the vulgarity of affectation. She was a girl of sense and principle, and her fancies, therefore, perplexed him the more.

It was a tearful parting between father and daughter. Each wished to be understood by the other—each felt convinced the other was wrong. Mabel's heart was very heavy as, from the parlour window, she watched her father leave the house and walk languidly down the garden, on his way back to the station. The hat-band and deep black, that told of his recent loss, appealed to her sympathies. "And I have wounded him," said she, mentally, "while he is in trouble and alone. How hard it is to be right!" The tears were streaming unheeded down her face as she followed him with her eyes: a hand laid gently on her shoulder, caused her to turn round; Miss Germaine stood beside her. Mabel knew that, under a cold, reserved manner, there beat a warm heart, and she at once frankly told the guide of her childhood and youth that she needed advice on a difficult subject. Miss Germaine merely said in reply:—

"Not now, Mabel; you are excited by your recent trouble, and tired with your journey. Carry your cares for this night to your Heavenly Father only. To-morrow, if you still wish to consult me, you can do it calmly."

Mabel acquiesced in the wisdom and kindness of this advice. She knew that the full heart often poured out its complaints too hurriedly for reason to regulate them, so she constrained herself, and before she slept sought that Heavenly direction, to which, from her earliest years, Miss Germaine had led her to look with reverence, that had now sublimed into faith. It was well; for during the interval, Mabel determined not to speak of her father's business as she at first might have done. The trade seemed to her so like a crime, that it was her duty to be silent about it, out of respect to her father. She merely said that "recent circumstances made her feel it imperative to endeavour to obtain a situation."

Miss Germaine heard her with astonishment. Mabel, an only daughter, always most liberally supplied with all that indicated opulence, to be obliged to exert her talents for a livelihood, was indeed a change—for Miss Germaine never doubted it was necessity not choice that prompted the decision. She could understand, indeed anticipated Mabel's dislike to her father's business, but not to the money it procured, or the position for herself that it sustained. She was too well-bred to express all the surprise she felt, and too kind to distress Mabel with many questions or words of sympathy; she did what was more to the purpose—entered heartily into her plans, and stated that she had at that very time a letter on her desk unanswered, requesting her to recommend a governess. This letter came from a lady, the wife of a member of parliament, altogether a most respectable family, whose reputation ranked so high in the religious world, that no young lady could desire a more advantageous commencement of a professional career than under such auspices.

"Do you think I am qualified?" said Mabel, feeling a sense of insignificance, as Miss Germaine dilated on the merits of the family.

"Mrs. Burnish was so good as to say she would prefer one of my pupils, and I had thought of writing to poor Miss Horton, and asking if she could leave the Fitzpinch family, where she has never been very comfortable; but, if it is indeed true that you wish to spend a few years in the useful work of imparting instruction, you have advantages of manner that would make me prefer to recommend you. Ah! Miss Alterton, it is well that you have been diligent all these years," concluded Miss Germaine, never forgetting her office of instructress, "you will find the benefit of it now."

Mabel employed the evening of that day in writing an affectionate explanatory letter to her father. She felt she could write what she could not say, and soften the determination she had made, by pointing out the advantages to her own mind of having a pursuit in life. Miss Germaine also enclosed a letter to him, in which she named the benefit Mabel would derive from entering such a family as that of Burnish, particularly, if, as she supposed it was, with the view to perfect herself in her various acquirements, concluding with a sort of schoolmistress' flourish on the mental benefit of teaching; in which she was no doubt right, for whether pupils learn or not, teachers are sure to learn.

These joint letters, and the time he had had for reflection, made Mr. Alterton agree to the proposal. "She may not get the situation—she may soon dislike it. Certainly the family in all its branches is unexceptionable; isn't there James Burnish, the bill-broker, and Richard, the rectifier, besides the two great concerns of Theophilus and Felix Burnish; and at present it's inconvenient to me to make any change in house or business