

He deeply regretted the necessity of making this known to her; he ended by suggesting that the gentle influence of home might do much towards bringing him to a sense of his condition. My mother read the letter, folded it carefully, reopened it and read it again. She then handed it to me without speaking a word. When I had finished reading it, I looked at her; she was still immovable, helpless as a child in this her great despair. Her apathy was the more distressing to me as I was entirely alone. I dare not consult anyone, dare not ask the advice of our kind neighbors. She had roused herself just enough to tell me it must be kept as secret as death. I was only sixteen. I had grown up under my mother's guidance, had never been five miles away from home, and now this great journey lay before me. There was no one else to go; I must take it alone.

We were both ignorant of the nature of my brother's disgrace. Mr. Lester had made no mention of it. I could only conjecture in my own mind what it might be. Of course I thought of dishonesty; what else could have driven him from a situation where he was so honored and trusted? The railroad was some miles distant from our village; despatch was necessary; I must meet the evening train. My brother was ill; I was going to him; This would quiet our neighbors, and put an end to curious speculations.

Again and again reassuring my mother that I would bring him back, telling her in all sincerity that I knew he would be able to clear himself in her eyes so that not a spot or blemish would be left on his fair name. I became so preoccupied, so entirely absorbed with the object of my journey, that the journey itself had no novelty for me though everything was new and startling. Now I was hurrying to the great city that I had so often thought and dreamed about. It was only in a confused way that I could settle it in my mind that I was really going there. My brother—would he come home with me? He might be angry that I had come. Could I ask him to tell me the truth? No I could not see him so humiliated; I would rather hear the story from other lips than his.

It was near midnight when I reached his lodgings.

"Is Arthur Graham at home?" I, trembling, asked of a kindly looking woman who opened the door.

"He is, miss, and sorely in need of some one to look after him."

She desired me to enter, and we approached his room, I opened the door cautiously. The woman's manner was so mysterious, I trembled and began to be afraid; she had told me he was not sick. Of course I thought he was a prisoner and perhaps chained in his own room. The light was very dim, and, as I advanced, I stumbled and was near falling over—what?—over the prostrate form of my own brother, lost, degraded, fallen.

As I bent down to see why he did not speak to me, I discovered the truth. He, the pride and hope of our lives, had sunk into a drunkard. I uttered no cry; I was no longer terrified; I thought only of my mother.

I was all that was left her now, and, as I bent over him, wondered if that face was his, so changed, so sickening; I tried to smooth the heavy hair, that lay in thick, dark masses about his reeking forehead. How old, how terribly old, he had grown in so short a time! I dare not cherish a feeling of loathing; he was my brother and needed my love as he had never needed it before. A conviction settled upon me, as I sat there with my travelling wrappings: I unremoved, that his case was hopeless. I could see a lonely, dishonored grave, far away from us in a strange land. I know not why this sight should rise before me, my brother was young, and others as debased as he had risen to a good and noble life. Thus I reasoned with myself, and yet that lonely mound of earth would come before me, and I was left powerless.

The night was far advanced, and I was trying to gather up my new found energies, when I felt a kindly hand removing my bonnet. It was the good woman who had met me at the door; she was waiting to show me my room and to offer me some refreshment.

"You can do no good here," she continued as she assisted me to arise, "until morning." She shook her head doubt-