

turn to her. How many, many days of painful toil, do these fifty dollars represent; and how willingly, in the glad day that is to come, will she pour them out, to bring the worthless vagabond home! Then she kneels beside her worn old chair, and asks of her Lord once more the desire of her heart: that this man, an outcast from all save his mother's love, may be found and brought back to her longing heart.

Her faith has nothing substantial on which to build, however. In one of the worst gambling hells of a distant city sits the young man for whom the precious ointment of a mother's love has been so freely poured forth. Luck is against him. Three hundred dollars have been transferred from his pocket to that of a fellow-gambler in one short hour. He stakes his last ten dollars. It is his last chance; but these, too, vanish, as the others have done. He rises from the table, cursing his luck; and, calling for a glass of liquor, drains it to the last drop. He has not drunk much while at play; but he makes up for it now. He means to go to bed and to sleep, forgetting himself and his wretched life for a time. He has gentlemanly ways, this gambler. His clothes are of the finest quality and cut. The stone gleaming in his scarf is an opal. He has a room not far away; a well-furnished, warmed, and lighted room. To this he goes, and, throwing himself on his bed, soon falls into a heavy slumber.

He sleeps on through all the morning hours; but wakes, at last, in the early afternoon.

'Curse the luck!' he mutters, sitting up and leaning his aching head on his hands.

'Never was so confoundedly cleaned out before in my life. Not a cent to get breakfast with.' The weather is not very cold, and he decides to pawn his overcoat. He can raise but five dollars on that, so he goes without his breakfast, in order to begin business with a round sum. All through the afternoon he sits winning, winning, till he rises, at last, with fifty dollars in his pocket. He invites a few of his chosen friends—jolly good fellows like himself—to sup with him at a restaurant, and they have what they call 'a good time.'

The supper and revel leave him nothing of his fifty dollars, and he goes to bed once more cursing his luck.

When morning comes, it is bitter cold; one of those sudden foretastes of winter which November is almost sure to have sandwiched between her days of heavenly balminess.

The young man's overcoat, the only available article of clothing for the purpose, is in pawn.

'What a dog's life it is, anyhow!' he mutters, sitting on the edge of the bed, with his face in his hands. 'There's some fun in winning, sure; but, there's the everlasting losing. What does it all amount to, anyhow? How is a gambler ever to settle down? There's nothing for it but to go on in the same old way. I wonder what my mother would say. Poor old lady! Ah, well. I guess she has broken her heart long ago. It's no use. I can't reform. Don't believe there's any reform in me.'

He goes out, and from mere force of habit, goes to one of his usual haunts, a gambling den. He cannot gamble for lack of money. So he seats himself in a corner, with a morning paper. A casual item, a commonplace announcement of an oft-recurring tragedy, meets his eye.

'An old lady, Mrs. Jean Campbell, was beaten almost to death last night. It is supposed that money was the object of the inhuman wretch, or wretches, who committed the deed, since drawers were ransacked and

everything about the cottage upset. Suspicion falls on the old lady's son, a reprobate fellow, who has not been heard from in five years. When found Mrs. Campbell was barely alive.'

His mother (kind, gentle old woman, who never had harmed a living being) beaten almost to death in her bed. She had but one natural protector in all the world, and he was such a reprobate that suspicion naturally fell on him. And he had not been near her nor written her a kindly word in five years. Not a single dollar had he even sent to maintain her in her old age and feebleness. He felt himself to be a wretch as never before.

'I haven't a dollar to take me home, or I'd go, sure,' was his next thought. 'If I did go, most likely they'd arrest me immediately. They don't think any too well of me in Uniontown; but to think I could beat my mother! Ugh!'

He was weary, fasting, disgusted. Catching sight of an announcement of a gospel temperance meeting in the heart of the city, he decided to go to it.

'I haven't been near a good, decent woman to speak to in five years,' is his thought.

As he enters the hall where the gospel meeting is held, this is what he hears:—'When a young man leaves home and devotes the first five or ten years of his manhood to having a good time, as he imagines it, drinking and gambling and all the dark things pertaining to these two, where have those ten years of early manhood gone? My friends, they have gone (have they not?) literally to the devil. What has the young man to show, at the end of these five, or eight, or ten years, for all this time and strength and opportunity which are gone? Not money—he has none in bank, or houses, or lands, and rarely any in pocket, not friends,—he has long ago left the friends of his youth behind, and he has found none, tried and true, to take their places; not character,—he has none to boast of. Is it worth your while, O my young friends,' continues the speaker, 'to throw away life and opportunity thus? Are there pleasure and satisfaction enough in sin to repay you for all you cast away in this pursuit?'

'No, there isn't,' says Jamie Campbell to himself, as this new outlook at life was opened to his vision.

He does not notice when the meeting closes, so absorbed is he in his own thoughts. A kind voice near him asks:

'Are you wanting to turn over a new leaf?'

'Yes, ma'am! I am that! I'm sick enough of the life I've been leading. You were right enough in saying a man has nothing to show for the years he throws away. I've thrown away five of them, and I haven't a thing to show for it, and I've broken my poor old mother's heart.'

Kindly does his friend point out to him the better way; set thickly with thorns at the outset, but growing more and more safe and pleasant toward the end. And the young man, with dimmed moral vision, endeavors to grasp the better life. His new friend helps him in his struggle as best she can. His room had to be given up; but she gives him meal and lodging tickets, and he haunts the reading-room and the temperance meeting and the mission at night. He hears much that he had never thought before.

'You ought to write to your mother, if you have one,' says his new friend, one day. 'Nothing would make her so happy as a letter from you, telling her of your new life.'

A spasm of pain crosses the young man's face. Then he draws from his pocket the little item telling of his mother's hurt and tells her all his story.

'I haven't anything to go on, and I have-

n't anything to send her, either. I'd better not write to her at all. Besides, they think I did the deed and they would arrest me as soon as I landed.'

'If your mother is living she can soon prove that you did not do it; and you can certainly prove that you were in this city on the night the deed was committed.'

'That's so,' he said, reflectingly; 'but she probably needs money, and I haven't a cent to send her.'

'She needs the good news of your reformation more,' said his friend. 'Don't let her die without that consolation.'

'Well, I'll write to her,' says Jamie, reluctantly; and he writes the letter she has prayed for so long.

In the days following his reformation he has diligently sought employment; but he is delicate-handed. Rough jobs are given to the scores of stalwart men waiting for them; while lighter employments involve responsibility and require references, and these he has not.

Mrs. Campbell has in some measure recovered from the beating she received, and her first wish is to go to the post-office once more. She will not send any one else although a dozen kind hands are ready and willing to do her bidding.

She stands waiting once more within the post-office. Kind hands take her old wrinkled one in their own, and many inquire if she has quite recovered. Mr. White, the minister, stops to ask after her welfare, and to inquire if she will be able to be in her accustomed seat in church next Sunday. She has never failed to be present in many years until her late hurt, and she readily promises to be there.

'Worst piece of business I ever heard of,' says a rough, but kind-hearted young man to an acquaintance, as they catch sight of the bent figure and worn old shawl.

'It was rascally enough to leave her all these years unprovided for; then to come home only to brain her with a club and then rob her of every cent she had. I declare, he ought to be hung!'

'No! no!' cries the old woman, eagerly. She has overheard the conversation, and, as she comprehends its meaning, she comes eagerly up to where the men are talking.

''Twas never my Jamie did the wicked deed. Did anybody think 'twas he? I saw the man as plain as I see you now, an' it was no more my Jamie than it was yersel's.'

The young men stare at her in surprise. It had been an accepted fact that it must have been her reprobate son who had thus misused her, knowing that she had money laid away. It had even been said that he had been seen getting off the cars in the twilight of that evening; but had slunk away into the darkness, and no one had seen him again.

Poor Jamie Campbell had little enough of good that could be said of him. He had little good name to lose; but it is hard that he should be robbed unjustly of the little he had.

Meanwhile, the postmaster and his clerk distribute the mail behind the closed window. The mail was large, and, owing to a for nearly half an hour beyond the usual recent severe snowstorm, was late. The clerk worked fast, for the crowd grew more and more impatient as the minutes flew by to the time of opening the mail. As the clerk passed toward the front boxes, with a large handful of letters: one letter fell from his hand, and the next moment a crumpled newspaper covered it with its ample folds. There was no letter as usual for Jean Campbell, and she turned sadly away. The disappointment seemed harder to bear than usual. She had been away from the office for two weeks, and she is not strong now.