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A Chapter in a Drunkard's Life.

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"Mother, I'm very hungry, indeed," said a bright-eyed boy of eight years, as he sat shivering over a few dying embers, vainly endeavoring to warm his benumbed limbs, and his pinched features assuming an expression that afforded the most satisfactory evidence of the truth of his ejaculation. "When do you think father will come?" he continued, in a sad tone, as he noticed his mother seemed not to have heard him. He rose from his seat, and with an unsteady step walked to his mother's side, and laying his thin, colorless hand on her arm, he made another and more successful attempt to arouse her from her mental abstraction. She raised her head quickly from the old table on which she had been resting it, as if suddenly awakened from slumber by some unusual alarm, and gazed inquiringly at her boy.

"Mother," said he tremulously, and with tearful eyes, "the chips I got for you are all burned out, and I am gold—very cold, and so hungry I am almost starved! Mother, I wish I could die, and be buried by the side of my sister in the old church-yard, under the beautiful willow tree that grows by the side of the grave; and then, mother, I shouldn't suffer with cold any more, should I? or hunger either, but the angels would come and sit on the green grass by the side of my grave, adding such pretty songs to sister and me. It almost seems as if I heard them now, mother, and can see their beautiful wings! O, mother, I can see!"—His speech failed, and he sunk into the arms of his distressed mother, who had listened to the strange words her child uttered with feelings far better imagined than described, and watched with painful interest the increasing brilliancy of his dark eye as he proceeded until he became exhausted, and dreamed of death, the angels, and happiness.

"Charley, Charley,—dear, dear Charley, don't feel so!—don't, don't, darling," snatching the insensible form of her child to her arms, and carrying him hastily to a wooden bench, on which stood a pail of water and a broken pitcher, and bathed his temples with the cool fluid to restore him to consciousness. He soon revived, and slowly twining his arms around his mother's neck, he kissed her and murmured a child's blessing to her, his last and only earthly friend.

"Charley, dear, what makes you talk so about dying; what shall I do when you are laid in the grave, away from your mamma, your own dear mamma! Father is gone most of the time; and how lonesome shall I be if my darling leaves me," said the poor mother, in sad and soothing accents, as he roused himself a little from the lethargy that was creeping

over him, the effect of long fasting, and the cold autumn air, for winter was near, and the sunny days of summer had long since fled.

"Why, mother," he replied, gazing at her with a look that seemed as if it were to be his last. "I don't wish to live any longer, and be always cold and hungry, and have you so too, and have father away at the tavern all the time, drinking rum and whisky, and I can't help feeling so, dear mother. Don't cry, for it does not do any good. I asked father the other day, when he hadn't been drinking, what made him drink so much rum, and leave you and me at home without any fire or cloths to keep us warm, or any thing to eat, and at first he was very angry, and talked so that I cried. When he noticed that, he said he was sorry, but couldn't help drinking; that he wished there was not another drop in the world, but that he loved it and must have it, and said he wished he was dead; and then pretty soon he went off to the tavern, and when he came back he was drunk, and struck you with a chair, and drove us both out of doors. Oh, mother, I don't wish to live, I'd much rather die, hadn't you?"

The poor woman could not reply to this heart-rending appeal. Her heart was too full, and the tears which she shed so freely seemed to flow from an inexhaustible source. She held her poor child closely in her arms, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Charles, my son," said she, becoming at length somewhat calmer, "I cannot wonder that you long to die, and that death has no terrors to you, and were it not for you, and your misguided father, who, though he deserves not the name, yet is still your father, and once an affectionate one, and very kind to both of us—were it not for you and him, I could most gladly quit this world of sorrow and trouble, and through the mercies of our Heavenly Father, find rest in a bright and glorious world above!—Truly there is no sickness or grief in that home of the 'blest made perfect,' there all is peace and love, and joy and harmony forever and ever!" Overcome by her feelings, she gave vent to them in a broken but sincere prayer to the Creator for those whom she loved on earth.

When she had finished her pious exercise, she sat for some time gazing intently on the sleeping form of her child, who lay in her arms languidly, in a troubled, dreamy sleep, until the gathering shades of night warned her to make provision for the night. Provision for the night! What a mockery of words! Yet, such was done, albeit it was very simple. She did all that was possible for her to do. There was nothing in the dwelling that could be converted into sustenance, the last crumb had been eaten the day before—there was no fuel to kindle a bright and cheerful fire on the