

fanciful delusion than a soter reality. So green and flowery their paths, so unclouded their skies, that while possessing, it may be, kindly hearts, that would fain sympathize with those who complain of the roughness of the way, they cannot fully enter into, or appreciate, their feelings; for, to those only, who have suffered, "sorrow is a sacred thing." We may number Ambrose Mandeville with the latter class—with those, who

Early feel life's bitterness,  
And taste its cup of wo.

His father had once been a merchant of good standing, and possessing a liberal education, gentlemanly manners and address, his society was much courted. Unhappily, this very circumstance led him into habits of dissipation; the billiard-room and drinking saloon became his favourite resorts, and not the prayers of his once lovely and beloved wife, nor the innocent prattle of his children, nor the remonstrances of friends, had any effect in dissuading him from the path he was pursuing. Of course, poverty came on him as an armed man, and ere he arrived at the age of forty, he found himself without means, without business, and without friends. But, instead of rousing his energies, and commencing afresh, he became utterly reckless, and seemed determined to rush headlong to ruin. His wife, a gentle, delicate woman, accustomed, from infancy, to all the luxuries of life, though she might have sustained the weight of providential misfortunes, drooped, like a broken flower, under the degradation of her husband; the words of rebuke and unkindness which he uttered,—and these were neither few nor far between,—called forth no similar response, but they sank deeply into a sensitive heart, and health and spirits speedily gave way, and at the time in which our story commences, the wasted form and hectic cheek, seemed to herald the approach of the insidious destroyer of earth's fairest children—consumption. The only stay and support of the family was the eldest son, Ambrose Mandeville, now in his twentieth year, and the artist of the picture purchased by Miss Clifton. His narrow income, as clerk in a subordinate office, under government, scarcely afforded them the necessaries of life, much less its superfluities. Distressed, that he could not procure for his mother those little delicacies which, to an invalid, seem indispensable, he

was one day secretly lamenting the smallness of his income, and wondering by what means he could increase it. While thus sadly engaged, a new idea suggested itself.—He remembered of having casually heard of a bookseller, who was in the habit of purchasing sketches from native artists, and having, when very young, evinced a remarkable taste for drawing, which, fortunately,—for they were then in prosperous circumstances,—had been assiduously cultivated, he determined to employ his leisure hours in similar attempts. The result of the first is already known to our readers.

It was a clear, frosty Christmas eve when Ambrose received the first fruits of his patient genius. The merry sound of sleigh-bells, the cheerful voices of pedestrians, as they hurried along the snowy pavement, the gaily decorated and brilliantly illuminated windows, all wore an appearance of life and gaiety, well fitted to usher in the anniversary of that season, when from Heaven was pronounced "Peace on earth, good will towards men." With a glad and thankful heart, Ambrose retraced his steps, and after making several purchases at the different stores, he passed on his way, entered the lowly dwelling, made sacred by the appellation of home. Somewhat better than usual, that evening, the mother had busied herself in endeavouring to make their little parlour as comfortable as possible before the return of her son. The curtains were snugly drawn, the hearth cleanly swept, and the fire blazed high and cheerily, to welcome him home. The frugal meal was prepared when he returned, the additional luxuries which he had been enabled to procure, made it quite a comfortable one; and the young man's eyes filled with tears of joy, as he observed how much his mother appeared to relish the simple delicacies which his consideration had supplied.

That evening would have been a happy one to all, but for one drawback on its felicity, namely: the knowledge that the husband and father was not only absent from the social circle, but as they, too truly, feared, amid the scenes of dissipation and vice. Still, as the mother gazed upon her eldest son; her heart swelled with thankfulness; and as she listened to the kindly tones of his voice, as he presented to each of the family a present, though simple, not the less wel-