

contracted in going out to a neighboring tavern, to seek for his insensible, bloated form. The cold grew worse, and soon the hectic flush upon her cheeks told the friends who visited her, that the worm which eateth into the vitals was at work upon her system.

Her disease had assumed a fatal character; and one evening as returning from the store where she prepared work for her needle, she misstepped, and fell at full length upon the sharp cobble stones in the street. A stream of blood gushed from her mouth, and all she was able to inform the bystanders was of the place of her residence. They raised her gently and placed her in a carriage, and drove to her apology for a dwelling.

Bearing Mary gently, they laid her down upon a bed, and propped her head with some pillows her poor neighbor had brought in. Mary was beloved by all in the court; wherever the sick and the dying were, there was she found to comfort the mourner, and wipe the tears of sorrow from the eye.

The doctor soon came, and after attentively observing her, shook his head, with an involuntary motion, thus showing the thoughts within.

Dr. Graham spoke to her kindly, and asked if she had any friends she would like to see? She raised her glassy eyes to his face, and fixed them upon him, with an earnest gaze—

“Doctor, I understand you—speak out plain, it will not affect me. Say, is my time of probation on earth drawing to a close?”

The Doctor, with tears flowing down his cheeks, assured her in the affirmative.

“Then, Doctor, all I ask is, that you will try and stimulate my body until my poor Thomas can be found.”

“I will put forth all my skill, madam, to gratify your wishes.”

CHAPTER III.

Thomas that morning had gone out sober, and with a determination to procure work, (if he could), to enable him to provide some food for his wife and child. He wandered up and down the street, endeavoring to obtain a job of work, but he walked in vain. Half famished, he sauntered down Market street, hoping to meet some familiar face and procure work sufficient to accomplish his object. There was one friend who had often assisted him; this was “Ned,” the companion of better days. Slipping into the store of Carton & Co., he inquired if Edward Torbet was in? The porter replied that Edward had gone with a customer over to Harry Blight’s to lunch.

To lunch! Eleven o’clock! And a series of years all shrouded in mourning, flashed across his brain! He staggered, and would have fallen, had not the porter sustained him. The porter placed Tom upon a chair, and procured a tumbler of water for him to drink. The cool beverage revived him, and visions of rounds of beef rose before his view.

Thanking the porter for his kindness, he arose and took his way to Harry Blight’s tavern. It was past eleven o’clock when he entered the bar-room. His appearance was shabby genteel.

Ned was sipping some Sherry wine, while conversing with his customer.

Harry Blight happened to cast his eyes towards the lunch table, and caught the form of Tom, as with vigorous jaws he packed away the lunch into his stomach. With one bound, Harry crossed the counter, and confronted Tom.

“Hey! sponging, loafing rascal! what are you doing here? begone, or I will kick you into the street.”

For one moment Tom glared upon Harry, and then in a torrent of words thus addressed him:

“You kick me into the street? You call me a loafing sucker? Who made me what I am? Who spread the tempting bait? and silly was I to take it? Who brought upon my soul a curse? And who has barred my way to Heaven with the poison of the still? Who has been the

cause of making—what you now call sucker and loafer? Who? why you, Harry Blight. Your accursed eleven o’clock lunch first led me astray. Gentlemen,” continued, turning and addressing the frequenters of the bar-room, “some years ago, I was one of the firm of Carton & Co., respected by all who knew me, beloved by my companions, and in the full confidence of my co-partners. In an evil day, Harry Blight opened this tavern, and spread what he calls a free lunch, at eleven o’clock in the day. I was induced to visit it, and the first silver I ever rung on the counter of a bar, I rung on that marble before you. I began with mineral water, then took wine, and at last, induced by the flaming encomiums heaped upon his fancy drinks, I took to drinking them. The temptation of the lunch was the first inducement to visit, and soon the thirst created by salted beef, salted pretzel, and sheep’s tongues, was quenched in the liquid fire of the bar. I have spent money, health and peace of mind, in this accursed place. It has been the cause of sorrow to my noble-hearted wife. And to-day, sick, disheartened, and half famished for food, I entered this house, with the ostensible object of seeking that gentleman: but also, with the hope that I might cull some of the waste bits of the lunch, to which I am entitled. The landlord sets it out as a free lunch. Free, to be partaken of—and therefore, gentlemen, I appeal to your decision, whether I have committed a trespass, or have sponged upon the landlord? I know it is called a free lunch—but I also am aware that Harry Blight laughs in his sleeve, when he retires at night to calculate what each man has paid for the slice of meat and bread he has partaken of. Gentlemen, I appeal to you.”

“He is right,” said they all.

“He is right,” said Ned, “and Harry Blight, you are wrong in threatening to kick him into the street—and I for one will not see it done.”

Here Tom’s eyes which had been flashing with anger, dropped their lids, and the tears fell pattering, like rain drops at his feet. The fountain of his soul had been broken up by the friendly voice of Ned—and it melted his heart, and he sobbed like a child.

“Come none of your whining,”—said the landlord—“you may thank your friend Edward, that your bloated carcass does not at this moment lie in the street.”

As if stung by an adder—Tom sprang towards Harry, his eyes glaring with fury, and screaming at the top of his voice, exclaimed—

“Curse you! May God curse your body! May worms destroy it, ere the spirit leaves it! And may the fiends of hell wrap you in flames that shall burn but never kill! May the drunkard’s curse lie on your soul!”

The effort cost him what little strength he had; and ere the bystanders were aware of Harry’s purpose, he had caught Tom by the throat, and hurled him headlong into the street. They rushed out in a body, picked him up, and carried him to Carton & Co.’s store. The blood flowed in a stream from a deep wound in his head. Edward perceiving his lips move, placed his ear near his mouth and heard these words:

“Oh God, have mercy on me, a sinner! Mary, Clara, wife, child!” and he ceased to breathe.

They procured a settee, and carried him towards his late home.

Mary had sent in every direction for her husband, but the messengers had returned without any tidings of him. Presently a number of footsteps were heard pattering over the pavement. In a moment, as if divining the cause, she raised herself upon her arm, and murmured, “Bring him up here; I know it all. Let me see his body before I die.”

They brought his body upstairs. As a statue, with glazed eyes, she looked upon the corpse; then clasping her emaciated hands in supplication, she murmured, “Father, turn the drunkard maker from the error of his ways. Lord, help me to forgive!” Edward approached her and said, “For-