

Still he was attentive to business—he still retained the confidence of his employer—his salary was liberal—he still sent thirty pounds a year to his mother: and Mary Douglas still held a place in his heart, though he was changed—fatally changed. He had been about four years in his situation when he obtained leave for a few weeks to visit his native village. It was on a summer day when the chaise from Jedburgh drove to the door of the only public-house in the village. A fashionably dressed young man alighted, and, in an affected voice, desired the landlord to send a *porter* with his luggage to Mrs. Brown's. 'A porter, sir!' said the innkeeper—'there's naethin' o' the kind in the town; but I'll get two callants to take it along.'

He hastened to his mother's—'Ah! how d'y'e do?' said he, slightly taking the hand of his younger brothers—but a tear gathered in his eye as his mother kissed his cheek. She, good soul, when the first surprise was over, said 'she hardly kened her bairn in sic a fine gentleman.' He proceeded to the manse, and Mary marvelled at the change in his appearance and his manner, yet she loved him not the less; but her father beheld the affectation and levity of his young friend, and grieved over them.

He had been a month in the village when Mary gave him her hand, and they set out for London together. For a few weeks after their arrival, he spent his evenings at their own fireside, and they were blest in the society of each other. But it was not long until company again spread its seductive snares around him. Again he listened to the words—'We'll have another'—again he yielded to their temptation, and again the *force of habit* made him its slave. Night followed night, and he was irritable and unhappy, unless in the midst of his boon companions. Poor Mary felt the bitterness and anguish of a deserted wife; but she upbraided him not—she spoke not of her sorrows. Health forsook her cheeks, and gladness fled from her spirit; yet as she nightly sat hour after hour waiting his return, and as he entered, she welcomed him with a smile, which not infrequently was met with an imprecation or a frown. They had been married about two years: Mary was a mother, and oft at midnight she would sit weeping over the cradle of her child, mourning in secret for its thoughtless father.

It was her birth-day, her father had come to London to visit them; she had not told him of her sorrows, and she had invited a few friends to dine with them. They had assembled; but Adam was still absent. He had been unkind to her; but 'his was unkindness she did not expect from him. They were yet waiting, when a police officer entered. His errand was soon told. Adam Brown had become a gambler, as well as a drunkard—he had been guilty of fraud and embezzlement—his guilt had been discovered, and the police were in quest of him. Mr. Douglas wrung his hands and groaned. Mary bore the blow with more than human fortitude. She uttered no scream—she shed no tear; for a moment she sat motionless—speechless. It was the dumbness of agony. With her child at her breast, and, in the midst of her guests, she flung herself at her father's feet. 'Father!' she exclaimed, for my sake!—for my child's sake—save! oh, save, my poor husband!'

'For your sake, what I can do, I will do, dearest,' groaned the old man.

A coach was ordered to the door, and the miserable wife and her father hastened to the office of her husband's employer.

When Adam Brown received intelligence that his guilt was discovered from a companion, he was carousing with others in a low gambling-house. Horror seized him, and he hurried from the room; but he returned in a few minutes. 'We'll have another!' he exclaimed, in a tone of frenzy—

and another was brought. He half filled a glass—he raised it to his lips—he dashed into it a deadly poison, and, ere they could stay his hand, the fatal draught was swallowed. He had purchased a quantity of arsenic when he rushed from the house.

His fellow-gamblers were thronging around him, when his injured wife and her gray-haired father, entered the room. 'Away, tormentors!' he exclaimed, as his glazed eyes fell upon them, and he dashed his hand before his face.

'My husband! my dear husband!' cried Mary, flinging her arms around his neck; 'look on me—speak to me! All is well!'

He gazed on her face—he grasped her hand—'Mary, my injured Mary!' he exclaimed convulsively, 'can you forgive me—you—you? O God! I was once innocent! Forgive me dearest!—for our child's sake, curse not its guilty father!'

'Husband—Adam!' she cried, wringing his hand—'come with me, love, come—leave this horrid place—you have nothing to fear—your debt is paid.'

'Paid!'—he exclaimed, wildly—'Ha! ha!—Paid!' They were his last words—convulsions came upon him—the film of death passed over his eyes, and his troubled spirit fled.

She clung round his neck—she yet cried, 'Speak to me!'—she refused to believe he was dead, and her reason seemed to have fled with his spirit.

She was taken from his body and conveyed home. The agony of grief subsided into a stupor approaching imbecility. She was unconscious of all around; and within three weeks from the death of her husband, the broken spirit of Mary Douglas found rest, and her father returned in sorrow with her helpless orphan to Teviotdale.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

BELLEVILLE, February 6, 1841.

SIR,—Without naming, at this time, any other practice, which I consider morally wrong, I will just advert to those of manufacturing, vending, and drinking intoxicating liquors. Can it be pleaded, at this period of the Temperance Reformation, that the judgment is not sufficiently enlightened? Can the manufacturer of strong drink excuse himself and say, "I knew not the evil that my traffic was producing in the land? Can the merchant, who deals out gallon after gallon of the inebriating liquid, to his grog-drinking customers of every age, and sex, say, "I was not aware that I was doing wrong—that I was subjecting myself to the application of that word, "Cursed is he that putteth the cup to his neighbour's lips?" Or, can those men (to say nothing of females who are in the business) who are "licensed to sell wine and other spirituous liquors," by the glass, to the lovers thereof, plead ignorance as to its evil tendency; when almost every day shows to them, the brutalizing effects of the "thing" they sell, upon their fellow-creatures around them; Nay: let the inquiry be pushed still further, can the MAGISTRATE, acting under the sacred obligations of an OATH, satisfy his conscience, before his Maker, by saying that he did not know the effect which the licensing of the last mentioned persons would be likely to have upon the community? Once more—Can the man of God, who is commissioned to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ, turn away the frown of Jehovah by urging, "I was not aware of the demoralizing effect of using myself, and allowing my charge to use, strong drink?"

An unqualified negative must be given to every one of the above interrogations; the fault, therefore, is not to be charged upon an uninformed, or an unenlightened judgment. The Distiller, the Merchant, the common Grog-seller, the Magistrate, and the Clergyman, who oppose, practically, the temperance cause, must, of course, stand convicted before all true lovers of mankind, and the Searcher of all hearts, as acting in direct opposition to their better judgment. Let those who indulge in, or countenance the practice of using as a drink, distilled or fermented liquors, deny this if they can!