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MY MOTHER'S GOLD RING.

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I have one of the kindest husbands: he is a carpenter by trade, and our flock of little children has one of the kindest fathers in the country. I was thought the luckiest girl in the parish, when G—— T—— made me his wife: I thought so myself. Our wedding-day—and it was a happy one—was but an indifferent sample of those days of rational happiness and uninterrupted harmony, which we were permitted to enjoy together, for the space of six years. And although, for the last three years of our lives, we have been as happy as we were at the beginning, it makes my heart sick to think of those long, dark days and sad nights, that came between; for two years of our union were years of misery. I well recollect the first glass of ardent spirits that my husband ever drank. He had been at the grocery to purchase a little tea and sugar for the family; there were three cents coming to him in change; and unluckily, the Deacon, who keeps the shop, had nothing but silver in the till; and, as it was a sharp, frosty morning, he persuaded my good man to take his money's worth of rum, for it was just the price of a glass. He came home in wonderful spirits, and told me he meant to have me and the children better dressed, and as neighbour Barton talked of selling his horse and chaise, he thought of buying them both; and, when I said to him, "George, we are dressed as well as we can afford, and I hope you will not think of a horse and chaise till we have paid off the Squire's mortgage," he gave me a harsh look and a bitter word. I shall never forget that day, for they were the first he ever gave me in his life. When he saw me shedding tears, and holding my apron to my face, he said he was sorry, and came to kiss me, and I discovered he had been drinking, and it grieved me to the heart. In a short time after, while I was washing up the breakfast things, I heard our little Robert, who was only five years old, crying bitterly; and, going to learn the cause, I met him running towards me with his face covered with blood.

He said his father had taken him on his knee, and was playing with him, but had given him a blow in the face, only because he had said, "Dear papa, you smell like old Isaac, the drunken siddler." My husband was very cross to us all through the whole of that day; but the next morning, though he said little, he was evidently ashamed and humbled; and he went about his work very industriously, and was particularly kind to little Robert. I prayed constantly for my good man, and that God would be pleased to

guide his heart aright; and more than a week having gone by, without any similar occurrence, I flattered myself that he would never do so again. But in a very little time, either the Deacon was a sort of change, as before, or some tempting occasion presented itself which my husband could not resist, and he returned home once more under the influence of liquor. I shall never forget the expression of his countenance when he came in that night. We had waited supper a full hour for his return; the teapot was standing at the fire, and the hammocks were untouched upon the hearth, and the smaller children were beginning to murmur for their supper. There was an indescribable expression of defiance on his countenance, as though he were conscious of having done wrong, and resolved to brave it out. We sat down silently to supper, and he scarcely raised his eyes upon any of us during this unhappy repast. He soon went to bed and fell asleep; and after I had laid our little ones to rest, I knelt at the foot of the bed on which my poor misguided husband was sleeping, and poured out my very soul to God, while my eyes were scalded with the bitterest tears I had ever shed. For I then foresaw, that unless some remedy could be employed, my best earthly friend, the father of my little children, would become a drunkard. The next morning after breakfast I ventured to speak with him upon the subject in a mild way; and, though I could not restrain my tears, neither my words nor my weeping appeared to have any effect, and I saw that he was becoming hardened and careless of us all. How many winter nights have I waited, weeping alone, at my once happy fireside, listening for the lifting latch, and wishing, yet dreading, to hear his steps at the door!

After this state of things had continued, or rather grown worse, for nearly three months, I put on my bonnet one morning, after my husband had gone to his work, and went to the Deacon's store; and finding him alone, I stated my husband's case, and begged him earnestly to sell him no more. He told me it would do no good, for, if he did not sell it, some other person would sell it; and he doubted if my husband took more than was good for him. He quoted Scripture to show that it was a wife's duty to keep at home, and submit herself to her husband, and not meddle with things which did not belong to her province. At this time two or three customers called for rum, and the Deacon civilly advised me to go home, and look after my children.

I went out with a heavy heart. It seemed as if the tide of evil was setting against me. As I was passing farmer Johnson's, on my way home, they called me in. I sat down and

rested myself, for a few minutes, in their neat cottage. Farmer Johnson was just returning from the field; and when I saw the little ones running to meet him at the stile, and the kind looks that passed between the good man and his wife; and when I remembered that we were married on the very same day, and compared my own fortune with theirs, my poor heart burst forth in a flood of tears. They all knew what I was weeping for, and farmer Johnson, in a kind manner, bade me cheer up, and put my trust in God's mercy, and remember it was often darkest before daylight. The farmer and his wife were members of the temperance society, and had signed the pledge; and I had often heard him say, that he believed it had saved him from destruction. He had, before his marriage, and for a year after, been in the habit of taking a little spirit every day. He was an industrious, thriving man; but shortly after his marriage he became bound for a neighbour, who ran off, and he was obliged to pay the debt. He had heard him declare, that, when the sheriff took all his property, and stripped his little cottage, and scarcely left him those trifles which are secured to the poor man by law; and when he considered how ill his poor wife was at the time, in consequence of the loss of their child, that died only a month before; he was restrained from resorting to the bottle, in his moments of despair, by nothing but a recollection of the pledge he had signed. Farmer Johnson's minister was in favour of pledges, and had often told him that addiction might weaken his judgment and his moral sense, and that the pledge might save him at last, as a plank saves the life of a mariner who is tossed upon the wave.

Our good clergyman was unfortunately of different opinion. He had often disapproved of pledges; the Deacon was of the same opinion; he thought very ill of pledges.

Month after month passed away, and our happiness was utterly destroyed. My husband neglected his business, and poverty began to stare us in the face. Notwithstanding my best exertions, it was hard work to keep my little ones decently clothed and sufficiently fed. If my husband earned a shilling, the druggist was as sure of it as if it were already in his till. I sometimes thought I had lost all my affection for one who had proved so entirely regardless of those whom it was his duty to protect and sustain; but, when I looked in the faces of our little children, this recollection of our early marriage days, and all his kind words and deeds, soon taught me the strength of the principle that had brought us together. I shall never cease to remember the anguish I felt when the constable took