

best and bravest and noblest of men. How he had endeavored in the battle of life to shield and protect her from every discomfort and hardship. Then of the time when the husband had been enticed into a saloon and persuaded to drink his first glass; how he fell into the horrible habit of drunkenness, and how she, thinking she might reclaim him, and hardly realizing the terrible character of the loathsome serpent which had stolen into her paradise and robbed it of its purity and happiness, had followed, pleading, praying, hoping and working; but, said she, "Hope failed, my pleadings availed naught, and my prayers seemed offered to a god of brass. Oh, human heart can hardly imagine what sorrow, what grief, what bitterness of soul was mine. For fifteen years, fifteen years of a hell on earth, he drank almost incessantly; every nickel he earned went to the saloon for drink, and he did not provide a thing for our home. I did washing to support myself, till rheumatism attacked me and my hands became so I could not use them. At last I could not work more, and then the poor-house door stood open to me. Perhaps you will think I was wicked, but, Mr. Finch, I have often gone to bed at night praying God I might never wake in the morning. During my whole life I had tried to do my duty, at least to be respectable, and the thought of dying a *pauper in the poor-house* was enough to drive me mad. Kind women, God bless them, watched with and looked after me while I was sick, and at that time John signed the pledge. He came home from the meeting and went directly to bed. The next morning he arose early; it was his usual custom to rise early and go down town to get his drink, but that morning I heard him building a fire. I couldn't think what it meant. He went out of doors and soon came back, and I heard him filling the tea-kettle; then he said to me.

" 'Mary, where is the hammer?'

" 'I asked him why he wanted the hammer.

" 'I want to fix the door-steps out here.'

" 'The door-steps had been broken for a long time. He had tumbled over them drunk many a time, and never thought of fixing them. As soon as he wanted to fix the steps it flashed into my mind what he had done, and I asked, 'John, have you signed the pledge?' and he said, 'Yes, Mary, and with God helping me, as they say down at the meeting, I am going to keep it.' Perhaps I am getting into my dotage, but the tears of joy came, and calling him to me I put my arms around his neck and kissed away the dark memories of the past. Since then the shadow of the pauper house has not darkened my home, and with my old-time love