

ceive, though not the sense to prevent; and all the while a burning crimson in my face, for which I many times attempted to apologize, without once being provided with an excuse. Above all, I recollect, that early in the evening, Emile, after looking at me steadily for some time, rose hastily, and bade me good night, without telling me when he should return, or even whether he should return at all.

The next morning I found a letter on my breakfast table, and taking it up, beheld his hand-writing. Was he then gone? I tore it open, and read as follows:

"It can scarcely be possible I should have to remind you, Flora, that yesterday was the anniversary of that on which we followed the remains of your sister to the grave. The season of the year—your own natural feelings of affection—all things must have brought it to your remembrance. Friday, you will remember also, was the day of her death. It was spent by me in solemn fasting and prayer. I had proposed to occupy the day of her funeral in the same manner, but it occurred to me that something was due to the feelings of a sister, and that it might possibly be more profitable to us both, to pray together—to retrace together the events of the past year, to measure our present standing together, by comparing what we are now, with what we were then, and to resolve together, if necessary, that we would begin a new life, letting the pledge of our sincerity be the vows we should make on the evening of that memorable day.

"Such were my feelings, and such my intentions, when I sought your habitation, and found you—I will not, I dare not, say how. Perhaps you had been weeping. Perhaps I broke upon your solitude too suddenly. I confess my fault; and am ready to hear and believe any excuse you may offer me, even the most improbable, only let it be the truth. I was not formed for suspicion. I must know the truth. Either put me out of the torture of suspecting you or tell me the worst."

I had awoke that morning from a dull heavy sleep, with a dim consciousness that something was wrong—that some calamity was hanging over me; and that I needed more than common resolution to meet the events of the coming day.

These feelings, however, had become so familiar to my waking moments, that I endeavoured to drive them away, by persuading myself again and again, that my situation on the past evening, could be known to none but myself; that Emile had only left me on some call of duty, and would come again when I should be better able to converse with him, and to enter into his feelings. What then was my alarm and horror, when I found myself called upon in this solemn manner to reveal the actual truth.

Emile was a man whom no one could deceive, when his suspicions were once awakened; though his confidence, before it had been shaken would carry him to almost any extent of credulity. What then remained for me to do? My resolution was quickly taken. I confessed the whole.

"I am indeed fallen low," I said, in the conclusion of my letter, "when I implore you to come to me, though I know it must be with loathing—when I beseech you not to forsake me, but to bear with me, and to help me; for I believe I have lost the power to help myself."

In the course of half an hour Emile was at my door. He did not take my hand, nor look in my face, nor address me in the common language of salutation. I could see that he was trembling all over, and I trembled too. He spoke directly to the point, for we were both occupied with one thought, and it would have been useless to touch on any other. Although the subject was one of the most gross and repulsive it was possible to contemplate, he addressed me in language as delicate, as it was beautiful and impressive; inspiring me for the moment with something like hope, that perhaps I might yet be restored to the fellowship of the virtuous, and the favour of God. Nor would he leave me until he had laid down plans for my protection for the future.

"Send away," said he, "every drop of this poison, not only from your closet, but from your premises. Let the cravings of midnight solitude find you unprovided with supply. Let the conviction that no eye sees you, come upon you without the means of gratification. We must take care to set a guard upon the body, as well as upon the mind. You will write to me at stated intervals, under the solemn vow you have already made, to reveal to me the truth. And remember this—that your rule must be broken by no plea of illness, of advice of doctors, or of persuasion and example of friends; for what is medicine to others, is poison to you; and it is better, infinitely better, to lose the body than the soul. Above all, keep this in mind, that victory over your be-

ating sin can only be obtained by watchfulness and prayer. Not by watchfulness at onetime, and prayer at another; for when you watch you must pray, and when you pray you must not cease to watch.

"And now," said he, in conclusion, while the tears stood in his eyes, "my poor Flora! you and I must part again; for there can be neither peace nor comfort in our intercourse, until some change is wrought."

He took my hand, and solemnly bade me farewell; but did not, as on former occasions, leave me with a brother's kiss. I stood motionless, and speechless, until the door closed after him; and I was left again to feel that I was utterly alone. For the past I had now nothing but repentance; for the future, Emile had told me there was hope. As I had been perfectly sincere in the confessions I had made to him, I was also sincere in the vows by which I had bound myself to fulfil to the utmost of my power, the injunctions he had laid upon me; and I commenced, without delay, putting in execution the plan he had proposed for securing me against temptation.

There are, however, two ways of following out a resolution; and of one of these, it is important to observe, that it seldom fails to prove fatal in its results. There is a resolution, under which we act promptly, and without reserve, as if in the sight of God, as well as man; and this resolution God seldom fails to bless. Mine, I need hardly say, was of a character essentially different. It was my desire, as well as my determination, to give up the dreadful practice to which I had become habituated; and, secure in the rectitude of my intentions, as well as the strength of my will, I indulged that very evening to the extent of my wishes, secure that it would be the last time; for the morrow was the day I had fixed for depriving myself entirely and for ever of the means.

The morrow, however, brought its difficulties. I had promised Emile to send away every dangerous kind of stimulant which I had in my possession; but how and where to send it, was a question not easily answered. Besides which, I found on examination there was so little left—so much less than I had expected—that it seemed scarcely worth while taking any pains to get rid of it. If it was dangerous to me, it could scarcely be right to give it to another, less it should prove a means of temptation. It was allowed to be a useful medicine in illness; so I decided at last, to keep it under lock and key, for the purpose of distribution amongst the poor, in their necessities. This was my resolution.

For many weeks after this, I certainly did abstain scrupulously if not cheerfully, from all improper stimulus. I did this, however, with a murmuring spirit, feeling all the while, as if I ought to have been rewarded with more peace and more satisfaction, for the self-denial I was practising. Emile wrote to me at stated intervals, and my only moment of enjoyment, was that in which I proudly and clearly answered to his inquiries, "Not guilty."

My hour of trial, however, was not yet fully come. I was seized with a painful indisposition, which kept me awake all the night, and weary all the day. My servant, and the gossips of the place, all agreed in recommending brandy. I thought my case a hard one, for I knew that every one around me—rich and poor, good and evil—would take stimulants for such a malady; and it seemed to me, that I alone was condemned, by eternal necessity, to suffer without hope of relief.

I was in this state of mind one day, when my servant brought me a glass of strong brandy and water. I could have resisted the sight, but the smell overcame me, and I swallowed it without a moment's hesitation.

The rubicon being now passed, I scrupled not to take more and more, calling it a medicine, and justifying myself by the idea, that neither Emile, nor any one else, would in common kindness, wish me to abstain from a useful medicine, that was free to all mankind; especially as I determined afresh, each time the draught was renewed, that it should cease the moment I was restored to health. In this I felt so secure, that I began by degrees to regard my present deviations from the line of conduct laid down by Emile, as a series of distinct and separate acts, having nothing whatever to do with the promise I had made him, which promise I still determined, as soon as relief from pain should be obtained, to keep inviolate as ever.

I could not, however, subdue all feeling of uneasiness, as the time approached when I was to render my periodical account to my last and only friend. It was true, I had long been the slave of one particular vice. To the upbraidings of conscience, on one particular subject, I had long been accustomed; but with deliber-