

I have never conquered my degrading passion. Even now, I feel the craving of an appetite cruel and rapacious as the grave!"

"Have you any relations, or friends, who can assist your family? To all appearances you must soon quit this world; and, next to your own eternal welfare, it is of some consequence to know what is to become of those children, and your feeble but patient wife." He shrunk back,—was silent for a time; and then, in a paroxysm of the most bitter and poignant reflection, exclaimed, "All my relatives have disowned me and mine for ever. Helen Burton has an uncle, an only relative; he is in a distant land. I have attempted to—to ruin —." He could proceed no farther; the violence of his feelings overcame him, and he sank upon his bed in agony of remorse. His poor wife was at his bed-side in a moment, and in sweet and soothing accents whispered in his ear, "My dearest Mark Burton, my husband, compose yourself. O, Mark, may not all yet be well? If Lindisburn is no longer ours, yet a change on you will be better to me than the possession of Lindisburn or anything the world can give." Mark Burton looked at his weeping wife, and, in the language of unutterable despair, cried out, "Helen Blair, I am dying! Drink, in an evil hour, robbed me of every manly and honest feeling. You have felt, and are now feeling, the consequences of your husband's vile conduct; but you know not half his guilt. O Helen, I am wretched beyond all endurance; and I am a——." The miserable man again stopped short. At this moment Maria Moreland entered the room, and looking in his face, she exclaimed, "Mark Burton, thy race is ended—thy course is run: the morrow's sun shall not light upon thy eyelids; and once more I tell you there is 'balm in Gilead and a physician there.'" A groan escaped from the lips of the dying drunkard—it came from the heart; and he again exclaimed, "I am a——." "A forger," said Maria Moreland; "but I crossed your path, and you missed your aim. You became a *drunkard*—and drunkenness drove you to meanness—to madness—to crime. Bitter is the experience of Maria Moreland of the evils of that awful vice: its name is *Legion*." At this moment the door of the apartment was opened, and a stranger entered. Maria Moreland uttered a piercing shriek, exclaiming, "It is Colonel Blair, the uncle of Helen Burton." This was too much for the poor drunkard; his whole frame shook and trembled; he heaved one heavy groan—and, in an instant more, his spirit had passed the boundaries which separate time from eternity.

Colonel Blair had just returned from India, and through his agent, had found out the abode of his niece and her wretched circumstances. But very lately before his arrival, Maria Moreland had discovered a plan, which Mark Burton had laid, to swindle Colonel Blair out of large property in the funds by forgery. She communicated her discovery to the Colonel's agent, under a promise that, being the husband of his niece, he should be allowed to escape. In consequence of this information and agreement, Colonel Blair's property was saved, and the criminal spared an ignominious punishment.

The sudden and unexpected appearance of Helen

Burton's uncle had unstrung the nerves of Maria Moreland, in general not very easily moved; but for the poor drunkard it was too much. Doubtless, the sudden appearance of the man whom he had basely attempted to ruin, hurried on that closing moment which, under other circumstances, could not have been far distant. He died evidently suffering all the horrors of remorse of conscience: beyond this we cannot, and dare not, say anything.

Colonel Blair and Maria Moreland recognised each other; mutual explanations took place; and, soon afterwards, Helen and her children were removed by him to his house in the country, there to spend their days beside him, and afterwards to inherit his ample property, for he was unmarried. They were accompanied by Maria Moreland, whom they revered as an example of faithful friendship rarely to be met with in this wicked world; looking upon her as a brilliant comet in a moral hemisphere, which may pass away, but whose striking and wonderful appearance can never be forgotten while the pulse of life continues to beat.

Helen Burton's children were trained up in utter abhorrence of that deadly poison which had ruined their father, and brought upon them a flood of woe; and the days of her widowhood were spent in doing good to the poor, the widow and the fatherless; a bright example of the power and efficacy of that gospel which purifies the heart by works of love, and the knowledge of which has been well designated as the *pearl of great price*.

OPENING OF A RECHABITE HALL—COOKSVILLE.

The new Rechabite Hall, at this place, was opened yesterday with attendant proceedings of a most interesting and auspicious character. The day was exceedingly favourable, the sun beaming forth benignantly through the deep azure of a true Canadian sky, and mellowing the bracing wintry breeze to the very heart's desire. Our usually quiet village was early on the *qui vive*, and the merest stranger might perceive that something "was up;" the village girls appeared to laugh more merrily, and skip about more briskly; and the boys to halloo and leap, and toss one another about more lustily, if possible, than their wont; whilst amply laden baskets of "creature comforts," accompanied by their fair providers, ever and anon passing along to the hall, gave cheering promises that "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" should not alone constitute the approaching banquet. About three o'clock the brethren of the Order, to the number of fifty-two, marched in procession, with appropriate banners, from the hall to the residence of Dr. Crew, and thence back to the Wesleyan Chapel, where the Rev. Wm. McClure, a temperance champion of twenty years standing, delivered a most excellent address to a crowded audience. He chose for his text the 16th, 18th and 19th verses of 25th chapter of Jeremiah, and briefly, but satisfactorily demonstrated,—1st, the lawfulness of—2d, the necessity for—and lastly, the beneficial results arising from Rechabite Societies. From the Chapel the procession returned, in like order, to the hall, where the day's proceedings were to terminate. Already the eager throng had nearly filled the spacious building, and the busy hum of voices from within suggested the idea of a vast beehive, the inmates of which were in that state of indiscernible excitation which usually attends the swarming season. On entering the hall and taking our place in the gallery, the scene that presented itself was truly animating. Two large chandeliers, pendant from the ceiling, aided by numberless single candles, poured a perfect flood of light into every corner of the apartment, and exhibited the arrangements and decorations to the best advantage. At the upper end of the hall was an elevated platform appropriated to the chairman and speakers, and pleasingly decorated with flags and evergreens. The walls also, on either side, were deco-