

Lost—A Boy.

His went from the old home hearthstone,
Only six years ago,
A laughing, frolicking fellow,
It would do you good to know
Since then we have not seen him,
And we say, with nameless pain,
The boy that we knew and loved
We will never see again.

One bearing the name we gave him
Comes home to us to-day,
But this is not the dear fellow
We kissed and sent away.
Tall as the man he calls his father,
With a man's look in his face,
Is he who takes by the hearthstone
The lost boy's olden place.

We miss the laugh that made music
Wherever the lost boy went;
This man has a smile most winsome,
His eyes have a grave intent;
We know he is thinking and planning
His way in the world of men,
And we cannot help but love him,
But we long for our boy again.

We are proud of this manly fellow
Who comes to take his place,
With hints of the vanished boyhood
In his earnest, thoughtful face;
And yet comes back the longing
For the boy we henceforth must miss,
Whom we sent away from the hearthstone
For ever with a kiss.

A Looming Shadow.

A TRUE STORY.

No doubt you will think this is fiction that I am about to write, and I suppose when I tell you about a very sad story, which happened when I was living in a very pretty island, about four thousand miles from Montreal, Canada, you may say, "Why, that won't interest us!"

But distance makes no difference. The same is taking place in Montreal in every passing hour of the day, although some of us may not see or hear of it, for this is a large city; but Brenton is a very small place, and news spreads quickly.

The characters of whom I am about to write are still living. Alas! but how!

Years ago there was a very wealthy man, who had a fine family of boys and girls. As soon as his children became old enough to be taught, he sent them to England, thinking they would receive better instruction than in their native land, although there are fine schools in the island.

One of his sons, whom we will call "Harry," was a good-looking fellow, but very vain. His father, rent and brought him home; and instead of having him taught some profession, he filled his purse, allowed him every liberty, and never checked him in his downward course. Very soon he became acquainted with bad companions, and, step by step, he was drawn into the web of gambling and drinking.

Soon the young man—who was once the pride of his home—was the skeleton of the household, but not one which could be draped out of sight by heavy curtains, or locked in a cupboard. Ah, no! He was an everlasting source of sorrow to his sisters, and a heart-rending grief to his young wife.

Early in life he married a very pretty young creature, and took her to a beautifully-furnished home; but, sad to relate! that fine residence soon became haunted by a looming shadow. Yes, within her beautiful home the shadow of a drunken husband reigned! Her poor, young heart was almost broken. Drink soon cleared the home of

all its comforts, and left her with only the bare walls. For to get drink he sold the articles, one by one. He never worked—did not know how to do so, indeed!

His father died in the meantime, and left him a rich man, but the principal of his fortune he could not touch—which was to descend at his death to his children, of whom there were three—two sons and one girl. Poor, neglected little things! who would have starved if it had not been for their kind aunts.

As you can quickly imagine, no one associated with them after the disgrace which had fallen on them through the shameless conduct of their father. He only received the interest of his money, and in a very short time every cent went in liquor.

They moved into a small house containing only two rooms. The boys, when old enough, left their home, and went out into the world. The younger one, while trying to protect his shrinking mother from his drunken father, received a blow which caused him to lose the sight of one of his eyes. They were often to be seen hovering around the little shanty, trying to speak with the mother and sister; bringing them some help, and fearing lest the father would drive them away.

Day after day this poor, unfortunate man was to be seen walking through the streets barefooted—the rags hanging on him, no hat on his head, his hair dishevelled, while his whole appearance was that of a sot.

Many were the efforts which were made to induce him to sign the pledge, or to reform in some measure, but all to no purpose—the raging demon had complete mastery over his sinking soul. Yes! it was sapping his life away; deeper and deeper was he enticed into the poisonous coils of the deadly serpent; lower and yet lower did he sink into the fathomless depths of sin and misery. He would turn a deaf ear to all who were always on the alert to give him a hand, and help him to rise from his evil surroundings. Satan had him bound fast in his chains, and only the powerful influence of our Heavenly Father, who sent his Son Jesus Christ our Saviour to save sinners, could rescue this poor, fallen soul.

Perhaps some one may read this short story who thinks it no harm to take a small glass of liquor, and who, through friendship's sake, will offer it to his or her friends,—then, my dear sister or dear brother, I would warn you, ere it be too late, beware of the fatal sip! One sip will give to them and yourself a taste for more, and may thus ruin a home and break the heart of some loving relative. It will in time take the bread from the trembling lips of starving children, poor little things, with hungry eyes and shrunken forms.

Oh, reader! Is not your heart touched, and do not the tears spring to your eyes, when you gaze on their pale, pitiful faces? Does not your heart bleed when you behold these little ones running away from their father the instant that they catch sight of him; for the terrible reason that he is not himself? Despised by his own family, who, fearing him, shrink away to the remotest corners of their miserable home!

To return to our story, I must lead you to one of the principal streets. It is evening, and we take a view of a magnificent home. Here resides Harry Lacy's sister, Mrs. Wenton, and to-night—being her eldest daughter's birth-night—it is celebrated by a grand party. The rooms are all ablaze with brilliant lights. Sweet-scented flowers adorn the several apartments.

The house is crowded; from the broad verandah sweet, melodious music floats out, and is borne away on the wind. Gay, bright forms flit to and

fro, rippling laughter resounds through the wide halls—rich voices peal forth joyous melodies; joy, comfort, wealth, and pride reign within. At the garden-gate, with wild eyes and ungaily dress, we behold the intoxicated brother, Harry. He halts, and listens to the merry sounds within. Then, with his eyes fixed on the front door—which has been thrown open to admit the cool breeze from the garden—he totters up, swaying from side to side; his long hair blown by the evening air, and his soiled and worn garments hanging in rags! Yes, years ago, this poor, degraded mortal was once the pride of this very home!

Perhaps through his beclouded mind rushed visions of the past, which were impelling him to go onward, and enter into the mirthful group, for—slowly but surely—he tottered on. Step by step he was gaining, without discovery. At last he reached the house, and, with his bare feet, walked into their midst, and in a shaky, drunken voice, he sang the two lines of that grand old song:

"Rule, Britannia! Rule the waves,
Britons never shall be slaves!"

Ah! poor, deluded wretch! he was singing of freedom, while he was the greatest slave of all.

Sudden silence fell on the several groups. Some, seeing this unsightly object, shivered, and turned away in disgust; while many of the young men, not being aware of the relationship between him and their hostess, called out, "Away with you, drunken Harry Lacy!" while others, in jesting tones, called him a slave.

Still standing, he looked around, and was about to speak, when Mrs. Wenton's sons and their groom drew him by force away. It was hard work to struggle with him, but they got him down the street, a good way from the scene they had left, after which they returned to their guests. Numerous were the questions as to how they had succeeded which greeted the young men as they entered.

Most of the guests knew but too well that this poor, fallen man was Mrs. Wenton's brother, and seeing the annoyance and shame stamped on her pale face and trembling limbs, mustered their forces together, in trying to drive away this gloomy impression which had intruded in their midst. For awhile all seemed forgotten in the excitement and pleasure. The supper was pronounced excellent; but, alas! on that sumptuous table gleamed the sparkle of the treacherous serpent. Wines and champagne flowed freely. One by one they would sip the nauseous poison. Glass after glass was drained.

Talk now of the poor brother who had been ruined by strong drink! Who ought to have been an example to his sister to bid her drive the serpent from her doors; instead of which she smilingly raises the poison to her lips, while her sons and daughters and guests follow her example. Meanwhile her husband, Mr. Wenton, could be seen stretched on a low sofa, in a side-room, lying in a drunken slumber.

Harry Lacy, finding he was left alone, slowly staggered back until he once more approached the garden gate. Tottering on, he reached the path leading to the house, when he stumbled and fell, and not being able to rise, sunk into his drunken stupor, from which he did not awaken until next morning, when, at an early hour, the guests began to depart.

Sauntering down the garden path, they were astonished to behold their unwelcome visitor of the evening before, stretched on the gravel path at their feet. Shuddering, and crying shame on him, some of them rushed quickly by, and after being seated in their carriages were driven quickly home;