



The Burning of Daleside Mill.

(Concluded.)

In a few minutes Mr. Bristowe stood by the bedside of his old and faithful over-looker, in the little upper room of Peter's cottage. Nay, it was Mr. Bristowe's cottage. Nearly all of the cottages in the dale belonged to him, but he had rarely been inside one of them. The room was very small, scarcely more than a box. Mr. Bristowe could hardly believe it.

The face of the old man, scarred and drawn by the fire, until his master hardly recognized it, lay on the pillow. They were alone in the room. The light from a small oil lamp, which hung against the wall, served, in Mr. Bristowe's eyes, to suffuse the place with a weird and unpleasant dimness. A shudder passed over him as he glanced round the little room.

'Coom near, Mestur Bristowe; aw want t' speak,' said the old man, in a thin voice.

'What is it, Peter?' Mr. Bristowe felt a little alarmed. What could the old man have to say to him?

'Mestur, aw wanted fer t' speak t' yo' abeawt th' mill. It wur fired, Mestur.'

'I fear so. Have you heard anything?' Mr. Bristowe asked nervously.

'It's only me as knows. Th' people said as they'd fin' out, an' that if they did they'd 'ang whoever it wur. But they'n noan fin' out 'less yo' tell 'em, cos no one only me knows. Aw seed it done, Mestur.'

'You—saw it done!' Mr. Bristowe could hardly control himself.

'Aw Mestur, aw did.'

'Who—who—who did it? Tell me.'

'Mestur—'Arry.'

'Harry! My own son! Impossible.'

'Nay, Mestur, it's true. Aw seed 'im do it.'

'How? When? Why don't you speak. Tell me.'

'Well, Mestur, yo' know at 'Arry 'ad been t' market th' mornin' as th' mill wur burnt, an' when 'e com back 'e'd adden drink. 'E'd drink on 'im, an' did no' know what 'er wur doin'.'

'Harry! Drunk! Monstrous!'

'It's true, Mestur; aw seed 'im. 'E went all through th' stock-room an' struck two matches t' light a cigar wi', an' aw seed 'im throw 'em both down, alight. Aw followed 'im, but th' stuff had catched, an' th' blaze run up, an' th' place were afire afore yo' knowd. It wur 'im as did it, an' nobry else. Aw seed it a', Mestur.'

When Mr. Bristowe entered the room in which his wife sat watching for him at Thornby Hall, he was deathly pale, and so haggard looking that she hardly knew him. He seemed to have aged twenty years since he left her.

'Clay—ton!' she exclaimed, horror stricken.

'Oh, Alice! we are ruined, punished, cruelly punished. It's all my fault,' he said, as he threw himself into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

'What is it, Clayton? What do you mean?'

'It was Harry who fired the mill. He came home from the market drunk, and threw lighted matches among the stock. Our own boy has ruined us.'

For a time Clayton Bristowe was inconsolable. The terrible truth had come home to him that his boy, whom he loved so fondly, was a drunkard, and that in a moment of drunken aberration he had caused the fire at the mill. The discovery was the more bitter, as Mr. Bristowe had been warned that Harry was showing a dangerous liking for whiskey, but he had regarded his son as superior to a weakness of that kind. He himself loved a glass of old port, and would as soon have thought of going without his dinner as of going to bed without the glass of hot whiskey and water which he sipped with such keen relish every night.

It was at home, at his father's table, that Harry Bristowe had acquired a liking for alcoholic liquors. Now, for the first time, it dawned upon Clayton Bristowe that all of this had been fatally wrong. It had led his boy wrong. The burnt-out mill, the maimed mill-hands,

and the distressed and workless town were the terrible evidences of this.

Gradually it leaked out that Harry Bristowe had caused the disaster, and a darker cloud than ever seemed to settle over the little town. Men went about with knit brows and set lips, with desperation writ on their very features. They knew who had fired the mill, and they remembered their oath. If they kept their oath the criminal would die, and he was their master's son. Yet they had taken that oath, solemnly. What were they to do?

Mr. Bristowe was seated at a table in his writing room at Thornby Hall. The table was spread with plans of the old mill and plans for a new mill which had only reached him that day. He had been poring over them for upwards of an hour, comparing the new plans with the old ones, and criticising points of improvement which had been introduced into the new ones.

A maid announced that four of the old workers from the mill wanted to see their master. Mr. Bristowe asked that they should be shown in.

The four men entered the room with awkward gait and timid air. They had never before been in the hall, and to enter it for the first time on such a mission as that which had brought them was enough to unnerve them utterly, plain millworkers as they were.

'What may be the object of your visit?' Mr. Bristowe asked, after he had motioned to the men to be seated.

Thomas Deakin, the oldest member of the party, spoke.

'Mestur Bristowe,' he said, gravely, 'when the mill were burned we knowd as it weren't no accident, but as someone 'ad done it careless or malicious, an' we all tuk a solemn oath 'at when we catched 'im as 'ad done it we'd 'ang 'im. We known a' abeawt it neaw. It wur Mestur 'Arry as did it when 'e wur i' drink. We respects yo' gretly, an' ud like to 'elp yo' i' this trouble, but ef we're t' kep our oath we'n got t' 'ang 'Arry, but we'n no cause fer to do that neither. We'n only got t' say a word to th' p'leece abeawt 'im firin' th' mill, t' ev 'im transported, but that ud only be makin' fresh trouble fer yo', an' God known you'n ed enough trouble wi' 'im, twixt 'is drinkin' an' 'is burnin' th' mill.'

Mr. Bristowe knit his brow. 'Well, what do you want to say?' he asked, impatiently.

'Jus' this, Mestur. Ef we agree t' hush th' thing up, an' don't breathe a word abeawt it t' no living soul, will Mestur 'Arry tek a solemn oath 'fore God to swear off drink; not t' touch another sup of it? It's th' best thing we can say to 'elp 'im an' you.'

'That is not a bad suggestion, certainly. I will try to get Harry to do as you wish,' said Mr. Bristowe, reflecting.

'That's good, Mestur. Get 'im t' do it. We don't want t' make no trouble fer yo', but an oath's an oath, Mestur. We'n sworn what we'd do when we got 'im as fired th' mill. Th' chaps is very sore about it.'

'I will do what I can to get Harry to give up drink. He ought to do it,' Mr. Bristowe said, shaking his head.

'Thank'ee, Mestur. Yo' onderstand, we only wishes yo' well, but we'n in an awkward fix, Mestur; an oath's an oath.'

'Yes, yes; I understand. That must not be. Good night!'

The men slowly left the room, closing the door behind them.

Mr. Bristowe turned to the table again, but not to study the plans. His mind was on what the men had told him. Placing his elbows on the table, he rested his head in his hands and thought.

He appealed to his son, and with good effect. Horrified by the thought of the havoc and suffering caused by his drunken act, Harry Bristowe made a solemn declaration in writing, which was witnessed by Thomas Deakin and Joe Forshaw, on behalf of the other workers, that, God helping him, he would never again touch a drop of alcoholic liquor as a beverage. As an encouragement to his son, Mr. Bristowe signed a similar declaration, which was witnessed by the same two witnesses. To him it was an act of great denial to give up his glass of port at dinner, and his glass of hot whiskey at bed time, but for his son's sake he made the sacrifice.

Daleside Mill was rebuilt. Harry was now changed. He kept his written promise, and became a partner in the business. He is now prosperous, and a respected public man. The mill-hands have been very loyal to their old

master and his son. The part which Harry played in the burning of the mill has been kept a secret. It is rarely mentioned, even round the cottage fires of Daleside.

Drunkards' Children.

Every medical man, every legislator, every father, every mother, every voter, every one who has any regard for the welfare of humanity, ought to read and ponder the following startling statement, which has now been before the public unchallenged for some time. We take it as it appears in the Kane 'Leader':

'Prof. Demms, of Stuttgart, has recently published the results of ten years' careful observation made on ten drinking families, in contrast with ten temperance families of the same social and financial standing.

'The drinking families had fifty-seven children, twenty-five of whom died before they were six weeks old. Among the rest were six idiots, five very much stunted in growth, five suffering from epilepsy. Only ten of the children showed normal physical and mental development.

'The ten temperance families had sixty-one children, of whom five died before reaching the age of six weeks, four suffered from nervousness in their youth, and two seemed to be victims of hereditary nervous diseases. The other fifty—that is, eighty-one percent of the lot—showed normal, mental and physical development.

'One out of five of the drunkards' children showed normal development; four out of five of the abstainers' children showed normal development. An awful heritage of epilepsy and lunacy is the lot of the progeny of drunkards.'

Why He did not Drink.

I read the other day of four young men riding in a Pullman car chatting merrily together. At last one of them said:

'"Boys, I think it's time for drinks." Two of them consented; the other shook his head and said:

'"No, I thank you."

'"What!" exclaimed his companion, "have you become pious? Are you going to preach? Do you really think you will become a missionary?"

'"No, fellows," he replied, "I am not specially pious, and I may not become a missionary; but I have determined not to drink another drop, and I will tell you why; I had some business in Chicago with an old pawn broker, and as I stood before his counter talking about it, there came in a young man about my age, and threw down upon the counter a little bundle. When the pawnbroker opened it he found it was a pair of baby shoes, with the buttons a trifle worn. The old pawnbroker seemed to have some heart left in him, and he said:

'"Look here, you ought not to sell your baby's shoes for drink."

'"Never mind, Cohen; baby is at home dead, and does not need the shoes. Give me ten cents for a drink."

'"Now, fellows, I have a wife and baby at home myself, and when I saw what liquor could do in degrading that husband and father, I made up my mind that, God helping me, not a drop of that stuff would ever pass my lips again."—'Herald and Presbyterian.'

Recruiting Tactics.

A lady, passing a public-house, observed a girl of about eight years drinking from a jug of beer. The lady inquired of the child whether she did not know that it was wrong to drink her mother's beer. 'Oh,' came the reply, 'but Mr. — (the publican) told me he had put some in for me, and that mother would still have her full pint left. He gave me these sweets, too, and I'm to have them when ever I go in, and Mrs. — has promised to let me fetch her beer, too.' The lady called and remonstrated with the woman named, and succeeded in obtaining a promise that the girl should not be sent on the errand again. A couple of days later the same woman accosted the lady in the street, and informed her that the promise had been kept, but that the child had 'gone on dreadful' when told she would not be allowed to fetch the beer any more.—Exchange.