

Hitherto Mary had been able partially to restrain him, even when intoxicated, and when to others he was wholly unmanageable, but now even she was powerless. He was a raving madman, not responsible and not to be restrained.

I pass over three years—three years which had changed my once bright and happy child into a care-worn woman. There were times even during this period when Mr. Monteith was sober for whole weeks or months, and when happiness smiled upon Mary's house; but on the whole hers was a wearing and anxious existence.

She was never secure, never quite certain that at any moment her husband might not give way to his besetting sin; and this uncertainty was fearfully trying to her health and spirits.

Then, too, his temper had become variable. When not under the influence of stimulants he gave way to frequent fits of depression or sullenness, out of which it seemed impossible to rouse him. When sober he was not intentionally unkind, but his moroseness and irritability were as hard to bear as actual unkindness.

On the whole, Mary bore with him very patiently, but there were times when even her patience was exhausted, and when bitter words passed between her and her husband.

I know that she was always humbled, always penitent, always mercilessly severe with herself after such, but that did not prevent the occasional recurrence of scenes which even now I cannot bear to think of.

Still, as I have said, there were times when happiness smiled upon the house in St. Hilaire. Times when Mr. Monteith was again the loving, lover-husband, and when Mary's sky seemed again bright with promise.

She still mourned the loss of her first-born babe; but when at the end of three years another infant came to soften the sense of loss, and to call

forth once more the mother's tender love for a helpless little one, the living child in a manner took the place of the dead.

This second child, unlike the first, was robust and healthy in an unusual degree. It was a boy, large, strong and vigorous, and full of grace and beauty.

In quite a short time it had learned to notice those about it, to laugh, to crow, to frolic in its pretty baby way. Its form might have served for the model of an infant Apollo, so perfect were its proportions, so faultless the firm, fair, rounded limbs. Mary literally idolized it, and I could not blame her. I was foolish over it myself; so was its father—so was everyone. On all sides it was pronounced an uncommonly lovely, noble boy; and as its character developed with its physical growth, it seemed to promise a mind of no ordinary calibre, accompanied by a disposition of much sweetness and a nature large and generous.

Its birth had for a time the happiest effect upon Mr. Monteith. He abandoned his bad habits altogether, and for nearly a year was not only a sober, but a prosperous and happy man. His business had constantly fluctuated with his habits. When he was intemperate and negligent, it had suffered materially, and when he was sober and diligent it had again revived.

I had spoken to Mary repeatedly, and of late to himself, to induce him to abandon a certain line of business into which he had entered, and which involved the necessity of his frequent absence from home. I believed it to be attended with danger to himself, apart from the discomfort to her; for it would lead him directly into company and places where it would be hard to resist this peculiar temptation. But neither I nor Mary could prevail upon him to give it up. He did not see the danger of it; or perhaps he did, but with the infatuation which I have often noticed in men of his stamp, he im-