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"SHE STAGGERED TO HER FEET AND SCREAMED WITH INARTICULATE RAGE."—Page 44.

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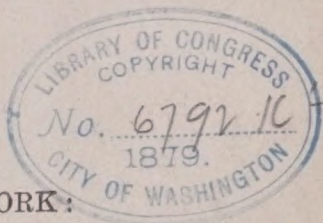
A TRUE STORY.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "FIREBRANDS;" "THE EMERALD SPRAY;" "A STRANGE
SEA STORY;" "LIFE CRUISE OF CAPTAIN BESS ADAMS;"
"NOTHING TO DRINK;" "JUG OR NOT;" "HOW
COULD HE ESCAPE;" "ON LONDON BRIDGE," ETC.

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A TRUE TALE.

 N unusually bright and warm June afternoon shone over Edinburgh. Fortunately it was Saturday, when all the city has a half-holiday, and the whole population seemed to have turned out into the public places.

In the Prince's Gardens the steady fathers played bowls; the maids trundled babes in little coaches; the Highland pipers sounded wild pilrochs in a pavilion under the frowning heights of the

Castle, and lovers paced along the flower-bordered promenades.

In the Meadows a club of portly merchants, dressed in green and gold, practiced archery ; three cricket clubs were in full play ; their red, white, and green uniforms mixing, mingling, and disentangling, like figures in a kaleidoscope, as they made their runs. Foot-ball also had its partisans, and crowds of burly or bony apprentices ran, kicked, tumbled, and scuffled over the huge flying balls, terror of all the women and children in the vicinity.

The Links swarmed with golf-players, and at the eastward of the city hundreds of people poured into the green slopes,

lovely drives and walks, and storied nooks, which surround Holyrood Castle and Arthur's Seat. Among these Miss Harlowe walked alone and moody. She passed one low rise after another, lingered where some children were waking "the image of the voice" at the famous "echo curve," and then moved on to the pathway cut in the face of Salisbury Craigs. Slowly she climbed on and on until she reached the semicircular *Cat Nick*, five hundred and seventy feet above the sea level, where, on a bench hewn in the rock, she sat down facing the city.

A light breeze lifted and waved the smoke pall which lowers over Dun Edin; the sunlight bronzed the tumultuous

masses of cloud, and bordered and fringed them with gold; where they parted and broke away entirely, looked forth the stately buildings, domed and towered and pinnacled, for which this glorious city is famous.

All the houses of joy in the joyous city woke no answer to their mirth on this solitary face watching from the Cat Nick. If some faces are illuminated by a light from within, others are darkened by a shadow from within, and Miss Harlowe's was one of these. The children who ran along the Craig path said to themselves that she was "a cross lady;" the working folk rambling by glanced askance and pronounced her "a prood leddy;" a stately

grandsire passing with two boys, who leaped and laughed about him like young satyrs, knew that she was a very unhappy lady, and he lifted his hat to her with a look of involuntary compassion. He had nearly passed the Cat Nick curve, when with an imploring gesture to the seat at her side, Miss Harlowe delayed him.

“Lads!” cried the old man, “run along. I will rest here for a while.”

“Aye, aye, grandsir,” shouted the boys, “we’re gaun to St. Margaret’s Loch to sail our wee boaties!” and down the path they leaped and shouted as joyously as they had ascended.

Meantime the grandfather sat down, and feeling the burden of conversation

resting upon him, said: "I am glad you are out enjoying the day."

"Not enjoying," said Miss Harlowe; "I know no joy. I came out to try and be rid of my friends, of myself, of every face that knows me or can hate or pity me. But the effort to escape is always idle; I carry my curse in my heart. Doctor Calderwood, I often think I will go out on one of the Burntisland steamers and jump into the Firth at mid-channel, to be done with the woe of living."

"Once a human being is born, Miss Harlowe, it can never be done with living. There is no such thing for us as *Death*; what we call death is only a change of state. We project ourselves into the fu-

ture as we are, and continue through eternity on that good or evil line which we started here. If we are not fit to live, or righteously happy in living, then we are not fit to die. My poor friend, I grieve to see you so cast down ; but do not allow yourself to be driven from a misfortune to a crime."

" Misfortune ? Crime ? Who can unravel these in my case ? My crime is a misfortune, and my misfortune is a crime. I feel that I am bearing a terrible and an inherited burden. I also *know* that I am guilty before God."

" Miss Harlowe," said the doctor, " have you prayed for help ? Have you cast yourself on Him who is able to keep you

from falling? I believe you to be a Christian woman; now do you realize that the Lord Jesus Christ is a burden-bearer for our sins as well as for our sorrows, and that He can, in us now, work miracles and cast out demons, just as He did during the days of His Incarnation below?"

"Doctor," said Miss Harlowe, speaking hesitatingly, and with a mighty effort at self-mastery, "in such days as this, days of reaction, with the bitterness of shame overwhelming me, and my fatal thirst quenched by its indulgence, then I cry to God. I pray Him to take me out of the world before I sin again in this way. I ask Him, as King Alfred did, for any

bodily disease which may overmaster my besetting sin. I tell Him to take what He will, health, reason, property, so that He takes with it my appetite for strong drink. I think that it can not be that I shall be so weak and failing any more. Then after a longer or shorter interval, so long sometimes that I am lulled into security, all at once, sudden as a flash of lightning, there comes in me a frantic craving for strong drink. Sometimes I struggle to pray a little ; but, Doctor, you will hardly believe it or understand it, I feel that if I pray very earnestly, God may hear my cry and keep me from touching liquor, and liquor I want and must have and will have, and would sell my soul to

obtain ; and I see disgrace and pain and repentance as very small matters in comparison with my awful thirst. It is the Scripture story of a strong man armed, keeping the house, that is my conscience ; and a stronger than he coming, binding him, taking possession, that is my inherited thirst. I realize my false position, my abnormal condition ; but I see, taste, hear, smell liquor, and that only, and before this invading torrent of desire, pride, conscience, resolution, all restraint, break down and are carried away, and I am left to sin, to loathe, and to repent. Doctor, I have seen on our Northern rivers an eygre or spate, a great unconquerable wall of water rushing down the stream, and

sweeping all before it—so seems this terrible madness in my soul.”

“You are right,” said the physician, in deep compassion, “it *is* a madness; it is a disease. You have inherited *oinomania*, inherited and self-produced also. It has been my judgment, after long study of cases such as yours, that this disease, in its worst and most unconquerable form, may be inheritable. And yet, Miss Harlowe, I do not want you to despair; you *must not* give yourself up as incurable. Leprosy has never been cured by physicians, but Christ cured leprosy. What is impossible with men, is possible with God. He can make you more than conqueror through Him that hath loved you. Fight

the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, and you may yet stand among that noble throng whom John saw in heaven; these are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

No responsive lustre of hope brightened the listener's face at these good words, she had hoped against hope so long. She answered in a despairing monotone:

"To cure me would be, indeed, to perform the impossible, Doctor. I am Circled by Fire! If I shut myself up at home, seeing no one, going nowhere, then I think that this thirst sooner grows upon

me. If I take up a book to entertain myself according to my taste—Dickens, Bulwer, Thackeray, all of our best novelists, most of our poets and essayists—by their allusions to, or elaborations of, the drinking customs of society, blow to a flame the dormant embers of my fatal taste. If I go out among my friends, as likely as not where I call, I am hospitably offered cake and wine. If, as to-day, I am in the full strength of revulsion, I refuse; but if my craving has awaked, the proffer is my ruin; and sometimes when I have not begun to experience it, a glass of wine offered in thoughtless kindness has made me *mad*, and I have gone home to become intoxicated. It is the same if

I go out to dinner, wine comes on with dessert ; or to an evening party, it comes with the refreshments. In the guise of the drinking customs of elegant society, my enemy lies in wait to destroy me.

“ I tried charity work, as offering activity and interest to my mind, and likely to benefit my fellows, but the streets where I went were crowded with gin-palaces and liquor-stores ; the air of streets and of houses was for me laden with a horrible temptation. I am hedged in on every side ; I look for a way of escape and find none.”

“ Possibly,” said the sympathetic physician, meditatively, “ some stronger emotion might have driven this taste from your

soul. The love of a wife and a mother might have dominated a heart so tender and duty-loving as yours. It is a pity that you have not domestic cares to absorb you."

Miss Harlowe did not answer; she looked across the green park and the carriage-crowded Queen's Drive at her feet with an expression of stony despair.

"I thought, some years ago, that young Wallace More was very attentive to you, Miss Harlowe."

Miss Harlowe turned sharply upon him—"Doctor! do you remember my father?"

"Yes, yes, poor fellow!"

"And my grandmother, do you remember her?"

"Yes," said the doctor, more softly, shaking his head.

"And remembering them, how *dare* you ask me why I have not married to pass this horrible inheritance on to another generation? This one comfort I have, that this Harlowe-thirst shall die with me. I am the last and only one left of my family, and you know, Doctor, what has sapped their strength, so that they have not lived out half their days, and one has died in a mad-house and one has been a suicide. You were right, sir, Wallace More was attentive to me, and when I saw it, I shut myself up and faced the past, and set before myself the long dreadful line of facts that belong to us;

and I saw my great aunt in her asylum grinning behind the bars; and my uncle lying stiff on the floor with that mark around his neck; and my father slowly dying; and the shameful scenes of my grandmother's last years, and I resolved that I would blight no man's life, and pass down to no children a curse. I dared not expose myself to Wallace More's arguments and entreaties. I preferred that he should think me heartless and trivial, rather than that I might yield to his prayer for his ruin. I treated him slightly and withdrew from him before he could offer me his hand. It hurt his feelings, but that was better than a life-long regret. He is now happy with a wife and

children, and I have not his heart-break to repent of, whatever comes to me, whether I go mad or am a suicide or die like my grandmother !”

The old doctor’s look at Miss Harlowe was mingled of compassion and admiration. Not that she was charming in youth, for she had reached middle age ; nor was she fascinating in face ; hers was a sad, while a comely, intelligent face, and she had the mien and grace of a lady ; but beyond most other women this woman had been unhappy and heroic.

“ Miss Harlowe,” said the doctor, “ you will neither die in a mad-house nor commit suicide, nor go down, like your grandmother, dishonored to the grave. Do

you remember the words of our Lord—
'Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand'? It is true that you may be as a warning and a wonder unto many; the sins of parents *are* visited physically and mentally on their children through many mournful generations, and some, like you, who fight and suffer, must stand as warnings to a dull world, that the parent is his child's keeper, and for his child's sake he must be moral. But I believe that through all this night of your temptation and falling, you are of the purchased ones of Calvary, and that God will yet save you from yourself and sin, and lead you to His rest."

Miss Harlowe looked toward the doc

tor for a moment, her eyes full of tears. Then she looked away, over the towered city, and thought how wretched it had been to her all her life, and how it was spread with nets and pits for such as she. The thought stayed her softer feelings. She was a reticent woman; she never talked of her troubles, except to her doctor and minister, and but seldom to them. She had united with the church in her youth, and now she was a great trouble to her minister, and the church was a great trouble to her. She lodged outside of the limits of the congregation, and her intoxication was unknown to any of her fellow church-people, except the pastor and physician. Some people suspected

“something wrong” or “something queer” about Miss Harlowe, but suspicions had never become certainties. She gave liberally, was of good family, and went into society but little. She realized that if the church knew of her terrible failing, she would be excluded from membership; she felt as if she sat among Christians in the shadow of false pretenses. The pastor believed that this unhappy woman was one of the feeble and straying ones of the fold, whom the Good Shepherd would yet carry in His own arms out of the wilderness.

“What shall we do with her?” said the despairing pastor to his friend the old doctor.

“Let us quietly wait for the event,” said the doctor. “I feel that if we reject her from our number, we shall be rejecting one with whom the Master has patience.”

“Doctor,” said Miss Harlowe, turning about to continue the conversation, “I remember my father; my first memory is of him lying on his reclining chair, and saying, as he looked at me, ‘Puir lassie! puir lassie!’ He was a kind-tempered man, and never cross when he was intoxicated; but I suppose his drinking, and the long times he used to be away, no one knew where, discouraged my poor mother, and threw her into the consumption or ‘pining,’ of which she died.”

“Yes, that was about it,” said Doctor

Calderwood ; “ she had but a slender constitution to begin with. Are any of her family left ? ”

“ It was a small family, and no one is left but her nephew, a minister near Montreal, Canada. I write to Malcom ; he is a good man, but he don’t know about—”

Miss Harlowe stopped abruptly, then continued : “ And my father finally had his leg crushed in a spree, and it was amputated, and he languished about a year and then died ; such a hurt could not heal on him, though he came of an originally strong race. So he died at thirty—five years younger than I am now ! ”

“ Yes, but look at the better side. I

know he sorrowed over his sins. Perhaps he had prayed as you have—‘Let anything come but a renewal of my crime;’ and this was God’s way of putting him out of temptation and giving him space for repentance. I never saw a man who seemed more humble and contrite; and his prayers for you echo in my ears to this day. He brought down judgment on you, it is true, but he may also have procured for you by his pleadings a store of mercy.”

“And there was my grandmother,” continued Miss Harlowe, moved to-day to an unwonted freedom of speech, “she inherited a love of liquor, and this love grew upon her as she was nursing a fam-

ily of young children. I suppose it had its share in destroying the children, for my father and uncle were the only ones who grew up. It would have been better for my grandmother if she had gone, as did her sister, to a mad-house. I have heard that when my grandfather died, his wife was too much under the influence of liquor to realize the solemn hour, and I know that often, when my poor father should have had his mother's tenderest care, *he* was waited on by servants, and *she* was lying in her room drunk. When my father was dead, and I was growing up alone in my grandmother's house, I remember that often she was carried to bed tipsy ; in her mad moods our two old

servants had to tie her hands and feet, or lock her in her room, to prevent her injuring herself, or getting into the street in her disgraceful condition. She did escape once in her bed-gown, and was arrested on the streets as 'drunk and disorderly,' and you, Doctor, and some of our family friends, got her home on the plea that she was 'subject to fits of aberration of mind.' I think we were all glad when she was partially paralyzed, and could not get out of doors, but even then she was ungovernable, and her nurse used to give her liquor as the only means of keeping her quiet. I doubt if she was in her right mind when she died! And I—I have had this warning before me all the

days of my life, and for ten years the memory of her wretched death, and to think of my following in her steps !”

“ But why need you follow in these steps ? You tell me that when you strongly crave liquor, you restrain prayer lest you may lose the gratification of this appetite. Now, if in such a crisis you recall this story, which is so sharply impressed on your mind, I should think it would teach you to fear yourself and your besetting sin, and to cry mightily to the Lord to keep you from so direful a bondage.”

Miss Harlowe shook her head. “ Green withes on Samson,” she said ; “ you know nothing of the strength of the monster

when it is aroused ; you live under the control of reason ; I live outside of it."

"Partly," said the Doctor, gravely, "by your misfortune, and partly by your fault, your most grievous fault. Why not, since at times you can not control yourself, and will not seek in your worst danger the Divine control, why not place yourself, in such an interval of sanity as this, in the keeping of some one who will have power to withhold liquor from you? Why not go to some Inebriate Asylum, where you shall be helped to live down your enemy? Anything is better than what you now endure."

"I suppose it is because of pride," said Miss Harlowe. "I keep thinking that I

shall not fall any more, and that I shall have reformed without such a public exposure of my infirmity. Just now I feel hopeless, and if any one were to put me in one of the carriages below there on the drive, and carry me off to an institution for reforming such miserables as myself, I should not remonstrate. By to-morrow or next day, I shall be hoping for better things, and in three months I shall be—just as I am now. Sometimes I have thought of going to America, to the United States or to Canada, where all my associations shall be new ; where, as I have heard, there is less temptation than here, less of social drinking, and where with fresh interests and new friends I

may be stronger to conquer my great temptation."

There was a long silence. It was now six o'clock, and while many who had been out all the afternoon for pleasure were going home to tea, a fresh installment of citizens was pouring out of street and close, for the fresh air of the daisied parks. In that far northern city, evening falls but slowly, and ten o'clock would bring the twilight. "The laddies will have wearied of their boats," said the doctor, rising. "Come, Miss Harlowe, will you go home by way of Saint Margaret's Loch?"

Miss Harlowe rose also, and going leisurely down the Craig path, turned the

conversation upon other subjects than herself and her sorrows.

As Miss Harlowe had said, with her to live was to be tempted, to struggle, to yield slowly, to fall, to repent, to suffer, to long to die, and to repeat times without number this dismal round. This bondage to strong drink is the most terrible of all slavery, because it saps the will power; it takes vital force from the victim, and also brain force. The ancient poet tells us that what day a man becomes a slave, observant fate takes half the man away; this is emphatically true of one who comes under the power of strong drink.

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As the short afternoon of late September was closing, Miss Harlowe lay on a lounge of her sitting-room, her pale face and wandering eye betokening to those who knew her, that she had again fallen a victim to her disastrous craving, and was but recently recovered from a period of intoxication. The hour of realization and of remorse had come. She could not read, nor could she bear the presence of a friend; she lay a prey to her mental anguish. A ray of the sunset fell between the damask curtains, and rested on an empty decanter standing upon the side-board; the vessel looked as if fashioned of lambent flame. Gazing at it flashing in the dying day, Miss Harlowe apostro-

phized this evil genius of her life : “ What a curse have you been to me ! At every turn of my life you have met and defeated me ; as a babe I had you in my food and for my medicine, under pretense of warding off disorders which flesh is not heir to, and which generally only come by your interposition ; as a child I had you offered to me as an ingredient in my food ; pies, puddings, sauces, all bore your flavor. When I have been sick you were brought me as medicine ; whether I suffered from cold or fever it was all the same, you were supposed to be equally beneficial. Friends have offered you to me as token of their friendship, and have pledged my well-being in my ruin ! Ac-

quaintances proffered you as a mark of hospitality and good breeding; where have you not been present in books and in food, in confectionery and in perfumes? Even in church you have met me, not only in the communion cup, but I have seen you begirt with glasses and upheld by plates of biscuits, carried into the vestry-room to sustain between services the fainting strength of our elders.* You load the air which I breathe and you are ubiquitous as air. By you my childhood was orphaned; by you my kindred have been swept from the earth, until none of them remain to me. By you I have been deprived of a woman's natural home and

* This is the custom now in some Scotch churches.

home ties; I am robbed of my dignity and honor; I am useless in the world; I live hourly on the verge of the pit of perdition."

This was Miss Harlowe's arraignment of strong drink. Her enemy was the grand enemy of the world; in covenant with death, pain and poverty were his henchmen, the grave was his treasure-chest; he counted not only kings and common men as his victims, but whole nations and races. And to meet such a foe, how was she counseled.

Some said to her, "If you were but *moderate*." "I can not be moderate," retorted honest conscience. "Fly from your enemy," said Doctor Calderwood,

but she had yielded her will-power to the foe, and had not energy enough left to fly.

“Yield,” hissed the tempter, “drink, and drink, and die,” and then a horrible spectre seemed to stalk to her out of her grandmother’s grave, and pictured to her all that debased, shameful life and hopeless death, and she would not wholly yield; she must continue her struggle.

Her pastor pleaded, argued, threatened; but tears and acknowledgments and resolutions were his only answer—not the desired reform. Already her failing had been hidden from public cognizance far longer than might have been deemed possible; but this woman was not to be allowed to go on screening her sin; the

refuge of her pride was to be torn away from her. From September until Christmas she had stood firmly ; she had had a few battles with appetite and had routed her antagonist. The Saturday before Christmas her craving was very strong. Now was the time when she should have summoned external aid ; when she should have called for Doctor Calderwood and asked for some antidote to her thirst, and for his advice and the sustaining power of his knowledge in her hour of temptation. But between pride and ignorance she struggled on alone. She should have eaten plentifully, but no food tempted her, and she went supperless to bed. She spent a sleepless night, and rose in the

morning haggard and forlorn. After a light breakfast she thought over her miserable estate, and concluded to go to church; possibly the cold air and the change of scene, the surrounding presence of her fellow-worshipers, the prayer and psalm, some well-spoken word, might be her weapon of defense. She trembled with exhaustion and excitement as she finished dressing, and slowly descended the stairs. She pushed open the sitting-room door to tell her landlady where she was going; the room was vacant, but on the sideboard stood a glass and a decanter of liquor, and the smell of brandy was in all the air. Without one instant to consider, she stepped to the fatal spot,

poured out a glass of liquor and drank it off.

At once her spirits rose, her strength returned, a flush dawned on her cheek, a light shone in her eye ; she stepped into the street and rejoiced in the sharp winter air, and as she went on to church, unconsciously to her, the poison was controlling all her powers.

“Give, give,” cry the leech’s daughters, and grudge if they are not satisfied ; thus is also the liquor mania. By the time she had walked a mile and a half to her church, her reason was partly clouded. Turning the last corner before reaching the house of God, she passed the open door of a liquor-store, and in her brain

and veins rang the leech-daughter's cry, "Give! give!" She had never before entered such a place, or taken liquor so publicly, but not half knowing what she did, she entered and purchased a glass of strong whisky and water. Again, as she stepped upon the pavement, she felt strong and jubilant; she was fast losing control of herself, but her mind retained the church-going bent which it had taken early in the day, and she moved on to her accustomed place of worship. She had been seen to leave the liquor-store by an elder and two members of the church; but if nothing further had occurred, they would doubtless have concluded that she had gone to get relief from some sudden

faintness or pain, and would have charitably passed it over.

In her own place in church all things went by her as in a dream; the clergyman's voice hummed monotonously far off; during the prayer she seemed drifting dizzily in space; echoes of her self-condemnation sounded faintly in her brain, and her soul, arraigned before its own bar, was striving to understand and justify its ways. And then the clergyman rose up to preach, and her wandering eye sought to escape his, and she felt vaguely that he looked at her, and that the solemnly-gesticulating hand was pointed at her, and his voice quoting prophetic denunciation was challenging her ways and dragging

forth *her* sin from its covert, and her pride and anger took fire; and not knowing what she did, she staggered to her feet and screamed with inarticulate rage!

Forever too late now to hide her sin in her own remorseful bosom! She had proven most bitterly that "He that concealeth his sin shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh it shall find mercy."

She was taken home; but here her pitiful, evil story was in every mouth. "Poor Miss Harlowe was going in her grandmother's ways, and what else could you expect? She would soon be as bad as the old lady; it seemed a doomed family." "There had always been something queer

about her, but this explains all. These illnesses, when she shut herself up, ah, it meant merely that she was intoxicated. A habitual drunkard ! seen coming out of a gin-house ! A disgrace to the church !” And so the miserable stream of talk flowed on and on. Church discipline could not now be withheld. Miss Harlowe came to herself, and more deeply horrified and penitent than ever before, was visited by her pastor and Dr. Calderwood, mercifully sent as representatives of the session, and was informed that she must be publicly suspended from church membership until such time as her reformation was evidenced.

And now that this great blow had fall-

en, now that she was openly exposed and disgraced, Miss Harlowe could not endure to meet any person's eye ; she could not enter her church ; she loathed her native city ; and her purpose, heretofore vague and spasmodic, now became clear and fixed, that she would find a new home beyond the seas. She reasoned to herself that the excitement and interest of a sea voyage would begin her cure ; that once landed in the New World, in full possession of her faculties, she would take refuge in some family where temptation could not possibly be in her way. That there, rested and consoled, she would still longer combat her appetite, and that as restiveness began to come upon her, she

would leave the United States and go to her cousin near Montreal; there she would have friendly aid in her efforts at reform, and she hoped by God's grace finally to live down her besetting sin.

Having come to this determination for her future, Miss Harlowe wrote two letters. The first was to a lady who had been a somewhat intimate acquaintance of her girlhood, older than herself, one whom she had always held in high respect, and with whom at long intervals she had corresponded. She told this friend that she intended hereafter to make her home in Canada, in the village where her only cousin lived; but that on her way thither she desired to spend a few weeks with her

in Baltimore, and that she trusted that a guest from the home-land would not be unwelcome.

Her second letter was to her cousin, the Rev. Malcom Morton. While to her friend she had not breathed a word of her temptations, her failures, and the grievous battle which she was making with a depraved appetite, to her cousin she gave a full statement of her wretched history, of her public disgrace, her suspension from church membership, and her assurance that in her own country there was no hope of her reform. She desired a new home, and to be near him, that he and his wife might help her in her efforts toward a nobler life. She thought that he had better

buy her a pleasant house of moderate size with a garden. The cares of housekeeping and hospitality might be beneficial to her, and she would not dare intrude her dangerous example in his household and before his children.

In due time she received answers to both letters. Mrs. Wortham expressed great pleasure in the thought of her visit, and hoped that her stay would be profitable and prolonged. Her cousin met the sorrowful outpouring of her burdened soul in a spirit of Christian sympathy and wisdom. He told her that he trusted she would find her new home and way of life the beginning of better things; that the friendship and help of himself and his

family would always be hers. He hesitated to take the responsibility of purchasing a house for her; therefore he begged her to make his house her home while she examined the properties offered and chose for herself.

These kindly letters shone like a light on Miss Harlowe's future; once more she began to hope. She looked forward with eagerness to being where the dark blots of her personal and family history were unknown, and she hastened her preparations to set out for a land which to her imagination was an Arcadia free from temptation. To go to a strange country was to her no exile; her own land, when she had asked food, had given her—a ser-

pent. The biting poison which gnawed her heart and maddened her brain, was protected by law and surrounded her on every side ; to her the tender mercies of the Government had been most cruel ; her familiar friends had been her enemies, and she turned to the shores of the New World and saw them bright with a glory which, alas, was but the product of her own fond dream !

She sailed in a fine steamer from Glasgow ; the beautiful shores of the Clyde, busy with ship-building, grand with castles and palaces, and brightened by white villages, had no beauty to her ; they were darkened by a curse ; she rejoiced when the fading spring daylight showed her the

river widening to the sea. The next day in the sterile shores of Truro, and the rocky Colonnades of the great Causeway, she looked her last on the Old World, and gladly set her face to the tumultuous North Atlantic.

But alas for those whose strength is from without, not from within ; who rely for succor upon external things, and not upon the grace of God in the soul, oftentimes the very circumstances to which we look for help betray us ; and our carefully chosen surroundings prove but an Egypt, a broken reed to pierce the leaning hand.

In this flight from her ordinary surroundings, but toward new surroundings, and not toward God, Miss Harlowe's ex-

perience was like that graphically described by the prophet Amos: "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him."

Sometimes God permits those upon whom He designs to have mercy, to find by bitter experience the fallacy of trusting in anything human, that they may cease to stay their courage upon horses or chariots and may lean only on Him who speaks in righteousness, Mighty to save.

Miss Harlowe had supposed that the novelty, excitement, and the sense of the precariousness of life at sea, would be a sure preventive of temptation during her

journey to New York. However, she was hardly well out upon the sea, when the water roughened with a heavy wind, and she became violently ill. She had now no interests, no excitements, no fear of danger or dread of death, or looking to the future, nothing, in fact, but horrible physical distress, which she longed to be rid of on any terms. Distracted with headache and nausea, unable to leave her state-room, she thought nothing of past nor of future—she was absorbed in the present distress. Then came the usual ship-board remedies.

“Drink champagne, as much as you can swallow,” said one of her fellow-passengers.

"Brandy is your remedy," said the ship's doctor, and he sent by the stewardess stiff glasses of brandy.

"There's nothing like good strong whisky toddy, with a lemon in it," said the stewardess, in her zeal to comfort a passenger who looked well-to-do.

"Tell Miss Harlowe," said the captain, "that I say that nothing will suit her case so well as a good bottle of porter, the first thing in the morning," and accordingly the steward sent in the porter by daylight. Who was to hinder? Somebody made their money out of the champagne, brandy, whisky, and porter, and Miss Harlowe was fed on these, until appetite, ever yielding toward these entice-

ments, was rampant, and then she demanded wine and whisky and porter and brandy on her own account, and the friendly passengers stared at the amount of liquors the lady could consume; the doctor shrugged his shoulders, and whispered to the stewardess, "Here is no new taste." The steward winked at his nearest assistant when a fresh bottle was demanded for room No. 8; the stewardess wondered and was shocked, and had seen such things before, and was divided between contempt for a woman who loved liquor and was undeniably drunk, and her regard for prospective fees, and her respect for "good clothes," and jewelry, and a handsome toilette apparatus. And so

at last this most miserable journey came to an end. When the ship came in sight of land, Miss Harlowe, recovering sobriety, but shaken sorely by illness, remedies, and indulgence, was up and dressed, sitting upon the deck.

She sat by herself, looking gloomily upon the new coast. One part of her hope had sorely failed. She had expected to be sailing up this grand bay, strong and well, and fit to begin her journey through the United States; a journey which should be a sort of triumphal progress, marked by conquests over self and temptation. Now, her face was haggard, and her hand trembled, and the ship people eyed her askance. Why did the ship

move so slowly ; would she never reach the land ? She longed to be out of sight of those to whom she had betrayed herself ; she would hurry on, and in the safety of her good friend's home she would be sure to be set apart from temptation, and once more she could "begin again." She concluded to go on at once to Baltimore, she dared not trust herself in a hotel ; she heard that the hotels in this innocent New World had bars, and abundant liquor in all forms, and she did not know what she might do if she went into one of them. She had had no liquor now for two days ; the morrow would be the third day of abstinence, and she would reach Mrs. Wortham, and in the care of a good,

gracious woman she would be safe. Her thirst was great still, but conscience was awake, and she was fighting for her life; once let her get where liquor was out of ready reach, and she could make a firm stand.

The stewardess finding that Miss Harlowe would leave the ship in the morning to take the train at once for Baltimore, felt that the poor lady was hardly fit to pilot herself in the strange place, and volunteered to go to the depot with her, and put her on the car.

She did so, and at the depot told Miss Harlowe that she would telegraph to her friends to meet her at the station in Baltimore, lest she should lose her way.

Mrs. Wortham accordingly received this telegram : " Meet Miss Harlowe with a carriage at the five o'clock train, she is not well."

Mr. Wortham was absent from home with the two elder daughters. Mrs. Wortham was suffering from a severe cold, and had an elderly guest to entertain ; she therefore deputed her son to meet Miss Harlowe.

" I suppose," she said to her old visitor, " that Miss Harlowe has suffered terribly from sea-sickness."

When Miss Harlowe arrived, Mrs. Wortham was shocked to see her so tremulous, so wan and nervous. " You must have been suffering terribly !" she cried.

“Indeed I have,” said Miss Harlowe. “I have not had a well day since we left the Irish coast, and our voyage was seventeen days long.”

“I am so sorry, but rest and the settling of your stomach will do you good; you had better go at once to bed; my chambermaid will help you, and unpack your portmanteau; will you not have some supper first?”

Miss Harlowe declared that the idea of food was painful to her; and this was true—she had not felt inclined to eat during the entire day, and now she was suffering from faintness, and instead of craving food, she longed frantically for

liquor, yet felt a certain comfort in thinking that she could not get it.

The maid having helped Miss Harlowe to bed, came and informed her mistress that the "poor lady was very sick and trembly; she ought to have something to strengthen her up, or she would be very ill, sure." If Mrs. Wortham had known the circumstances of the affair, she would have given her patient cream, and then strong beef-tea; but the state of the case did not enter her mind; this good lady had never seen a woman intoxicated, and did not know that it was within the range of possibilities that any friend of hers could have the awful craving for drink of

some miserable inebriate who gets sent to Randall's Island for sixty days. She went up to Miss Harlowe's room, inquired into her symptoms, expressed her sympathy, and said in conclusion: "I have no doubt that a little whisky and water will tone up your stomach, strengthen you, and induce sleep. Will you have it hot or cold?"

Poor Miss Harlowe closed her eyes and made no answer. "I will send Sara up with it," said Mrs. Wortham, "and pray do not rise to breakfast; we must nurse you for a little. I will see you before I go to bed."

In a few minutes Sara arrived with a tray bearing a glass, a little bowl of sugar, a lemon, a cracker, two teaspoons, a pair

of small pitchers, one with hot and one with cold water, a spray of tea-roses, and—a pint bottle of whisky!

“Just carry up the bottle, Sara, and she can mix it for herself. I might get it too strong for her,” had said Mrs. Wortham. Sara set the tray on a stand by the bed, poured a little whisky into the glass, and left the room.

Again a prey! The Fire Circle was unbroken still! Here where she had been sure of safety, this kind and careful woman, in the abundant frankness of her heart, had shut her friend more closely in to that round of horrors. Miss Harlowe had fought hard, but with this craving, this opportunity, the fumes of this direful drink

loading the air of her apartment, what could she do? She yielded! Raising herself on her elbow, she drank and drank again.

At ten Mrs. Wortham came softly into the room; her guest was soundly sleeping. In the morning she came again; she slept still. The tray was near the bed and Mrs. Wortham took it up. She saw that the whisky bottle was about empty.

“Poor Miss Harlowe!” she said, “she is so weak that she has upset this bottle,” and thought no more of it. All that day, which was Thursday, Miss Harlowe was reported ill, sleepy, and able to take little food. The fact was, she had now lost control of her appetite, but pride was striving

to conceal her shame. Would she have a doctor? She almost resented the idea, she would be better next day. More liquor she must and would have, but was ashamed to send for it. Thursday evening she sent Sara to buy her a *pint of cologne*. Friday she was still in bed, flushed, red-eyed, sometimes incoherent.

Sara predicted brain fever, and Mrs. Wortham only hoped her friend had not contracted some dangerous disease on ship-board. She could not take the responsibility of the case upon herself, and on Saturday morning she said, as she entered the room, "My dear Miss Harlowe, you must see a physician; I have sent for my own medical adviser, a skillful and a

most godly old man, friend and physician both. He is below stairs, and as soon as I have smoothed your bed and hair a little more, I will bring him up."

"Then I must see him alone!" spoke up Miss Harlowe, sharply.

"Certainly — as you like," said Mrs. Wortham, surprised.

"Don't open that blind, please; let the room be rather dark; light hurts my head."

Mrs. Wortham introduced the doctor and departed. The doctor asked a few questions, felt her pulse, let a little more light into the room, asked more questions, then suddenly throwing open the blind, he looked into his patient's eyes.

Miss Harlowe flung her arm over her

face. "Oh, doctor! you see it; you know it. I am the most miserable of women—a vile inebriate!"

"How is this?" said the doctor; "here is some mystery; from all that Mrs. Wortham has told me of you, I should not have anticipated this trouble. Had you not better look upon me as a friend, and tell me your whole story?"

The gentle tone, and the feeling that the worst was now discovered, induced Miss Harlowe to be frank; she detailed her family history, her own miseries and temptations, the flight from her besetting sin, and that sin pursuing or accompanying her, like the brownie in the fairy tale, who from the baggage of the household

who are flying from him, cries "We're a' flittin'."

"Here at least I was sure of being safe," she said, "and here Mrs. Wortham herself brought me my destruction! Good kind lady as she is, such troubles as mine have never come under her observation; she did it in the innocence of her heart. And what shall I do now? Again I must fly. I can not stay here and have my besetting sin known; I can not stand as a moral pariah in this safe and godly family."

"So they will not consider you," said the doctor. "Not one of them suspects the true state of the case, and not one of them will know of it but Mrs. Wortham. At once her best efforts will be enlisted

in your behalf; stay here and she will help you. I shall send you a prescription or two; keep your room until Tuesday morning; by that time your system will have returned to a quiet state, then come out to do something better. You must conquer or die."

"Or conquer *and* die," said Miss Harlowe, "perhaps I can do that."

When the doctor had explained to Mrs. Wortham the real nature of her friend's disorder, that good lady was deeply troubled.

"What have I done?" she cried; "this unfortunate creature trusted to me for help, and what has been my part?"

"Let this teach you," said the doctor,

“that if it is dangerous to play with edge tools, it is doubly dangerous to play with poisons. He who is cut with a tool, thereafter is generally careful in handling it; but he who is poisoned with liquor loves his poison. Mrs. Wortham, it is *never* safe to give alcoholic drink to *any person whatever*. I would not prescribe it to my own mother, nor allow it to be prescribed for me. There is always something better to be used, and there is always danger in that cup.”

For two months after this Miss Harlowe remained with Mrs. Wortham; the cares of her friend for her were diligent; she watched over her, counseled and encouraged her. Miss Harlowe's naturally

good mind, and her wide reading and graceful manners, rendered her a universal favorite; wherever she went she pleased. In the family of Mrs. Wortham's brother she was especially esteemed, and they urged her to return to the city during the ensuing winter and make them a visit.

At midsummer she went to Montreal, and there meeting her cousin Morton, proceeded to his home. As no property suitable for her purchase was at that time offered for sale, she remained a welcome guest in his family. This new home was especially helpful and attractive to her, and as a barrier between herself and her dangerous propensity, she took a most solemn vow that if she there indulged in

liquor, she would remain no longer under that roof.

Mr. Morton had high hopes of her entire reform, and all went well until February, when she purchased a pleasant cottage not far from her cousin's parsonage, and ordered made the necessary repairs. While these were going on, and Miss Harlowe was undergoing a good deal of fatigue in overseeing the work in progress, in ordering the making up of her household linen, and in going to Montreal to buy furniture, her deadly passion assailed her with unwonted power. She had by long abstinence become stronger to struggle with appetite, and she did so in silence; her natural reticence, mingled

with pride and shame, preventing her making a confidant of her cousin.

Mr Morton, lulled to security by her long self-denial, had forgotten danger, and at this time set off with his wife for Quebec to attend the marriage of his sister-in-law. During his absence Miss Harlowe went to Montreal and returned feverish and exhausted ; getting out of the car she twisted her ankle, and on arriving at her home the servant sent for the physician. The doctor found his patient semi-conscious, feeble, in apparently a very low physical condition, and proceeded to feed her on milk and brandy, and brandy and raw egg. This treatment opened for her once more the flood-gates of destruction ;

she was carried away by her craving for drink ; and when Mr. Morton returned home he found her recovering from several days of intoxication. The very next morning she received a letter from Mrs. Wortham's brother, Mr. Leslie, entreating her to pay his wife a long visit. She said to her cousin :

“ I shall go to Baltimore for a lengthened stay ; indeed until my house is finished. I can not stay here and render your family the subject of invidious remarks and surmises. I can not look your children in the face. I vowed I would not intrude upon you if I erred in this way, while sharing your hospitality.”

“ It is no intrusion ; this catastrophe is

the result of the doctor's ignorance of your case, and is the outcome of a false idea of alcohol as a medicine. Do not leave us. Think how long you have stood firmly. We will not allow another occasion of falling to be presented to you."

"Such occasions are bound to present themselves to those who are ready to fall," replied Miss Harlowe. "Do not hinder me. My fault makes me restless. I shall go to Baltimore. My house will be ready for me in May, and then I will return; I will leave my final arrangements of the place to you and to your wife."

Seeing that she was persistent, Mr. Morton sought traveling company for her, and found a gentleman and lady

going from Montreal to Philadelphia. Miss Harlowe wrote to Mrs. Leslie, telling when she might expect her. The journey was safe until she left Philadelphia; at this time she was suffering from a violent headache, having slept very little the previous night, being unable to take her usual food, and also tried by the very great cold. In the car between Philadelphia and Baltimore, Miss Harlowe grew worse; she shared the seat of a very agreeable lady who expressed much sympathy for her. Miss Harlowe mentioned the length of her journey and the various causes of her present suffering. "You look nearly distracted," said the lady.

"I feel so," said Miss Harlowe; "I wish

I were in Baltimore. I hardly know what I am doing, I am so faint, and my head is so giddy and painful."

"Yes, yes; well, you must take something, a half a glass of good whisky will set you all right. I always use it when I am traveling; it conquers nausea and headache." And suiting act to word, she took from her satchel a flask of strong liquor, and in her own silver mug, made Miss Harlowe a potion and pressed it to her half-resisting lips. "There! you look better already! Now, in half an hour I will give you another dose, and you will be feeling first rate when you get to Baltimore."

"Perhaps the lady is not used to it, and

it may injure her," said a remonstrating voice from the next seat.

"Oh, it can not hurt her. It might be too much for her if she were at home and quite well, but feeling as she does, it merely restores the lost tone of the system, preserves the balance, as you may say ; see how much better she is !"

In fact, the wonted stimulant was having its effect. Miss Harlowe's hand ceased to shake, her pallid cheek and lips took a better hue, the look of pain and exhaustion passed out of her face, and her whole being shared the familiar excitation.

"See there, now !" said her new medical adviser, proud of the improvement in her patient. "Such another dose pretty

soon will make a new woman of you. I'm a temperance woman, of course, but I'm not a fanatic. I believe every creature of God is good and to be used with thankfulness and discretion. Whisky is a powerful agent for good if it is properly used, but it ought to stay in the hands of sober people, not of drinking people."

"And how long would they be sure to *be* sober people with that in their hands? Most drunkards were sober people once," said the voice from the next seat, and then the car stopped and the speaker got out.

Said Miss Harlowe's seat mate: "A very pretty lady, but evidently a foolish fanatic. We are above such things; now

you must have another cup of whisky and water. Was that last sweet enough? We shall be in Baltimore in half an hour, and you will be able to get comfortably to your friends."

"I hope so," said Miss Harlowe, "for I find I told them to meet me at the train next later than this, so no one will be looking for me. I must go to them alone, but they are near the depot."

"I am so sorry I am going right on! If I stopped here I would see you to your place. But you will be all right. I have put an extra tablespoonful in here, and that will keep your heart up!"

When Miss Harlowe left the car the liquor taken had so seized on her ex-

hausted system and empty stomach, that she scarcely knew what she did. She vaguely determined to walk to Mr. Leslie's, that the cold air and the exercise might quiet her. But as had happened in Edinburgh, her brain was turned; she saw an open door of a liquor-shop, went in and took a strong glassful. She was no longer master of herself. Bewildered she mistook the house, and instead of going to Mr. Leslie's, went next door, stalked past the servant, entered the parlor, and by her wild demeanor almost threw the lady of the house into a fit. This terrified person sent to call Mr. Leslie to her aid, and he, dismayed, discovered in the intruder, his own expected guest.

He sent for Mrs. Wortham. That good woman explained the case to him, and to her husband, who accompanied her to his house.

“What shall we do?” queried Mr. Leslie.

“Clara,” said Mr. Wortham to his wife, “this poor woman is a stranger in a strange land, sorely tempted, and greatly falling. We must not be as priests and Levites who passed the sufferer by on the other side, but as the Good Samaritan. Let us take this sister home; she may yet be more than conqueror through the grace of our God.”

The burden assumed by these Christian people proved greater than they had ex-

pected, yet they carried it cheerfully as unto the Lord. Miss Harlowe fell very ill with gastric fever, and then with inflammatory rheumatism, and until June was an invalid—part of the time in imminent danger of death—in their house. Their cares for her were unbounded, and rendered, as bids the apostle, without grudging. During this long sickness Miss Harlowe seemed to enter on a great mental and spiritual change; her physical strength was much broken, and her bodily feeling seemed more controllable than before. Mrs. Wortham noticed this to their physician.

“I hope so,” said the good man. “I hope that she will be enabled to conquer

her appetite, and spend the rest of her days in peace. She has a fatal disease of the heart. She may live for years, and she may drop off at any moment. I have not told her of this. I do not wish her to pass the rest of her sojourning here in fear of death, but in fear of sinning against God, and coming short of the heavenly inheritance."

"In spite of all her failures," said Mrs. Wortham, "I believe Miss Harlowe is a Christian woman. She seems to deplore her sin with the bitterness and brokenness of spirit which David exhibited. She has a close acquaintance with the Scripture and seems to have a deep spiritual understanding of Bible truths. She appears

to me more sinned against than sinning. What a fate has pursued her! She was born with this deadly appetite for alcoholic stimulants; she has been surrounded all her life with strong temptations; wherever she has tried to fly, she has met her foe; she has been Circled by Fire; but I trust that Heavenly Love will look on her compassionately at last saying, 'Is not this a brand snatched from the burning?'"

Early in July Miss Harlowe took a grateful leave of this friend—who, if she had unwittingly sinned against her, had made a noble atonement for the error—and returned to her cousin's home. Her own home was in readiness for her and

she began housekeeping for herself. She took an elderly Christian woman for a servant; a young girl, an orphan whose health had broken down in school-teaching, for a companion; and adopted a little girl left destitute, thus forming for herself home ties, and seeking to make her means go as far as possible in providing for others. After two months of this family life, suspecting possibly that her own health was precarious, she made her will, leaving half of her property to her cousin, her jewelry and richer articles of dress to Mrs. Wortham, and her house and the remaining half of her funded property to be used as, and to support, an orphanage for six girls, who were to be under the general

supervision of Mr. Morton, at a proper age be taught some means of livelihood, and at seventeen make room for other helpless ones to take their places.

A year from the period of her will-making Miss Harlowe invited her cousin and his wife to tea with her. They noticed that she looked very worn and pale. As they were sitting alone at the tea-table, after the meal was finished, Miss Harlowe said: "I have now passed eighteen months without tasting liquor. Since I was sixteen such a period of release has never been mine. I want you to thank God for me. I do not find my appetite dead; the longing comes upon me fiercely at times. I have just passed through a week of

torment, of craving, of almost yielding, of feeling my feet standing on slippery places, of strong crying to God for aid. And He has helped; He reached from above and took me, and drew me out of deep waters. I feel like the worn swimmer tossed half lifeless on the strand, hardly a breath left in him, and yet feeling in all his languor a realization of safety. I do not dare to think that this conflict will be the last. But I have hope, that having conquered once, I may conquer again. Sometimes I think that I shall die in such a battle with invisible foes. I have indeed said to God: 'Let me die rather than offend;' and if I do die, I pray that it may be on the field of victory, and not of defeat;

that like the Romans of old, even in death my face may be bravely to the enemy, and fixed in resolution not to yield."

She spoke with a low, yet clear and earnest voice; her two cousins watched her with reverence and sympathy as she spoke. Even as the last word fell from her lips a swift change swept over her face; she sank slowly back in her chair and—was dead. On that field of her victory some flying Parthian had sent back an arrow in retreat, and a conqueror she died.

Laid in that peaceful haven where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, this our sore-tried sister has finished her warfare and has gone to join

those blessed throngs who have come "out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

THE END.

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