

"Your words sound very strange, and sweet," he said, after a moment's pause. "My wife wants me to go into another kind of business, to give the money I have made in this to the amelioration of the condition of — of —." The words were hard to utter.

"Of the families of drunkards," suggested Mrs. Lee, in the same sweet voice.

"Yes, that is it. How well you understand her. This is a hard thing for a man to do. Remember, Mrs. Lee, that I am a wholesale liquor dealer. I never peddled drinks from a bar; don't think that of me.

"In proportion as the wholesale is larger than the retail, just in proportion is your sin larger than the man's who deals out to individuals what you supply him with."

"You don't mean that," he urged.

"Every word of it. Your wife's desire is perfectly just, in every respect, and I trust that the Lord will, through her love and purity, incline your heart to do His will."

Just here, the pale, tender-eyed wife glided in, with a greeting which spoke volumes.

"I am so glad to see you, dear madam!" she said. "I told my husband that if you did not come to see us, I should send for you, didn't I dear?" and the thin little hand caressed her husband's arm affectionately.

"And I told my wife that there wasn't the least hope of your coming; but her eyes sometimes see farther than mine."

"Husband told me," she went on, "that he met a lady who bowed to him, and whom he thought would do me good. O! I was so glad. I had asked God so many times to send me a friend; and"—drawing close to Mrs. Lee—"if I could have picked one out myself, I could not have been better suited."

"Our dear Father answers our prayers, sometimes according to our desires," said Mrs. Lee, taking the thin hand in hers.

"Yes, and sometimes he doesn't seem to answer them at all. O, Mrs. Lee, I have prayed one prayer so long, so faithfully, so hard without getting an answer, that I am almost discouraged. It is about him," pointing to her husband. "You don't know, I never can tell how kind and how loving he has been to me, ever since he married me. He thinks I am sick, because he sees me failing every day. I am not. Only for one thing, I should be as healthy and happy as any body. Won't you please kneel down here and ask God to answer my prayer?"

Mrs. Lee could hardly see the pleading woman for her tears, but she wiped them away, and looked up at the husband. His fine face was drawn with pain, and his whole manner that of one who suffers keenly.

"If you can do such things, Mrs. Lee, please oblige her," he said, with an effort at sternness.