

Mary Davis.

(By Annie Little-Barry, in 'The Pacific Ensign'.)

In the little town of Swansey no child had been more carefully, tenderly, reared than had Mary Davis. Her father and mother were in comfortable circumstances, well educated, and had never known what it was to battle with the world, each having had a comfortable inheritance from their parents. They were not brilliant, but well informed, were not zealous Christians, but both belonged to the church. Dr. Davis had kept a general merchandise store; he had never branched out beyond his capital, consequently his business was on so sure a basis that he could live a happy, contented life and not worry over a crisis.

Mary was like thousands of girls in the world who never in their girlhood have anything to develop their characters, yet who are lovely, sweet young women. Are there thousands of young men who are worthy to be their husbands? Do mothers who are training boys realize that they should try not only to have their boys good sons, but good men, good husbands?

Across the street from her father's house lived Robert White. His mother had died when he was an infant; his father was the banker in Swansey. Mr. White had since his wife's death employed a man and wife, the man for gardener, and the wife for housekeeper. He was a man of simple tastes, and he often congratulated himself on being able to so well manage his household machinery. He believed he was furnishing the best possible care for his son.

Robert was a high-spirited boy. His father loved him devotedly, but never showed this love; he expected Robert to understand it by instinct, and while boys have a keen insight, they need to be told of parents' love.

Mr. White was engrossed in his business; was naturally a very quiet man, and since his wife's death had often become gloomy. Robert was left largely to his own resources, and had none of the loving companionship that is so necessary to help form a boy's character. The housekeeper, Mrs. Banks, had no control over him. She did not even try; it was so much easier to allow him to run the street than to have him in the yard or house. He cut up all sorts of pranks, teased Miss Smith's cat, tied tin cans to dogs' tails, played truant from school, and did all the mischief possible for a village boy to do. Strange to say, he stood very high in his studies, and many mothers who worked faithfully with their boys wondered why Robert, who had no one to help him at home, excelled in scholarship. He played with Mary Davis when they were little children, teased her unmercifully, called her a sissy, and made her life miserable when with her.

At the age of eighteen Robert went to college. At the end of his freshman year he went home for his vacation. The girls in Swansey smiled and simpered at him and were as foolish as it was possible for them to be. Many of their mothers were hardly less foolish. They forgot his boyish pranks and only saw the rather elegant young man.

Mary kept her distance, a sweet, modest girl; she simply nodded to him when they met.

Mr. Robert could hardly understand how it was possible for a young gentleman of his charms to fail to receive marked attention from Mary. He exerted himself, called upon her mother, sent her flowers, did

everything in his power to charm. Mary, unused to the attention of men, soon followed the way girls have been going so many cycles, and became infatuated.

Robert returned to college. Mary dreamed day-dreams and built air-castles, with Robert as her hero. Each vacation was much the same, till in his senior year Robert brought home a college friend who fell in love with Mary. This alarmed Robert to the point of proposing marriage. He was accepted and Mary felt her lot the happiest in the world. She firmly believed never was girl so beloved; never had girl so loved before. Her father and mother, too, were greatly pleased to have her future so satisfactorily settled. To be sure, they had heard rumors of Robert's being a little wild at college, but 'all young men must sow their wild oats' and, of course, when he married he would settle down.

Robert graduated from college with honors, returned home, entered his father's bank. He and Mary were married. They had a beautiful wedding. For two generations no young girl in Swansey was married but that her wedding was compared to Robert White's and Mary Davis's. They went to live with Robert's father, and while we hear a great deal about mothers-in-law, Mary soon learned there could be much said about fathers-in-law.

Father White was a good man, but a very positive character. The house was his. Mary had been married but a few months when she felt one room of her own would be far better than a mansion of someone's else. Robert was supremely selfish, and she found many of her dreams were not being realized, but she loved him devotedly and felt, perhaps, it was her fault when everything was not smooth; indeed, Robert always told her so.

At the end of the first year her father-in-law died. Robert inherited quite a fortune. Mary was greatly envied by her friends.

One night Robert did not come home. Mary suffered agony both of mind and spirit; she had smelled liquor many times lately on Robert's breath; he had come home acting silly. Had he been a laboring man instead of a banker, he would have been called drunk, but Swansey people only smiled, and said, 'Mr. White likes his glass.'

Mary wept and prayed and suffered in silence. She had never even rebuked him, for she had read wives made their husbands worse by finding fault with them. She knew nothing of the evils of intemperance, for, as we have told you, her life had been particularly sheltered; her mother had always used liquor in her cooking and for medicine, and she often said if the W. C. T. U. women would spend the time with their families they spent running to meetings, it would be better. It was Mrs. Davis's boast that no one connected with her family ever drank to excess. Mary remembered a few years ago her father had signed a petition for a saloon license and his talking about it at home, giving as the excuse for his conscience that the man was a customer of his, a good fellow, and would keep a highly respectable place. It was this highly respectable place (?) where Robert White was spending a great deal more of his time than he was in his own home. The morning after his first night away from home, his timid little wife, with a prayer in her heart, rebuked him; he swore at her, called her a namby-pamby, and said he guessed he had a right to stay out if he wanted to.

At the end of the second year their little baby boy was born. Robert celebrated his son's birth by treating all his friends, and was drunk most of the time for a month. Mary never recovered from the dreadful nervous strain of that time. The baby was sick, cried a great deal, which annoyed Robert greatly and gave him further excuse for staying away from home. When the little one was six months old God took it to himself. Robert had, in his selfish way, loved his baby. He now gave as his excuse for drinking, grief over the death of his child. Poor little mother, she was nearly crushed, but not a word did she say, even to her own mother, what she suffered, only she and her Heavenly Father knew.

Ten years later in the city of San Francisco, a Methodist Deaconess was called one night to see a dying woman. She climbed two flights of narrow stairs. In a bare, cheerless room, without any fire (though the night was bitterly cold) a flickering kerosene lamp on the table beside the bed showed her the pale, wan form of Mary White. In a chair at the foot of the bed was a pile of ladies' night-gowns, such as women are paid 50 cents per dozen for making. Mary pointed to these, and asked the Deaconess to return them to the firm to whom they belonged. Poor woman, she started every time there was the slightest noise, as though in fear. The Deaconess took Mary's hand, soothed and comforted her, and drew from her the sad story of her life. Since the time we last saw her, her husband had lost his own fortune. Then, after the death of her father and mother, when she had her own little patrimony, he had spent that; how he had gone from bad to worse, till he often beat her; how she had for several years been obliged for the most part to support them, and though she could do so many things just a little, it had been very difficult for her to eke out an existence, as she had not been taught to do any one thing thoroughly. She told of her pride, her love, her grief, her sorrow and despair. The Deaconess comforted her as best she could. 'Ere morning Mary's soul had gone to that home where sin and sorrow do not enter and the weary are at rest.

Her husband returned, but was too drunk to realize her death.

As the Deaconess sat in that death chamber and thought of the sad, sad story she had just heard, her heart ached for the other lives she knew must be wrecked, even the generations yet unborn, by that deadly monster—the liquor traffic. And she prayed, Lord, how long; oh, how long will thy people permit it?

The Deathbed.

We watched her breathing through the night,

Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the waves of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seemed to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had left her half our powers
To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied;
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed; she had
Another morn than ours.
—Thomas Hood.