

father and mother. He did not, after all, go out gathering roses, as was hinted but remained at home. During the evening, he spoke of his intention of leaving the farm and commencing work on his own account. There was no objection to this, for they all knew that the family was large and the farm small, and that some one must go—and who better than the eldest? But when it came out that he intended going to the city, there was a dissent.

You had better rent some farm near by, where we can help you, said the father. The city is full of sharpers. There is no room for such as you who was taught to be honest and tell the truth. Honest labor here will make you rich quicker than your head will there, where you will have to deal with rascals. Take my advice and stick to the farm.

But, father, I will have an honest employer. Mr. Gilman is an honest man, and a gentleman in every respect; and I am sure there is nothing so very bad in keeping books, and clerking in a boot and shoe store.

Ernest replied his mother, there may be nothing wrong in the business which you will enter; but then you know your old enemy, and it's better that you should stop near us, and not throw yourself in its path.

At these words, Ernest frowned and moved impatiently in his chair. They had touched on a subject that had often caused trouble in the family, and no one ventured to speak of it lest it might again make trouble. Hence there followed a painful silence. The old clock ticked strikingly, and the blaze died down into a bed of red coals on the fireplace, throwing a vivid shadow over the furniture and trio of clouded faces in the room.

Mrs. Thornton took up her knitting and worked at it mechanically, while Ernest and Mr. Thornton tried to forget the awkwardness of the occasion in their newspapers, which had been cast aside during their conversation.

Perhaps I have presented Ernest in an unfavorable light; yet he was a noble young man, honest and generous. He was considered the handsomest young fellow in the neighborhood, and his friends and enemies were about equal in number. He might have been the favorite of all, but he was careless about his friendships, and frequently persons called him proud. His enemies, too, said he was a drunkard; and others told, with much apparent satisfaction, how they had seen him stagger on the streets of the city, and how he often "went on a long drunken spree." Yes, the gossips had told the sad truth. He was cursed with an uncontrollable appetite for intoxicating drinks. It was his only fault, but it was enough. This one failing had saddened his mother's heart, and given his father many an anxious hour; and it was for this reason they tried to keep him near home and away from the city, full of temptations; but their persuasions appeared useless.

The next evening, which was Sunday, Ernest was seated in Mr. Roberts' cosy little parlor, making his last visit to Rose before going to the city.

Really, Ernest, you are not going away to-morrow, to be gone the whole winter? asked Rose.

Yes, I must be in the store every day, and, of course, will have no time to come home, although I regret it very much.

Regret it! that's a mild expression to use. Why, I'll die of the blues if you don't come back at least once a month, and don't write me two letters every week.

Yes, my darling Rose, you will be a great loss to me, and I know I shall spend many a lonely hour without you. I would not leave the country and you too, at the present time, for any other inducement than I hope to make my fortune sooner in the city, and thus the sooner be with you continually. If some good fairy would fill my pockets with gold, now, I would never leave the country, but would ask you to share a home with me at once.

Dearest Ernest, why not let me start with you now, and, working together, we could earn a home sooner than you could alone? And, she said impudently, you know your great failing, and ah! if you should commence drinking again! it would be better that we should live together in poverty all our lives than that this should happen: there are so many temptations in the great, wicked city.

Ernest turned away his face in anguish. He had battled against this one fault, and it angered him to have it mentioned; but this woman's pleading the woman he loved best—seemed almost more than he could bear.

Ernest, my dear Ernest, I cannot let you go! something tells me you will never come back to me as you now leave me—a temperate man. Stay with me; we can find a home here in the country, and you may overcome that awful appetite.

A groan escaped his lips as he wrung his hands and listened silently. If she had found fault with him for being a drunkard he could have resented it;

but her readiness to sacrifice her own happiness to save him from ruin, her pleading and woman's pity, filled him with an overwhelming sense of shame and inferiority. He suffered intensely without replying a word, and seemed to writhe under the accusing finger of Rose's warning and prophecy. At length he spoke.

Rose, for Heaven's sake don't punish me in this way any longer. It's getting to be more than I can bear. Hate me, despise me, cast me off, but don't pity me! I must go to the city, and I will return to you a man; and, as such, claim you for my darling wife.

He rose to go, but was detained by Rose, who sprang to his side, seizing his arm, and, looking up earnestly and anxiously into his clouded face, asked,—

You promise me then, dearest Ernest, never to drink a drop of liquor while you are gone?

Yes, I promise you, darling. And, embracing her, he was gone.

In vain Mr. and Mrs. Thornton talked and pleaded with him, trying to dissuade him from his determination, and the next day he bade a sad farewell to those at home; a sad farewell to the old farm-house and a life of quiet industry in the country, to try the more active life of the city. For one constituted as he was, it might either bring success and happiness or ruin and misery.

Chapter II.

O Rose Roberts the remainder of the winter dragged itself along slowly, and seemed to have no end. It was dull, even dreary to her, in every sense of the word. Since she and Ernest had been little school children together, they had never spent a winter apart; they had always been constant companions. She had learned to confide in him, and he in her. Each was in some way dependent upon the other. There was not a lack of the usual entertainments in the neighborhood; but wherever she went, whether to church, or party, or ball, there was always one familiar face absent, and one well known voice hushed, and it never failed to take away the very essence of her pleasure.

Anxiously she read every letter from Ernest, fearing the worst, yet hoping for the best. She trusted him confidently so far as she had the will to control himself, but she knew that this inflaming appetite ruled men often in spite of their will and their resolutions, and I'd captive all their nobler and more christian virtues.

The winter wore away and spring came. With the renewed and invigorated life of spring-time, Rose, too, felt a hope and a new life. If Ernest could keep his promise faithfully so long, she felt more confident for the future. The battle was more than half won.

From earliest childhood, Rose had hailed the coming of spring joyfully, for she loved the fields and the groves of the farm. Out door life had an absolute charm for her, and she was happy when the snows of winter had vanished, and cold north winds had changed to gentle breezes of the south, so that she could wander out over meadow-land and field, watching the busy workmen from some secluded nook, or enjoying the warm sunshine on some sunny hill-side. Amid the unfolding of the vegetable world, of plants and flowers, and the green carpeting of the hills, her love and hope unfolded in a richer and rarer beauty; she began to look forward with a woman's anticipation to the time when her lover would return to lead her as a bride to a newly wrought home; and she began, too, to picture that home in her mind, and plan the future.

It was to be the great end and culmination of her life, and it is not strange that it occupied so much of her thoughts. A man has a multitude of hopes and aspirations to engage his time and mind but a woman only two—maternity and home. In Ernest she saw, with one exception, a perfect man—a very model of excellence and virtues; and, with a woman's devotion, she allowed her whole heart to go out to him. It was a most dangerous risk to give herself up, heart and soul, to this figure of clay, for if it should once fall and give way to its carnal appetite, she might be forever lost to it and it to her.

The days and weeks passed pleasantly along. They were now happy ones to Rose, for she lived in an ideal world, as it were. She seemed to forget the lonely present in the bright future which she pictured as the reward of her patient waiting.

The month of May came. One warm sunny evening she came out upon the veranda, as was her custom, to enjoy the twilight hour. Lattice work, almost hid in the thick growth of vines that clambered up over it and upon the roof, shut out the glare of the setting sun. A few rays, however, found their way through this network, and fell now upon the back which was reading, and now in her face, so that she kept moving to avoid them. She looked unusually beautiful this evening; her dress harmonized well with her fresh, rosy countenance; a rose adorned her beautiful hair, and she held a hand-

some bouquet of flowers in her hand. A happy, contented expression rested upon her features. Sometimes it changed to a smile, and sometimes it grew sad and serious as she turned leaf after leaf of the book, which completely absorbed her attention.

The sun sank slowly toward the east so that the red rays penetrated more easily the screen of lattice work and vines. Rose moved her chair frequently to keep in the shadow, but it finally became tiresome, and she closed her book. She sat looking at the vine, and playing a tattoo upon the book with her slender fingers, when two branches of the vine parted mysteriously, and the red, dazzling sun shone full in her eyes. The occurrence provoked her, for it had happened so often, and she rose from her chair to go into the house.

At that moment a step startled her, and she turned to look back. A cry of joy broke from her lips, and the next instant Ernest Thornton held her in a tender embrace.

As they took seats she said,— Oh, I'm so glad you have come! How odd! I was just thinking of you. I was wondering when you would come to see me; but here you are, surprising me completely. It seems like a dream.

No, no, my dear Rose, it is not a dream, for I am almost tired out by my long walk from the stage road. I came along the old path through the timber, and across your farm.

Pshaw! laughed Rose. That's what comes of living in the city. I walk further than that every day, and it doesn't tire me. But haven't you been home yet.

No, I came directly here, and caught you dodging about the veranda to keep out of the sunshine.

Ah, you rogue! So you were watching me from behind the lattice. I thought I heard some one several times but of course could not see you.

Pardon me for pulling the vines asunder, and thus causing the sun to shine in your pretty eyes; but really I was getting jealous of the look which you bent over so fondly, and wanted a glimpse now and then of your smiling face.

City life, I see, has very nearly spoiled you; but I'll pay you back with compound interest yet.

That's the way we do business in the city!

I see you will have the last word, so I'll change the subject. I am anxious to know how you have been succeeding and whether you thought of me as pleasantly and earnestly as I did of you a few moments ago. You have not written to me for more than a week.

Well, Rose, said Ernest, in a confident, satisfied way, I can tell my story in a few words. I have thought of you very often, and always with a longing to see you. I have been well, have worked industriously, saved my wages carefully been promoted in my business, kept my promise to you faithfully, and have a modest present for you.

Saying which, he slipped on her finger a perfect little gem of a ring, as Rose termed it.

What better record could a young lady wish from her lover? Rose's cup of joy was full to overflowing. She thought it was the happiest day of her life. Ernest had improved so much in every way. His old awkward ways were cast aside, and city customs and training had developed him into a graceful, self-possessed gentleman. He had lost that diffidence and almost bashfulness which he used to show while in her presence; and his easy, careless manner of conversing now delighted her. All these changes pleased her the more because they were unexpected. She had never thought of the change which mingling with society in the city would produce, simply because she knew very little of it.

Ernest's visit was short, but it was priceless to Rose. When he said goodbye to return to the city, there was not a vestige of the doubt and gloom which had so unsettled her mind at his first departure. She had perfect confidence in him now, and her love came nearer than ever to idolatry; and the memory of his visit gladdened her heart for many a long, weary day afterward.

Chapter III.

ERNEST returned at once to his position as head book-keeper in Mr. Gilman's establishment. His readiness to work, and skill in his business, served him to good purpose, and he soon entered the firm, through the pecuniary assistance of his father, who now began to trust him more fully. Nothing seemed to stand in the way of brilliant success. His sterling, manly qualities were appreciated wherever he was known at all and were the foundation stones upon which he would build in life.

He lived at Mr. Gilman's home in the suburbs of the city. It was a palatial residence, and the family was refined, and moved in good society. This was a great advantage to Ernest socially, for it brought him in contact with an entirely different class of persons from that to which he had been accustomed in the country. While he acquired nothing that was of intrinsic value, yet it

opened to him a new current of life in the world, and awakened new thoughts and ideas. It polished his manners, and made him more thoughtful about his personal appearance.

He soon became a favorite in Mr. Gilman's family. There was something in his plain, out-spoken manner, and his perfect confidence in every one, that won many warm friends.

In the hottest part of the summer, as he was returning home to his dinner one day, he complained that his head felt badly. A dull pain settled in his forehead, and now and then a sharp pain shot through every nerve. Having arrived home, according to his usual custom, he immersed his head in a basin full of the coldest water that was at hand. But it did not quiet that strange feeling and semi-blindness.

Dinner over, Ernest started back to the store, but, just before reaching it, he staggered and fell. Passers-by on the street rushed to his assistance, and he was hastily taken into a neighboring drug store. A doctor was called in immediately. Ice was applied to his head and some one placed brandy to his lips just as life was returning. It was a good remedy, but alas! in his case it was worse than the sun-stroke. The smell and taste of the brandy, and the critical moment, ruled his appetite, and he drank. It was the first time for two years. It revived him, and again the fatal drink was held to the dry, feverish lips that now longed for it.

He recovered slowly from the effects of the sunstroke. It was many weeks before his old ways and usual health came back to him, and even then the trouble was not over with entirely. It seemed to affect his brain, and at times made him restless and irregular in his habits.

After he was able to return to the store once more, Mr. Gilman noticed with anxiety that Thornton, as he called him, had not the enthusiasm that he used to have. He was morose, quick-tempered, and frequently made mistakes in his work.

Mr. Gilman accredited it all to his misfortune during the past summer, and found no fault, hoping that all would soon come around right again; but, when he saw Thornton come into the office one day, his eyes bloodshot and looking wild, and smelt the whiskey on his breath, he knew, for the first time, the true cause of the trouble. It angered him, for he looked upon Ernest with the eyes of strangers and not with the sympathy and charity of parents for a wayward son. He upbraided him severely for appearing in his presence in such a condition, and of course there was trouble which might have had a terrible ending but for Mr. Gilman's discretion.

The news of Ernest's sickness in the summer was soon received at his home. It frightened all—especially Rose, whose love magnified the danger. Before any one started to the city, word came that he was recovering, and hence no one went to him.

It was not long after this when rumors came that Ernest had taken to drinking again, and that he was more dissipated than ever. The rumors crushed Rose's fair hopes. The old doubt and fear came back again, and embittered every hour; but she could scarcely believe it all, for his letters still came regularly, and were written as lovingly and affectionately as ever.

Soon there came a report that he had dissolved his partnership with Mr. Gilman. Following this came tales of his recklessness and terrible dissipation.

Rose and Mrs. Thornton could not bear it longer. Nothing definite could be found out, and they determined to go to the city immediately, and settle the truth or falsity of all they had heard from others.

[CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.]

It is suggested that Poe's bird must have had the delirium tremens, as he was raven on a bust.

THE STAR.

AND CONCEPTION BAY SEMI-WEEKLY ADVERTISER.

Is printed and published by the Proprietors, ALEXANDER A. PARSONS and WILLIAM R. SQUAREY, at their Office, opposite the premises of Capt. D. Green, Water Street, Harbor Grace, Newfoundland.

Book and Job Printing executed in a manner calculated to afford the utmost satisfaction.

Price of Subscription—THREE DOLLARS per annum, payable half-yearly. Advertisements inserted on the most liberal terms, viz.:—Per square of seven-teen lines, for first insertion, \$1; each continuation 25 cents.

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SELECT STORY.

Ernest Thornton's Enemy.

SEVENTY-ONE to-day thought Ernest Thornton, as he trudged along through the deep snow on his way home from the woods.

Twenty-one to-day, had been the theme of his thoughts since early dawn. All day long had it kept up a half accompaniment to the sharp ring of his heavy axe, as it sank deeper and deeper into the gnarled oak; and the sound of his swinging blows, re-echoing again and again in the silent forest seemed to give back the same refrain.

He had been thinking that the time had come for him to try this great world for himself; to leave home and look out for his own fortune. He was no longer a boy, but a man. The family was large, and he must give up his place to those younger. And, also, it must be confessed, he was growing impatient for the time when he should have enough laid aside from his earnings to warrant him asking Neighbor Roberts for his daughter's hand in marriage. Indeed, this one thought, after all, was paramount in his mind. He had been betrothed to her for a long time, but he had no home to offer her, and he could not ask her to share his poverty. Whatever his occupation, her pretty, sweet face was always before him. Especially true had this been to-day; for, as he laid low one forest giant after another with his strong arm, at the same time his mind was busy overcoming the giant difficulties that stood in the way of a sunny future for Rose and himself.

With his head full of these thoughts, he shuffled off the snow from his heavy boots and entered the large sitting-room of the old farm-house which had been his home for twenty-one years. A huge fire-place, well filled with blazing logs, shed a cheerful light over the room; and a half circle of noisy boys changed their positions in front of the fire-place to make room for him.

It was Saturday night, and the boys were much excited over the spelling school, which was to be held that evening at the district school-house. All talked at once. The bright light from the burning logs played fantastically over their happy faces. Ernest loved to listen to the babel of merry voices, and look at those beaming faces, so boyish, so free from care, and so innocent. It was sweetest music to him—a picture which an artist could not paint.

As he took a seat in their midst they boisterously questioned him.

Go in' to spellin' school to-night Ernest?

He gave them little satisfaction. They winked at one another knowingly. Some one hinted that he was going out to gather roses instead. This was received with a round of applause by the boys. Another suggested that the rose might be already gathered, but they all shook their heads, as much as to say, he knows.

Supper was soon over, and the noisy boys gone leaving Ernest alone with his

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