

touch that stuff again, I promise you that I will tell Effie; it would not be fair for her to marry you not knowing that she was marrying a—a—drunkard (with a great gulp at the horrible word) and I don't mean to allow it.'

Reginald looked at the boy as he stood in front of him, and slowly there came to him an overwhelming sense of shame. He, the elder brother, to be there before this lad as a culprit. Until last night Frank had looked up to him as the ideal of all that a young man should be; he had been a hero in his eyes; but now, it was all gone, all the boyish awe and respect, and he knew that in his brother's heart there could be nothing but reproach. He groaned heavily; then he said, 'You are quite right, old chap, you might leave me alone for a little while, won't you?'

'Of course, I will,' said Frank, gently, touched by his brother's evident distress; 'and I won't ask you to make any promises to me, for I am sure you will make them to God instead, when you have thought it over a little.' He got no answer but a deep sigh, and he left the room, only casting one wistful glance at his brother's sunken figure, as he softly closed the door.

CHAPTER IV.

For about a month after the scene we have recorded in our last chapter, all went smoothly in the Cramer household. Reginald was graver than he used to be, but Frank thought that was rather a good sign than otherwise, especially when he noticed what a very extra devoted lover Reginald had become.

One very hot, sultry summer morning Frank burst into his mother's drawing-room. 'Where is Reggie?' he asked, 'Effie and I have been planning a picnic, for it's such a glorious day, and we want you to come, mother, and we'll have a fine time!'

'I'm afraid Reggie has gone off on another picnic,' said Mrs. Cramer, 'with Mr. Pryce, who has been getting up one. He came here this morning while you were out, and persuaded Reggie to go with him. I am very sorry, for I am afraid Effie will be disappointed.'

A very blank look came over Frank's bright face. 'Has he started already, and do you know where they have gone?' he inquired.

'Yes, Mr. Pryce said he wanted to start at once. I think he said they were going up the river, and that they wanted to have luncheon at Asher Castle.'

Asher Castle was a fine old ruin, about five miles off, and Frank thought of following his brother there, but when he considered how angry Reginald would be if he found Frank following him about, he made up his mind that even if he did go and find his brother he should probably do more harm than good, so he only said, 'Oh, well, mother, it can't be helped; I suppose I had better go and tell Effie,' and left the house with a much sadder face than when he entered it. He knew that any picnic which Mr. Pryce had got up was sure to be very rowdy, and he was sadly afraid that it would be far worse than that.

Effie was very much disappointed that her picnic should be spoilt, and they agreed that it should be put off till the next day, when they would go, if all was well. 'Yes, if all is well,' repeated Frank with a dismal face, so dismal, indeed, that Effie laughed and rallied him on his gloomy forebodings. 'For,' she said, 'the weather does not seem likely to change, and what else could be wrong?' Frank did not answer, but went home again with a heart like lead.

As the day wore on he became terribly anxious, and when his mother said gently that she thought it was almost time that Reginald came home, he jumped up and said he would walk on the path that runs along by the river to meet the picnic party. It was a long time before he met it, but at last he heard the sound of oars plied very unsteadily as it seemed to him, and voices shouting some jovial song which their owners seemed to have little more control over than they had over their oars. Frank shuddered. He fancied he could hear his brother's voice among them. A moment later the boat came in sight—yes, Reginald was there, shouting among the loudest. As they drew near Frank stopped and looked on in horror. His brother saw him and jumped up in the boat, which was heavily laden with men who had but little sense left in them. 'Here, you young rascal,' he cried; then he lost his balance and fell into the river. Frank was a good swimmer; he saw that the men in the boat had not enough wit left to rescue his brother, and he immediately plunged into the water. As he got up to the boat the men in it leant over to help him, and in doing so overturned the boat. The shock recalled their senses, and most of them scrambled unto the land easily enough, some of them dragging Reginald with them. But Frank? When the boat had turned over an oar had caught him on the head and stunned him, and he sank. When the others had reached the bank they turned and saw his white face rise to the surface of the water. The most sober of them jumped in and dragged him out again. They laid him on the green bank, and knelt down by him, rubbing his hands and his back, and calling to the others to help him, but all their united efforts could not bring any glimmer of light into that still white face, and at last they gave it up in despair, and raised him gently up and carried him home to his mother, who stood looking at him in mute anguish after he had been laid on the bed in his little room.

'Surely God's crowning gift of sorrow comes, The when he bids us stand beside the bed Of those we love, and watch their sufferings Each pang they bear pierces with two-fold power

Straight to our heart; their pleading eyes meet ours

With a strange pathos newly-born of pain, Seeming to ask for help: and we who would So gladly die for them can but gaze back Heartsick and helpless. And so God teaches The bitter lesson we have all to learn, The awful helplessness of human love. Oh! happy they, who learning this, learn, too,

The wondrous power and help of love Divine.'

He was not dead they told her, but she did not move or seem to hear them. Presently he opened his eyes and looked at her with an expression of tenderest love and pity in them. The doctor came and shook his head when he had examined the patient. 'No hope;' that was all he had to say, and so they left her standing by the bedside. Presently he murmured feebly, 'I must speak to Reggie, and alone,' and at once his mother left the room and sent his brother to him. Reginald came in with his head bent down, and the hand he laid on his brother's was shaking. 'Never again, old chap, never again,' was all Frank could gasp out. 'No, never, Frank, I promise you,' said Reginald solemnly, and Frank closed his eyes with a happy smile as his brother knelt down by the bedside. Frank opened his eyes again after a little while. 'Let

them in,' he whispered, 'Mother and Effie.' He had heard their voices, and Reginald beckoned them in. They bent over him anxiously, hot tears falling from Effie's eyes. He smiled at her faintly, and with the little strength he had left joined her and Reginald's hands. 'Take care of mother,' and, after a little pause, 'I am so tired,' and closing his eyes again he fell asleep. Who is there that does not know that sleep? Who does not know the solemn smile of a pure soul lying in that deep slumber? To anyone who has seen it the agony of the loss of their beloved has in some measure passed away, for even as the sun shines out in its splendor in a sky which has been covered before with dark clouds, so here does the glory of the eternal God shine out after all the pain that has gone before till one exclaims, with the aged Simeon, 'Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

There remains little to be said. Reginald waited for two years before he got married, for he wanted to be sure of himself first. Mrs. Cramer lived for some years with her son and daughter. A quiet, peaceful life; even a happy one. But it was with joy that at last she passed away, and went to meet her youngest and her best beloved son. Effie knows her husband's story. She has shed many sorrowful tears over the green grass that covers their brother. She had helped her husband again and again to withstand the terrible temptation which has sometimes almost mastered him, and together they have united to help others against the same temptation, and they have their reward.

Lucy's Engagement.

'Is it all over between us, Lucy?' asked George Adams, as he stood at the gate, watching Lucy Dawson's downcast eyes and quivering lips.

'Yes, quite, quite over,' whispered Lucy. 'I can never marry anyone, till—till father's debts are paid. He meant to pay them before he died last midsummer, but he wasn't able, his health broke down, and—and he couldn't do it. Everything was against him, poor, poor father!'

'Yes, yes, I know; but you have nothing to do with that.'

'I have! It's no use talking, George,' cried Lucy, dashing the tears from her eyes; 'you shan't marry a bankrupt's daughter. I'll work my fingers to the bone till I can clear off every one of father's debts.'

'You, Lucy! You can't do it, I tell you, you can't.'

'I mean to try. I'll go on with the dress-making, and, George, you must not wait for me; you mustn't come to see me. It is better for both of us never to meet again,' and Lucy's voice broke down.

'Won't you let me help you, Lucy?'

'No, indeed, I won't! Folks shall never say I took your money to pay what father owed!'

'Oh, Lucy, do listen!'

'No, I won't listen. My mind is made up. Good-bye, George, dear, dear George, good-bye!'

Lucy turned away and went through the little gate to her aunt's cottage, while George Adams stood looking after her. He had brought her a bunch of roses, and she still clasped them in her hand. She did not seem to know what she was doing, her heart was dead within her, for she loved George most sincerely, and it was a terrible wrench to part with him. They had been engaged for upwards of two years.

Her father had a small farm, but he had got into difficulties by standing security for a friend, and eighteen months before his death, he was called upon for a large sum