

work, and she dreaded the thought of her afflicted sister, to whom she had been as a mother, being deprived of any comfort.

At last success, substantial success, came to Winnie, and how her invalid sister rejoiced in her literary triumphs. 'Why, Winnie, you don't seem a bit enthusiastic about that cheque,' Patience said, when a more than usually substantial reward for her sister's labors came from her publishers.

Winnie smiled a sad, weary smile; she knew, alas, how often the bright flame of her imagination had been fed with the unholy fires of alcohol, to which, despite her better nature, she felt herself fast becoming a slave.

Just at this period, too, she learned what she had never known before, for she was too young when her father died to know much about him, and that was that he had died as the result of excessive drinking, though he was really a brilliant man. Winifred was aware that her mother's life had been burdened with some secret sorrow, but she never dreamed it was the curse of drink.

Instead of the knowledge of the fact putting her on her guard against what was really the hereditary foe of her family, it created a fatal sense of despair in her mind; she felt that she had inherited her father's vice, and that his fate, and that of others of her family, must be hers, and so she yielded herself to a hopeless sense of fatalism.

Thus weakened in mind and body, she seemed powerless to release herself from the tentacles of this horrid moral octopus that were closing around her. Sometimes she wept passionate tears at the sense of her degradation, and at other times maudlin tears as she came under the influence of her foe.

III.

At last the awful fact of her sister's fatal weakness was forced on the mind of Patience Hilderton herself, and she had the inexpressible sorrow of seeing her still young and beautiful sister under the influence of drink.

There seemed to Patience no greater suffering than that that she could be called to endure. The very light of day seemed henceforward ghastly. She could have borne any other sorrow patiently, but to know that her sister was a secret, yet wretched drunkard, was a sorrow for which there seemed no alleviation.

Sometimes Winifred made a futile effort to combat her weakness, but the old sense of the utter dreariness of life, which, perhaps, accounts more for drunkenness amongst women than anything else, crept over her. She expended the little nervous force she possessed in her literary labors, and then, entirely exhausted, flew to her secret foe for relief from her misery. On one occasion Patience found her sister lying in her room in a drunken stupor.

When she had recovered from her intoxication the afflicted girl drew Winnie gently to herself, and the wretched woman fell at her sister's feet weeping as at those of some saint. The agonized girl threw her arms around her sister's neck, crying in an ecstasy of grief, 'Oh, Winnie, my own precious sister, you will break my poor heart. Is there no help for you? Must you perish and none save you? Leave it, darling, leave it all. Let us live on a crust; anything rather than that I should lose you. Oh, merciful God, my sorrow is greater than I can bear. Save us, Father, save us,' she groaned. The two women mingled their tears, the one those of Gethsemane anguish, the other those of shame, and almost of utter despair.

Singular to tell, as Miss Hilderton sank lower and lower in the vice of drunkenness, she was becoming more and more the idol of the public. Her work was becoming better known. She was regarded as one of the favorites of fortune whose literary star had early risen in the ascendant.

Eulogistic paragraphs appeared about her in the papers, and yet, all this time Winnie was becoming a wretched, despairing woman. Sometimes, as she read the personal paragraphs respecting herself in the newspapers, she burst out in bitter mocking laughter. Despair had darkened her heart; despair of ever conquering her foe.

'I have inherited the fatal vice of my family,' she cried, after one of her lapses, 'and there is no hope for me.'

In her despair she determined to break off her engagement with Basil Stainton, and wrote him to that effect. She confessed to him that her love for him had never changed, but she had discovered a secret in her own past life, she told him, that would make her marriage with him an impossibility. She begged of him to try and forget her, and to seek someone who would be more worthy of him and his noble life's work.

When Basil received the letter he was stunned, and would have posted off to London at once to plead with her to alter her decision. But in her letter she begged of him not to increase her present agony of mind by seeing her.

Basil wrote to her telling her it was impossible for him to cease to love her, and that for him there could be no other woman for a wife but herself. To transfer his affections to another, he said, was equally impossible.

Sometimes a glinting of hope crept into the wretched woman's heart that she should yet conquer her foe, and by years of abstinence from intoxicating drinks prove herself worthy of Basil Stainton's great love for her. But the old craving came back again; she lost control over herself, and she fell again, and yet again from the heaven of her hope.

She told herself she would conquer her foe gradually, and take less and less intoxicants. A very will-o'-the-wisp delusion to such as she.

Patience tried to help her by seeing that no intoxicants came into the house, but despite her efforts, when the craving became strong upon her, somehow she managed to obtain them. So the battle went on, alternating between fear and hope.

As we have seen in the opening of our story the young lady's disease—for in her case disease it really was—had so far progressed that she had begun to publish her falling publicly, and friends began secretly to whisper the awful fact amongst themselves that the brilliant authoress was a confirmed dipsomaniac.

IV.

Miss Patience Hilderton slept in a room adjoining that of her sister, and the doors of the two bedrooms being opposite each other, it was easy, when the door was open, for her to command a view of her sister's bedroom.

One evening Patience had retired to rest as usual, and before she felt asleep she saw that her sister was reading in bed. It was a frequent practice of the nervous woman, to try and induce sleep. Patience fell herself into a fitful sleep. After a while she woke, and as she gradually became conscious she could smell fire. The door of her sister's room was still open, and she could distinct-

ly see a thin, white, curling smoke arising from her sister's bed. She called aloud and rang the bell for help. But seconds seemed hours. She could see her sister's danger, and yet she was powerless to help her, and lay bound in bed as by a chain of iron, for her lameness prevented her action.

She clutched the bedclothes frantically, and tried to drag her useless limbs out of bed. It was the struggle of love against physical weakness, and love, in such circumstances, has often worked miracles. So it was here. She gained the floor, and managed to balance her body. She clung to the furniture and to the walls. She dragged herself along, bent on saving her sister.

The hangings of the bed were already aflame, and still the doomed woman slept, and no help was nigh.

Patience had sufficient strength to lay hold of the water jug and dash the water on the smouldering fire. The flame abated. At last the house was roused by her cries, and the servants appeared, and rushed into the room, aghast to see the white draped figure that stood by the side of the bed. Then the reaction came, and the brave girl fainted.

Patience happily recovered from her exhaustion, but what was still more wonderful, she had regained the use of her limbs. Her recovery was in no way exceptional, as there are many cases on record of similar recovery, even after years of loss of the power of locomotion.

When the doctor turned his attention to Miss Winnie he found that not only was she somewhat seriously burned, but she had suffered from shock to her over-wrought system, which was far worse.

The medical man soon understood the real facts of the case in relation to his patient; he saw at once the terrible tragedy of the life of this brilliant woman, and he saw too, that what alone would save her would be to put her out of the reach of all intoxicants. But how was that to be done? That was the doctor's puzzling question.

For the time being, however, the physician had to save his patient from her critical condition, and slowly, very slowly, Winnie came back to life. Her whole nervous system was a wreck.

The doctor had formed his plans to try and save the poor woman. He communicated with a lady friend, and entreated her to interest herself in the case, and try and get her to enter an inebriate home.

Miss Hilderton, when the matter was suggested to her by her sister, consented, and in due course she entered the home. Here, far away from the heated rush of life, and amid the healing influences of nature, she reposed. Day by day a physical, mental, and spiritual change was slowly passing over her.

Nature was weaving, in her body healthy tissue; gradually the old craving died down, and the calm, benign influence of the love of God was shed abroad in her heart. At last she felt as if, by the grace of God, she dare trust herself to resist intoxicants, and so left the home.

Weeks lapsed into months, and months into years, and Winnie was conscious that she had in very truth become a new creature.

The change, however, was not less marvellous in her sister, Patience. The power she had so wonderfully gained by her ter-

The juvenile part of the 'Messenger' is continued on page 11.