

She drew closer to him.

"It is because I am not yet free," he went on. "There may be men who can drink in safety; but I am one of those who can not. The death of Hal proved to me that even the most rigid abstinence is not sufficient. It will not do to say that I will never have the taste of whisky on my tongue. I must be able to endure that taste, and conquer the desire it arouses in me. The taste on the tongue! Tavy, I am not yet secure against it; and there is a reason greater than you or me why I have no right, with this curse upon me, to make you my wife; that reason considers those who cannot agree that they are willing to bear the wretchedness I might bring upon them — the unborn."

She drew still closer, nestled against him, and he folded her in his arms, though he stood stiff and straight. If he dared bend to her he might weaken his resolution, and to hold to it was, even now, costing him his heart's blood.

"So, Tavy dear, I am going to spend my life, if need be, in the conquering of this enemy, and I have no right to hold you bound. There must be no pledge between us."

Mutely she stripped the ring from her finger and laid it in his palm, and looked up at him. There flowed between them that pure love which