

CHAPTER V.—DEPTHS OF MISERY.

In spite of the port wine and stout recommended by Dr. Chambers, Mrs. Mordaunt did not make rapid progress after the birth of her child. Her husband was distressed at the doctor's prescriptions and wished he could banish intoxicating liquor from the house, but he felt himself powerless to interfere. He maintained his own resolution to abstain but having so long pursued an opposite course he was tolerant of the habits of others.

Once, indeed, when Millicent was well enough to enter the drawing-room and was in a soft and gracious mood he talked quietly on the subject, even venturing to suggest that she would do well to return to her old practice of abstinence, and she allowed herself to be persuaded into this view. Yet she added despondently:

'I fear I am not mistress of myself.'

'But you will try, dear, for baby's sake,' he pleaded.

'It will be hard work, George. You do not know how strong a hold the drink has upon me. If I go two or three hours without tasting it, I feel I must go anywhere and do anything in order to obtain some.'

'Try something else. Let me send you in fruit. They say that apples make a good substitute. Or you might take Bovril or cocoa or mineral waters.'

'They seem tasteless, after wine. But I will try. I am dreadfully sorry, dear, to bring all this trouble upon you. Pity me and don't be angry.'

With such a confession it will elicit no surprise that the plan of substitutes failed to meet the difficulty. For a while she avoided drinking at dinner but the servants were conscious of her private indulgence. The housemaid came from a Rechabite family and felt equally sorry for mistress and master. She would venture now and then, respectfully, to remonstrate.

'Oh, please, ma'am, let me get you a cup of tea or give you something else.'

In some moods Mrs. Mordaunt would consent to put back the bottle she had in her hand. Not always, however. At other times she would almost frighten the maid by her bitter taunts, saying:

'I don't want you to be a spy over my actions. Just mind your own business, and let me drink what I like.'

Even the abstinence of her husband annoyed her. She felt he had denied himself on her account and the absence of the decanter was a constant reminder of her own weakness.

For a while the care of her baby boy occupied her and Lena visited frequently, taking care, however, to offer no further remonstrance. Grandma came along sometimes to see the little fellow, who was declared to be the image of his father. And the father invented a number of ways of spending pleasant evenings and denied himself his chess club, in order that he might be with her.

All such attempts were palliative; they did not touch the core of the mischief, love of the poison. In time she refused to visit the theatre and the concert room, because of the long intervals during which she was deprived of the opportunity of quenching her thirst.

So, amid alternate hopes and fears, varying progress and despair, another year passed. In the third year of their marriage, a frail but lovely little girl was added to the household, but this time the father exercised his authority and induced the

doctor to dispense with stimulants. The mother tried all sorts of expedients to obtain drink, but the nurse was obdurate. At last, the patient became so restless and ungovernable that Dr. Chambers said he would not answer for the consequences if drink were altogether forbidden, and the distressed husband felt he must yield and permit a limited supply.

Millicent accepted the compromise and forced herself to quicker convalescence that she might be mistress of her own actions when she could more fully indulge her appetite.

Poor Mordaunt was in despair. His cross was a heavy one to bear and had to be borne in silence; he could not proclaim the facts to the world, nor even to his friends. He lost some of his elasticity and cheerfulness; office matters worried him more than of old; and he felt helpless. The doctor could offer no remedy. The children, though physically cared for, were subject to alternate manifestations of passionate love and thoughtless indifference. Millicent became careless in her dress and of her outward demeanor; there was a lax administration of the household; and George's dinner was not always to his liking. Sometimes, on arriving home he would find his wife in a condition of semi-intoxication, and quite unfit to enter the dining-room.

Much as he had loved his wife, it would be fatuous to suppose that he could maintain, under such conditions, the depth of his regard. Love is founded on respect; if the bases of respect disappear, love takes to itself wings and in married life only the sense of duty remains. Not the most crucial of law points gave Mordaunt half so much anxiety as how to deal with his wife. He coaxed, he scolded, he threatened to keep her without money. All was in vain; he had to pass through a ceaseless round of fits of hysteria, hypocritical repentance, bitter revilings, and helpless degradation.

Something must be done.

(To be Continued.)

Camp Endymion.

Underneath the willow trees,
Whispering to murmuring river,
Rippled by the summer breeze,
Where the moonlight shadows quiver,
Endymion peaceful, dreams,
Bathed in pure, chaste, silver light,
Raining from Diana's beams,—
Glory-flooding all the night,
Not a sound disturbs the calm,
Save a far-heard whippoorwill.
Floats a perfume wave of balm,
From the hay-fields on the hill:
Far away a woody isle,
Reached by silver track of fire,
Where the water-lilies smile,
When the sun and air conspire,
Stretches far across the stream;
With a ford of rocks to shore;
As a huge attempt did seem
Giant hands to bridge it o'er;
There where weeds and lilies grow,
In a pretty skiff afloat,
Delia, and a rural beau,
Sitting on the gallant's coat,
Fished for bull-pouts by the moon;
Happy, artless innocence!
Listening to the bullfrog's tune;
And the swain's soft eloquence,
Fishing! Ah, sweet simple maid,
Learn the truth by fable taught!
I am very much afraid,
You can't carry all you've caught.
—C. S. Edwards, in the 'Witness.'

How a Tramp Was Saved.

A prayer meeting was being held in New York. It was an all-day prayer meeting, but the hour of noon was open to all comers. Just as this noon-tide meeting was about to commence, a paper was brought to the chairman of the meeting. It was in substance as follows:

'I am a poor tramp, a wretched drunkard, who has often tried to reform, but so far has failed. Arriving in your city this morning, I learned from one of your scholars that there was to be a meeting to-day in the interests of drunkards, like myself. I ask you to pray for me.'

The paper was read in the meeting, and earnest prayer to God was offered for the stranger. At the close, the chairman obtained a personal interview. A most forlorn-looking man presented himself. He was ragged and filthy, with all the marks of dissipation and utter dejection. But his eye and speech showed intelligence and sincerity. He was a German by birth, a graduate of the University of Bonn, where he had spent nine years. The minister put into his hand a copy of a book in Latin, and another in Greek, several passages from both of which he translated readily and correctly. He was no impostor.

The minister took him to a hair-dresser's, where he was shaved and had his hair cut, and then he supplied him with clean clothing, which transformed his appearance.

In the evening a mothers' meeting was held.

Yielding to a request, the stranger told the story of his life. He had emigrated to America to push his fortune. He enlisted in the army and fought all through the civil war on the side of the union, and gained an honorable discharge. But he learned to drink freely, and drink had become his master.

Great interest was felt in him, and many prayers were offered for him. He signed the pledge and kept it. A temporary home was found for him; he obtained employment, and became a regular attendant at church.

So far so good. But he was not a Christian. He was no sceptic, but he did not seem to comprehend even the simplest truths of the Gospel.

'Do you pray?' he was asked one day.

'No,' he said, smiling, 'but I think a great deal.'

The minister attended a meeting in a town two hundred miles distant, at which he told the stranger's story. Great interest was taken in his case, and most fervent prayer was offered on his behalf. That was on a Friday. The minister saw the German at church on Sunday, and on Monday the young man called upon him. A glance told him that he was a changed man.

'I have found the Lord,' said he.

'When?'

'Last Friday morning, between eleven and twelve o'clock.'

It was the very hour when hundreds of people were praying for him. 'While they were yet speaking God had heard.'

From that time he stood forth as a faithful soldier in the army of the Lord.—R. Shindler, in 'Friendly Greetings.'

When a boy finds out why policemen, car conductors, motormen, clerks, etc., are not allowed to smoke when on duty, he has found an all-sufficient reason for never touching tobacco.

As many men, so many minds. 'World Wide' reflects the thought of both Hemispheres.