

"Thank God!" involuntarily murmured the mother, who did not rightly comprehend those portentous words. "I do not see what detains father so long; he should have returned ere this with the doctor."

"It matters not, dear mother, my pain has nearly ceased, and I feel I shall soon be where there will be no more need of a physician."

"My child! my child!" exclaimed the mother with startling energy, "speak not thus!"

"'Tis God's will, mother; and when He summons, who can disobey?" The last sentence was spoken in a faltering tone, and with great difficulty.

"'Tis hard to bear, but God's will be done," returned the mother, sobbing violently as she spoke.

At this moment footsteps were heard, the door opened, and a man with a flushed countenance, and other indications of intoxication, reeled into the room. "The doctor won't come," he exclaimed, slamming the door after him.

"What detained you so long?" meekly inquired the wife.

"Well, you see, the doctor wouldn't come with me, for he said I was a poor drunken fellow, and wouldn't be able to pay him, if he did come, and he couldn't afford to work for those who couldn't pay; so, thinking there was no hurry, I just stopped at Baker's to see some old friends. But how's the child," he exclaimed, suddenly approaching the bed.

"I feel better, dear father," said a faint voice; "my pains have all left me, and I am so easy—so easy."

"Then it's just as well the doctor didn't come, isn't it, Sue?"

"Yes, father, and I shall not need a physician any more."

"Then father won't have to go through the storm again, will he, Sue. I'm glad on't. Come wife, since Sue is so much better, we might as well go to bed.

"Oh! John, you know not what you are saying; Susan is, even now, dying!"

"Nonsense, nonsense, wife; didn't you just hear her say she felt better. But you can do as you please—I'm sleepy and tired, and am going to bed;" and yawning, made his way to an adjoining room, and without disrobing, threw himself on the bed, and was soon snoring loudly.

The mother turned again to the bedside with a sigh of bitter anguish, and the scalding tears coursed their way in profusion down her care-worn cheeks. Ah, grief-stricken mother, little didst thou think when clad in nuptial garments, thou didst stand at the hymenial altar, and there solemnly promise to love, honor, and obey, and didst receive in return, the assurance of love and protection, that thou wouldst one day be called to pass through scenes like those thou art now, to thy deep sorrow, realizing. But alas! the stern reality is too palpable to be understood, and thou must suffer on, for aught that can be seen, in the future.

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## PART II.

An hour had passed, in the little cottage; and still the father slept, unconscious of the solemn truth that death was silently stealing over the frail form of his lovely daughter. Poor, miserable being! he knew not the heart-rendings of his sorrow-stricken wife—she whom he had sworn to love and protect—was now the victim of his pernicious habits.

He had led a life of suffering to himself and family, and at this time was almost an entire stranger to sober thought and reflection. The pitiful wife had been able to make herself and daughter quite comfortable by their diligence and industry. She was accustomed to take in washing of several of the neighbors, and often received a slight token of their esteem and pity in the shape of a few provisions, or garments of clothing; but things were now in a deplorable state. There was no wood for fuel, and the weather was bleak and cold, and want and entire destitution seemed to bid defiance to all her exertion.

Mournfully moaned the wind around the little cottage, as the mother approached the couch of her sick daughter. As she approached the bed, the lovely Susa fixed her eyes upon her.

"Mother," she lisped, "mother, I shall soon be at rest. Tell father, Susa wants to see him once more."