

made, but hitherto Mark had put him away with kind words and promises, none of which he kept.

On this night Mark was very much the worse for drink, and Stephen, who entered the tap-room boldly to rescue his children, said a few hard but justifiable things to the elder members of the assembled company. Some of them resented it, the landlord came in and gave his opinion, and finally Mark with only a few preliminary words got up and struck his father. Luke, who was sitting in a corner, was between them in a moment. Mark, grumbling and cursing under his breath, resumed his seat, and Stephen Daker went sorrowfully home.

From this hour a great change came over Luke. Horrified by the unnatural scene he had witnessed, which he rightfully charged to the influence of drink, he gave up the public-house, abandoned all intoxicating liquors, and exerted himself to the utmost to induce his brother to do the same.

But Mark would not listen. Perversely he kept up his old courses, and would have lost his work again and again if it had not been for Luke, whose good character helped them both. Their employer feared if he sent one away he would lose the other, and Luke was too good a servant to be parted with.

At home there was much sorrow. Stephen Daker and his wife mourned over their wild son more than they would if he had been dead, and Luke came to see them and join in their grief. After that night when he struck his father, Mark never came near his parents, or even asked after them.

From bad to worse the doomed youth went. Lower and lower down the scale—less at his work and more at the public-house as the weeks sped by. Through all Luke never deserted him, or ceased to persuade him to turn his back upon what was causing his ruin. Luke would not enter the public-house except to urge his brother to leave, and the ribald jests of the taproom and the angry reproach of his brother did no more than send him outside, where he waited in all weathers to take home the fallen Mark.

But was Mark indifferent to this affliction? Was all that was good and noble dead within him? No; for when sober he would talk to his brother as he did of old—call him "Dear Luke," and listen with attention to his exhortations; but anon, some drinking companion would come that way and hold out the old temptation, and Mark would fall again. Through all and in all Luke never deserted him until one winter's eve.

They were homeward-bound from their work, and Luke had hopes of getting his brother past the public-house, for he had no money left, and his credit was as good as stopped. Mark had been drinking during the day, and was, as drunkards say, "a little gone;" not intoxicated, but on that dangerous middle-ground where a man has his ears open to the voice of the tempter, and sees naught but the gloss he puts over the advancing ruin. "We will go home to-night," Luke kept saying. "Ay, ay," replied Mark, "we will go home," but the tone was that of indifference.

The shortest way home was unfortunately past the inn, and owing to the great rains, the path across the fields was very heavy travelling; but Luke would even then have gone the latter way if he could have induced Mark to do so. Mark, however, was firm.

"I'll not go in," he said; "there'll be nobody there to-night."

Opposite the public-house they met one of his old companions, an idle, dissolute fellow, some twelve years the senior of the two brothers, ruined in mind, body, and character, and fallen to the terribly low level of one who took delight in compassing the ruin of others, especially the young.

"Ha! Mark," he said, "I am glad to see you; come in and have a glass."

"I have no money," said Mark.

"Nay, lad, don't let that hinder you," said the other. "I have a shilling—it's enough for two. The room is empty to-night, and I am lonely there?"

"Why not go home?" asked Luke; "you will not find it lonely with your wife and children."

"I want the company of men," was the answer; "not drivelling women and crying children. Come, Mark, one glass, and you shall go home in half an hour."

"Don't go," pleaded Luke, clutching his brother by the arm; "it's no good to you, and the money that man is going to spend is wanted at home."

"Nay, he'll spend it all on himself if he give none to me," replied Mark, shaking off his brother. "I've stood to him many a time, and it's now his turn to stand to me. You go home, and I'll follow."

More urgent pleadings had no effect. Mark went inside with his sottish companion, and Luke was left outside. It was a bitter night, early in winter, with a wind unusually cold—heavy dull clouds in the sky, and a few flakes of snow falling. For a moment the glowing fire of the taproom had its allurements for Luke, but he shook them off, and walked quietly up and down waiting for his brother. His heart was heavier than usual; there was the dim shadow of coming evil which we call presentiment upon him, and he could not put it away.

"I'll wait for him if he is there till midnight," he said. But he had to leave, for presently one of the villagers came by, and asked him if he had heard the news at home.

"What news?" asked Luke.

"Your mother is very ill," was the reply; taken this morning and has been bad all day. The doctor is with her now."

Luke thanked the bearer of this sad news, and hurried into the taproom where Mark and his friend were drinking. Mark was now on the high road to intoxication. He heard

the tidings of his mother's illness with drunken indifference, and supposed it was a "little attack of something."

"But you go on, Luke," he said, "and I'll come directly."

"No, now—this moment," replied his brother. "I have a feeling in me that this is no common illness."

But Mark would not come, and Luke went alone. At home he found his sad presentiment more than fulfilled. His mother was at death's door, and in half an hour she was gone. She died with one hand in Luke's, and the other held by her husband, blessing them both. Of the deep sorrow which Mark's absence must have caused her she made no mention. She asked a dozen times simply if he had come, and her attention was often directed to the sound of footsteps outside, hoping they might be his; but that was all.

Luke's grief, born of a double sorrow, was intense. That his mother should die so suddenly, and his brother be so indifferent, bowed him down, and brought such tears from his heart as strong men shed in their agony.

Two hours elapsed, and Mark not coming, Luke set out again in quest of him. Outside the night had grown very dark and cold, and the air was full of sleet and snow. Luke with his head bent down to meet the wind, plodded back to the inn. The taproom was empty, and the landlord in the bar, smoking, without a customer to converse with.

"Where is Mark?" asked Luke.

"Left an hour ago," replied the landlord, slowly. "He said something about going home to see his mother, but I fancy he was a little too far gone for that."

Luke could have said something not very pleasant for that landlord to hear, but he refrained, and hurried off to the house where he and Mark lodged. There he learned that his brother had not been near. From there he hastened home, but gained no news of Mark.

He spent all that night in going to and fro in search of his brother; he also went over to the house of the man he had left him with. There all was dark, but he heard sounds of quarrelling, and the voice of the dissolute drunkard high above all, cursing—oh, so fearfully!

"Mark is not there," he said, and went home again sorrowfully, to console his afflicted father, as best he could.

A sad night—a long, weary night, and then the cold dawn. Father and son sat by the fire hand-in-hand.

"Mark has not come home," said the father.

"I will go and seek him again," said Luke.

He went back to their lodging-place, to and fro, to this place and that, where Mark was likely to be found, but there were no signs of him. The morning passed, and afternoon came, and he was still away.

But why dwell upon that dreadful time? Mark was missing for two whole days, and then was found dead in the river that ran through the village. His body was discovered near the mill, but it was conjectured that he had mistaken his path in the darkness, and walked into the water much higher up. But, however it came about, he was dead, and all the world could not bring him to life again.

An inquest was held, and I with many others attended it. I call to mind now that scene. The inquest, mark you, was held in the very room where Mark had taken the poison that lured him to death. The coroner, a kindly gentleman at home I have no doubt, but used to such scenes, and anxious to get away to escape a cold drive through the country in the dark; a dozen labourers summoned to act as jurymen, myself and half a dozen lawyers, and the few witnesses who had anything to say about the case were present; Luke in a corner of the room weeping bitterly.

Mark's loafing friend was there, the worse for drink of course, and from his stammering utterances it was gathered that he and Mark left the house together, but parted outside, as their ways were in different directions.

"Was he sober?" asked the coroner.

"I dunnow," replied the sot; "I was drunk, and maybe he was about the same."

"Ah! a clear case," said the coroner. "What say you gentlemen of the jury? These lamentable accidents are of frequent occurrence."

The jury took the hint from the coroner, and returned a verdict of "Accidental Death." But the moment it passed their lips, Luke stepped forward to protest against it.

"Call that an accidental death!" he said, with a face burning with indignation, and speaking with forcible rugged pathos; "accidental death! why I tell you he was murdered!"

"Murdered!" exclaimed the coroner.

"Yes," continued Luke, "by the poison he drank here. He was as good as a dead man before he left here, as he had not so much reason and sense left as ought to be in a brute beast."

"Well, that's a social question I have nothing to do with," said the coroner, calmly putting on his gloves. "The death in the eye of the law is accidental. Twelve intelligent men have returned a verdict to that effect, and I have nothing to do with your private opinions upon the question of drink."

Then he buttoned his gloves and went his way; and the jury, half inclined to smile at the words spoken by Luke in his agony, went into the bar to spend the money allowed them by law for their attendance.

And Luke, what of him? He went home and wailed all night over the dead body of his brother. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," but Luke said it was "Murder." Was he right or was he wrong? I personally have examined the scene of this untoward disaster, and cannot conceive how a sober man could have mistaken his way. His road to his house was to the right, that to the stream to the left; one way uphill the other downhill. It was suggested that he committed suicide; but does that make matters any better? Would he, a sober man, have gone that dark night

deliberately down to the stream and destroyed the life God had given him? Certainly not.

It was a pitiful story from beginning to end. The great tie between the brothers as twins made the sorrow of Luke all the greater, in any case it would have been bad enough, but in this it seemed as if his heart had really broken.

Mother and son were buried together, and Luke and his father were not the only mourners. Many friends came to pay a last tribute of respect to the really noble woman who had saved Stephen Daker from ruin. He had said so fifty times in her hearing, and it is his belief that she would eventually have drawn her son out of the pit if they had lived.

In the telling of this story I have not dwelt much upon her efforts, as it was my purpose to depict the relative positions of the two brothers; but all that a tender-hearted mother and a Christian woman could do was done in vain, we know, but that does not in any detract from her love and goodness.

After the funeral, Luke Daker could not rest in the place, and went over the sea to America. The last I heard of him was in the columns of a New York paper, wherein I learned he had become one of those rugged but powerful speakers who have their whole heart in the cause they espouse. The subject of the lecture was, "The Murder of Mark Daker," wherein he charged the laws of this country and the pernicious sale of intoxicating liquors with the death of his brother. Was he right, or was he wrong?—*British Workman*.

SOME WONDERFUL FACTS ABOUT YOUR BODY.

Supposing your age to be fifteen years, or thereabouts, you can be figured up to a dot. You have 160 bones and 500 muscles. Your blood weighs twenty-five pounds. Your heart is nearly five inches in length—it beats twenty times per minute, 4,200 times per hour, 100,800 times per day, 36,792,000 times a year. At each beat a little over two ounces of blood is thrown from it; and each day it receives and discharges about seven tons of that wonderful fluid. Your lungs will contain a gallon of air, and you inhale 24,000 gallons per day. The aggregate surface of the air-cells of your lungs, supposing them to be spread out, exceeds 20,000 square inches. The weight of your brain is three pounds; when you are a man it will weigh about eight ounces more. Your skin is composed of three layers, and varies from one-eighth to one-fourth of an inch in thickness. The area of your skin is about 1,700 square inches, and you are subject to an atmospheric pressure of fifteen pounds to a square inch. Each square inch of your skin contains 3,500 sweating tubes, or perspiratory pores, each of which may be likened to a draining-tile, one-fourth of an inch long, making an aggregate length in the entire surface of the body of 201,166 feet or a tile-ditch for draining the body almost twenty miles long.

THE LARGEST ISLAND.

Immediately north of Australia, and separated from it at Torres Straits by less than a hundred miles of sea, is the largest island on the globe,—New Guinea,—a country of surpassing interest, whether as regards its natural productions or its human inhabitants, but which remains to this day less known than any accessible portion of the earth's surface. Within the last few years considerable attention has been attracted toward it by surveys which have completed our knowledge of its outline and dimensions, by the settlement of English missionaries on its southern coasts, by the exploration of several European naturalists, and by the visits of Australian miners attracted by the alleged discovery of gold in the sands of its rivers. From these various sources there has resulted a somewhat sudden increase in our still scanty knowledge of this hitherto unknown land; and we therefore propose to give a general sketch of the island and of the peculiar forms of life that inhabit it, and to discuss briefly some of the interesting problems connected with its indigenous races.

It has hitherto been the custom of geographers to give the palm to Borneo as the largest island in the world, but this is decidedly an error. A careful estimate, founded on the most recent maps, shows that New Guinea is considerably the larger, and must for the future be accorded the first place. In shape, this island differs greatly from Borneo, being irregular, and much extended in a north-west and south-east direction, so that its greatest length is little short of 1,500 miles; a distance as great as the whole width of Australia from Adelaide to Port Darwin, or of Europe from London to Constantinople. Its greatest width is 410 miles; and omitting the great peninsulas which form its two extremities, the central mass is about 700 miles long, with an average width of 320 miles; a country about the size of the Austrian Empire, and, with the exception of the course of one large river, an absolute blank upon our maps.—*Popular Science Monthly*.

It appears that in the late contest in the Irish Presbyterian Assembly on the use of instruments in the church praise service, the majority of the ministerial delegates were in favour of their introduction, while a large majority of the lay delegates were opposed, and succeeded in maintaining the Assembly's testimony against the innovation.

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