

now changed, and the first sight of his wife, ghastly and wretched as she looked, brought with it a sudden conviction that he ought to make some effort to be serious too. He was perfectly sensible that he ought to go up to his chamber, and endeavour to be quiet but still the walls and the stars were rushing around him, the floor on which he trod was like a heaving sea, and when he lifted up one foot, it either remained suspended in the air, or was thrust forward with a violence intended to reach some distant object.

After long and patient effort, Eleanor at last succeeded in steadying him to the door of his chamber, when the servants, hidden by her, had made every preparation for the state in which it was now always taken for granted he would return. With difficulty she placed him on his bed. She then adjusted his distorted limbs, and smoothed his pillow, and bathed his burning brow, as gently and as tenderly as if he had been a slumbering cherub. But her effort had been too much for her, and, sinking down on her knees beside the bed, she burst into such an agony of tears, as prayer, and prayer alone, would have had the power to soothe.

In the morning, when Frederick Bond awoke, the first object which attracted his attention, was the figure of his wife, seated in her nursing chair, wrapped in a careless dishabille, and hushing her baby on her bosom. Her hair was uncurled, her eyes looked sunken and heavy, and her cheek was so deadly pale, that he could not help contrasting her present appearance with what it was a year, or rather two years ago. Still gazing, without venturing to interrupt the monotonous motion with which she was lulling her infant to sleep, he thought she grew paler and paler; and starting from his pillow, had but just time to save the child that was beginning to slip from her hold, when she fell back in her chair in a swoon.

Frederick Bond was one of those, who, when their fit of intoxication is over, can recollect much of what has passed. He even knew at the time, what he was saying or doing, though he appeared to have no power to control his words or actions. Thus when he beheld his wife, pale, suffering, and exhausted, all the transactions of the past night rushed upon his memory; and he felt, that, instead of cherishing the young and lovely being he had taken from the shelter of her father's roof—instead of guarding her from every danger, and averting every cause that could lead to a recurrence of her malady, he had in reality been inflicting upon her the greatest cruelty, and hazarding that precious life which he now felt as if he could die to preserve.

Conscience-struck, appalled, and galled, Frederick bent over the senseless form of his wife; and on the first signs of returning consciousness, he knelt before her, clasping her cold hands in his, looking up into her face, and imploring her to hear him, while he pronounced the solemn vow, and called Heaven to be his witness, that from that time forth he would never inflict upon her the same cause of suffering again.

"Hear me, Eleanor," he exclaimed, with passionate fervour—"if you cannot speak, at least give me some token that you hear me."

Poor Eleanor, who was indeed beyond the power of speech, but she threw her arms around his neck, and held him to her heart, as if he should never be separated from that strong hold again.

"And you believe—you trust implicitly to my vow," he continued.

"As I believe in heaven—as I trust in the promises of the Bible," was uttered in a faint but deliberate and decided voice.

All was now peace and sunshine in Eleanor's pleasant home. She felt no fear; she knew no danger; she was ignorant that the root of human guilt lay deeper than the human will; and that man is seldom able of himself, and by a single effort of his individual power, to say to the temptation which most easily besets him—"thus far shalt thou go, and no further."

All was now peace and sunshine, and Eleanor's cheek began to bloom as it was wont. Health was once more circling through her veins, and hope was busy at her heart. It is true, she perceived not in her husband the clear eye, and steady hand, he once possessed. It is true, he often appeared strange, and wandering, and scarcely like himself; but he had given her his word, and that was a pledge too sacred to admit for a moment of the shadow of a doubt.

Restored to health and happiness, and feeling no apprehension of any change, Eleanor Bond fell easily back into the same train of habitual conduct to which she had been accustomed before her illness. The same subjects interested her mind, the same pleasures attracted her regard, and she herself became in all respects

the same. The same? Impossible! For she had passed beneath the shadow of the gates of death, she had stood upon the confines of eternity, she had felt by what a frail tenure her life was held. The hand of affliction had been heavy upon her. She could not be the same; for these awful warnings demanded some answer—some token of having been heard and understood; and if passed by without attention, they would still be ready to make the same demand, at a time when it could only be answered by the final sentence of eternal condemnation.

In outward appearances, however, Eleanor was the same; and as the strongest proof that she had not really profited by the discipline she had undergone, her prejudices against Mrs. West began to return; and while she still spoke of her in terms of gratitude and affection, she was sensible of a certain shrinking from her presence, accompanied by a secret desire, whenever she heard her step approaching that for the present she would go away until a more convenient season. It seemed to her, in short, that Mrs. West was always calling at the wrong time; especially one day when she was just going up to dress for a dinner party at Sir James Mornford's, on which occasion she could not altogether conceal her vexation and chagrin. Her visitor appeared that day unusually grave and dull; and after trying some of the most common-place topics, she determined to make a desperate effort to escape, by pleading an engagement that must be attended to.

The fair face of Mrs. West was immediately overspread with the deepest crimson, and she was evidently much agitated, but keeping her seat, she answered mildly—"I know your time is precious, nor is it of less value to me; for if you will give me leave I will speak to you on a subject of great importance, before you go to Sir James Mornford's."

With a forboding of something extremely vexatious and unpleasant, Eleanor again seated herself, and Mrs. West went on.

"There is a subject on which I have long wished to speak to you; for I feel that I have no right to the pleasure of your society unless I will deal faithfully with you as a friend. I have prayed God to give me power to speak as I ought, but hitherto my weakness has prevailed against my sense of duty."

"I believe," said Eleanor, in a tone by no means the most conciliating, "that I can anticipate your meaning. And if the duty you have imposed upon yourself be an irksome one, I can spare you the pain of proceeding farther."

"I do not understand you," said Mrs. West. "And as the duty to which I allude is certainly not self-imposed, I must persevere in acting upon it, if the result should be altogether unequal to my factory. I must speak to you about your husband."

Eleanor coloured deeply; but while a feeling but little allied to Christian meekness took possession of her whole frame, she endeavoured to devise some plan by which she might reply, what appeared to her, in the character of an unwarrantable interference.

"Eleanor," said Mrs. West, "I have not known you long. I have loved you for a still shorter time. The bond between us may be easily broken, for I am not difficult to repent. But the case is very different with your husband. He was placed under my care as an orphan boy. In my heart and my home he was unto me even as my own child. A mother's eye is quick-sighted to that which may endanger the happiness of her offspring; and I have seen—Mr. West and I have both observed—"

"Say no more," interrupted Eleanor. "There is no need for this. I would rather give every thing I possess, than have such a subject named; but since you have forced it upon me, I must inform you, that all danger is now over."

"How?"

"My husband has made me a solemn promise, that he will never give me the same cause of uneasiness again."

"Is that all?"

"Surely it is enough. No one has ever yet had occasion to doubt his word."

"So far as promise extends, it is well; because I am sure his intention is good. I have no doubt of his sincerity, but I do doubt his power to keep the resolution he has made."

"You surely forget how injurious and unjust is this suspicion. Nothing but ignorance of his danger could so long have prevented his making this determination before. His eyes are now opened, and it must be the easiest thing in the world, to refrain from what is in itself so repulsive and degrading."

"My dear young friend, you speak like one who has made few observations, and had but little experience. All vice is repulsive and degrading, yet, how few are induced to shun it from this cause. It is not with any sinful habit, as with an unsightly garment, that we can always cast it off by a mere effort of the will