



Temperance Department.

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.

(From Day of Rest).

CHAPTER IV. (Continued.)

Presently a poor haggard wreck of a man came up, his clothes dripping with wet, and passed along the passage to the door at the farther end. Jessie moved a step or two in, gazing earnestly forward. He threw the door wide open. A huge fire was blazing in the grate; there were two large tables around which men, in all attitudes, were sitting. There was Mr. Bates, a steaming glass of dark liquor before him and untasted, for it was filled to the brim. All this Jessie saw at a glance, and with a smothered cry of joy she sprang along the passage, and in a moment was at her father's side.

'Heyday!' shouted a burly tipsy fellow. 'Where the dickens—'

'Jessie!' exclaimed her father, rising hastily, and hurrying her out of the place. 'Where—how did you come?'

'Papa, I only came,' she said, in her childish winning way. 'We wanted you at home so much. Come along, pa.'

He walked mechanically into the street without speaking. He held Jessie's hand so tightly that it pained her. After a while he said, 'Your hand is so hot, Jessie. Stop! are you wet? are your feet wet? I forgot that, my darling. You are wet through, Jessie! Why did you come?'

'It was not wet when I came out, pa. It won't hurt. We shall soon be home.'

He lifted the slight little form and carried her tenderly; but even so light a burden was almost too much for the enfeebled man. The wind had somewhat fallen, and the rain descended with a sudden decided splash on their unsheltered heads.

Mrs. Bates was in an agony. Twenty times had she reproached herself for letting Jessie out in such weather. 'She will catch her death,' was her continual plaint.

How was her heart relieved when she entered, and with her father too! 'Thank God!' she murmured while stripping off the child's outer clothing.

'Let me go to bed now, mamma,' said Jessie. 'I'm tired.'

'Very well, darling. Mary can help you while I get some dry clothes for papa to put on. I will bring you something up in a few minutes.'

It took her some time to hunt up an old change of things for Mr. Bates, for his wardrobe was lamentably scanty. Then baby had to be settled with playthings between Johnny and Freddy; so that by the time Mrs. Bates had got hot water ready for Jessie's feet, full a quarter of an hour had elapsed, and when she took it up stairs Jessie was quite asleep.

'Mary,' said Mrs. Bates, 'she ought not to have gone off without this water. She will have a dreadful cold.'

'Mamma, she was too weary to sit up another minute. I rubbed her feet well with this rough towel.'

'Perhaps that will do,' said Mrs. Bates, with a sigh and glancing anxiously at the thin, flushed face of the little girl.

It was between nine and ten o'clock. The children were all in bed except Mary, who was finishing the turning of Jessie's school cloak. Mr. Bates had taken nothing to drink since before tea; and his wife thought what a comfort to have him, nearly sober, at home that night. However, he was just getting out some coppers for Mary to fetch 'something to keep him from catching cold,' when they heard a low cry proceeding from the room where Jessie was sleeping. Mrs. Bates rose, saying 'Hush!' and the next minute the much-dreaded hoarse, thick cough startled them. 'There, she has the croup,' said Mrs. Bates, and her heart sickened with apprehension.

Mr. Bates hurried up. She was awake. 'Can I have anything, papa?' she gasped.

'Yes, darling; mamma is getting something.'

She started up in the bed, the terrible cough almost choking her. 'Try to lie down, my dear,' said her father in alarm; 'you must keep warm.' She shook her head; and

her mother brought a flannel and hot water, and gave her a simple remedy which she had prepared, while Mary ran for the doctor. All their remedies seemed to be in vain. Still was the wild struggle kept up for breath; still sounded out the stubborn choking cough. The night passed away in the fight for life. An emetic was administered, which gave no relief; and with agonizing hearts the parents watched beside the bed of distressing suffering.

'What can we do, Aleck?' groaned his wife when Jessie had dropped to sleep for a moment, the quick breath rattling continuously in her throat.

'God knows!' he replied, with feelings of bitter remorse as he considered how he was the indirect cause of this trouble. 'She has got over it before, you know, Marian. We must hope for the best.' He was himself now—the kind, considerate husband, the affectionate father.

Morning dawned cold, gray, comfortless. The earth was damp from the night's storm; and the ragged, broken clouds moved steadily before a bitter east wind. 'Papa,' gasped Jessie, turning her eyes toward him with an earnest, unearthly gaze.

'Yes, my darling,' he replied.

She tried to speak, but the choking feeling in her throat prevented her, and the tears streamed down her face with the mere effort.

'What do you want to say, my pet?' said her father.

She pointed upward and nodded her head. 'Going,' she said.

'No, no, Jessie, you'll be better presently; the doctor will be here.'

She shook her head and beckoned. Her little strength was all spent; and when he stooped down as she wished, she had scarcely power to clasp her arms around his neck.

'Pa,' she whispered hoarsely, 'promise that you will—turn—over—a—new—leaf.' The words were at last got out with difficulty, and then the large blue eyes pleaded more than any words possibly could.

Mr. Bates groaned. Big, burning tears rolled slowly from beneath his closed eyelids. Jessie took his hand.

'Will you, pet?' she still pleaded.

'Oh, Jessie, don't! I'll promise anything, my darling; only be quiet.'

Still the child looked anxious and dissatisfied. Mrs. Bates stood by, weeping. 'Promise her, Aleck,' she whispered.

But he remained silent, perfectly still, save that his breast heaved laboriously. There was a mighty struggle going on within him. In a moment all the events of his past life came crowding back upon his memory. There was the happy home of his early childhood; there was the good mother speaking to her little son words of holy counsel and wisdom; there was the youth—the man—the new home—the happy wife—the gleeful children. There was the yielding to fierce temptation—the first downward step taken. There was the horror of thick darkness settling down on the once happy dwelling. Then the exodus; the going forth, branded, to wander through the world; there was the remembrance of hours of disgrace and anguish; the sinking lower, lower into the horrible pit and the miry clay; there was the feeling of utter helplessness; and the man wept. He raised his head. Low, indeed, he had fallen, but life and comparative strength were still his. He looked up to the future, but it seemed dark, very dark. There were thorny paths to tread, rocky heights to climb, whose rugged outlines stood out in gloomy relief against a gloomy sky. The way looked very rough. 'Turn over a new leaf.' Ah! that involved so much. The conflict with old habits would be sharp and sanguinary; the fight would be long and desperate; the upward ascent toilsome and wearying. But, as he thought, a ray of light shot athwart the gloom and mellowed the scene. The bold rugged heights were softened down; the unsightly parts thrown into pleasant shadow; yea, that sunshine of hope revealed flowers strewn along the rough, upward pathway; and behold! the lofty summits were bathed in light ineffable. And thrilling his inmost soul, came to memory the inspired and inspiring words: 'In me is thy help.' Weary and with soiled garments, the man stood in the quagmire of degradation; but his uplifted brow was radiant with the glow caught from that sunbeam of hope, and his breast throbbed and heaved with noble, earnest aspirations. Then to the dying little one before him he answered, with husky voice,

'I will, my child!'

The clouds have rolled away. The western sky is gorgeous with blending, fading tints. Far up in the zenith the stars gleam out, pale and lustrous. Another spirit has passed within yon mystic portals.

Hush! tread softly in this shadowy little room. Angels awhile since trod its roughly-boarded floor! A child sleeps her last sweet sleep upon that lowly bed. Still the breath while gazing on the white form, the folded hands, the marble brow! Weep not over the beautiful clay—all that remains of little Jessie! She sleeps well; she has fulfilled her mission!

In that solemn eventide hush Mr. Bates sits pale and statue-like beside his dead child. There is something unnatural in his outward calmness. His eyes are red and tearless; his hands are pressed so closely together that the nails and knuckles are white as marble. Within the man, grief, yearning love, remorse, hate, determination, alternately rage and struggle. His bosom is torn with strong, conflicting emotions. He would weep, he would pray, but just now is powerless to do either; and so he keeps his silent, solitary watch, as immovable as the dead by his side. A little boy steals on tiptoe into the room. The presence of death awes him. The curly head is thrown back, and the ruby lips whisper: 'Somebody wants you, papa.'

Gone is all the nervous bitterness that has rankled in the father's bosom for so long a time in the past; gone the harsh, thoughtless manner of rebuff, and he replies: 'Who, my darling.'

'A gentleman, pa; he is waiting to see you.'

Mr. Bates left the still, quiet chamber for almost the first time that day. As he entered the "parlor," unlighted save by the street lamp which gleamed through the window, a dim figure advanced with outstretched hand to meet him.

'Bryant, I have had no rest to-day thinking of you; you must come back.'

Bates drew his tall form to its full height, and answered proudly, and withal bitterly, 'Thank you, Mr. Harris, I shall intrude no further upon your benevolence.'

As he turned his fine face—fine still though branded with his sin—toward the window, Mr. Harris was startled. It was pale and haggard; and the expression was indescribable. He perceived, too, that he was sober.

'Bryant,' said the gentleman, with delicacy of tone and feeling, 'you are suffering.'

'Not for anything that has transpired between us,' said Bates, quickly. 'I have lost a child, Mr. Harris, and the pain of separation is somewhat acute.'

'God knows it is, Bryant! I will not offer a word of sympathy which in such a case would seem burdensome and intrusive. You will allow me to be your friend?'

'Mr. Harris, you have been more than a friend to me. I and my family owe much, very much, to you. I have ever appreciated your kindness, though I have given no proof of it. I have not requited you in any single instance. I have been bound, kept down, down! No man could sink much lower. However, it is of the past, I trust. The business of my life shall be to repay the only man who has reached a helping hand to Alexander Bates in his degradation. I shall decline availing myself of your disinterested offer to return.' And he bowed haughtily.

'Alexander Bates!' echoed the astounded merchant. 'Surely you are not the architect of the—?'

'The same, sir.'

'Oh, Mr. Bates, be true to yourself! You have been bound; you have been kept down, and sorely tempted, I know. Set your face like a flint against the temptations that surround you; they will seem stronger than ever as you take your first struggling steps in the upward way. Lean upon God, Bates; lean upon Him, and may you hear his voice saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."'

Neither spoke for a minute. Then Mr. Harris said, 'You are determined, Bates?'

'Determined! Mr. Harris, I have made promises to you again and again, and as soon as made they have been broken. I feel in no mood now to parley with any one, neither to make promises to man. But a few hours since I was ordained to stand, for the first time, by the bedside of a dying child. She was aware that I was—what it costs me a bitter effort to pronounce—a drunkard. It is useless to deny the fact. She is gone, and with her bears the vow which she entreated

of, and received from me—that henceforth I would be free from the curse that has dragged us down to this, and that has been the indirect cause of her death.' His lips trembled and his eyes flashed as he added, 'And Mr. Harris, I'll fulfil that vow! so may God help me!'

And by God's help he did fulfil it.

(To be Continued).

A RUMSELLER'S STORY.

A man named Stacy, the owner of a splendid drinking saloon in New York, signed the pledge lately and closed his house. Hearing that a party of lads had formed themselves into a temperance society, he went to them and gave them his experience as a rumseller. We repeat some of his recollections for our larger audience.

'I sold liquor,' said Mr. Stacy, 'for eleven years—long enough for me to see the beginning and the end of its effects. I have seen a man take his first glass of liquor in my place, who afterward filled the grave of a suicide. I have seen man after man, wealthy and educated, come into my saloon, who now cannot buy his dinner. I can recall twenty customers worth from one hundred thousand to five hundred thousand dollars, who are now without money, place or friends.'

He warned boys against entering saloons on any pretext. He stated that he had seen many a young fellow, member of a temperance society, come in with a friend and wait while he drank. 'No, no,' he would say, 'I never touch it. Thanks all the same.' Presently rather than seem churlish, he would take a glass of cider or harmless lemonade. 'The lemonade was nothing,' said the rumseller, 'but I knew how it would end. The only safety, boys, for any man, no matter how strong his resolution, is outside the door of the saloon.'—*Church and Home.*

THE MODERATE DRINKER.

The *Morning* tells this story of a moderate drinker: 'A so called moderate drinker was once very angry with a friend who claimed that safety is alone in totally abstaining from the use of ardent spirits, and who allowed his fanatical notions to insinuate that the moderate drinker himself might then be beyond control. 'To make plain the question who is wrong,' said the temperance man, 'will you quit just one month—not to touch a drop during this time?' Said the other, 'To satisfy your mind, sir, I will, with pleasure; though I know myself, I will do as you ask, to cure overwrought ideas.' He kept his promise, but at the end of the time he came to his friend with tears in his eyes and thanked him for saving him from a drunkard's grave. Said he, 'I never knew before that I was in any sense a slave to drink, but the last month has been the fiercest battle of my life. I see now that I was almost beyond hope, and had the test come many months later, it would have been too late for me. But I have kept the pledge, and, by God's help, I will keep it for life.'

"THIS IS WHY I KNOW IT."

'How is your father getting along now?' I said to a little daughter of a man formerly a drunkard, but whom, some months before, I had persuaded to sign the pledge. 'He is getting along very well,' was her reply.

'Has he kept his pledge?'

'Oh, yes,' she joyfully said.

'Are you sure he has?'

'Yes, sir, I am quite sure.'

'How is it you are so positive on this point?'

'Why,' said she, and her face was radiant with joy, 'he never abuses mother any more; we have always plenty to eat; and he never takes my shoes off to pawn them for the drink now. This is why I know it, sir.'—*Band of Hope Review.*

A FRIEND was asked to sign the pledge. 'What for?' he asked. 'In order to set a good example.' 'But I do set a good example—an example of moderation.' 'True,' said the applicant, 'but suppose some one seeing you drink moderately should drink to excess?' 'In that case he would not be following my example.' This is the most common of all objections to teetotalism, but it is just by following the example of moderate drinkers that all drinkers drunkards are made.