

subject of joy to the wife of his bosom and the children of his loins. I have seen the faint smile of satisfaction brighten upon my poor mother's pale features, upon such occasions; and I have marked the sigh, half-suppressed, which told the secret of an agonized spirit, and which seemed to say, How precious, how brief is this little interval of joy!

It was indeed like the parting sunbeam, the last, lingering light of a summer day, which plays upon the cold grave, where the treasure and the heart are destined to slumber together.

In such an example of domestic wretchedness as ours, the operation of cause and effect was perfectly intelligible. Rum excited into action all that was contentious, in the nature of my parent. A keen perception of his own blame-worthiness, notwithstanding the stupefying tendency of the liquor he had drunken, increased the irritability of his temper. A word, look, or gesture, from any member of the household, which indicated the slightest knowledge of his unhappy condition, when he returned at night, under the influence of strong drink, was surely interpreted into an intentional affront. He would often anticipate reproof; and, as it were, repay it beforehand, by the hardness of his manners.

The habit of drinking, which is invariably the prolific mother of sin and sloth, wretchedness and rags, is sure to be maintained and kept alive, by the beggarly progeny, to which it has given birth. Whenever my unhappy father was dunned for the interest on his mortgage, or any other debt, which, at last, he had no means to pay, he was in the habit, almost mechanically, as soon as the creditor had departed, of turning to the jug of rum for relief and oblivion.

The gloom and ill-nature, which had hitherto been occasionally interspersed with exhibitions of kinder feelings to us all, appeared to have become unvarying and fixed. There was less and less, from week to week of an April sky. All was chill and drear, like November. One evening, my mother and sister had been busily engaged, as usual, in such housewifery as might best contribute to keep our poor wreck of a domicile together as long as possible. I had learned to write a fair hand, and was engaged in copying some papers for our squire, who paid me by the sheet. It had gotten to be nearly ten o'clock. My mother put on her spectacles, and, opening the Bible, began to read. Rachael and I sat by the fire, listening to the words of truth and soberness. My poor mother had fallen upon a portion of Scripture which, from its applicability to her own situation and that of her children, had affected her feelings, and tears were in her eyes, when the loud tramp upon the door step announced the return of my father. His whole appearance was unusually ominous of evil. My mother stirred the fire, and I placed him a chair, which he kicked over, and threw himself down upon the bed, and called for supper. Mother told him, in a gentle manner, that there was nothing in the house but some bread. He told her she lied, and swore terribly. She sat silently by the fire;—I looked up in her face:—She wept, but said nothing. "Don't cry so, dear mother," said Rachael. "Wife," said my father, sitting upon the edge of the bed, "when will you leave off crying?" "Whenever you leave off drinking, husband," replied my mother in the kindest manner. My father sprang up, in a hurricane of wrath, and with a dreadful oath, hurled a chair at my mother's head. I sprang forward, and received its full force upon my shoulder. Rachael and my mother fled to a neighbor's house, and my father struck me several blows with his feet and fists; and, as I made my escape, I left him dashing the furniture to pieces, with the fury of a madman. I rushed forth to seek shelter amid the driving storm—from the tempest of a drunken father's wrath. I went, as speedily as possible, to the squire's house, and begged him to take compassion on my poor mother and

sister. Having received his promise, that he would go instantly over to our cottage, I took the resolution, which I have already stated.

After I had passed a comfortless night in the farmer's barn, I pushed forward to the city. I had a trifle of change in my pocket; I bought a biscuit of a travelling baker, and I had no relish for any other than the beverage of God's appointment, which was near at hand. When I reached the city, I directed my course to one of the wharves, and found no difficulty, as I was unusually stout for my years, in obtaining a voyage, as a green hand, in a ship bound to China. Three days passed, before the ship sailed. I wrote to my mother and sister, bidding them keep up their spirits, and put their trust, as I did, in the God of the widow and fatherless, for such, and even worse, was our condition. I asked them to say to father, when he was sober, that, although I had scarcely expected to see him again in this world, I freely forgave all his ill-treatment to myself.

I worked hard, and strove to please the captain. I soon found that ploughing the sea was a very different affair from ploughing the land. I had a good constitution, and a cheerful temper. I had been taught, at all times, by my dear mother, and by my poor unhappy father also, till he became intemperate, to put the fullest confidence in the promises of God. When we arrived in China, though we had shipped out and home, the voyage was broken up, and the ship sold. The captain settled with the crew to their entire satisfaction; and I shall always be grateful for his kindness to me. He got me a voyage to England. I laid out my wages, by his advice. I could not have followed a shrewder counsellor. He was born and bred, so far as regards his land learning, in one of the most thrifty villages in Connecticut. We had a most boisterous voyage from Canton to Liverpool; but whenever I pulled a rope, I always pulled a little harder for the sake of my old mother and sister Rachael. I had saved every penny of my wages, that I could lay by, and my little investment in Canton turned out far beyond my expectations. I do not think I was avaricious; but I felt it to be my duty, under existing circumstances, to save my earnings for my honored mother. Nevertheless, I felt myself authorised to indulge in one luxury at least; so, upon my arrival in Liverpool, I went into the first bookstore and bought me a pocket Bible.

Five years had now gone by, in which I had sailed many thousands of miles, and visited various corners of the world. During this period, I had gotten together a larger sum of money than I ever expected to possess at twenty-one; besides having made several remittances to the squire, for my old mother's use, to whom I wrote upon every convenient opportunity. They all came to hand, as I afterwards learned, saving one, in gold, which went to the bottom, with poor Tom Johnson, who was lost at sea. If I was fortunate enough to save my hard earnings, just let me say, for the advantage of every brother sailor, that there are four things, which I never did; I never suffered a drop of grog to go down my hatches, blow high or blow low; I never rolled a stinking weed, like a sweet morsel, under my tongue; I never crossed hands with a drunken landlord; and I never bore away from a poor fellow, whose hammock was harder than my own.

My five years' absence from home might have extended to fifty, but for many recollections of my mother and sister, which became more forcible, from day to day. My remembrance of my father was of the most painful character: the very recollection of his tenderness, in the days of my childhood, which often brought tears into my eyes, served only to render the image of a cruel and degraded parent more frightful and revolting.

I had shipped, about this time, on board the Swiftsure, from London to Oporto. One afternoon, two or three of us, a day or two before the ship sailed, had strolled over to the