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## THE WIFE OF THE INTEMPERATE.

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Jane Harwood, with her husband and children, made one among the many families who removed to the unplanted Western wild. The change from the manner of life in which she had been brought up in her native New-England, was great. But she never complained, and busied herself with those duties which befit the wife of a lowly emigrant.

One of her principal cares was an invalid boy. The change of his health, and of his mind, occupied her most anxious thoughts. She supplicated that the pencil which was to write upon his soul, and which seemed to be placed in her hand, might be guided from above. She spoke to him in the tenderest manner, of his Father in heaven, and of His will respecting little children.

She pointed out Almighty goodness in the daily gifts that sustain life; in the glorious sun rejoicing in the East; in the gently-falling rain; the trail plants, and the dews that nourish them. She reasoned with him of the changes of nature, till he loved even the storm and the lofty thunder, because they came from God.

She repeated to him passages of Scripture, with which her memory was stored, and sang hymns, until she perceived that if he was in pain, he complained not, if he might but hear her voice. She made him acquainted with the life of the compassionate Redeemer, how he took young children in his arms, though the disciples forbade them. And a voice from within urged her never to desist from cherishing that tender and deep-rooted piety, because, like the flower of grass, he must soon pass away.

Jane Harwood had a different, and a still deeper trial, in the intemperance of her husband. In his fits of intoxication, there was no form of persecution which distressed her so much, as unkindness to the feeble and suffering boy. On such occasions, it was in vain that she attempted to protect him. She might neither shelter him in her bosom, nor control the frantic violence of the father.

The timid boy, in terror of his natural protector, withered like a crushed flower. It was of no avail that neighbours remonstrated with the unfeeling parent, or that horry-headed men warned him solemnly of his sins. Intemperance had destroyed his respect for man, and his fear of God.

The wasted and wild-eyed invalid shrank from the glance and footstep of his father, as from the approach of a foe. Harshness, and the agitation of fear, deepened a disease that might else have yielded. Returning spring brought no gladness to the declining child. Consumption laid its hand upon his vitals, and his nights were restless and full of pain.

"Mother, I wish I could once more smell the violets that grew upon the green bank, by our old, dear home." "It is too early for violets, my child; but the grass is growing bright and beautiful around us, and the birds sing sweetly, as if their little hearts were full of praise." The mother knew that his hectic fever had been recently increasing, and saw that there was a strange brightness in his eye.

Seating herself on his low bed, she bowed her face to his to soothe and compose him. "Mother, do you think my father will come?" Dreading the alarm which, in his paroxysms of coughing, he evinced at his father's approach,

she answered, "I think not, love; you had better try to sleep."

"Mother, I wish he would come. I am not afraid now. Perhaps he would let me lay my cheek to his, once more, as he used to do, when I was a babe in my grandmother's arms. I should be glad to say a kind good bye to him, before I go to my Saviour."

Gazing earnestly in his face, she saw the work of the destroyer. "My son! my dear son! say, 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit.'" "Mother," he replied, with a smile upon his ghastly features, "he is ready for me. I am willing to go to him. Hold the baby to me, that I may kiss her once more. That is all. Now sing to me; and oh! wrap me closer in your arms, for I shiver with cold."

He clung, with the death-grasp, to that bosom which had long been his sole earthly refuge. "Sing louder, a little louder, dearest mother, I cannot hear you." Tremulous tones, like those of a broken harp, rose above her grief, to comfort the dying child. One sigh of icy breath was upon her cheek, as she joined it to his, one shudder, and all was over.

She stretched the body on the bed, and kneeling beside it, hid her face in that grief which none but mothers feel. It was a deep and sacred solitude—alone with the dead. Only the soft breathings of the sleeping babe were heard. Then the silence was broken by a piercing voice of supplication for strength to endure. The petition, which began in weakness, closed in faith. It became a prayer of thanksgiving to him who had released the dove-like spirit from its prison house of pain, to share the bliss of angels.

She arose from her knees, and bent calmly over the dead. The placid feature wore the same smile as when he had spoken of Jesus. She smoothed the shining locks around the pure forehead, and gazed long on what was to her so beautiful. Amid her tears was an expression, chastened and sublime, as of one who gave a cherub back to God.

The father entered carelessly. She pointed to the pale, immovable brow. "See, he no longer suffers." He drew near, and looked with surprise on the dead. A few natural tears forced their way, and fell upon the face of the first-born, who was once his pride. He even spoke tenderly to the emaciated mother, and she, who a few moments before felt raised above the sway of grief, wept like an infant, as those few affectionate tones touched the sealed fountains of other years.

James Harwood returned from the funeral of the child in much mental distress. His sins were brought to remembrance, and reflection was misery. Sleep was disturbed by visions of his neglected boy. In broken dreams, he fancied that he heard him coughing from his low bed, as he was wont to do. With a strange disposition of kindness he felt constrained to go to him, but his limbs refused their office. Then a little, thin, dead hand, would be thrust from the dark grave, and beckon him to follow to the unseen world.

While conscience thus haunted him with terrors, many prayers arose from pitying and pious hearts, that he might now be led to repentance. There was, indeed, a change in his habits; and she, who was above all others interested in his reformation, spared no effort to win him back to the path of virtue, and to sooth his accusing spirit into peace with itself, and obedience to its God.