

importance, of the most thrilling interest to Anthon. He had gained the confidence of his employer, won the esteem of his associate clerks, was respected and beloved by the whole circle of his acquaintance, and sustained a character proverbial for honesty, integrity, truth and virtue. Prosperity had smiled upon him, and made him an honored member of his patron's family; he had chosen and wed a lovely companion, whose character, talents, taste, and genuine piety corresponded with his own. Bright was the day that gave him Myrtilia Vestallon for his fair bride, happy the guests who gathered at that wedding, and rich the scenes that clustered round that bridal.

His home was the *Christian's happy home*, a bright, favored spot, a calm, sunny retreat from the toils of life, and the vexations of the world.

A fair, suken-haired, soft-eyed little Myrtilia, the very image of her beautiful mother, and a rosy-cheeked boy with roguish dimples laughed at his return, and shouted "father's come," as he entered his peaceful dwelling, whose snowy white and delicate green peeped out through the majestic elms that encircled it; and he felt that Providence had granted him a little paradise on earth.

The noble Temperance Reformation enlisted his sympathies, and he gave his hand and heart to the philanthropic work. Many a happy man surrounded by comforts, and ever welcomed with smiles at his own cheerful cottage, pronounced the name of Anthon Bloomingdale with a thrill of gratitude, and daily taught his children to bless and pray for their kind benefactor. Many an influential member of the Christian Church can recall the time, when that constant missionary of brotherly offices, that friend of mankind, raised him from the drunkard's gutter, taught him the duty of repentance, and pointed him to the Saviour of sinners. Thus he lived, the constant dispens. of good, aided in all his heavenly plans by his lovely companion.

One evening as he was returning from his counting-room, his attention was attracted by the figure of a man reeling through the street, apparently under the effects of intoxication; he hastened to his assistance, but ere he could overtake him, the wretched being stumbled and fell. Anthon raised him from the ground, conducted him to his hospitable mansion, and earnestly sought to administer to his comfort. In the morning the stranger arose, recovered from the influence of alcohol; and the efforts of reason to regain its throne betrayed a mind which might once have ranked high among the talented. His countenance excited the compassion of his generous friends; there was something in his appearance that attracted their notice, an unaccountable something in his very look that riveted their attention. He knelt with them around the *family altar*, and, as the rich, soul-stirring petitions ascended to heaven like pure incense, his bosom trembled with deep emotion. Amid the earnest supplications for friends and kindred, there was breathed a prayer for *one long lost*, who might yet be a wanderer on earth—and O! how ardent that prayer that he might be gathered in the Saviour's arms, and found in heaven; with irresistible power it touched his heart, and called an unbidden gush of tears: but when he heard the fervent, importunate petitions offered for himself, then the springs of feeling were all opened, and the "Fountains of the deep broken up."

They rose to consult the Holy Scriptures—a volume was handed the stranger—the name on the blank leaf caught his eye, he started from his seat, and exclaimed "Anthon Bloomingdale—can it be—the friend of my youth—my beloved cousin? And I have not recognized you before! and yet you are not changed, you have only assumed the maturity of manhood."

"And is Clarentius Mervidon, the *lost one*, returned?" said Anthon, clasping him in his arms. As soon as the first emotion of surprise had subsided, he added, "compose your-

self, dear cousin, and prepare to give us your history since our separation, when our devotional exercises shall be finished."

The book of inspiration was closed, and the welcome guest called upon for a recital of his wanderings.

"But," said he, grasping the hand of Anthon, "my dear cousin, you have not introduced me to your lovely wife, and yet I think I recognize her as one whom I once had the pleasure of considering an *intimate friend*—the beautiful daughter of Deacon Vestallon—fortunate man that you are! And I then hoped to be equally fortunate, and to stand in a place as enchanting as yours; but my fate must have been long sealed, and my cup of happiness broken." His voice trembled—he wept in bitterness of spirit, and it was long ere he could summon resolution to commence his sorrowful tale; at length, while the gushing tear drops were still streaming, he related his sad story in substance the following:—

"When I left you, my dear Anthon, on that eventful evening, I bent my steps directly to Alterden's, and quaffed long the sparkling wine, thence I hastened to the theatre, the plays were peculiarly fascinating, and I left that dissipated scene to drink still deeper of the intoxicating cup, and under its phrensied influence I sought the captain of a vessel that was preparing to sail for Europe the next morning; I gave a fictitious name to be enrolled, and went on board.—When I recovered my reasoning powers, I learned that a strong breeze was fast wafting me to a foreign shore. How bitter was my chagrin, how deep my disappointment, how agonizing my feelings, when I reviewed the circumstances under which I had left; and as I thought of home with all its fond endearments, of doating parents mourning over my absence, of kind friends from whom I had so abruptly separated myself, and of her to whom I had pledged my heart, perhaps lost to me forever by my own rash acts, my anguish was almost insupportable.

The awful profanity of the society around me, at first shocked my ears, and their manners disgusted my taste, not quite lost to everything good and pure; but gradually I became initiated into their company, learned their vices, and at length took upon myself the duties of a sailor. In this new occupation I ploughed the deep, year after year, plunging still farther into crime, and drinking still deeper from the cup of dissipation. Home and friends were almost forgotten, and when in my sober moments I gave them a passing thought, a feeling of my own degradation came over me, and I was ashamed to return. At length I became weary of my soul-sickenin'g life, and determined to abandon my beastly habits, and tiresome employment.

For the last two years I have been in England, engaged in a large mercantile establishment; I had entirely refrained from the use of intoxicating beverage; prosperity had smiled upon me, and I returned to America with a little fortune, amply sufficient for the comforts and many of the luxuries of life; I stepped upon her shores believing that I was a reformed man; but alas! When I thought of meeting my doating, cruelly disappointed parents, (if still living), and explaining to them my absence, of condemning my past acts to my friends and acquaintances, I felt my frailty—and then the image of that fair one was before me, from whom I had torn myself without the slightest warning, nor had I afterwards ever sent her any message, or heard any tidings from her; O! how could I meet her? what apology should I offer when I came into her presence? And then again, the question arose, was she yet a sojourner below? and if so, might she not have become the bride and taken the name of another? These and kindred thoughts awakened within my soul such remorse and self-reproach, that my feet were drawn into a drinking saloon I was then passing, and to stifle the upbraidings of conscience, and lull the torturings of my agonized mind, I drank deep draughts from the sparkling wine-cup, whose exhilarating fumes completely overpowered