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JOHN JARVIS,

OR THE TEMPERANCE PLEDGE SIGNED.

(Concluded.)

The poor man was now shown his place in the shop, and once again he resumed his work, though under a far different impulse than had, for years, nerved him to action. But his nerves were all unstrung. His hand shook so, that he could with difficulty use, with the required skill, the implements of his calling. He experienced, likewise, a sinking, sickening feeling; and at times a dizziness and obscurity of mind would suddenly come over him, exciting the liveliest emotions of fear lest nature would not bear up under so sudden a withdrawal of its accustomed stimulus. Gradually, however, as his mind became intently fixed upon his work, and his body felt the impulse of manual activities, a slight reaction took place, and the whole machinery of his physical frame moved on with something approaching to a healthy tone. His hand grew steadier, though it still trembled.

Two hours brought his regular dinner time, when Jarvis, who began to feel the want of food, returned home, with new and strange feelings about his heart. One impulse was to tell his wife what he had done, and what he was doing. But then he remembered how often he had mocked her new springing hopes—how often he had promised amendment, and once even joined a Temperance Society, only to relapse into a lower and more degraded condition. "No, no," he said to himself, after debating the question in his mind, as he walked towards home, "I will not tell her now; I will first present some fruit of my repentance; I will give such an assurance as will create confidence and hope."

Mrs. Jarvis did not raise her eyes to the face of her husband, as he entered. The sight of that once loved countenance, distorted and disfigured, even made her heart sick when she looked upon it. Jarvis seated himself quietly in a chair, and held out his hands for his youngest child, not over two years old, who had no consciousness of his father's degradation. In a moment the happy little creature was on

his knee; but the other children showed no inclination to approach; his conduct had estranged their young hearts' purest and most innocent affections. This was perceived and felt keenly; but he had hope of reclaiming all that he had lost, and this compensated, in some degree, for the present distance and estrangement.

The frugal meal passed in silence and restraint. Mrs. Jarvis felt troubled and oppressed, for the prospect before her seemed to grow more and more gloomy. All the morning she had suffered from a steady pain in her breast, and from a lassitude that she could not overcome. Her pale, thin, care-worn face told a sad tale of suffering, privation, confinement, and want of exercise. What was to become of her children she knew not. Under such feelings of hopelessness, to have one sitting, by her side who could take much of her burdens from her, were he to will it—who could call back the light to her heart if only true to his promise, made in earlier and happier years—soured, in some degree, her feelings, and obscured her perceptions. She did not note that some change had passed upon him—a change that, if marked, would have caused her heart to leap in her bosom.

As soon as Jarvis had risen from the table, he took his hat, and kissing his youngest child, the only one there who seemed to regard him, passed quickly from the house. As the door closed after him, his wife heaved a deep sigh, and then rising, mechanically, proceeded to clear up the table. Of how many crushed affections and disappointed hopes did that one deep, tremulous sigh speak.

Jarvis returned to his work, and applied himself steadily during the whole afternoon. Whenever a desire for liquor returned upon him, he quenched it with a copious draught of water, and thus kept himself as free from temptation as possible. At night he returned, when the same troubled and uneasy silence pervaded the little family at the supper table. The meal was scanty, for Mrs. Jarvis' incessant labour could procure but a poor supply of food. After the children had been put to bed, Mrs. Jarvis sat down, as usual, to spend the evening, tired as she was, and much as her breast pained her, in sewing. A deep sigh heaved involuntarily her bosom as she did so. It caught the ear of her husband, and smote him upon his heart. He knew that her health was feeble, and that constant labour fatigued her excessively.

"I would not sew to-night, Jane," he said, "you look tired; rest for one evening."

Mrs. Jarvis neither looked up nor replied. There was something in the tone of her husband's voice that stirred her feelings—something that softened her heart towards him. But she dared not trust herself to speak, nor to let her eye meet his; she did not wish to utter a harsh or repulsive word, nor was she willing to speak kindly to him, for she did not feel kindly, and kind words and affected cheerfulness, she had already found, but encouraged him in his evil ways, and so she continued to ply her needle, without appearing to regard his presence. Her husband did not make another effort to induce her to suspend her labours; for under existing circumstances he was particularly desirous