

your spirits, or care had laid his blighting hand upon you?" "Forbear," cried Anne, impetuously, "and hear me, before you blast me with your contempt. It was not till bitter disappointment pressed, crushed me, that I knew art could renovate the languor of nature. Yes, I, the courted and admired of all, was doomed to love one, whose affections I could not win. You knew him well, but you never knew how my ineffectual efforts to attach him maddened my pride, or how the triumph of my beautiful rival gounded my feelings. The world guessed not my secret, for still I laughed and glittered with mocking splendour, but with such a cold void within! I could not bear it. My unnatural spirits failed me. I must still shine on, or the secret of my humiliation be discovered. I began in despair, but I have accomplished my purpose. And now," added she "I have done. The necessity of shining and deceiving is over. I thank you for the warmth of friendship that suggested your admonition. But, indeed, Emily, your apprehensions are exaggerated. I have a restraining power within me that must always save me from degradation. Habit alone, makes slaves of the weak; it becomes the slave of the strong in mind. I know what's due to Manly. He never shall blush for his choice in a wife."

She began with vehemence and ended with deliberations. There was something in the cold composure of her manner that forbid a renewal of the subject. Emily felt that she had fulfilled her duty as a friend, and delicacy commanded her to forbear a renewal of her admonitions. Force of feeling had betrayed her into a warmth of expression she now regretted. She loved Anne, but she looked with many misgivings to being the sharer of her wedded home. She had deeply studied the character of Manly, and trembled to think of the re-acton that might one day take place in his mind, should he ever discover the dark spot on the disk of his sun—of his destiny. Though she had told Anne that the secret of her growing love for the exciting draught, was known only to herself, it was whispered among the servants, suspected by a few discreet individuals, and had been several times hinted in a private circle of friends. It had never yet reached the ears of Manly, for there was something in his demeanour that repelled the most distant approach to familiarity. He married with the most romantic and enthusiastic ideas of domestic felicity. Where those bright visions of bliss realised? Time, the great disenchanter alone could answer.

It was about five years after the scenes we have recorded, that Mr. and Mrs. Manly took up their residence in the town of G—. Usually, when strangers are about to become inhabitants of a new place, there is some announcement of their arrival, but they came, without any previous intimation being given, for the speculation of the curious, or bringing any letters of introduction for the satisfaction of the friend. They hired an elegant house, furnished it rich and fashionably, and evidently prepared for the socialities of life, as enjoyed in the highest circles. The appearance of wealth always commands the respect of the many, and this respect was heightened by their personal claims to admiration. Five years, however, had wrought a change in both, not from the fading touch of time, for they were not of an age when the green leaf begins to grow sere, but other causes were operating with a power as silent and unpausing. The fine, intelligent face of Mrs. Manly had lost much of its delicacy of outline, and her cheek, that formerly was pale or roseate as sensibility or enthusiasm riled the hour, now wore a stationary glow, deeper than the blush of feminine modesty, less bright than the carnation of health. The unrivalled beauty of her figure, had given place to grosser lineaments, over which, however, grace and dignity still lingered, as if unwilling to leave a shrine so worshipped. Mr. Manly's majestic person was invested with an air of deeper haughtiness, and his dark brow was contracted into an expression of prevailing gloom and austerity. Two lovely children, one almost an infant, who were carried abroad every fair day, by their nurse, shared the attention their parents excited; and many appealed to her for information respecting the strangers. She was unable to satisfy their curiosity, as she had been a member of their household but a short time, her services having been hired while journeying to the place. The other servants were hired after their arrival. Thus, one of the most fruitful sources from which the inquisitive derive their aliment, was denied to the inhabitants of G—. It was not long before the house of Mr. and Mrs. Manly was frequented by those whose society she wished most to cultivate. The suavity of her manners, the vivacity of her conversation, her politeness and disinterestedness captivated the hearts of all. Mr. Manly too received his guests with a cordiality, that surprised, while it gratified. Awed by the external dignity of his department, they expected to be repulsed, rather than welcomed, but it was universally acknowledged, that no man could be more delightful than Mr. Manly, when he chose to unbend. As a lawyer, his fame soon rose. His integrity and eloquence became the theme of every tongue. Amidst all the admiration they excited there were some dark surmises. The malicious, the censorious, the evil disposed, are found in every circle, and in every land. It was noticed that Mr. Manly watched his wife with painful scrutiny, that she seemed uneasy whenever his glance met hers, that her manner was at times hurried and disturbed, as if some secret cause of sorrow preyed upon her mind. It was settled in the opinion of many, that Mr. Manly was a domestic tyrant, and that his wife was the meek victim of this despotism. Some suggested that he had been convicted of crime, and had fled from the pursuit of justice, while his devoted wife refused to separate her destiny from his. They gave a large and elegant party. The entertainment was superior to any thing witnessed before in the precincts of G—. The graceful hostess, dressed in unwonted splendour, moved through her drawing rooms, with the step of one accustomed to the homage of crowds, yet her smiles sought out the most undistinguished of her guests, and the most diffident gathered confidence from her condescending regards. Still the eye of Mr. Manly followed her with that anxious, mysterious glance, and her hurried movements often betrayed inexplicable perturbation. In the course of the evening, a gentleman refused wine, on the plea of belonging to the Temperance Society. Many voices were lifted in condemnation against him, for excluding one of the gladders of existence, what the Scriptures themselves recommended, and the Saviour of men had consecrated by a miracle. The subject grew interesting, the circle narrowed round the advocate of Temperance, and many were pressing eagerly forward to listen to the debate. The opinion of Mrs. Manly was demanded. She drew back at first, as if unwilling to take the lead of her guests. At length she seemed

warmed by the subject, and painted the evils of intemperance in the strongest and most appalling colours. She painted woman as its victim, till every heart recoiled at the image she drew. So forcible was her language, so impressive her gestures, so unaffected her emotions, every eye was riveted, and every ear bent on the eloquent mourner of her sex's degradation. She paused, oppressed by the notice she attracted, and moved from the circle, that widened for her as she passed, and gazed after her, with as much respect as if she were an Empress. During this spontaneous burst of oratory, Mr. Manly remained aloof, but those who had unmarked him in their minds, as the harsh, domestic tyrant, were now confirmed in their belief. Instead of admiring the wonderful talents of his wife, or sympathising in the applause she excited, a gloom thick as night lowered upon his brow, his face actually grew of a livid paleness, till at last, as if unable to control his temper, he left the drawing room.

"Poor Mrs. Manly," said one, "how much is her destiny to be lamented. To be united to a man who is incapable of appreciating her genius, and even seems guilty of the meanness of annoying her."

Thus the world judges; and had the tortured heart of Manly known the sentence that was passing upon him, he would have rejoiced that the shaft was directed to his bosom, rather than her's, which he would fain shield from the proud man's contumely, though it might never more be the resting-place of love and confidence. Is it necessary to go back and relate the history of those years which had elapsed since Anne Weston was presented to the reader as a triumphant belle, and plighted bride? Is it not already seen that the dark speck had enlarged, throwing into gradual, but deepening shade, the soul's original brightness, obscuring the sunshine of domestic joy, converting the home of love into a dark prison house of shame, and blighting, chilling, palsy-ing the loftiest energies and noblest purposes? The warning accents of Emily Spencer were breathed in vain. That fatal habit—had already become a passion—a passion which, like the rising tide, grows deeper and higher, rolling onward and onward, till the landmarks of reason and honor, and principle, are swept over by its waves—a tide that ebbs not but with ebbing life. She had unfortunately looked "upon the wine when it was red, when it gave its colour to the cup," till she found, by fatal experience, that it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. It were vain to attempt a description of the feelings of Manly when he first discovered the idol of his imagination under an influence that, in his opinion, brutalized a man. But a woman!—and that woman—his wife! In the agony, the madness of the moment, he could have lifted the hand of suicide, but Emily Spencer hovered near and held him back from the brink to which he was rushing. She pleaded the cause of her unhappy friend, she prayed him not to cast her off. She dwelt on the bright and sparkling mind, the warm, impulsive heart that might yet be saved from utter degradation by his exerted influence. She pledged herself to labour for him, and with him, and faithfully did she redeem her pledge. After the first terrible shock, Manly's passionate emotion settled down into a misanthropic gloom. Sometimes when he witnessed the remorse which followed such self-abandonment, the grace and beauty with which she would emerge from the disfiguring cloud, and the strong efforts she would make to reinstate herself in his estimation, a ray of brightness would shine in on his mind, and he would try to think of the past as a frightful dream. Then his prophetic dream would return to him, and he shuddered at its confirmation—once it seemed as if the demon had withdrawn its unhallowed presence, unable to exist in the holy atmosphere that surrounds a mother's bosom.

For a long time the burning essence was not permitted to mingle with the fountain of maternal tenderness. Even Manly's blasted spirit revived, and Emily hoped all, and believed all. But Anne had once passed the Rubicon, and though she often paused and looked back with yearnings that could not be uttered, upon the fair bounds she had left, the very poignancy of her shame, goaded her on, though every step she took, evidenced the shame that was separating her from the attentions of a husband whom she loved and respected, and who had once idolized her. It has been said that when woman once becomes a transgressor, her rapid progress in sin mocks the speed of man. As the glacier that has long shone in dazzling purity, when loosened from its mountain stay, rushes down with a velocity, accelerated by its impetuosity, and coldness, when any shameful passion has melted the virgin snow of a woman's character, a moral avalanche ensues, destroying "whatsoever is venerable and lovely, and of good report."

Manly occasionally sought to conceal from the world the fatal propensities of his wife. She had occupied too conspicuous a station in society—she had been too highly exalted—to humble herself with impunity. Her father—whose lavish indulgence probably paved the way to her ruin—was unable to bear himself up under the weight of mortification and grief thus unexpectedly brought upon him. His constitution had long been feeble; and now the bowl was, indeed, broken at the fountain. The filial hand which he once hoped would have scattered roses on his dying pillow, struck the death-blow. Physicians talked of a chronic disease; of the gradual decay of nature; but Anne's conscience told her she had winged the dart. The agony of her remorse seemed a forest of the quenchless fire, and the undying worm. She made the most solemn promises of reformation—vowed never again to taste the poisonous liquor. She threw herself on the forgiveness of her husband, and prayed him to remove her where her name was never breathed; that she might begin life anew, and establish for their children an unblemished reputation. On the faith of these ardent resolutions, Manly broke his connection with every former friend—sold all his possessions, and sought a new home in a place far removed from the scene of their present unhappiness. Circumstances in her own family prevented Emily Spencer from accompanying them, but she was to follow them the earliest opportunity, hoping miracles from the change.

Mrs. Manly, from the death of her father, came into the possession of a large and independent fortune. She was not sordid enough to deem money an equivalent for a wounded reputation; but it was soothing to her pride, to be able to fill her husband's coffers so richly, and to fit up their new establishment in a style so magnificent. Manly allowed her to exercise her own taste in every thing. He knew the effect of external pomp, and thought it was well to dazzle the judgment of the world. He was determined to seek society; to open every source of gratification and rational excitement to his wife, to save her from monotony and

solitude. His whole aim seemed to be, "that she might not be led into temptation." If with all these cares for her safety, he could have blended the tenderness that once softened his proud manners, could he have banished from his once beaming eye the look of vigilance and distrust; could she have felt herself once more enthroned in his heart, gratitude might, perhaps, have completed the regeneration begun by remorse. But Anne felt that she was an object of constant suspicion and fear; she felt that she had not faith in her good resolutions. She was no longer the sharer of his counsels—the inspirer of his hopes—or the companion in whom his soul delighted. His ruling passion supported him in society; but in those hours when they were necessarily thrown upon each other's resources, he was accustomed to sit in gloomy abstraction, brooding over his own melancholy thoughts. Anne was only too conscious of the subject of these reveries, and it kept alive a painful sense of her humiliation. She had, hitherto, kept her promise sacred, through struggles known only to herself, and she began to feel impatient and indignant that the reward for which she looked was still withheld. Had she been more deeply skilled in the mysteries of the human heart, she might have addressed the Genius of the household shrine, in the language of the avenging Moor, who first apostrophises the torch that flares on his deed of darkness:

"If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
I can again thy former light restore—  
Should I repent me—but once put out thine,  
I know not where is the Promethean heat  
That can thy light relume!"

Mr. Manly was called away by professional business, which would probably detain him many weeks from home. He regretted this necessity; particularly before the arrival of Emily, whose coming was daily expected. He urged his wife to invite some friends to remain as her guests during his absence, to enliven her solitude. His request, so earnestly repeated, might have been gratifying to her feelings, if she had not known the distrust of her faith and strength of resolution it implied. The last words he said to her, at parting, were "Remember, Anne, every thing depends on yourself." She experienced a sensation of unspeakable relief in his absence. The eagle glance was withdrawn from her soul, and it expanded and exulted in its newly acquired freedom. She had a constant succession of visitors, who, remarking the elasticity of her spirits, failed not to cast additional obloquy on Mr. Manly, for the tyranny he evidently exercised over his wife. Emily did not arrive, and Mrs. Manly could not regret the delay. Her presence reminded her of all she wished to forget; for her days of triumph were returned, and the desire of shining, rekindled from the ashes of scorn, that had for a while smothered the flame.

It wanted about a week of Mr. Manly's return.—She felt a strong inclination to renew the splendors of her party. She had received so many compliments on the subject—"Mrs. Manly's delightful party!" "Her conversational powers!" "Such a literary banquet!" etc. Invitations were given and accepted. The morning of the day, which was somewhat warm and oppressive, she was summoned by the kitchen council, where the business of preparation was going on. Suddenly, however, they came to a stand. There was no brandy to give flavour to the cake; and the cook declared it was impossible to make it without, or to use any thing as a substitute.

Mrs. Manly's cheeks flushed high with shame. Her husband had retained the key of the closet that contained the forbidden article. He was afraid to trust it in her keeping. The mildest cordials were alone left at her disposal, for the entertainment of her guests. What would her husband think if she purchased, in his absence, what he had himself secreted from her? What would the servants believe if she refused to provide them with what was deemed indispensable? The fear of her secret's being detected, combined with resentment at her husband's unyielding distrust, decided her conduct. She bought—she tasted. The cook asserted there was something peculiar in its flavour, and asked her to judge for herself. Would it not excite suspicion, if she refused? She broke her solemn vow—she tasted—and was undone. The burning thirst once kindled, in those who have been victims to this fatal passion, it rages with the strength of madness. In the secrecy of the closet where she hid the poison, she yielded to the tempter, who whispered, that, as she had been compelled to taste, her promise had been innocently broken: there could be no harm in a little more—the last that should ever pass her lips. In the delirium of the moment, she yielded, till, incapable of self-control, she continued the inebriating draught. Judgment—reason—at length, perception, vanished. The approach of evening found her still prostrate on her bed, a melancholy instance of the futility of the best human resolutions, unsupported by the divine principle of religion. The servants were at first struck with consternation. They thought some sudden disease had overtaken her. But the marks of intemperance, that, like the brand on the brow of Cain, single out its votaries from the rest of mankind, those revolting traces, were but too visible. They knew not what to do.—Uncertain what guests were invited, they could not send apologies, nor ask them to defer their visit. The shades of evening were beginning to fall; the children were crying, deprived of the usual cares of their nurse; and in the general bustle, clung to their mother, whose ear was deaf to the appeal of nature. The little one, weary of shedding so many unavailing tears, at last crawled up on the bed, and fell asleep by her side, though there was scarcely room for her to stretch her little limbs, where she had found the means of climbing. As her slumbers deepened, her limbs relaxed from the rigid posture they had assumed: her arms drooped unconsciously over the bed, and she fell. In her fall she was thrown against one of the posts, and a sharp corner cutting her head, inflicted a deep wound. The screams of the little sufferer roused the household, and pierced even the leaden slumbers of intemperance. It was long, however, before Mrs. Manly came to a clear perception of what was passing around her. The sight of the streaming blood, however, acted like a shock of electricity.—She sprang up, and endeavoured to staunch the bleeding wound. The effusion was soon stopped; the child sunk into a peaceful sleep, and the alarm subsided.

Children are liable to so many falls, and bruises, and wounds, it is not strange that Mrs. Manly, in the confused state of her mind, should soon forget the accident, and try to prepare herself for the reception of her guests, who were already assembling in the drawing-room. Every time the bell rung, she started, with a thrill of horror, conscious how unfit she was to sustain the enviable