

ful headache, and a general feeling of having done something to be ashamed of. It took some time to so arrange his ideas as to tell where he had spent the evening, and what time he came home. All at once the blood rushed to his heart with a bound, and then back again, leaving his pulses to stand still, as a thought entered his mind. He sprang to his feet. "Is it possible that I, John Earle, was drunk?" He remembered sensations very like these in days past. He went down and asked Kate if she heard him come home.

"No, you must have been out late. Where were you?"

"Over at Allan's office. I have a bad headache. Make me a strong cup of coffee, please." His breakfast was eaten in silence, and he went out as soon as it was finished. All that day he struggled with himself. He thought he ought to write and tell Franc. Then, he argued that she would feel badly, poor little girl, and he would wait until he could send good news with it. Again, if it was only this once, she would forgive that when he told her about it, at the end of three months; and so it was settled.

But this was not the only time. Again and again it happened. Not that he was ever intoxicated again—he took care of that; but a thousand and one instances seemed to come up, making it almost necessary to take just a little.

At last, in despair, he wrote to Franc, telling her the whole painful story in all honesty;—and he hoped—he was almost sure—she would answer, giving him, at least, sympathy. But he waited in vain. No answer came. The truth was, the letter never reached her.

About this time her uncle died, leaving her sole heir to his vast wealth; but he had left her a better inheritance in the teachings of the last few weeks. She wrote to Kate, and got in reply a letter full of heart sympathy; but with no mention of John, and no invitation to go back to the old home. Kate, poor child, was experiencing her first trouble. She more than suspected that John took too much brandy, and the knowledge completely crushed her. She could not bear that Franc should come to know what she knew, and so did not

ask her to come to them. Franc wondered that there was not even a message from John; but, with woman's trustfulness, she never attached any blame to him.

Not being very strong, the strain upon her strength began to tell, and the old family physician recommended a sojourn at the seaside; and so she went.

Passing along the street one day, she heard a voice that touched a tender chord in her memory. Turning in the direction of the sound, she saw, through an open window, a scene that struck a chill to her heart.

It was John Earle seated, with two or three other gentlemen, at a table on which were decanters and glasses. She knew at a glance that he had been drinking. He lifted the goblet of cut-glass almost to his lips, when a delicate hand was placed suddenly over the top, and gently forced it down to the table again. He rose with an angry exclamation; but the anger died out of his voice, and the flush out of his cheek, when he met a pair of sorrowful blue eyes looking steadily and fearlessly into his. He went out with her instantly.

Not a word was spoken until they reached her private sitting-room. She gave him a seat, and laying a light hand on his shoulder, said:

"John Earle, I've been your friend, have I not?"

"Yes, Franc; you trusted me, and I betrayed the trust. Leave me now to complete my ruin."

"No, John; I shall never desert you, and I feel sure you will not go to ruin."

John looked up to assure himself that she was in earnest.

"Franc, do you really mean it? Could you ever trust me again?"

"Yes; I could trust you again. Surely I, who have received so much mercy, ought to be glad to reach a helping-hand to an erring brother. But, John, you have tried only in your own strength. No man is strong enough to battle such a foe as this alone. Since I last saw you, I have learned to love, and look for strength, to the great God, who is all power as well as all love. Do you go to Him, too, John? He surely will help you." She was kneeling at his side now, her clasped hands resting on his