



## Two Lives.

'Truth is stranger than fiction.' Yes! and truth is stronger than fiction also; one case which we have seen for ourselves makes far more impression than twenty 'made up' or even 'dressed up' stories told by others. Let me try to bring before our readers two lives which have been partly lived in my own neighborhood. If I can make the contrast between them even half as vivid as the reality, there will be no need for me to 'point a moral,' the lesson is too obvious.

Some twenty years ago two sisters were married on the same day, and with, apparently, almost equal prospects of happiness. But the elder girl, whom we shall call Susan, made a more advantageous choice than Jane as regards the things of this world, for James White was a handsome, prosperous young man, full of life and energy, proud of his fine-looking bride, and most anxious to make her comfortable and bright. Jane, wedded a quiet God-fearing farmer, and settled down very tranquilly to 'guide the house and bring up children.' William Scott was worthy of her trust, and love, year by year their affection for one another deepened, and, although they never expected to be wealthy, their land yielded increase proportioned to the patient care bestowed upon it, their cattle were well looked after, and prolific, in every trial and loss they turned to God with submission, and to each other for comfort. Jane saw her sons and daughters grow up around her in ways of honor and honesty, and she had no need to envy any mother in the kingdom.

I do not say that there were not drawbacks to prosperity, or disappointments to be faced by the dwellers in Scott's farm. Our paths are never altogether smooth, but I believe firmly that, even in this present world, 'the Lord up-holdeth the righteous.'

Susan White came to visit her sister from time to time, and rather laughed at her quiet and homely ways. She loved to display her own handsome dresses, and tell of the presents which James brought her when he returned from doing business in distant towns. He was an auctioneer by profession, and greatly sought after as a clever and rising man.

But the fees gained did not satisfy the young couple's desires for wealth. They found that their dwelling was in an excellent position for trade, and very soon a license was obtained, and a public-house opened. It prospered beyond their hopes, from morning to night, and sometimes far beyond night-fall, the bar was crowded, Mrs. White was gay and attractive, the liquor which she dispensed was decidedly better than that obtainable in the shops around, and fortune seemed to smile upon all the business carried on.

After awhile, however, Susan found herself less able to stand all day in the shop, a baby-boy came to divert her attention, and she was often weary and weak. Some neighbor advised her to drink a bottle of porter daily 'to keep up her strength,' and Susan followed the prescription with ready acquiescence. Then a day came when the porter was not a sufficient stimulus to flagging energies, and a little whiskey was added, the 'little' soon became 'much,' and James White was horrified by finding his wife helplessly intoxicated when he returned home one evening after a busy day's work. He did not reproach her severely, he was so gentle with her that she was really distressed at having grieved him, and promised that such a thing should never, never happen again. Her good resolutions did not last long, however, for they were built upon no secure foundation, and Susan's second fall made her less able to resist temptation to a third. Matters went quickly from bad to worse, and poor James finally decided to give up the shop, quit his once comfortable home, and move to another house in the hope that reformation would result, and his wife 'turn over a new leaf,' and keep it turned. But we do not change our characters with changed surroundings, and

Susan was no better able to deny herself intoxicants at E— than at M—. Perhaps the disgrace was even more noticeable there.

James had truly loved her, and it preyed upon his mind so greatly that he tried an awfully foolish but all too common remedy for his grief. The misery caused by drink was forgotten for a few hours by means of drink, and the fine young man yielded himself hopelessly to its influence.

It was a melancholy thing to visit that household. Father and mother confirmed inebriates, children despising and cursing their parents, and leaving them as much as possible to taste the fruits of their doings alone. The youngest son, born when his mother was at her worst, proved afterwards deficient in intellect, not exactly an imbecile, but weak and helpless mentally, willing to be led by every fresh tempter, a trouble and sorrow to those who cared for him in after years.

We must not prolong this sad record by dwelling on details. When the curtain rises again we find Susan alone except for the lad just mentioned, her husband in a drunkard's grave, and her four elder children making their own way in the world as best they could. After various plans and places had been tried Susan was given a comfortable lodge in which to live with Dennis, and might have been in fairly easy circumstances had she conducted herself wisely. At first all went well, poor Susan came under good influences, took the pledge, and promised to turn from her sinful ways for ever. But she had to transact business occasionally in a little town near by, and the temptations there proved again too strong for her. She fell deeper than before, and after fresh repentance, only went back to fresh degradation. Finally, she implored a kind lady friend to save her from herself, and do what seemed best for her, as she could not guide her own conduct. She was sent at first to a quiet farm house, at a great distance from public-houses, and placed under the care of a farmer and his wife, but continual complaints were followed by her determination not to remain at L—. Susan returned, and was next established in an inebriates' home in Scotland. There she was obliged to keep from drink, but her unhappiness was great, and her discontent wore out the patience of all her relations. None would do anything more for her. All longed for her death. Her maintenance was provided on the condition that she never set foot in her native land again. One daughter was about to make an advantageous marriage, and had the honesty to tell her lover all about her unhappy mother. His love was unchanged, but he asked that the secret might be kept from all his family. So Annette had a continual 'skeleton in her cupboard,' and was badly able to meet the constant drain on her resources, and strain on her mind. After two years spent in misery, Susan managed to scrape together a little money, and appeared once more in the old neighborhood. She took a room—a damp, dark place—in our village, 'hoping to live the rest of her time in peace' near her youngest boy. When Christmas time came round she was asked to prepare a plum-pudding for a friend, and insisted on putting in a glassful of whiskey.

This seems to have aroused the old craving, and her last fall was final. A drunken bout was followed by complete break-down of her worn-out constitution; exposure brought on a chill, and disease of the lungs rapidly supervened.

Must she die in the workhouse? we asked one another, and God answered through the kind heart of Jane Scott.

I last saw poor Susan on a summer evening last September. She had been received into the home of that good sister, and lay, surrounded by kind care, gasping out her life.

All the surroundings were ideal. The farm-yard, so nicely kept, full of flowers. The bright garden with its bee-hives, fruit and flowers. The spotless kitchen, well furnished with every homely comfort, and Jane herself, gentle, motherly, neat as always; thankful for her good husband, and the sons and daughters growing up in godliness and prosperity. They were 'plain farmers,' but there was money to spare for such luxuries as bicycle and piano; leisure for books, for Bible study, and family prayer. Above all else there was the atmosphere of love—love towards one another, and towards Him of Whose gifts it is written. 'The bless-

ing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.'

All James' children were and are Total Abstinens. They never tasted drink, and never needed it. What a contrast was presented by the sisters who began their married life on the same day!

Susan White, dying a pauper, without one human being to regret her, knowing that she had entailed a curse upon her children, been the means of her husband's ruin, alienated and disgraced her friends; while Jane who sought first God's righteousness had 'all good things added' unto her.

The poor woman was humbly repentant at last; she passed away very suddenly, but not until she had sought forgiveness from Him who never casts out a sinner, and she grieved alone for the young son left behind her, whose incapacity and weakness she knew only too well.

I have told this story because it illustrates very strikingly many points which are brought forward by those who speak in the cause of Total Abstinence. The facts are absolutely true, and alas, I fear, only too common. But I have never met the different phases of drink and its consequences so strikingly exemplified in one person. Had space allowed many more details of interest could have been given. Such as it is—brief and bare, and matter of fact—I trust the record may be useful, and may perhaps bring home to some minds the reality of the ruin to 'mind, body, and estate,' caused by yielding to the first temptation, and drinking to its last dregs of bitterness the cup of retribution, 'Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap.'—An Irish Secretary, in the 'Temperance Record.'

## The Bishop of Hereford on Betting.

At Oxford, recently, the Bishop of Hereford told a large and influential audience that in all his life he remembered no time when the greed of gain was so strong as now. He spoke such words on 'Sport, Betting, and Gambling' as ought to be pondered by every man and woman in the land. In connection with the special perils of the gambling evil, the Bishop told how he had been engaged on a Betting Committee of the House of Lords, and thought the most striking evidence they had had was given by a very influential working man, Mr. Robert Knight, of Newcastle-on-Tyne. He had been ten years a justice of the peace; he was brought up as a mechanic, and he followed his trade for twenty-five years. He had retired now, but he was the general secretary of the Boilermakers' and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders' Society, which had nearly 50,000 members, for twenty-nine years. His evidence was very strongly condemnatory of betting.—Selected.

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