

children; and these three the dearest to her soul. My poor heart which had hitherto borne up under all the accumulated ills with which I was afflicted, now gave way. No tear, no sob escaped me; but a low brooding melancholy settled upon my mind. Days and weeks passed away. I was insensible alike to harshness and to pity. Even the iron-hearted rum-selling Christian, who came to see me, appeared touched with my situation, and heard to declare, that if he was not commanded to look out for his own family, he would never sell any more rum to my husband.

I said before, days and weeks passed away, and still I heeded not the scenes which were transpiring around me. When I awoke to returning consciousness, I found myself in another dwelling, much more comfortable, and my husband seated beside me anxiously regarding me. He had been so shocked at the death of our children, all of which had arisen from his beastly thirst for rum, that he swore he would never take a glass again. During the six weeks of my sickness, he had religiously kept his word. Several of his former friends had heard of his reform, and had come forward to assist him. They procured him a situation in a large establishment in the village, and we had removed from the thatched cottage down by the river side to a small and neat dwelling, nearly opposite my former residence.

I well remember the smile which played over my husband's fine features as I awoke from that living death. It was like the smile which I had often seen in our young days of innocence and hope. Oh! what a cheering sensation it sent to my heart. It atoned, at once, for the errors and abuse of years, and I arose from my bed with a lightness of step to which I was a stranger. My husband flung his arms around me. "I will drink no more rum, my dear Mary," he observed, "I will treat you better than I ever did before. I have been a harsh and unfeeling monster to you; yet now I intend to reform." "Amen," I responded with my whole heart.

I was standing the first morning after my recovery, looking out of the front window, regarding the splendid mansion before me into which I had once entered with all the youthful gaiety of a happy bride; and out of which I had been driven by a deadlier curse than that which sent our first parents from Paradise. Our rum-selling professor stood in the door. My heart ached at the sight of him. I knew him to be the man, who, under the plea of friendship for my husband, had allured him to his store, and had been the chief cause in consummating his ruin; I knew that my husband had spent whole nights at his store, surrounded with a number of worthless associates. I knew that my two eldest boys had been brought often under this man's influence; and I then turned aside from the sight of him, pained and affected even to tears. Now my eyes were open to that man's real character. I could no longer discover in him any trait of Christian gentleness or love. And yet he would sit at the communion table. He made a loud profession of his zeal in the cause of Christ. He would exhort the longest and loudest in meetings, and with his hands still covered with the poison, which was sending death and desolation around him, he would lift them up in holy prayer to God. What consummate hypocrisy!

Six months rolled rapidly away, during which time my husband still continued kindly, affectionate, and temperate. My two sons had procured excellent situations on board of one of our merchant ships, and were already many thousand miles off at sea, on a long and distant voyage. My mind had become sobered with many long years' acquaintance with grief; and although I found considerable comfort from the consciousness that I had always done my duty to my husband and my family, still there were hours in which I experienced deep and uncontrollable agony of heart. I had my fears of the strength of my husband's mind to resist temptation.

Like the wave-tossed, wearied, and troubled mariner, I had ventured my all upon the strength of an almost foundered bark; and if this failed, I knew that my earthly career would be short, and sad; yet I studiously concealed all my fears from my husband, I met him with a smile whenever he came home, and tasked all my powers to render his fireside happy. He treated me with the utmost affection, as if to atone for his many cruel neglects; and his smile was as winning, and the tone of his voice as gentle as they ever appeared in the days of our early love. But oh! another cloud—dense, dark, and dreadful—came over our peaceful fireside. Well do I remember the night. Oh, yes! it is stamped with a fearful force upon my memory for ever. It was a cold and windy Saturday night, in November, 1825. The shutters were closed; a good fire was burning upon the hearth; and I was seated beside it, with my work in my hand, waiting the return of my husband. He had gone to our rum-selling Christian's store, against my advice, to buy a few groceries for family use. Ten o'clock had passed ere he returned. My quick eye detected an unsteadiness in his step as he entered; and his whole appearance betrayed the effects of his deadly enemy. I passed a sleepless night; my couch was literally wet with tears; and in the agony of my heart, I wished I had never been born.

My husband's descent was fearfully rapid. Within a few weeks, he was seen lying at mid-day in the streets, absolutely helpless, the sport of unfeeling boys. He lost his situation, and was again deserted by all his friends. In vain I reasoned with him. So powerfully had his thirst for liquor become aroused, that for me to attempt to speak to him was sufficient to draw down upon me the most bitter imprecations; and yet I begged, and entreated, and wept: yea, more, upon my knees I imploringly besought him to renounce a habit which would forever ruin both his soul and body, I called also upon the rum-selling professor, and upon several other persons, two of whom were the select men of the village, and entreated them not to sell him liquor. I pleaded with them with all the eloquence that a wretched and neglected wife could command. I told them of all my early history—of my once peaceful fireside—of the deadly blight which had come over it—of the many wretched hours I had passed—of the many sleepless nights and troubled days I had experienced—of the many, many tears I had shed—of the cold neglect and harsh treatment of a once kind and still tenderly beloved husband. And what, think you, were the feeling answers I received to my appeal? The answer of the wealthy rum-selling Christian was, "*I have a family to look out for, and must provide for them;*" and then when I mentioned his ability to support his family without selling rum to my husband, his answer was, "*If I don't sell him rum, others will.*" Some of them, I must say, were however so conscientious, that they said they would not sell to him when he was already drunk, but if he came to their store perfectly sober, and called for liquor, he should have it.

My husband had now become a common labourer upon the wharfs, and all the money he obtained was spent for rum. I was compelled for a subsistence to take in sewing; and often have I, after a hard day's work, during which I had not tasted a mouthful of food, been compelled to relinquish to him my earnings, with which he would get dreadfully intoxicated. My former neighbours and friends now stood afar off. All had deserted me. I was miserably wretched. How could it be otherwise? I was the wife of a drunkard.

In this state four years rolled away. I well remember one night when my husband came home more deeply intoxicated than usual. He had been fighting with some one of his companions, and had been badly bruised. My tears fell fast as I bound up a severe wound upon his head. A few