

"Well it gave him strength—the fever left him miserably weak—and kept up his spirits; a great thing you will acknowledge."

The summons to tea interrupted the conversation, and it was not resumed after tea until the gentlemen left. Then Kate said: "John, Allan has ruined his brother Hugh."

"How, pray? You are wild, Kate."

"No, I'm not. Did you hear what he said about his drinking? Now I know when Hugh has once broken his promise not to drink he will never stop short of ruin."

"Nonsense, Kate; Hugh has more wit than that."

"Hugh Mc Alpine has not your force of character John; and you know he once before drank hard."

"Did Dr. McAlpine know of his brother's appetite for it when he ordered it?" said Franc.

"Of course he did," said Kate; "there is where the blame lies."

John rose impatiently.

"Kate Earle, do you suppose Allan would deliberately ruin his only brother?"

"No, John, I don't. But I do suppose he has unintentionally roused a demon that will not soon be subdued."

"Its all nonsense! Of course he will take it while he needs it; and when he gets strong leave it off."

"Well I hope so;" and Kate relapsed into silence.

Franc roused from a reverie and said, "Is Dr. McAlpine what people call a moderate drinker?"

"By no means," said John. "He very seldom tastes anything of the sort,—only uses it as a medicine; and is always ready to speak a word against intemperance."

"I hate that sort of character," said Franc, vehemently.

"Franc!" John looked at her in astonishment. The slight figure was drawn to its full height, and the flashing blue eyes grew dark as she went on. "Yes, I hate them. Those are the men that make scores of drunkards, while they escape the toils themselves. They lead their poor victim blindfold right to the edge of the pit, and the descent is all too easy then. I know—I've seen it done. Heaven forbid I should ever see it again!" and she shuddered as she spoke.

"What in the world has come over you two girls?"

"Nothing new has come over me; but don't bring me into too close contact with that man, or I must tell him what I think."

John walked the room, when he was left alone, and mused something after this fashion: "Wonder what the little girl would say if she knew how much brandy I drink, and I'm sure I'm a temperance man. I've seen enough of its evils to cure any man of being a drunkard. But I only take it when I feel I absolutely need it. After all it's my own business;" and he strode to his room with a firm step, and the air of a man who had the mastery of himself, and intended to keep it.

New Year's evening Dr. McAlpine was talking to Miss Kate, when two other callers were shown in.

"Franc Lester, as I'm a sinner!" and a handsome, fashionable-looking young man came toward her with unsteady step, and offered his hand.

"How do, old girl! How on earth did you stumble down into this out-of-the-world place? Thought you'd have turned the heads of half the men in the city before this," and he laughed a rude, boisterous laugh.

"Stewart!" but he was not to be stopped.

"I say, Francie, Mollie sends her love; at least she would if she knew I was here. I'm out on a lark, though! Mollie don't know where I am, poor little dear."

Flashes of scarlet shot across Franc's face.

"Now, don't go getting your spunk up.—you do look awfully pretty, my dear! But I must go now. Good-bye! I'll call again."

"Not until you are sober," said Franc, deliberately.

"I'm not drunk now! Who says —" But his friend hurried him out, and as the door closed after him, Franc said:—

"That is the brother of my dearest friend; and a fine fellow Stewart Longley would be but for that accursed drink!"

"What a shame," said McAlpine, "that any gentleman should so far forget himself as to intrude his presence upon a lady in such a state! What a shame, I ought to say, that a man should ever allow himself