

the habit grew stronger, he sank lower and lower, until he became powerless in the grasp of the destroyer. My poor mother did all she could to save him, but her efforts were unavailing. When sober he was the same tender parent and loving husband as ever, but under the influence of strong drink he was often furious. The usual results followed, prosperity, character, and health were squandered and lost; but that was not all. In a fit of madness he felled my mother to the ground, from which she only recovered to kiss me and die. With the cry of a maniac he seized me and dashed me upon the ground, from which I was taken up for dead. Sobered by what he had done, and supposing he had killed us both, he fled at once and took passage for America; but the vessel in which he sailed was wrecked on the coast of Nova Scotia, and all on board perished.

Thus was I at once deprived of a mother I had idolized, and a father whose only fault was a love of strong drink. Had he lived to know that his child recovered, and that the last words of his noble wife were those of forgiveness and affectionate remembrance, he might have been rescued and saved; but he went down into the deep waters with that heavy load upon his heart. To me these are heartrending memories, and I only refer to them in the hope that others may be persuaded to shun the path of the destroyer. Can you wonder that I feel deeply and strongly upon this subject? Can you wonder at my earnest advocacy of the Temperance cause? Or can you wonder that I feel forced to fight the demon to the death?

Tell me I hate the bowl?
Hate is a feeble word—
I loathe, abhor, my very soul
Where'er I see, or hear, or tell
Of this deadly drink, that leads to hell!

A deep groan startled the audience, as all eyes turned instinctively to the place from whence the sound proceeded, Mr. Hall was seen forcing his way to the stand. Grasping the pulpit stairs to keep him from falling, he cried out in soul-thrilling tones, "Oh, William! William! my dear boy," and with that he swooned away. What followed we shall not attempt to describe; the meeting broke up, the son returned home with the father, and the mystery was at length cleared up as to who and what he was. As might have been supposed, Hall was only an assumed name, the real one being Stanley. All had not perished in the wreck as had been supposed, for he and his two domestics had been picked up and carried to Portland. Having secured some money he persuaded his fellow voyagers to accompany him to Mapleton, and here they had since remained.

The rest of our story is soon told. The case was at his own request investigated, and taking all the circumstances into account, the matter was allowed to drop. The son continued to minister to the people in holy things, and is well and favourably known, and with him the father quietly settled down. And however painful these disclosures were at first, they relieved him of a heavy burden, melted away his reserve, led him to mix more in society, and after a few years of useful and active effort he peacefully passed away, and is still kindly remembered as *The Mysterious Stranger*.