

One day as she sat alone and despairing, a gentle rap sounded on the door, it was followed by the entrance of the village pastor. Taking her hand he said:

"My child, I have come to give you comfort."

"You cannot," she answered, "My heart is broken; I only wish to die."

"My child, you must bide your time; your work on earth is not yet completed."

"What work have I? I am alone."

"No. There is one, weak and erring, whose feet have often strayed; he is now earnest in his wish to repent. Will you not help him? Give him a welcome here?"

"If he wishes it," she answered listlessly, knowing that the minister referred to her husband, "but I can help no one." Then like a great wave it rushed over her all that he, her husband, had done to help her on that dreadful night. The thought of it all made her cry aloud in her agony, and clinging to her heaven-sent friend, she said:

"Oh! Let me speak, let me tell you all."

"Speak, my poor child; tell me all you please. With me your confidence is sacred."

Then she told the whole awful story, without reserve; nothing was kept back. When she had finished the clergyman said:

"My child, your Heavenly Father saved you from yourself. Had you rushed then with your child unbidden into His presence, the gates of Heaven would have opened to the spotless child, but would have closed against the mother with blood-stained hands—stained with her own self-murder and that of her child."

"And now," she wailed, "I am forever shut out, for my hands are stained with the blood of the old man."

"You had no wish, no thought to injure him, therefore I think that they are stainless, at least so far as wilful guilt goes. You are given time to repent and you can atone in some measure by helping the erring one."