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THE
BEST FELLOW IN THE WORLD.

HIS HAPS AND MISHAPS.

NARRATED FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT.

BY

MRS. JULIA MCNAIR WRIGHT,

*Author of "Almost a Priest," "John and Demijohn," "Jug-Or-Not,"
"How Could He Escape?" etc., etc.*



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“HOW COULD YOU KILL IT?” Page 52.

PREFACE.

BY REV. THEO. L. CUYLER.



IT is not needful that I write a single word to introduce Mrs. J. McNAIR WRIGHT to the American people. Her ready and graceful pen has been a "door-key" to unlock ten thousand hearts; and she has been a giver of good gifts to our Sunday-schools and firesides. Nor does this volume need my commendation. It tells its own story. Like her previous writings, it is destined to a wide circulation and a happy influence.

Nowhere has the destructive havoc of the social glass been so manifest and terrible as among that class of young men who are popularly styled "the best fellows in the world." Their excitable temperaments and generous natures make them an easy prey to the tempter. They, in turn, become the most fascinating tempters of others. One such "sinner destroyeth much good," and will poison a whole circle of companions.

A touching and eloquent letter now lies before me, which was written by a former resident of Mrs. Wright's own State—Ohio. It is in an elegant style of composition and

penmanship. The writer was once in a prosperous business and courted in society. But from a charity-hospital—in sickness, poverty, and want—he sends these bitter confessions of a broken heart :

“How I have so far escaped with my life is, to me, a miracle. I have been at death’s portal a score of times during the past few years. And what has been the cause of all my misery and wretchedness? *Rum*. How well I remember the first glass of liquor I ever took! It was in Columbus at the — Hotel. I took it with Mr. K—, and I drank it at the time under protest. Could K— have seen the fruits of that ‘sherry cobbler,’ that *one drink*, he might better have given me a potion of strychnine in its stead. I am an embodiment of the fruits of that one drink. The bottle has been the skeleton in my closet ever since.”

There are thousands of just such “best fellows in the world,” who are rapidly rushing on just such a doom. This volume goes out as a warning signal to ward off the unwary youth from the fatal first glass. May the blessing of God go with this faithful “word in season”! And may the blessings of many who “were ready to perish” be the reward of its gifted author!

CONTENTS.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| PREFACE, | 3 |
| CHAPTER I. | |
| The Best Fellow's Family, | 7 |
| CHAPTER II. | |
| The Beguiling Young Man, | 41 |
| CHAPTER III. | |
| Geoffrey the Student, | 75 |
| CHAPTER IV. | |
| Geoffrey the Royal, | 110 |
| CHAPTER V. | |
| The Trust Betrayed, | 141 |
| CHAPTER VI. | |
| A New Profession, | 176 |
| CHAPTER VII. | |
| The Best Fellow in Love, | 210 |
| CHAPTER VIII. | |
| A Pleasant Prescription, | 242 |
| CHAPTER IX. | |
| Charlotte's Prodigal, | 278 |
| CHAPTER X. | |
| The King is Dead, | 319 |
| APPENDIX, | 348 |

THE BEST FELLOW IN THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

TO know a good person is ever a satisfaction, but the happiness of knowing the Best Fellow in the World was reserved solely for the friends of Geoffrey Hunter. The fact of Geoffrey's pre-eminence is abundantly attested; he was by birth, by act, by acclamation, the very Best Fellow in the World. Moulded in prodigal nature's choicest fashion, of a rich and generous disposition, jolly and free-handed, he was lifted up to a throne as the king of good fellows by a plebiscitum of all who knew him. Geoffrey Hunter, Geoffrey the unrivalled, Geoffrey the good fellow, we would type him by the ripest fruit of the most glorious of Octobers — a very child of the sun, as if the day-

god had bronzed his cheek and touched his flowing hair with tawny gold, while all his words were cheerful and sweet from the overflowing satisfaction of his heart. It is evident that, happiest of all who knew him, must have been this good fellow's family. The family consisted of father, mother, and two sisters; of these sisters, Charlotte was Geoffrey's twin, and Eva several years his junior. Between Geoffrey and Charlotte there was not that close similarity that sometimes exists between twins. Lying in their cradle, Charlotte had probably stolen from Geoffrey any little tempers, obstinacy, irritability, or sharpness that might have made him less than the king of good fellows; so, while Geoffrey was left all honey and sweetness, Charlotte was a commingling of gentle and hard, of bitter and sweet, of genial and sharp. By a law of compensation, Geoffrey had most likely won some qualities that rightly belonged to his twin-sister, and here, as ever, Geoffrey's happy star had aided him. He had gathered in all those little talents

and facilities which should have been Charlotte's, and this made him such an "Admirable Crichton" that he was every one's delight. Geoffrey could do anything and everything. He could learn a lesson while other people were finding the place; he could compose a song and sing it; he could draw a caricature, tell a story, make a killing pun, deliver a fluent speech, argue both sides of a question at the same time, convince all who heard him, and yet never seem inconsistent. Nature had evidently designed this young man for a lawyer! As for Charlotte, she could only mark out a plan, and diligently follow it up to its conclusion; if she could not, like that pink and admiration of all virgins, Elizabeth of England, swear a round oath, she could say that unbecoming word "no" whenever it seemed appropriate. She could not, like Geoffrey, do half-a-dozen things at the same time, but she could do some one thing thoroughly. While Geoffrey was beautiful, his twin-sister was neither handsome nor plain; her parents called her Charlotte,

and Eva called her Lottie, while Geoffrey's name for her was Charley, and that seemed to fit her best of all.

During all their early years, these twins were inseparable. It was necessary that this should be so, for it needed Geoffrey's *bonhomie* to smooth Charlotte's path in everyday life, and Charlotte's decision and zeal to keep Geoffrey in action. At home, when little tasks were given them, Charlotte's duty was quickly done; but Geoffrey, fully resolved to mind his mother, must yet catch butterflies for Eva; convert himself into an elephant draped in a table-cover that she might ride on his back; frolic with the dog, because the dog was lonesome; sing an Irish song to cheer the maid, and chat with the hired man "to make the poor fellow feel at home," until Charlotte either performed Geoffrey's task alone or helped him do it, her own concluded.

It was much the same at school. Geoffrey loved and honored his teacher, and meant to please him. He also meant to please the boys.

Geoffrey could learn his lesson by taking one look at it; and in the matter of firing balls of chewed paper, he was as skilful as a sharpshooter. As the boys enjoyed seeing paper-balls fired, our Geoffrey was constrained to occupy much time in stuccoing the schoolroom ceiling and ornamenting the walls with bas-relief; as laughter was healthy, he produced untimely bursts of it by making astonishing grimaces, and for popularity's sake even caricatured the dear teacher, his defects, misfortunes, and deformities, and never meant the least harm in the world. In fact, he protested with tears in his eyes that he had far rather pain himself than his pedagogue.

In such circumstances, it was well that Charlotte was Geoffrey's seat-mate, to hide the paper intended for balls, to destroy secretly the caricatures, and to remind her brother that the lessons must at least be looked at.

Finding from the very dawn of reason that Geoffrey always said "yes" and invariably yielded to the last speaker, Char-

lotte constituted herself a vigilance committee to be near her brother, and when inopportune propositions were made for doing things dangerous or forbidden, and ill-advisers said "Let's do," Charlotte promptly and firmly put in "Let's don't," and so full often won the day. Charlotte was known in her family as a wise, reliable, energetic child, very good to have in the family, but nothing to compare with Geoffrey, the delightful, only son. Eva, the youngest child, was small and pretty, curly-haired and satin-skinned, "cut out for lady," said her mother, and who had a better right to know?

The father was a quiet, kind, plodding farmer, who had made a very good fortune by his work, and still worked on. The mother, elderly before any of her children were born, was fat and smiling; wrinkled in face, old-fashioned in notions and in dress; wore two pair of spectacles, and did quantities of knitting-work. The mother clung to old-time ways; she had a fashionable parlor to please friends and

children; and for her favorite sitting-room claimed a home-made carpet, a wide fire-



place, and splint-bottomed chairs. Her children's bedrooms gloried in sets of modern furniture in polished walnut; she insisted on sleeping in a high four-posted cherry-wood bedstead, dressed out wit' winged curtains, feather ticks, and patch

A glad, good home was this

were love and health in abundance, where no one overworked, and none was idle.

In school studies and out-door sports the twins had kept together, until, when Geoffrey was fourteen, his father made arrangements to send him to boarding-school. The only son must be educated. Mr. Hunter said nothing about sending the girls away, for he had thought nothing of it. They could read, sew, knit, and keep house; he had even distant visions of a piano; but he had a notion that girls needed much less book-learning than boys. Geoffrey was to go to school, and his trunk was packed. Charlotte had watched proceedings, gloomy and brooding.

It was October, and the leaves were changing splendidly. Geoffrey was to go next day, and, in the afternoon previous to the prospective parting, these twins, who had never been separated, wandered off arm-in-arm for a walk. They turned down a lane lined on either side with sumac and blackberry bushes dressed in flame color. On a gray boulder a redbird sat

preening his bright feathers with his scarlet bill, and turning his tufted head from side to side.

Here, crossing the rude bridge, they came to a clear spring that welled for ever in a natural basin of living rock; and now there was the barn that held the hay of remote fields, the barn where they had sported many an hour, and which had changed to fairy-land as they sat on fragrant piles of new-mown clover and told tales of elf and goblin. Now the road swept round in a grand curve, and they were between a fence draped in ivy and the green borders of the Happy River, which ran gaily over its bed of rock, where purple mussel-shells clung in the soft banks; the trees, beech, elm, and maple, reached over the fostering waters on either side. Now, on the fallen moss-covered trunk of a butternut-tree, the pair sat down, and for the first time spoke of their parting. As they talked, the greatness of the coming evil grew before Charlotte's mind.

“O Charley! what can I do without you!” cried Geoffrey, with indistinct memories of lavished praises, of mittens mended, of handkerchiefs kept from losing, of sums and compositions neatly copied at the last minute, when he had been too busy “obliging somebody” to attend to his own business.

“You needn’t know what you can do,” broke forth Charlotte, “for I’m going too. I shall go home and tell them so now.”

She jumped from her mossy seat and started homewards, Geoffrey, as usual, admiring and agreeing.

“I’m going to school with Geof,” cried Charlotte, rushing into her parents’ presence. “Mother, you can pack up my trunk!”

“Why, who ever heard of such a thing!” said her father.

“And why not?” demanded Charlotte. “I’m as old as Geof, and I know as much as he does, and keep even with him, why can’t I go to school?”

“Sure enough!” said her father, getting a new light on the subject.

“But your clothes are not ready,” remonstrated her mother.

“Never mind the clothes. I’ve got plenty, and then you can send me some more, if you want to.”

“But they won’t take you; it’s a boys’ school,” interposed her father, looking greatly perplexed.

“Send Geof to a school where they will take me. We have never been away from each other—and we cannot be. Geof would not know how to get on if I wasn’t there.”

“I wish you *would* send Geoffrey to a school where they took both boys and girls, and send Charlotte with him,” said Mrs. Hunter to her husband. She laid down her knitting, and solemnly scanned her son through one pair of spectacles, while the other pair were set high on her forehead. Then she reversed the position of the spectacles, and bringing down the upper pair, she reviewed him through those; then she set both pair of spectacles on the top of her head, and scrutinized

Master Geoffrey with those mild, blue eyes that could never see harm in any one.

“Yes,” she said; “our Geoffrey is a good boy, the best boy in the world; and yet, come to think of it, it seems as if it is our Charlotte that has brought him through straight so far, and as if without her he’d be—a little *too good* for anything. Bread can be overlight, and yeast overlively, and cake too rich, and coffee too sweet; and I do think, father, you’d better keep those two together. Likely the Lord knew that they needed each other when he made ’em twins.”

Charlotte saw that her cause was won, and over her grave, resolute child-face dawned a smile like the creeping up of crocus bloom in spring.

“The keeping together cannot always be,” said Mr. Hunter, touched with some new sorrow at the thought

“Geoffrey is to study law, Charlotte, and what then?”

“I shall study law, too,” said Charlotte the bold.

“But he must go to college, and *there* they will not let girls go.”

“They ought to,” said Charlotte—“girls that have heads on them, and will study, and can pay. When Geoffrey goes to college, I will go to the same place, and get the same books, and see him, and learn the same lessons every day.”

“Mother,” said Mr. Hunter, turning to his wife, “mother, I believe she will.”

Very likely her father's faith had much to do with fixing this girl in her resolves. A new school was selected where the brother and sister might be sent. The preparations were hurried, for Charlotte insisted that she did not need a large outfit. With some strange prescience the girl said to her mother: “Don't do too much for me now, mother; Geoffrey will cost more than you think. Save your money for him.”

When Mr. Hunter arrived at “Walford Seminary” with his two children, the faculty at once fell in love with the handsome, gracious lad, who looked into their

faces with such a genial smile, spoke such cheery, prompt replies, and seemed so thoroughly to know what to do with himself. The preceptress, a woman wise in experience, studied Charlotte's face for a few moments, and announced that she should make her the room-mate of little Zell Ranleigh. Now, little Zell was an orphan with a small fortune, who was sent to school because no one knew what else to do with her, and had become in some sort the baby of the establishment. In concluding to put Charlotte with Zell, the preceptress showed that she placed unlimited confidence in the stranger. While Mr. Hunter went with his son and the principal to the large stone building, where, in charge of their tutors, the boys had their lodging and study rooms, the preceptress took Charlotte to her room and her new companion. Zell, a charming, vivacious seven-year-old, having learned her short tasks, was dressing a doll; her heart went out at once to Charlotte, she gave her a kiss, and remarked that

now there would be some one to see if her lessons were learned, and her hair combed straight, and they could tell stories every night after they went to bed. With a motherliness natural to her, Charlotte assumed much charge of the affectionate Zell, and felt quite at home, especially at the table, where Zell sat on one side of her, and Geoffrey on the other. The twins were in the same classes, and were permitted to see each other whenever they desired. The watch-care which Charlotte exercised over her brother at home was not relaxed in school.

There was a confectioner's shop opposite Charlotte's window, and she observed that whenever her brother went there, which was not seldom, he was accompanied by several friends — friends collected about Geoffrey as flies about honey — and they all came out eating. She divined that Geoffrey treated them all. It therefore behooved Charlotte to save her pocket-money.

She was looking from her window, one

day, counting the group leaving the cake-store, when Zell asked: "Are you going to buy your blue silk apron, like the other girls, to-night?" Blue silk aprons had been the rage at Walford.

"No," replied Charlotte crisply; "I haven't the money."

"Dear me! I'll lend you some. I've got twenty cents," said Zell.

"I never borrow," said Charlotte curtly; then, seeing the child's bright face shadowing, she kissed her.

It was only the next day that Geoffrey came to his sister's room, saying, "Charley" (he always called her Charley when he wanted something)—"O Charley, my dear, can you lend me a couple of dollars? I'm cleaned out."

Charlotte quietly handed him the money he asked, counting it out, and at no pains to conceal that it took the last cent she had.

Geoffrey saw it. "Cleans you out, too, don't it, Charley? Well, never mind, I'll pay you back, certain sure." He pocketed the money securely.

“There, now!” cried Zell, who stood near, for she was always on hand when Geoffrey came in, “I’m afraid you told an *untrue*, Charlotte; you said you had not the money to get a blue silk apron—like all the girls here.”

“There, Charley,” said Geoffrey, “I hope you’ll never say ‘can’t afford.’ I never do. It sounds close. Never be mean, my dear sis. And did you really go without that kind of aprons they are all sporting?”

“Yes, she did truly,” interpolated Zell, getting before her room-mate.

“That will never do,” said Geoffrey; “they’ll think you a pauper. I’ll see that you have one.”

In the course of a week Geoffrey came in with a yard of blue silk, and gave it to his sister. Charlotte at first imagined that he had had the grace to spend some of the borrowed money on it, but Geoffrey had never thought of such a thing. “I wrote to mother,” he said, “to send me some money to buy you an apron, as I did not like to see you shabbier than the rest; so here it is, and make

it stylish." He also showed her the letter from his mother, praising his brotherly love that was so thoughtful of his sister ; and from the casual mention of the amount enclosed, Charlotte could not help seeing that Geoffrey had made twenty-five cents by the business.

There was a great noise about the buildings, one night ; the boys had suddenly broken loose, and were holding high carnival. Next morning, Geoffrey was not at breakfast ; he was ill of headache, and Charlotte got leave to go and see him. He was in bed, with his head tied up, but, seeing his sister alone, speedily pulled off the kerchief, and sat up, with no other evil evident than a black eye.

"I am afraid, Geof, you were one of those boys, last night," said Charlotte, referring to the rioters.

"Well, Charley dear," said the amiable Geoffrey, "the fellows wanted me so badly, and it doesn't look well to set one's self stiffly above these little games. And the fact was, Charley, the fellows did not know how to do anything exciting or original. The ghost

was entirely my invention, and, if you'll believe it, I am the only one not caught! I may be suspected, *possibly*. The headache game will do very well. I can so cover up my eye, which I got by running into the gate-post when I was playing spectre. It was the neatest thing, Charley. I came tearing upstairs with Tute at my heels, and I had off the trappings, and was at the table cramming algebra (my hand over my eye) when he got in here, and, seeing me so busy, thought he must be mistaken. 'You here, Master Hunter?' says he. 'Yes, sir, *of course*; isn't it rather noisy on the campus to-night, sir?' says I, and off he went. All I want of you, Charley dear, is to write off that translation of the sixteenth fable; I hadn't a minute to learn it last night."

Charlotte wrote the translation, feeling that she was doing wrong; and, with tears in her eyes, pleaded, "You won't do so again, will you, Geof?"

"What, going to cry, Charley? Don't—for my sake don't. I'll never do it again, as sure as you're born, Charley. Got the

translation all right? Thank you—you're the best fellow in the world; worth six of chum, who says *I'm* the best fellow. Queer idea; ain't it, Charley?"

"You *are* the best fellow!" cried Charlotte, growing tender, and kissing her beautiful brother; and before she was out of the room, Geoffrey was learning her translation, and deftly fitting it to the Latin.

This was not the only instance of such help. Charlotte grew suspicious, of the phrase "Charley dear," for it usually pre-faced such whispers as this, one evening at the table, "To-morrow is composition-day, my blessing, and I'm short of my compo; yours all right?"

"Yes; why didn't you write, last evening, Geof?"

"You see, Charley love, the boys beguiled me into acting charades for them. I can do the professors killingly, dear, good men that they are. I must let you see me do them some time. I say, Charley, you couldn't let me have your compo, could you? It's Greek, this evening, and I couldn't get

one done. Your report went home perfect, the last two months, and I managed to get three demerits each time. Father blew me up for it each time, and I've tried *so* hard this month, and here will be another, you see—unless you come to the rescue. If you do get a demerit, it will be your first, and father won't mind it. In fact, I'll tell him the right of the matter some time. Nobody will know, Charley; you write a fist just like mine."

Charlotte ate no more supper; but, when the class met the tutor to be helped through the intricacies of the Greek lesson, Charlotte quietly handed Geoffrey a folded paper, and next morning he was able boldly to answer "Prepared!" in composition.

The school-year passed rapidly. Charlotte helped her brother bravely, secured credit-marks which he could never have gained but for her, lent—or say, rather, *gave*—him all her pocket-money, and favored him also with advice.

"You must not spend so much money."

"Why, Charley, I spend it on other

people. I can't refuse to lend when a fellow comes to me."

"You should refuse when you cannot afford it."

"Nonsense, Charley dear. And when they ask me to stand treat in cakes, or pop, or lemonade, I cannot say no; it would look so miserly."

"You ought to say no rather than run in debt to treat other folks."

Charlotte said this as a "feeler," but Geoffrey did not repudiate the idea of debt; he blushed a little, and said, "How did you find that out, my dear?"

Mr. Hunter, pleased with the praises received from her teachers, had sent his girl five dollars to buy fineries for examination. Charlotte went first to the confectioner's, and paid Geoffrey's bill of three dollars. She bought a sash with the remaining money, and the next day Geoffrey came to borrow five dollars; the boys had urged him to give a little supper.

"Indeed, Geoffrey, I have not a cent left. I'd give it to you if I had; but you ought

not to do these things for the boys. Father cannot afford it."

Geoffrey looked so melancholy that, when Charlotte was called from the room, little Zell approached him with a five-dollar bill, saying, "I'd as lief lend it as not. Do take it, Geoffrey. I don't know what to do with it, and you can pay me back next term." Geoffrey hesitated, but Zell pushed the money into his half-willing hand, saying positively, "Take it."

"You are the dearest and prettiest little girl in the world," said Geoffrey, "and when I come back to school I mean to bring you a necklace."

"And you are the Best Boy in the World," said Zell, speaking in capitals, and blushing with delight, for she was entirely fascinated by Geoffrey.

It was some days before Charlotte found out about the five dollars. She had a locket given her by her uncle, Lawyer Ames. This locket was greatly desired by one of the elder girls. To her went Charlotte. "You offered me five

dollars for my locket; here it is, if you will buy it."

The money went to Zell. "It is what Geoffrey borrowed. He thanks you, and will never want to borrow any more."

Children, like charity, believe all things.

"How good Geoffrey is to pay so soon!" said Zell, who had already thought of a dozen uses for her money.

Charlotte told her brother of this restitution when they had gone home, and were wandering along the green bank of the "Happy River;" she told it wishing life were all a green slope by Happy River, where they two could walk safely hand in hand.

"Good of you to pay my debts, Charley, upon my word! And sold your locket! Well, my darling, there's one comfort—you don't care for jewelry. But you *do* care for books and pictures, my dearest Charley; and when I am a lawyer, you and I will live together, and we'll have the finest library in the United States."

That careful mother, Mrs. Hunter, duly

unpacked her children's trunks, and examined all their belongings. She came downstairs after this business, and remarked to her daughter, "Charlotte, I cannot imagine what you have done with your money. I see nothing new in your trunk but the apron Geoffrey gave you and a rose-colored sash."

The past and the future did not appear very roseate to Charlotte as her mother spoke. She looked up uneasily from Eva's stockings, which she was darning, and said, "Oh! well, mother, the money was spent; what else was it for?"

It took two pair of spectacles and a pair of unaided eyes thoroughly to review the Best Fellow in the World, but the eyes alone had sufficed for the scrutiny of his twin sister. Having surveyed Charlotte with the eyes, Mrs. Hunter, with motherly intuitions, began to bring the glasses to bear on Geoffrey, when that youth hastily remarked: "The fact is, mother, she lent it to me. I got out of funds, and borrowed of her."

"Boys always spend more money than girls; they need more," said Charlotte.

“Son Geoffrey,” remarked Mrs. Hunter, exchanging her spectacles, and regarding the delightful lad through pair No. 2, “if I remember rightly, you have always been borrowing of your sister since you twins could run alone; and, as far as I recollect, you have never paid.”

“I don’t want to be paid,” said Charlotte, jealous for Geoffrey’s reputation.

Geoffrey replied, with amiable sadness, “My darling old mammy, I’m sorry if you think me a bad brother to my sisters.”

“Oh! I don’t, Geoffrey, I don’t,” said Mrs. Hunter, totally beguiled. “You have always been the best brother in the world; so gentle and polite with them, truly, my dear.”

At home Geoffrey told rare tales of what help he meant to be about the farm-work. “Hay and harvest” came in vacation, and Geoffrey promised to perform prodigies of strength and industry; but his father was forced to be content with promises. The doting parents asserted that it was natural for young people just escaped from school

to forget to do as they had said ; to lie abed late in the mornings ; to make visits that lasted overlong in the evening ; and then Geoffrey's most thoughtless acts proceeded from his excessive goodness of heart. He borrowed one of the horses before breakfast to ride to town and post a love-letter for the maid ; borrowed it without leave, and brought it home so sweated that it could not be worked until noon. The rake was idle that morning to the detriment of the hay. Geoffrey was sorry, and even with tears in his eyes protested that he rode so fast for fear his mother would have to keep breakfast waiting. On another occasion, he lamed the best horse of the span that must be used for bringing in the hay—lamed it by dashing off unbidden, for a ride of three miles, to bring his mother a nutmeg-grater!

Still Mr. Hunter *could* not be angry at these little idiosyncrasies of Geoffrey—for Geoffrey could read both poetry and prose in a fashion to thrill the most senseless "human" that ever listened ; his impromptu speeches were supposed to rival

the early deliverances of Daniel Webster; he had brought home the first prize in elocution, and led his class in mathematics; more than this, the principal of the boarding-school came from Walford to visit the Hunters in the vacation, and pronounced over the absent Geoffrey unlimited eulogy. "He will undoubtedly be an ornament to society, and a blessing to the world," said the principal. "He is decidedly the smartest pupil Walford ever boasted, and we have turned out some fine scholars" (speaking quite as if the seminary were a cabinet-shop, and for scholars he had said furniture). "Indeed, you have cause to be proud of your children. It is hard to choose between them. The boy has the greater genius, the girl the more perseverance.

Mrs. Hunter during these words had polished her eyes and both pair of spectacles, and now remarked, "that she sometimes wished the two could be shaken up together, as they obviously possessed qualities which should be combined

in one shining individual, but in thus shaking them up she could not tell which child she wished merged in the other." Mrs. Hunter did not use exactly these words, for she was a plain, unlettered woman, and we, editing these annals, have our Webster's Unabridged just at hand, and are able to pick and choose at leisure. But, in making her remark, Mrs. Hunter thought remorsefully that in Charlotte's conduct had appeared none of those little discrepancies which we are compelled to report of Geoffrey; but, then, that was only to be expected—for dear, plain Charlotte was not the Best Fellow in the World. And here upon the musing mother shone between the clematis that draped the window the face of Geoffrey, lit with glowing, hazel eyes, and framed by masses of bronzed hair, until he was like some artist's study of young Phœbus, glinted, in the old-time style, with touches of leaf-gold.

Well, the vacation was over, and the twins returned to Walford. Charlotte was established with Zell again, and smiled

perforce to see that small damsel's passion for Geoffrey. At table, the child paid more attention to Geoffrey than to her eating; when he came to the room, she hung about his chair; she hemmed him a handkerchief in curious stitches, and painfully worked him a pair of slippers and a book-mark for Christmas.

When Geoffrey thanked her for her gifts, called her a little dear, and said he would like to have her for a sister, Zell was happy. When he brought her a tiny ring set with a turquoise for a New Year's gift, she went into an ecstasy of joy. When Geoffrey gave Zell her ring, he brought Charlotte a gold pencil; and here turned up another discrepancy. Geoffrey had written home for money to buy these gifts, and his father sent him ten dollars. Just after he got the money, it was decided by a few of the boys to give, in the gymnasium, a New Year's entertainment to some of the young ladies. The refreshments were to cost twenty dollars, and Geoffrey, as became a royal

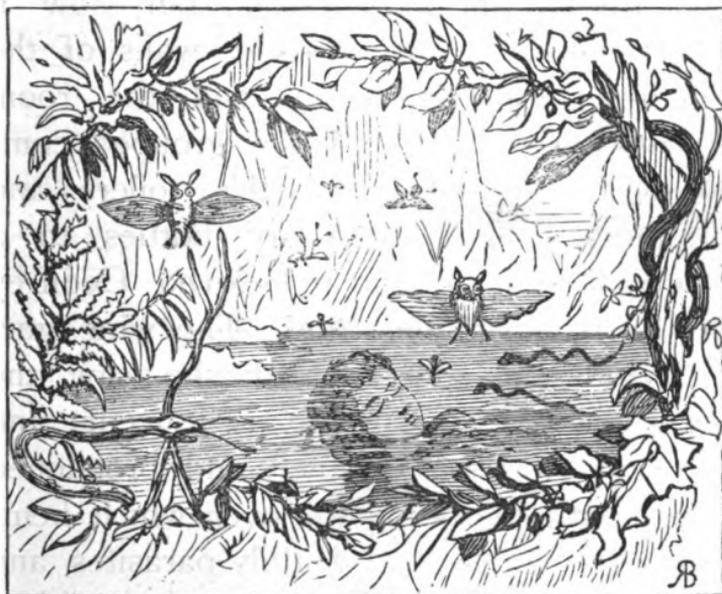
good fellow, gave half the money. After this he went in debt for his presents; and in a few weeks Charlotte, discovering the debt, began to save up her allowance, and by a queer coincidence paid, on the first of April, for her own and her room-mate's New Year's presents.

But we must go back to the supper. Zell cried because she was too small to be invited, but Charlotte was old enough, and went. Without the knowledge of the faculty, these jolly lads had smuggled in some wine. Do not stare at wine in a twenty-dollar supper for ten; because, in days when champagne and burgundy can be made of *dried apples* (and the apples be duly dried again and sold for pies, after they have yielded the best imported wine), wine is cheap. Boys and girls thought it very cunning and sharp when the bottles came out of hiding, and the perils of the smuggling were gaily narrated, and all were ready for merry sips and healths. All? Well, hardly Charlotte. She had never thought on

the wine question. The subject had never been brought home to her. Love is a magician. Rather, love is divine, and can prophesy. The love of Charlotte for her twin-brother was greater than the loves of David and Jonathan. When she saw the wine, she quickly began to think not how it affected herself, but how it would affect Geoffrey. The walls of the gymnasium melted away, and the room widened to the world; her grouped companions changed to earth's toilers and conquerors, and the dusty bottles to a band of foes by whom beloved Geoffrey was worsted in the strife. The wine gurgled into the glasses, and she saw the Happy River run singing as it went; and it swept on, and deepened and broadened into a strange, dark pool, over which hemlock and cypress, and deathly parasites, and poison-ivy hung, and down beneath the shiny, stagnant waters slipped Geoffrey's glory-tinted hair. The voices and faces near were known again—the room narrowed to its due limits—the walls rose straight and strong.

“We’ll drink the New Year, Charlotte,” said Geoffrey’s joyous tones.

“No, Geoffrey,” replied Charlotte with unwonted fervor. . . “My Geoffrey, I cannot, I cannot see you taste one single drop. For my sake, Geoffrey, put it down!”



Fred Gay, one of the party standing near, moved by her tone, would have set down his glass, but Geoffrey spoke:

“What! be so stiff and moping, and hurt their feelings all for NOTHING, Charley my dear?”

“O Geoffrey! for my sake, never a single drop!”

“Charley my dear, I’ll split the difference with you; now for *their* sakes I’ll drink, and for your sake never again.” He tossed off the health, but Charlotte did not taste a drop.

Now after this, our genial boy, when in his school-life pressed to take a glass of wine, took it secretly—for Charlotte’s sake—and banished the odor from his breath with a comfit first invented by the devil.

CHAPTER II.



OUR Geoffrey only indulged in wine, with the after-thoughts of comfits highly perfumed, when it was needful for him thus to maintain his position as the Best Fellow extant. There are some truly commendable people who go to church when it neither rains nor snows, is not too hot or too cold or too dusty, and when they have some new clothes to show. There are other lively and accommodating sinners who lie when it will serve themselves, their neighbors, or the devil. Thus Geoffrey gracefully looked upon the wine when it was red, and just as gracefully tossed it down his throat, when it would please the vender, the buyer, the friend who invited him, or would save him from seeming to set himself upon some lofty eminence of virtue above the fellowship of other mortals.

We must, indeed, chronicle one occasion

when our admirable young friend was invited to the library, and severely reprimanded for having been seen, against orders, in a bar-room. But even this turned to his advantage, for his penitence was so deep, his apologies were so fluent, that the severe "Prex" relapsed from his severity, shook hands with the culprit, and liked him better than ever.

Geoffrey was at last ready to go to college. Charlotte announced that she was ready also, and, in fact, whatever fitness could be claimed by Geoffrey was possessed also by his sister.

Father, mother, and Eva came to the Walford examination and exhibition; father with stout clothes and even stouter pocket-book, genially smiling on all he met; mother rustic and simple, in a bonnet of date two years back, and dress and cape guiltless of furbelows and ruffles, yet with such motherly kindness and benevolence radiating from face and silver-rimmed spectacles as made every one pronounce her "such a nice old lady;" lastly, Eva was

a bundle of curls and muslins, with bits of smiles and fluttering ribbons, and all the Walford boys followed her with adoring eyes. Behind the spectacles and the homespun there was in Mrs. Hunter a deal of acuteness—she could learn something from experience, and the experience of two years had taught her so much that she brought Geoffrey's graduating suit from home that she might feel sure it was paid for; she brought Charlotte's dress also, lest, were money for it sent, the money might pay little debts Charlotte had never contracted, and the girl be shabby on the great occasion. This same acuteness caused Mrs. Hunter to ask her husband to go about to the stores in town to see if there were any bills against "our Geoffrey."

The bills amounted to fifty dollars. There was no time to think of these small errors now, for the examination was in progress, and a certain pair of twins, who were alike in nothing but their pre-eminence, led the school, carried off all

the honors, and made the hearts of those honest parents from the country sing for joy.

Happy father and mother! They heard the mellow tones they had first trained to articulate speech utter now a sounding Latin salutatory, of which they could not understand one word; but it was all the grander for that, and everybody said it was quite wonderful for a lad of sixteen, even considering that the good "Prex" had brushed it up and helped him on.

This same salutatory was an unusual feather in the cap of Walford seminary, and by that and Charlotte's valedictory the soul of the "Prex" was comforted, even when he found that some of his boys were celebrating their last evening at Walford by "Tom and Jerry" and Roman punch. While Geoffrey helped them to celebrate, Charlotte comforted Zell, who grieved over the approaching parting, and the parents in their room at the hotel made mention of that fifty dollars.

"This must come to an end. It is very wrong, and I shall tell him so," said Mr. Hunter.

"Yes, to be sure; and yet, father, I dare say you'll find that the dear boy has not spent it on himself, but on his friends. He always had the best heart."

"I know I can't stand treat and supply pocket-money for all his friends," said Mr. Hunter, sore over the demands thus unexpectedly made on him.

"For my part," pertly spoke up Eva, with the wisdom of twelve, "I like to see boys lively. They *must* be a little wild and see life. I always read so in story-books. And fifty dollars isn't much, is it?"

"Be silent, child; it would clothe me for a year," said her father sharply.

"Well, father," said Mrs. Hunter soothingly, "don't worry. I am sure a boy who can talk Latin as beautifully as our Geoffrey cannot be very far wrong."

"I dare say Charlotte could speak it as well, and *she* don't owe a penny," said Mr. Hunter grimly.

“Ah! yes; but Charlotte is a girl, and Geoffrey was always such a good fellow,” replied the mother.

“Let me tell you what one of the professors said, to-day,” cried Eva. “He said your children were Wit, Beauty, and Good-sense. Geof is Wit, and Lottie is Good-sense. I can’t possibly guess who Beauty is, can you?” And Eva laughed merrily.

“Go to bed, child. I’m afraid you’re vain,” said her mother.

Early next morning, Mr. Hunter was talking to his son: “I really cannot understand these debts, Geof.”

“Now, my good father, you surely cannot think they were for myself! I lent some money to the fellows, foolish of course, but how could I refuse them? And I had to treat them now and then; and I gave Prex a Bible as a testimonial, and his wife a gold thimble; and really, I could not stand seeing Charlotte without a reticule, and a card-case, and a fashionable muff and parasol. The dressing-case and writing-desk were for me. I hope you liked my salutatory, father?”

And didn't Charley gave a stunning valedictory? I meant to tell you about these little bills, and I mean to pay you, too. When this examination is over, I mean to go home and work faithfully as a hand, and pay you up. I beg your pardon, my good, liberal father, if I've disappointed your expectations or hurt your feelings."

What could this parent say but that he was neither disappointed nor vexed, and was exceedingly proud of his admirable son and his admirable salutatory?

The examination to which Geoffrey referred was at college. The principal of Walford was going to take a class of six young men—idle Fred Gay most poorly prepared, but our Geoffrey chief ornament among them—to enter them at their chosen college.

Mr. and Mrs. Hunter had supposed that Charlotte was going home with them, until at the depot she announced her intention of accompanying her brother. "I am going to college, you know. I always said so."

"If you can get there," said her father,

laughing. "Well, go with Geoffrey, if the principal will take you."

So Charlotte picked up her compact black satchel, and went with her brother. The principal laughed, and permitted Charlotte to do as she chose, to see whereunto this thing would grow.

Charlotte was not the only lady who waited upon the college faculty, for one or two widowed mothers appeared with their young sons to watch their success and provide for their future. Charlotte's errand was unlike theirs.

"Sir," said the undaunted young woman, "I have always been my brother's classmate, and am as well prepared as he is. I wish to stand my examination and enter college."

"O my dear child! impossible!" cried the venerable president, glancing at the firm, well-made figure from the round hat to the neat boots. Plainly dressed in black, grave and self-possessed, Charlotte was a most impressive damsel, but many years before her age. Charlotte secretly thought herself

a much more suitable candidate for collegiate honors than Fred Gay.

“Sir, if I pay my bills, and keep up with my class, why cannot I enter college?” asked Charlotte.

“Because such a proceeding would be without precedent, and against the rules.”

“Then you can do me a favor, sir, if you will?”

“Anything in reason, my dear young lady.”

“You can speak to the pastor here in town to allow me to board in his family, and he will superintend my studies while I keep up with my brother in his classes. My father will pay whatever he asks.”

“I will do this with pleasure, my child.”

“Might I not attend lectures in the college, if I did not recite?” asked Charlotte, emboldened.

“Oh! no,” cried the president, alarmed again. “All the young men would stare at you.”

“Sir,” returned Charlotte frostily, “I believe young men never stare at a young woman who does not encourage it.”

The president first wished this imperturbable maid were his daughter; next wished he might admit her to college; then arranged matters for her with the minister, and promised to oversee her studies himself now and then, if she persevered. However much he was taken with Charlotte, he was even more captivated by her brother, and foresaw that he would lead his class.

After this, these two went home to the dear old farm, and Geoffrey was so occupied in being delightful, and helping and pleasing all the world, that he forgot to work out that little indebtedness to his father, and his father forgot it too. While both were thus ignoring the promise and its fulfilment, Geoffrey was roaming about, making calls, chatting with every one he met, treating the boys, and flattering the little girls of the district-school, and making friends everywhere.

“It is all in my line, Charley,” he would say, when his sister hinted that he might possibly be wasting his valuable time. “If I am to be a successful lawyer, I want to be a politician, and the politician must know how

to win hearts and be universally agreeable."

Sitting on the edge of the rock basin of Cold Spring, watching the Happy River dancing on its way, and thinking of some suitable form with which to persuade his mother to make cherry bounce, wherewith he might "respectably" treat his friends when they called, Geoffrey heard a step, and, looking up, saw a tall, loose-jointed man, with a rifle in one hand and a leather drinking-cup in the other. With his usual geniality, Geoffrey rose, shook hands, and gave the stranger a seat; then filled the leathern drinking-vessel, and asked after his success in hunting. The man's game was in a net-bag, and consisted entirely of small birds. He took out a Baltimore oriole, and lovingly stroked the brilliant plumage as he held it toward Geoffrey, then laid it on his knee, and took from the bag a cedar bird of rare beauty.

"I never had one so handsome before," he said; "for, if you'll notice, there is a second row of red spots hanging below the yellow dots on the edge of the wings and tail."

The bird was beautiful in form and of a delicate brown hue, except the gay spots which the hunter so much admired.

“How could you kill it?” asked Geoffrey, who loved every living thing.

The man smiled, and, still stroking the bird tenderly, replied: “One gets hardened to their business, sir. I make my living and Katy’s by these birds. I stuff them, and send them to England. I’ve sent several hundreds, sir. My name is Moreland, and, if you could call at my house, I could show you some fine specimens of animals and birds well stuffed; and Katy could give you a good glass of ale or beer. She keeps a few barrels and some tobacco to sell to the neighbors, sir; for, having no children, she’s main lonesome when I’m away hunting my birds. And when I’m home, what with working at the skins, and holding the tools in my mouth, and searching my books for names, I’m not very companionable, though Katy *does* say it’s a pleasure to look at me.”

Geoffrey, ready to make friends with everybody, interested by the stranger’s words

and pursuits, and curious to see "Katy," took the hunter home to dinner, and in a day or two walked over to pay him a visit.

Moreland's house was easily to be found, as TAXIDERMIST was written in large letters on a sign, while more modestly under it hung the too familiar legend ALE AND BEER. The hamlet was a poor one near the mouth of a mine; but Katy found plenty of her neighbors ready to pay out some of their coppers, hardly earned in the depths of the earth, for foaming cups of something which, she assured them, had each the strength of a loaf of bread.

"It's a respectable place," said comely Katy to her guest. "I allow no guzzling nor rowdying about me. If you would do me the honor to sit in the best chair and take a glass of ale while you look at the birds, I would take it kindly, sir. Moreland's a rare hand; do just look about you!"

Katy had a pleasant voice and a pleasant smile—a tidy, comfortable matron, with an intense pride in her *taxidermist*. Geoffrey felt that he could not refuse her the honor

she asked; he *could not* hold himself stiffly above these people. He sat down, and drank a glass or two of Katy's *best* while he looked around. The brown beams of the low room were ornamented with coon, squirrel, and rabbit skins stretched out to dry. The walls were papered with illustrated weeklies, advertisements, and sixpenny prints. The hunter's rifles were slung over the mantel; some large volumes of natural history were on a shelf; along the sides of the room were ranged cases of stuffed birds and small animals, and sheets of Bristol-board covered with beetles, butterflies, and moths. Katy's ale and beer barrels occupied one side of the room, and the mugs and glasses were on a blue dresser. As it was summer, the fireplace was filled with green branches and wild flowers, while the wooden settles were put outside the door. The room was rather dusty, but Katy said "Moreland" did not like her to sweep much, it hurt the "specimens."

While Geoffrey sipped the ale and looked about, an elderly man came in with several

“friends.” He was a man who had the making of a patriarch in him, in a full beard, a head turning bald, a round, smiling face, and a mellow voice. He treated all the friends who came with him, complimented Mrs. Moreland and the beer, drank “the health of the strange gentleman kindly present,” and, when his comrades were gone, took a great measure of ale to one of the settles outside, and deliberately set himself to guzzling.

“And who is that?” asked Geoffrey softly of the communicative Mrs. Moreland.

“Oh! that’s Uncle Terry—a good fellow, real good, and no one’s enemy but his own. He mines when he is not running around, chatting, drinking, or helping his neighbors. And such a hand to treat, as if he were a king! Not a mite of harm in him; but I often tell him not to frequent here so, for he uses up his money without thinking, and has none for them at home, and his wife’s weakly, and his daughter’s husband was killed in the mine, and she with a babe not a month old. Poor little Judy! I’m making her a slip this

minute; and by that token, I've a little nephew turned six is coming over to us from London. Yes, there's no harm in Terry but his goodness, and sometimes he is too good for his own good or those belonging to him."

No misgiving came over the heart of the Best Fellow in the World as, seated in Mrs. Moreland's big chair emptying a mug of ale, he saw and heard of the other excellent good fellow. Having heard, he gave Mrs. Moreland a dollar to buy baby Judy two more slips, and, shaking hands with Uncle Terry, went joyously home to tell Charlotte what he had seen. Going, he left a memory behind him like sunshine, and Mrs. Moreland wondering if that princely mannered lad would ever come again. She need not have wondered; in other years and other circumstances he came, and came again, all things changing, the Best Fellow and the Good Fellow, everything changing but Katy's rough cottage under the gray side of the beetling cliff.

Geoffrey gave such a glowing account of his visit that, the first evening a pair of

horses could be spared, Charlotte rode with her brother to call on Mrs. Moreland and see her curiosities. After the call was finished and the visitors were galloping away:

“I don’t often take a fancy to any one,” said Katy, greatly belying herself; “but I’d do pretty near anything for that young lady.”

There was no second call made to the taxidermist’s that season, for Charlotte and Geoffrey soon went off to college—Geoffrey with many gentle warnings not to exceed the allowance his father was able to make him.

The twins were gone—the house was lonely without the helpful girl and the brilliant young man.

In their new home, the pair were objects of unusual interest. The sister was content to shine like a fixed star steadily in her appointed space; the brother, comet-like, must be discursive in his genius and an object of astonishment. Being a freshman, of course he was convinced that he knew everything, and, for a wonder, his professors esteemed

him almost as highly as he did himself. We travesty what is written of Washington, and can assert that Master Geoffrey was first in the class-room, first in frolic, and first in the hearts of the faculty. If he got into little scrapes easily, he got out of them gracefully. That his frolics led to extravagance was reprehensible; that they digressed into drinking wine or brandy now and then was alarming. But Charlotte was a good genius to keep him from great errors; and partly for his sake and partly for the sake of that brave loving girl-student, the faculty winked at all Geoffrey's errors. Fred Gay, trying to carry the same sail under which Geoffrey ran so easily, came a score of times near shipwrecked.

Do not think we are going to write that Geoffrey forgot and neglected his sister. He loved her fondly. The moment chapel exercises ended in the morning, he ran across the campus and over the street to the parsonage to ask for his sister. When the mail came in, he never failed to go to Charlotte to report and share the letters.

On Sunday evening, he invariably accompanied her to church. When flowers were in season, he kept her supplied with bouquets. They frequently studied together; she read his essays and heard his orations before any one else, and doubtless they were often improved by her criticisms. When some wise professor commended Geoffrey's talent in composition, our young man was neither afraid nor ashamed to say: "Oh! but you should hear Charley, sir; she beats me all hollow!"

There is no doubt that it was this gallant bearing toward his sister that helped keep Geoffrey so high in the good graces of the college faculty. It certainly won for him the partisanship of all the professors' wives and sisters, and that, we know, is worth a great deal.

The old story of Charlotte's saving and Geoffrey's lavishing was told again at college. Charlotte was an orderly creature, whose clothes would never wear out, and who had a great genius for making new out of old, and looking well in anything. She

clung to neat gloves and boots and immaculate collars and cuffs, but she wore no gewgaws and no fineries, and, when Geoffrey urged her to adopt them "for fashion's sake," he was always compelled to admit that she looked better without them.

The last term of the freshman year Geoffrey was shocked to discover that Charlotte was teaching writing in the "Young Ladies' School" in the town.

"Why not?" asked Charlotte coolly. "I have time, and as good a right to earn money as a young man. If it is no disgrace to one of your students to teach, it is no disgrace to me. I can do it well."

"It's a fact, Charley, you do write a splendid fist, and, when we go into law together, you shall do the writing, and then there'll be one law office that turns out good penmanship."

Perhaps Geoffrey was more reconciled to this teaching when, just before vacation, Charlotte handed him his bill for indebtedness at the livery stable, duly receipted. He guessed then which way her earnings

had gone; he wrung her hand, while tears stood in his eyes.

“You sha’n’t lose by this, Charley my dear, I assure you. I’m bound to make a high mark, and you shall go up with me. Oh! upon my word, Charley, I’ll put you in the White House yet, and make you the greatest lady of them all. Bless you, you’re the best friend ever a fellow had!”

After this effusion, of course Charlotte felt that she had done nothing worth speaking of, and was more than amply rewarded.

At home Geoffrey helped vigorously some days, and hindered just as completely on others, all out of goodness and forgetfulness. He wrote several poems that were published in the village paper, and sent a story and an essay to a magazine, which were accepted with *thanks*—the only kind of coin said magazine dealt in. He also read of evenings to his parents, and Eva doted on hearing the “Culprit Fay;” while his mother graphically remarked that his rendering of the “Ancient Mariner” “absolutely made her crawl to hear him.” On some evenings, also,

Charlotte and Geoffrey jointly gave scenes from Shakespeare, which their father asserted to be worth ten dollars a hearing. Aside from thus assisting Geoffrey with Shakespeare, Charlotte taught Eva French and botany. Charlotte had never studied music, as she had sense to perceive her lack of talent for it. She agreed with her mother that it would be well to get a piano by-and-by and have Eva instructed, as she seemed to have little talent for anything else.

“Eva hates study; so I would not send her to boarding-school,” said the wise Charlotte. “I can teach her all she is willing to learn. But, mother, get her the piano pretty soon, before father thinks he cannot afford it.”

Charlotte being at college, her word was law, and her mother made arrangements to get the piano.

“Mother,” said Geoffrey, “do make wine out of some of the fruit. One can’t keep Christmas and New Year’s without wine, and Charley and I are coming home for the winter holidays and want a party. Always

keep some wine, mother, to offer to your guests with cake in good style. That, now, would be real hospitality."

"Yes, do, mother," said Eva; "that is the way they do in story-books. Do make wine for Geoffrey, mother."

"And I say, mammy darling, you'll let us have some egg-nog for our company to-night, won't you? I mentioned the matter to the hens, and they volunteered an extra egg apiece, and the recipe is in the cook-book. You'll have it for us, won't you? and I'll read for you."

Mrs. Hunter was knitting. She had one pair of specs on her forehead, and one up over her cap border. She dropped the first pair to view Eva, the upper pair to look at Geoffrey; and finding her foolish maternal heart softening to that beguiling boy's unprecedented petition, put the two pair of spectacles together over her eyes, and regarded him severely through double glasses. Under this arrangement of lenses Geoffrey looked less enchanting, and she was enabled to say:

“No, Geoffrey; you know, I’ll have no such doings here.”

In spite of these *noes*, in the evening, when youthful fun was at its height, that naughty Geoffrey appeared with a great tureen of something, and Eva bringing glasses.

“What is that, Geoffrey?” demanded the mother, filled with an alarming suspicion.

“Oh! it’s floating island, mother dear, I guess.”

“Geoffrey, *I* guess it is that wicked egg-nog.”

“Oh! go off, mammy,” said the laughing Geoffrey, giving her fat shoulder a poke. “It *is* floating island—with something else under it. Hand over the glasses, Eva pet.”

Charlotte’s sparkling face darkened, as when a thunder-gust rushes over a summer sky. Mrs. Hunter went out to her maid.

“Ann! why did you help Geoffrey to make that—stuff?”

“Troth, ma’am,” said the smiling Ann, tying on a new neck-ribbon, “it’s not me

fault at all, at all. Sure, one couldn't help givin' him the eyes out of their head, if he axed 'em so persuadin'-like, even whin they knew well they'd nade thim the nixt minute!"

So we perceive that this was a very



beguiling and dangerous young man to be around; and it is quite reasonable that mother Hunter should sit down by the window in her own favorite room, and consider whatever was to be done with her

beautiful son, and feel oppressed with the fact that a son "too good" was as troublesome as one "too bad." We use the word *good* in the sense in which it applied to Uncle Terry and our Geoffrey.

Again at college, and while Geoffrey pursued his studies with ardor, took a high rank in his classes—especially devoted himself to elocution, and wrote many things, some good and some indifferent, as usually happens—his sister kept abreast with him in her studies, and by degrees taught more and more.

Geoffrey protested half-heartedly against this teaching. He could see no harm in it, and protests were ever useless when Charlotte had made up her mind; besides, the fact that Charlotte was relieving her father of expense comforted Geoffrey in view of some little indiscretions on his own part. Indeed, before the senior year was reached, Charlotte not only provided all the money she used, but was able to lend her brother various small sums, which, he assured both her and himself, should be repaid with interest.

“Charley, what a treasure you are! But for you I should be disheartened” (though what there was for Geoffrey to grow disheartened over was more than anybody could tell).

Geoffrey took the “five” his sister was lending him, tucked it into his pocket, and said:

“Never fear, my dear Charley. Love and gratitude keep your account in my mind, and I shall pay you not ten per cent., but ten times over.”

Geoffrey was ever abundant in promises, and, though these are not legal tender, his sister readily accepted them and set them to his credit. Now, gently putting aside both thanks and promises, she said boldly:

“Geof, I wouldn’t have the slightest hesitation in lending you; in fact, it would be a pleasure, if I felt sure you never paid out any of your money at the bar.”

“Charley, my best! what a naughty accusation! As if I ever could forget the respect due my friends, myself, my position! Now, my good Charley, you know I never

take a glass but for decency's sake, when I can gratify some one else without harming myself."

"Without harming yourself?"

"Yes, my dear; and I might say it is a positive benefit. A neat glass of brandy has, I observe, upon me as beneficial an effect as Jonathan's honey. When I have 'tasted it, my eyes are enlightened.' Fact is, Charley, a small tip is as a draught from the Pierian spring. That speech the fellows cheered so last week, when our society was open for visitors, was made under just such inspiration. You remember, Charley, you praised it yourself as I took you home."

"I remember. I shall always hate that speech, now," said Charlotte with some bitterness. "Come, Geof, let us go over our Greek."

We do not intend to follow Geoffrey year by year until the day when he graduated with the highest honors, and when the president confidentially remarked to some of his friends that, if there was any young person whose attainments would enable him

to dispute those honors with Geoffrey, it was the reserved, calm-faced girl who lived and studied at the parsonage. Let no one imagine that, in the years before this commencement-day, Geoffrey had at all degenerated into the rowdy and the tippler. By no means; on that day he stood higher in all esteem than ever before.

We pause to chronicle one experience—one grand hour when Evangelist met Geoffrey, and pointed him to the Wicket-gate that stands at the head of the way where walk the children of the King. Truth was, that many supposed Geoffrey had gone in at the gate, and was walking with the sons of light. There is a way that runs very near the way to heaven: it is trodden by the *almost saved*.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and the Heavenly Breath stirred through the earthly garden of our Lord. "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices may flow out." At the call of mercy, the Comfortin came.

Now, we have no thought of irreverence in the statement that Geoffrey treated the striving Spirit with the same complacency which it was his nature everywhere to exhibit. Geoffrey was no mocker; he made no inane flings at that which was above his comprehension. He could not scoff and doubt at religion, for his parents, his friends, the professors, and the pastors to whom he listened with habitual respect, were Christians, and he believed in them. When we say that father and mother Hunter were Christians, we feel that an explanation is needed. They were ignorant Christians. We do not say ignorant because they were unschooled in classics and sciences, but because they had failed to search into and receive those truths and promises of God which are open to all his people. They had read, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." They neglected, as people generally do, to receive the latter part of this promise, "*and thy house.*" They received the words, "The promise is" They did not go as far as the

Eternal Father, when he immediately adds, "*and to your children.*" They had asked God to be *their* God; had heard him say, "I will be a God to thee," but never realized his glorious conclusion, "*and to thy seed after thee.*" The paternal Hunters received a Saviour for themselves, and calmly hoped that their children would one day do as much. They limited God, in that they did not see him as the God of the *household*, to whom they were privileged to give their children without the shadow of a doubt. It is a religious *selfishness* terribly common, and has through all ages been the cause of the cry, "O Absalom, my son, my son!"

When deep solemnity pervaded all the college, Geoffrey, ever complaisant to popular emotions, was solemn too. When invited to meetings of prayer and conference, he, who never denied a request, most amiably came. When loving friends urged the claims of God, he assented; when teachers wept with strong emotion, Geoffrey was not ashamed to weep. When the promise was asked that he should choose God for his

portion, that promise was readily accorded. When Hector Gray, his room-mate, chose God for his portion, Geoffrey seemed almost to do the same. There were in the amiable Geoffrey signs of grace that were lacking in some in whom real grace was indwelling. The faculty, anxious for their favorite, made their hopes parent to their belief, and they accounted Geoffrey among God's trophies in that blessed time. They may have been led the more readily to make this estimate of Geoffrey because, as we have shown, the twins were never separated, and Charlotte had, with characteristic whole-heartedness, turned her earnest face toward the city which hath foundations.

Early in the junior year, Geoffrey had said to Charlotte that he believed it best now to spend his vacations in making some preparations for his future profession. About forty miles from the college was the pleasant city where Judge Ames, half-brother of Mrs. Hunter, was a prominent lawyer. With him Geoffrey meant to study his profession.

Charlotte gave a sigh, as she thought that now the glad returns home for long visits, happy hours spent in teaching Eva, pleasant evening readings to her admiring father, loving help to her mother, were for ever ended. She naturally sighed as she relinquished all these joys, and turned her back on the loving shelter of home, with its pressing and petting, to fight the rough battle with the world by Geoffrey's side. Sighing, she did not yield her purpose. She was not needed at home. The healthful, busy mother dreaded nothing more than any interference in her housewifely duties. Eva, ever a soft, pretty home-bird, was enough there for society and filial duties; the strong-eyed father must read his paper for himself, and Eva must go her ways alone; Charlotte and Geoffrey, as since their cradle, must be side by side.

As in all her life, Charlotte conquered by resolution. However aghast Uncle Ames was when he read, in Charlotte's bold, firm hand, "Geof and I are coming to study our profession with you," he offered no objection,

and thereafter, in the still office, the brother and sister studied together the dusty tomes that unfold the law, and learned the devious manifestations of legal justice.

CHAPTER III.

N saying that life in the old home for Charlotte was for ever ended, we do not suggest that she went home no more, but that she went as a guest and for a short stay.

On that great occasion when Geoffrey stood forth as the valedictorian of his class and won universal applause, mother Hunter, in a new silk gown, went to admire her son, and father Hunter, though he wore two pair of spectacles less than his wife, saw all that was going on—saw, and was briefly happy. Eva was divided between her own admiration of her brother and the other students' admiration of herself. As Charlotte had seen the other students daily for the last four years, it was evident that she should care less about them than did Eva. Charlotte's thoughts and looks had but one object—Geoffrey. Why not? Toward this one day she had pressed with Geoffrey for

four long years. With Geoffrey she had bent in anxious inspection over every sentence of that carefully elaborated valedictory. To descend to minor matters, she had sewed every stitch in Geoffrey's shirt, hemmed his handkerchief, ironed his collar, and bought his studs and watch-chain. No wonder that, regarding Geoffrey's personality as her twin, and his apparel in a great measure as the work of her hands, Charlotte's feelings centred alone in him.

Fred Gay had no honors, but he managed to ride through his course and obtain a diploma by means of a fine stud of *ponies*—Greek, Latin, and Mathematical.

Geoffrey and Charlotte went home with their parents after that famous commencement-day, and that home seemed pleasanter than ever before. Eva was a belle in her neighborhood, and youthful guests made the house merry. There were walks, picnics, parties, and rides. Geoffrey and his sisters visited every old familiar haunt. They found green vines twisted and spreading over the rock cup of Cold Spring and the

birds dipping down to drink, and under the white-armed buttonwood-trees, with their swinging balls, the Happy River flowed singing as before; while for old times' sake the twins printed their hands and feet in white sand-bars that reached into the stream, and drank the clear water from purple muscle-shells.

One of their excursions was to visit Mrs. Moreland. The hunter was away exploring Western Virginia for birds. The ale and beer barrels were in their places, the mugs and glasses on the dresser, the branches and wild flowers in the open chimney, and Katy was as cheery as ever.

"You'll sit down, sir and ma'am; and look at his fine new birds, and the little grebe he has stuffed—queer; pretty thing it is. And you'll have a drink of ale this warm day."

"Thank you," said Charlotte, sitting down; "we came to see how you were, and what new birds you had. But we are not thirsty. No ale, if you please."

Katy looked disappointed, and Geoffrey was quick to see it.

“We are not thirsty,” he said. “But you may give me a glass of ale, Mrs. Moreland. I’ll take it as a compliment to you.”

Mrs. Moreland drew the ale with alacrity, while Charlotte looked on ill-pleased.

“How is Uncle Terry?” asked Geoffrey, who never forgot any one.

“Just the same, sir. May be a bit balder and grayer, sir; and works less and drinks more. Cheerful and good-hearted, that one *cannot* be angry at him, though he does neglect the family, and they have hard times. I’d refuse the pay for the ale he drinks, if I thought *they’d* get the money. But no; he’d tip the first little rascalion he met with the threepence, and think it so much clear gain. Such a good heart has poor Uncle Terry, like a king, the dear old beggar! Well, I make it up to the family by meal now, and pork then, and potatoes some other time. There he is this minute.”

Sure enough, there came this other good fellow, just as Geoffrey had taken his second glass of ale. And this other good fellow

bowed all around, and took a pitcher of beer to the settle, Geoffrey paying for it. As he began to drink the beer, Katy's cockney nephew, a light-haired, barefooted ten-year-old, came running in from school, and Uncle Terry considerably bestowed on him a penny.

"O my eye!" said Tony; "he gave me a penny. Oh! wot larks to give me a penny, an' little Judy ain't but one gownd to bless herself over."

"Come, now, Uncle Terry meant well; he has such a good heart," admonished Tony's aunt.

"Oh! an uncommon good 'art, which I'm glad mine ain't the same. Uncle Terry is that style of infidel the Scriptor deals in, wot don't care for their own. He has drunk enough ale in four years to school little Judy uncommon."

The small cockney danced about on his toes, filliped the despised penny into the air, and went off, as he said, to "chuck it to Judy."

Uncle Terry's wife was dead. Judy, plump

and ragged, sprawled about the door, playing with a wooden doll, while her mother, feeble and disheartened, had hard work to obtain food and shelter for herself, her child, and her *good-hearted* old parent.

“What a contemptible wretch!” said Charlotte, looking back at the patriarch, drinking his beer before the taxidermist’s door as she and Geoffrey cantered off.

“Don’t be hard on him,” said Geoffrey. “You can see he means no harm. And what a gracious air and smile, contented with himself and all the world!”

“He ought not to be contented,” said Charlotte; “and sometimes those who mean the least harm do the most, because they don’t mean to do well.”

As they reached their own gate, Mr. Hunter came out with a gloomy face, and requested Geoffrey to walk down the lane with him. Father and son went on in silence until Mr. Hunter sat down on the edge of Cold Spring basin. Then he said:

“Son Geoffrey, I’ve received your bills from college and from the dealers—bills

some of which have been running for four years."

"I meant to speak to you of it, father," said Geoffrey; "but one thing and another has prevented. College is a very expensive place, and I *have* somewhat exceeded my income."

"Son Geoffrey, your debts, over which I have spent this afternoon, amount to one thousand dollars."

"O father! I had no idea the amount was so much. Cannot payment be deferred, and I will try to settle them myself," said Geoffrey, looking deeply distressed.

"They must be paid at once, Geoffrey; and, as you know, it will be nearly two years before you fully enter on the practice of your profession. And not only must I be responsible for you until then, but it will need a large sum to provide you with a library and fit you up an office."

"You are certainly the best of fathers, and I am not ungrateful to you," broke out Geoffrey. "And as for these debts, I hate myself for them, and wish I were at the

bottom of the sea. But I do hope, father, that you will see that I have not spent all this money for myself. I have brought home presents, as you know, and I gave Charlotte many little articles which she would not buy for herself. Then I was frequently asked for something for the poor; and I always took Charley to lectures and concerts; and I lent fives now and then to the fellows, for I *could not* refuse when they asked. And I made little New Year's gifts to some of the ladies in the professors' families. And one way and another, the matter got quite ahead of me. Anyway, I'm sorry enough."

"The most trying point is, Geoffrey, that there was quite a serious bill at the hotel," said Mr. Hunter in a sad voice.

"That bill had interest in it; it's run the longest, and I *had* to treat the fellow sometimes, and pay little bills for a visitor or two, and order a bottle of stout or wine, now and then, for good-fellowship's sake, all in a gentlemanly way, father. You know I'm no tippler."

“I want a little serious talk with you, my son,” said Mr. Hunter, as Geoffrey stood uneasily kicking up pebbles with his toes, and grinding little holes in the earth with his heels. “You are aware that I cannot take such an amount as this from my income: it must be drawn from my bank stock. A part of that stock I have reserved to start you suitably in life. This home-place I shall always retain for your mother and myself. The bank stock from which I must draw money for your debts I had laid up as marriage portions for your sisters. I feel that I am absolutely robbing my girls to help my son. Is this right, Geoffrey?”

“By no means,” said Geoffrey earnestly. “It quite breaks my heart. But, father, I’ll one day make it right with you. You’ll have a portion for Eva, and I’m bound to succeed, and I shall consider my Charley as my especial care, and I’ll give her a stunning outfit when she gets ready to marry.”

“Remember, Geoffrey, no more debts,” said Mr. Hunter.

“No more, upon my word. Forgive me,

father, I have treated you miserably; but, indeed, I never meant to do it, and I'll make it all right for you and the girls."

Geoffrey looked so sad and so earnest that his father shook hands with him, remarked that they would say no more about it, and then the two walked to the house "arm in arm.

Mrs. Hunter, who knew of the debts, looked at Geoffrey with the spectacles placed over each other; but he said so humbly, "You're not angry, are you, mother?" that she put one pair upon her cap border; and when he read "Peter Bell," that evening, she changed the glasses twice; and finally, when her tall son came to her chair and stooped down to kiss her good-night, she laid both pair of glasses in her lap, and said: "God bless you, Geoffrey, you are the Best Fellow in the World."

"Lottie," said Mr. Hunter a few days after, "I do not see how I can support the expense of you and Geof at Ames's. Don't you think you'd better stay at home?"

"Very well, father," said Charlotte.

Three weeks passed. Geoffrey was getting ready to go to study with his uncle, and Charlotte seemed to be getting ready too. She went to her father. "You know I wish to study law with Geoffrey, father."

"Yes, my dear child; but I told you I did not see how to pay bills for you both."

"I've written to Uncle Ames, and have made arrangements about teaching some, and can see to my own bills, if you can give me money now for my travelling expenses. I'm going to write for a magazine, and a paper besides, and that will bring me all the money I need."

"Travelling expenses!" cried Mr. Hunter. "You shall have them, and welcome. There are fifty dollars for you, Charlotte, and I wish Geoffrey were more like you."

While at home, Geoffrey felt much touched by his father's sorrow and disappointment, and fully resolved hereafter to devote himself rather to study than good-fellowship, and to spend no more money than he received—admirable resolutions, the carrying out of which would have blessed himself, his

family, and the world. But Geoffrey was far too good a fellow to be an unmixed blessing. Once fairly established in the family and the office of Judge Ames, Geoffrey made a multitude of friends, he knew not how. Society



received him with open arms, and no man was more sincerely his admirer than the dignified Judge. Aunt Ames and Miss Mary Ames, the daughter of the house, some five or six years older than Geoffrey, yielded

at once to that young man's fascinations. While they respected the serene Charlotte more, they lavished admiring love on the gushing Geoffrey. Time would fail to tell of the dressing-gowns and slippers, the smoking-caps and writing-desks, the gold pens, and seals, and rings, and choice books that were bestowed on this same Geoffrey. In less than a year Uncle Ames was giving card-parties, and keeping a fast horse for him, and was thoroughly convinced that his convivial nephew was the best read, the most eloquent, the handsomest, and most industrious young man in the State. All this petting and adulation caused Charlotte to fear. She dreaded the wines and the late suppers, the hosts of friends, and the demands of society that divided Geoffrey's time with study. Charlotte felt instinctively that somewhat of coldness, of restriction, of disappointment, would have on Geoffrey all the tonic effect of a douche bath. It was idle to remonstrate; for, if reproved, Geoffrey at first admirably defended himself, then repented, and promised amendment, and, feel-

ing himself already vastly improved by the penitence, immediately sinned again. Charlotte wished vainly that Geoffrey were less attractive and less talented, that he was forced to study more for what he acquired; but, alas! Geoffrey learned as if by magic, saw strong and weak points at a glance, and could construct a fine argument, and wind it up with a brilliant peroration, while other people were casting about for a beginning.

These characteristics, which the clear-eyed Charlotte saw as the elements of ruin, because Geoffrey suffered them to run to waste without considering them a loan from Heaven, were regarded by other people as the auguries of Geoffrey's success. How many prophecies of future high achievements were treasured up in the hearts of Geoffrey's loving friends! Nor do we assert that Charlotte expected less. She believed in Geoffrey, she hoped for him, and, feeling that life could not be even for him a calm summer sea, she expected to find him made strong by trial when it came, and believed that, when he entered the practice of his profession, he would

prove worthy of himself and his great gifts.

The church looked also upon Geoffrey with a favoring eye. He was regarded as a young man very near to the kingdom of heaven, if not indeed in it already. He was regular and respectful in his attendance on church services, ready to give to her charities and for the spread of the Gospel. As far as Geoffrey himself was concerned, he had no doubts; he regarded himself with the same geniality with which he looked on other people, and, when human duties or God's requirements were the theme, like the young man in Scripture, he was ready to say, "All these have I kept from my youth up." That cheerful young ruler, frank and gracious, toward whom the human tenderness even of our Saviour was drawn out, has been set in Holy Writ as the warning type of all such as our Geoffrey until time shall end.

"My dear Charley," said Geoffrey to his sister, when, coming home from the communion, she said some solemn words to him, "I do mean to join the church some day.

Don't worry for me, Charley. I do not take anything in such dead earnest as you do, but I get on very well all the same."

The generosity of Uncle Ames prevented Geoffrey from contracting any debts during the time of his legal studies. Everything prospered with him; his father forgot the errors of the past; all that the most censorious could urge against him was that he took too much wine now and then, but, as Geoffrey cheerfully observed, "Charley made up for that by her total abstinence."

Geoffrey was intensely proud of his sister, and delighted in hearing Uncle Ames declare she would be as good a lawyer as himself. The young woman's unusual studies were not without their embarrassments and disadvantages. In those days, being "strong-minded" was even a greater disgrace than at present. Young ladies, prodigal of perfumes and small talk, shrank from the girl who preferred jurisprudence to poetry, and Blackstone's "Commentaries" to the last romance. These gentle damsels regarded an earnest-faced young person, who

read up cases with avidity, and disputed with other law students on forfeiture of office by *mis-user* or *non-user*, as hardly a proper acquaintance. She certainly was a dangerous companion, for by her side their trivial characters revealed too clearly the paste and tinsel, as bogus jewelry cannot sustain the near presence of fine gold and gems.

The surface triflers of society are often more agreeable to young men than solid worth, and Charlotte had few admirers, except among grave and reverend seniors, who, contemplating frequent depletions of their purses, vainly wished that their daughters were like her. She found in Hector Gray, erst Geoffrey's *chum*, now a medical student, one, however, who asked her to leave law for love. He was a noble fellow, and Charlotte liked him well for lofty virtues which found echo in herself.

"I have never found any one to love better than Geoffrey," said Charlotte. "I do not say that I shall never marry, but I do not feel inclined to do so now. If you

please, we will drop this subject. I thank you, and I wish you well; but I had rather you now gave me up entirely, and never asked me again."

It was not like other women; there was no blush, no hesitation. Charlotte's clear eye met Hector Gray's with unfaltering frankness. He saw that his cause was hopeless.

"Then I have lost a great deal out of my life," he said.

"No; you will find that a mistake," said Charlotte, without a thought of vanity. "We are too much alike, each to supply what the other lacks. Generally when a man likes a woman, and takes pleasure in her society, he imagines he wants her for his wife, when, probably, he only really needs her friendship." Then, perhaps, a prophecy of the future flitted across Charlotte's vision, for she added, "Hereafter, if I need a friend, I shall think of you."

Shortly after this their lives were slipping far apart.

The law studies were finished, and Charlotte and Geoffrey turned their attention

toward New York as a place to enter into practice. It was far from home, but business would in a great degree cut them off from home even were they settled near. When their father had furnished their rooms and their office, these two knew they must depend upon their own exertions, and it was Charlotte's part to make their expenses fall within their income. Indeed, Charlotte was wise enough to have a margin on the part of the income, for she well knew into how many extravagances the Best Fellow in the World was tempted by his bountiful disposition.

While Geoffrey could come before the court and obtain a license to practice, Charlotte, with the same qualifications, was denied this privilege. We hear that customs are different now. It made little matter, however, for Charlotte had not the least desire to plead in court, or to appear in public—that should be Geoffrey's work. She was to be the silent partner, content to read and think, and do office-work, out of sight even of the clients.

In this mystery of her presence and her labor, she and Geoffrey found great delight. They entered into their little romance of the visible and the invisible, the speaking and the silent partners, with all youth's zest. It was the piquant spice to their work-day, solid lives. Being Geoffrey's partner, Charlotte was also his housekeeper; making half his business firm, she also made his home. They could not afford the expense of boarding, nor in her peculiar life did Charlotte like the publicity of a boarding-house. The ample stores of the dear, old-fashioned mother could set up the twins in housekeeping.

On leaving Uncle Ames, taking with them a present of valuable books and pictures, the brother and sister went to New York to hire their rooms. The office, in a good situation for business, consisted of one large, well-lighted room, with a very small room opening from it. In one of the towers of the University building, they rented two communicating chambers for their home. Having secured these apartments, they returned for visit and preparation to the distant farm,

with its river, and its spring, and its peaceful domestic life.

Pride beamed through dear mother Hunter's spectacles at sight of her twins. Pride she had also in pretty Eva, who was engaged to be married, but it had been decided that the young couple should live at home, and George should help Mr. Hunter carry on the farm. Charlotte was mostly busy with her mother making carpets and bedding, and getting ready for the small housekeeping in the University tower.

Said Geoffrey, "Charley, you can do the home fixing, and I'll tend to the office."

"Yes. But don't be too extravagant with the office, Geof. Don't tax father too heavily."

Yet Charlotte knew that father would be taxed in a generous, free-and-easy fashion which he could not resist, particularly when love and pride argued in his heart along with his son. So, knowing that Geoffrey would be lavish, Charlotte was economical, and was so glad that Uncle Ames had supplied them with works of art and taste, and

that their home could now be beautiful without being expensive.

While Charlotte was busy, Geoffrey was royally idle, and went hither and thither with the birds and the butterflies. He followed them to the "taxidermist's," one day, and found Katy clad in black. "And is it you, sir?" cried Katy. "Sit down in my big chair, and take a glass of ale, and a welcome, while we give a thought to him that's dead and gone. Moreland hunts no more, and I'm alone. Never was such a man for birds; and he followed them down into the swamps in Virginia, and took the chills and the typhus, and so he died, the dear. Just look at the birds and the insects. Yon's a fine cecropia, and next it a sphinx—the ugly-looking creature!—that he caught the last time ever he went out-of-doors. Indeed, he had a way with him that seemed to bring the fool things right into his net. He set great store by that peacock moth. It has a long satin mane, sir, and came to him from Europe by a friend. O dear!"

"You have many birds, Mrs. Moreland,

and as my sister and I are going to house-keeping, couldn't you sell us a few for our rooms?" said Geoffrey, handing Mrs. Moreland the empty ale-glass, which, unasked, she replenished.

"Don't be asking me, sir. All that was Moreland's—bird, or skin, or bug—that I must keep as he left it, sir. He gave me the house and a bit of money in the bank, and I have the business, sir. I couldn't be wronging him by selling the birds he took his death hunting."

Mrs. Moreland's nephew, Tony, who had grown much, came in, and Geoffrey shook hands, as if the lad had been a prince and Geoffrey himself a courtier. The boy took a brown pitcher and filled it with beer, and stood waiting.

"Who's coming, Tony?" asked his aunt.

"That partic'lar good fellow, Uncle Terry," replied Tony. "Come to spend another loaf of bread out of little Judy's mouth, and she's thin as a rail now. Wish't you were in any other business, Aunt Katy."

"Uncle Terry is alive, and fond of his beer

as ever?" said Geoffrey, glancing out of the door to see the old man.

"*Fonder*, I'd say, and takes a sup of brandy frequent," replied Tony.

But his aunt interrupted:

"But he is a real good old fellow, after all—means no harm, Tony."

"Oh! yes," piped the youthful cockney, not to be deceived. "A werry conwenient and unexceptionable old person. Never means no harm, but is allus a doing a plenty; an' is so particular cantankerous once in a while, all from bein' so extraordinary amiable an' admirable."

Tony darted out, pushed Uncle Terry irreverently into a corner of the settle, gave him the beer, and came in again.

"Tony don't like my selling ale and beer. He got some whims from a speaker. But never mind, Tony. I keep the place respectable, and, when I'm dead, you can have it all your own way," said Katy.

Tony was subdued at once, and sniffed out that "he'd go drown'd hisself if his aunt up an' died. He didn't think much

‘of goin’ back on a feller that way.” Then he got a book from behind a stuffed coon, and mounting into the window, with a stuffed squirrel holding a nut over his head, a solemn white owl in a case on one side of him, and a damp beer-barrel, turned on its side and leaking slowly from the spigot, behind him, he read in peace. Katy saw the leak, and stopped it, just as Uncle Terry started homewards, followed by Tony’s advice to “get the folks a slap-up supper.”

Geoffrey tossed Tony a silver half-dollar, bidding him divide it between himself and Judy, and then went his way. It was some time before he again sat in Katy’s big chair.

Trunks, boxes, and barrels were packed. Fully equipped, as far as was possible to parental prudence, both mentally and physically, for the battle of life, Geoffrey and Charlotte were ready to go out to win or die.

It was the last evening at home, and the family conclave were gathered about a bright wood-fire in the mother’s room. The fire glittered on Mrs. Hunter’s carefully polished spectacles. She changed them

again and again, and viewed her son under every possible arrangement of glasses.

“Well, mother,” said the cheerful Geoffrey, “what do you think of me? And what advice have you to offer on this momentous occasion?”

“Geoffrey,” replied Mrs. Hunter, resolutely putting both glasses together, “if you were a little less good, you’d be much better.”

“Fie, mammy dear, that’s a paradox,” said Geoffrey lightly.

“Geoffrey,” said his mother, repenting, and using kind eyes alone, “you are the Best Fellow that ever was. But, my son, take Charlotte’s advice—she’s a sensible woman.”

“Oh! I mean to do that,” said Geoffrey heartily. “She is to be the thinking brain, and I the eloquent tongue.”

“But, Geoffrey,” said Eva, “you know the Bible says the tongue is an unruly member, and full of deadly poison. Now, *that* doesn’t at all describe you.”

“There’s no poison about me,” said Geoffrey, laughing, “except what Charley affirms

I pour into me from a jolly little glass of wine used for good-fellowship's sake."

"Don't be so priggish, Lottie," said Eva.

Mother Hunter suddenly put on a pair of spectacles, and said:

"My son, don't touch wine. Many a little glass of wine has held the seed of death."

"The better part of valor is discretion," quoted father Hunter. "Safety is in abstinence, son Geoffrey."

"What nonsense!" cried the hasty Eva. "Don't make an old fogy of our Geoffrey. Let him be what he was meant for—a liberal, genial gentleman."

"He can most perfectly reach that high estate without the cup, which has undoubtedly ruined many of his fellow-men," said Charlotte. And, taking her lamp, she left the room.

Hitherto our story has lingered, as the Happy River lingers along its summer banks, the wavelets

"Enforced to go, and seeming still unready,
Backward they wind their way in many a wistful eddy."

Geoffrey's life-work was before him. Now was his time to choose for ruin or success. Behind him closed the gates of school and college. No more would parents and teachers be about him a prudent body-guard. Straight and plain before him lay the road to honor and fame. He was at a point where he could not stand still; he must make speedily some decisive move, and now his truant feet turned out of the beaten way, and stood upon the quicksand of pleasure, and it began to slide beneath his steps.

Never was a young man more thoroughly furnished forth for victory over every adversary than was our Geoffrey. Well provided for his work, he did not enter upon it unheralded and unknown. Judge Ames had bespoken friends and confidence for his nephew. Affection and pride bound the college faculty to their favorite pupil, and they had sent forth his praise. Overhelping seems generally a hindrance to our easily tempted nature. Left alone, or severely buffeted, Geoffrey might have vin-

icated his manhood; but, as soon as he entered New York, friends gathered about him, and, instead of being enrolled among the brotherhood of indomitable workers, Geoffrey Hunter was elected King of the Royal Good Fellows. From the first, business flowed in upon the new firm. Charlotte trembled when she found that the income upon which she had based her calculations would be doubled—trembled because she felt that Geoffrey's expenses would be quadrupled on the strength of that doubling. Geoffrey pleaded cases in court, and his success was that of Job in his palmiest days.

“When the ear heard him, then it blessed him. After his speech they spoke not again, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.”

Flatterers crowded about him; politicians wanting a sharp and shining weapon courted him. When the speech was made and the case was won, the successful pleader and his friends adjourned to some restaurant of the *highest respectability*, where they drank

wines and brandies to his health and prosperity, ate a costly supper, played somewhere a game of cards or billiards, and then perhaps, as the stars were setting or the gray morning creeping along the eastern horizon, the King of Good Fellows, flushed and jovial, sought his home in the University tower. He let himself in with the latch-key, and always found the lounge-bed in their parlor prepared by Charlotte's careful hands, and the gas turned low.

Wives watch for truant husbands, and count the hours, and weep.

It is doubtful if any princely good fellow or any drunkard has been converted by these vigils. Geoffrey found no Charlotte sitting up for him. She knew that, when his brain was hot with wine, hers must be sleep-soothed for the labors of the coming day. What time he wasted, she must save; what labor he neglected, she must perform. This silent and invisible partner of this firm, when evening studies and meditations were concluded, and her devoted heart felt that woeful burden of her twin-brother's danger

and sin most grievously crushing peace and hope, turned to a Burden-Bearer of eternal strength, and gave the care to him; then slept, that, having prayed to-night, she might to-morrow wisely couple work with prayer.

The jolly Geoffrey slept in his curtained alcove, until Charlotte's home duties were concluded and office hours had come, then, buoyant and boastful, rose to drink the coffee she had prepared, brushed out his shining hair, laughed his sister's fears to scorn, condemned her remonstrances as "moralizing," and, courteously giving his arm to "Charley dear," went out to perform in some short time some great task—to sparkle with wit, to glow with eloquence, to achieve some higher and more precarious pinnacle than had been attained yesterday, and thus, overstraining mind and body, swept nearer to ruin every day.

There were days when prodigies of work were performed, when, long after the office hours were over, Geoffrey wrote and studied. There were other days when he did nothing at all, and his office while open was thronged

with jesters and flatterers, who schemed for pleasure, for games, and suppers, and treats, and excursions, as if Heaven had ordained man to perpetual holiday. While pleasure thus ruled in the outer room of Geoffrey's office, industry and perseverance retired to that room within, and kept ward over Charlotte's desk. The door remained fast closed. The silent partner worked alone. When Geoffrey must come for counsel, he was signalled by a sharp bell-stroke, and not one of those pleasure-seeking youths dreamed that just within hearing, but shutting her ears to their voices, a girl, who lived, as Geoffrey said, "in dead earnest," kept the flourishing young lawyer's business in order, and Geoffrey's sister, with unswerving courage, strove to work out at least the business salvation of her twin.

Working, working still. The ponderous law tomes and reports of cases were turned oftenest by Charlotte's hand. The good points for which Geoffrey was applauded were frequently first seen by that eye which, no clearer, no stronger of vision than his

own, was ever undiverted from the case in hand.

People troubled themselves very little about Geoffrey Hunter's partner. When the fact of the partner presented itself, some suggested that it was a deaf and crabbed old man; others got up a little romance about a deformed young man, and held it on the grounds of very beautiful, clear, bold handwriting that appeared in the young lawyer's files of papers, and because on some occasions Geoffrey had called out "Charley!" to bring attention to some paper he was slipping through a letter-slit in the wall above his table. One or two adventurous youths had been known to peep into this aperture, but it slanted so that they had only a very restricted view of a bit of cocoa matting on the floor, and as for the door of this inner office, it opened only from within.

It was well known that Geoffrey's sister had her home with him, and did a funny, picnicking sort of housekeeping in the University tower, for his friends had passed

pleasant evenings with the brother and sister in their charming retreat. The sister, though voted talented and agreeable, was supposed to be hostile to particular attentions from young gentlemen, and not especially anxious for friends of her own sex. When any of her few lady acquaintances complained that they "never could find her," Charlotte simply replied that she liked "to help her brother, was not often at home in the day-time, and read a good deal." She was presumed to frequent libraries and picture-galleries.

Charlotte may have craved more or different society than she had, but she was not likely to suffer from it, being of a nature satisfied with the earnest pursuit of a fixed purpose. She did not intend to allow herself to be beguiled from business these few years, for she firmly expected Geoffrey would some time grow weary of pleasure and wine and fast living, and "*settle down*;" until then, hers must be the laboring-oar.

How many women have worn their lives

out waiting for son, husband, or brother to *settle down!*

Getting discouraged over late hours, negligence, extravagance, and the cheerful temperament that saw harm in nothing that was pleasing, Charlotte sometimes comforted herself by going to hear Geoffrey plead a case in court, trusting that his resistless eloquence would charm her as it charmed others, and give her heart again. It was a gratification, also, to behold, in carefully-treasured facts, the result of her own plodding, to hear her best thoughts clad in brilliant rhetoric, to see the rough sketching of the "inner office," perfected and unimpeachable as it was, presented in court.

It is true she sometimes heard more than she wished, as when a stranger near her said of the eloquent young lawyer, "The most talented and promising fellow ever in our courts, who might aspire to anything, were he not so convivial and dangerously given to wine."

CHAPTER IV.



ONE year passed, and Geoffrey Hunter was still dividing his time between Love and Pleasure.

Many men have found Love a jealous mistress, who will not divide attentions with literature. When a lawyer turns aside to court the muses or dally with romance, he must generally cleave to them thenceforth, for Love will have no more to do with him. Intemperance does not seem so entirely to disable a man for legal studies and practice as does authorship. While the wine-bibber is rejected as a teacher, disgraced as a minister, and distrusted as a physician, his debauch over, he may hold his head up among his fellow-attorneys, and, if he be a man of talents and culture, may succeed with the best.

Thus our convivial Best Fellow obtained plenty of business, and received liberal fees, drank wine and hotter, more poisonous

drinks as he played shady games in secret places of evenings, and boldly stood forth next day, and appealed to the sacred name of justice whether he pleaded for the right or wrong.

Over Charlotte's face had grown a shadow, and a setting of the muscles that told of endurance. There had been nights when Geoffrey had not come home at all; but, then, next day he had not failed to present himself in Charlotte's inner office, with tender enquiries after her health, poor excuses for his absence, fluent thanks for her busy helping, and eloquent protestations of his love and confidence. Not only had Geoffrey at times failed to come home, but there had been one or two bitterer hours when Charlotte had seen her handsome brother, her life's idol, drunk. Perhaps it was even less painful and hopeless to see him overpowered and degraded, unconscious of everything, the thinking soul reduced to the level of the brute, than to find him, on returning to consciousness, regarding his excess as a trifle demanding no penitence.

He woke from his heavy sleep, opening his eyes just as the afternoon sun slanted in at the tower window across the book from which Charlotte was rapidly taking notes. The curtains were looped back from the alcove, and, as Geoffrey gave a deep breath, Charlotte turned her head—her look was undeniably one of reproach and pain.

“What are you doing, Charley dear?”

“Studying up this case of Gray *vs.* Brandt, which you ought to have been at all day,” said Charlotte with sharpness.

“Yes, my dear; and I’ll get at it presently, and be like Ajax, the son of Oileus, in the fervor of my attack on the technicalities. What’s the matter, Charley? Anything wrong? Case going against us, think? Cheer up, my friend! A few quibbles, brilliantly stated, will carry along with them the convictions of any jury in the land. I’ve told you so often, Charley.”

“The case is clear as daylight, and right is on our side, as I told you from the first, Geof. But I do not consider it half as important that, in this breach of contract suit,

we obtain judgment for Gray, as it is that you, Geoffrey, of whom I have been so proud, for whom I have hoped so much and have loved so well, should come home in the condition you were last night—should be as you have been to-day.”

“Well, Charley, my best!” cried Geoffrey, ignoring the first point of his sister’s accusation, “it is a shame for me to lie in bed while you work. But my head feels hot and foggy for a moment; it will pass away, and, as I was telling you, I’ll be up and at it in an instant.”

Then as Charlotte, still turned from her book, regarded him with the countenance of an accusing angel, Geoffrey said: “My dear girl, I’d much sooner you praised me for the triumphant manner in which I won Black’s case yesterday. That point I made, that Nelson’s testimony was not *legal evidence*, was a beautiful thing. Praise me for that, Charley, love, and don’t throw up any little indiscretions at Black’s supper.”

“Geoffrey, your conduct is not a little indiscretion. You know that, if you were

ill or disabled, I would willingly work for you all the days of my life; but you are destroying your good name, disappointing the hopes of your family, falling short of the success for which we all have toiled in your behalf. You are setting a bad example, and, instead of helping to purify and ennoble society, you are degrading it. You are not proving yourself worthy of those lofty qualities which God bestowed upon you."

"Tut, tut!" said Geoffrey easily. "Even wise women will exaggerate and be fanatical. Why are you so down on a little jollity and good-fellowship? It wins a man friends, brightens his life, enlarges the circle of his acquaintances, and, politically, gives him no end of help. It also sharpens his wits. My child, I shine nowhere so well, and nowhere win so many suffrages, as when presiding at a convivial supper, partaken entirely by gentlemen. I'm better than new after it, Charley, so where's the harm?"

"The harm, Geoffrey? You commit a sin against God."

"I don't look at it at all in that light—

don't understand it. In truth," Geoffrey added lightly, "I may be versed in common and statute law, but I cannot apprehend law celestial. I may win cases in these sublunary courts, where shine the wisdom and the wickedness of New York, but the court of Heaven pleads cases too high for me."

"Don't, Geoffrey," pleaded Charlotte, shocked. "Your name means *at peace with God*; but, instead, you are neither at peace with God yourself, nor your fellow-men."

"You're out there, Charlotte," said Geoffrey. "I haven't an enemy in the world."

"Then, again, Geoffrey, these habits you are forming are going to destroy your business," said Charlotte, going back to Geoffrey's question, and passing over the fact of his popularity.

"Out again, my love. I could tear this little case you are making out against me into fragments. My business prospers: my genial disposition fosters it. When it begins to decline, Cassandra, begin to warn!"

"And, Geoffrey," continued the resolute Charlotte, "you are sinning against yourself,

injuring your health, your ability, your reputation."

"All imagination, my dear girl! As to health, I am stronger and stronger, weigh more, eat more, sleep more, as see to-day. As to my ability, I told you that wine and friends sharpened my wits—afforded the relaxation which I need. I feel my intellectual powers developed every day. When I begin to fail, *then* warn me. As to the matter of reputation, Charley, you know my friends are the first men in the city. We go only to places of the highest respectability; we take the refreshments of gentlemen as gentlemen. I do no more, no more than the rest. We all do well. There's no more harm in drinking a little too much than in eating a little too much. In company, one is often led to do it unawares. It didn't hurt the reputation of that grand old ark-builder, who refounded the race, to take a post-prandial potation and consequent snooze. There, Charley, I'll up and rejuvenate, and *then* I'll dip into the case with you, and we'll set Gray on his legs forthwith. No wonder

you believe in his side; perchance you have a little stray tenderness for Doctor Hector Gray?"

"No, I never had; but I like him, and shall be glad to help him," replied Charlotte, turning to her book, as Geoffrey pulled the cords that held back the alcove curtains, and was shut out of sight.

A mist swam before the open pages, and the words she traced on her paper blurred before her eyes. It was so hard to hear Geoffrey thus jovially defend his wrongdoing.

The cause of Gray *vs.* Brandt was gained. It was an affair of great importance to the doctor, and to his fee he added sincere gratitude for the skill and energy displayed in his behalf.

Charlotte was glad. She rejoiced when in their business they could bring truth to light, and cause right to triumph over wrong. She was no less glad when, a few months after, they received Doctor Gray's wedding-cards.

"A little bit disappointed, Charley?" said

Geoffrey quizzically, looking over to where his sister stood by the window with the square, satin-tied envelope in her hand.

“No, surely not,” said Charlotte, smiling.

“I’m glad you’ve no mind to marry yet, I can’t spare you,” said Geoffrey; “but, when you do conclude to take a husband, what sort of a man will he be—any like me, Charley?”

Charlotte half-smiled, half-sighed, as she shook her head. One grievous fault prevented this Geoffrey, whom she loved and lived for, from being her ideal. He sat now looking toward her, turned about so that his chin rested on his hands clasped over his chair-back—such a handsome Geoffrey, with flashing eyes and sunbright hair, but with the story of his fatal error even now being written over a face that, carved in marble, would have been its sculptor’s glory.

“I’m going to bring an old fogy here, to-night, Charley. I’m cultivating his acquaintance, primarily because I never can turn a cold shoulder to anybody that I get introduced to; secondarily, because he will

be a perfect treasure-trove in our business, if we come out sociable as hand and glove. He's the chief of the detectives, and a man, they say, with a wonderful head, and just as wonderful an amount of that metal that rings in you, partner—perseverance.”

Charlotte was for ever building new air-castles for Geoffrey, planting new hopes for him; and, when the place she had chosen proved treacherous, her castles fell, and her harvests failed, she sought other grounds, and went to work again. So now, when Geoffrey mentioned this new friend, she divined that he was different from the wine-bibbing, jolly-supper, billiard-playing crew who were drawing Geoffrey the Easy to ruin, and she began to plan and hope that this friendship should supplant the others—that this man should bind Geoffrey to a soberer and a better life.

Oliver Alden came that evening: it was the first of many visits. Ten years older than Geoffrey, grave and honest, devoted to his business, with a keen mind and a great fund of information, he attracted Geoffrey,

and the two were soon fast friends. Still, the good effect of this intercourse which, Charlotte had hoped did not follow: the chains of pleasure were too closely wound



about the royal good fellow. If wine and intoxicating liquors were not everywhere freely sold; if drunkenness, unassociated with beggary and ribaldry, were deemed a disgrace; if the good fellows who surrounded the Best Fellow had all been temperate while they were merry, Geoffrey would not have fallen. But "drinks" were to be had in

“places of unimpeachable respectability.” Geoffrey claimed that his friends were of high social position, and they drank and sometimes got drunk, and disgrace was not attached to them as to the artisan or the beggar who is intoxicated on cheap rum and picked up by the police.

This is the short history of that second year, that the business prospered and friends increased, and Geoffrey was more and more given to the “social glass,” which he had grown to love, and Charlotte trembled, protested, and pleaded. Geoffrey jested, defended himself, made rash promises, and broke them gaily, and no rumor of wrong or of danger went back to the homestead where beat the true hearts that trusted in Geoffrey.

The most important case upon which Geoffrey Hunter had yet been retained was soon to be brought into court.

A millionaire had died, and two men appeared, each claiming to be the legal heir, and the one intended in the dead man’s will. It was Geoffrey’s good fortune to be engaged upon what he truly believed to be the

right side of the case. He felt convinced that his client was the true heir and a worthy young man. He began to work up the case with ardor, seeing that both honor and emolument would accrue from his success. Entering heartily into his interest, and building a new castle in the air, based on months of earnest labor, Charlotte continually kept Geoffrey's attention fixed on his case, searched out evidence, studied precedents, and was ever suggesting some new point to her brother. Their friend, Oliver Alden, proved almost invaluable. No man could better trace a hidden clue than he. In his own peculiar line of life, his services were needed on this case, and long evenings were spent in the little drawing-room of the University tower discussing the subject which so deeply interested both. During these discussions, Charlotte, withdrawn from her brother and his friend, sat, half in the shadow, listening and remembering, gathering up hints that might have slipped from the notice of the absorbed speakers. Oliver Alden had no idea that this girl was her brother's part-

ner — indeed, the chief worker in the firm.

One evening Geoffrey produced a file of papers.

“Who got these up for you?” demanded Mr. Alden, pouncing on the flawless documents.

“My partner,” said Geoffrey quietly.

“Your partner keeps himself always in the inner room, don’t he?”

“Always there,” replied Geoffrey.

Mr. Alden looked over the papers, mentally compared the writing with a name or two he had seen written in some of the books lying about this little drawing-room, noted the fact that business partners are not given to keeping themselves invisible, recalled what he had heard, that Miss Hunter went to and from the office sometimes with her brother, then turned and covertly studied the intent face, whose profile was strongly relieved against the folds of the crimson curtain.

Turning to Geoffrey, and pointing to the papers, he said: “These were drawn up by

a mind fixed on the subject in hand, untainted by wine, and undisturbed by what some call pleasure."

"It is true that my partner is a glorious model," said Geoffrey. "In our firm, I am the comet, my partner the fixed star."

A shrewd guess pointed out the partner's identity to Mr. Alden, as it might to others before him if they had cared to know. He had proof as well as guessing within a few days, for, being in Geoffrey's office, the young lawyer went into the inner room, and Mr. Alden took the unwarrantable liberty of putting his head in after him. He drew it out as soon as he saw Charlotte steadily at work at her desk, with Geoffrey bending over the paper she had just handed him. Oliver Alden retreated unseen, and Geoffrey, who had not suspected the solemn detective of any curiosity about the invisible partner, and so had left ajar the door which in every other case he would have closed, returned to the outer office.

From that moment Oliver Alden set Charlotte's image in some sacred shrine vacant

until now, and received her as his chosen pattern of womanhood. Always shy and silent in the presence of a woman, he treasured every word that Charlotte uttered, and, by some strange intuition, learning to sympathize with all her emotions, with none more heartily accorded than with those that stirred and trembled over Geoffrey, recklessly pressing to some painful fate.

Again had Charlotte found herself deceived, for no sooner had she begun to take comfort in Geoffrey's interest in the important suit than a new courtier suddenly made his appearance, and fawned upon the King of Good Fellows.

Geoffrey, with his customary heedlessness, accepted the man as his friend, and was strangely fascinated by his accomplishments, his flatteries, his apparent wealth, and his seeming knowledge of life. The man claimed to have travelled over all the known portions of the earth, he had hunted elephants and lions, feasted with notabilities of every land, and was a connoisseur of wines.

He came to the tower-room, one evening,

with intention to be agreeable "to his dear friend's sister." Charlotte speedily weighed him in the balance, and found him wanting. He dared not encounter her again. He was introduced to Mr. Alden, but quailed before the detective's searching eye, and was by that detective privately denominated "an unmitigated scoundrel." While these two, Charlotte and Mr. Alden, were on either side Geoffrey to keep him in safety, this man, in the name of pleasure, tempted the young lawyer on to places where his best friends could not go. He haunted the office, but, whatever were his plans, Charlotte, with a vigilance that Oliver Alden denominated "tremendous," kept Geoffrey's treasures safe under lock and key. Charlotte felt that the stranger was set for her brother's snare. He had led him on to excess such as Geoffrey had never tried. There was danger that the great case should fail at last, from Geoffrey's proving traitor to it and to himself.

Charlotte betook herself to Oliver Alden. "I believe that man is hired by the other

side to divert Geoffrey from his case, to hinder his preparation, to discover his line of argument, to destroy our case by means of Geof's good-fellowship."

"I have arrived at the same conclusion. We will each warn him."

They warned, and he laughed them to scorn.

But where woman's argument had failed, Charlotte betook herself to woman's wit. Where appeal to Geoffrey's head was useless, Charlotte addressed herself to his heart.

Charlotte suddenly fell homesick. She wanted to go to Eva's wedding. Wouldn't Geoffrey go?

"I've been willing all the while, and you thought we could not spare money or time. Have you changed your mind?" said Geoffrey.

Circumstances had changed Charlotte's mind.

The journey, the gifts, the new clothes, would not cost so much as Geoffrey was now wildly wasting in dissipation. As to time, at home he *might* be brought to attend to

what he was now led by his new friend entirely to neglect.

Charlotte had said, "Geof, this man is trying to ruin you, doing it advisedly and deliberately."



"My beloved prophets of evil," quoth Geoffrey, "no one can ruin me. I stand too firmly."

He stood on the most treacherous quicksand that ever has deceived humanity!

"I feel convinced," replied Charlotte, "that this man is hired by the plaintiff to distract your mind, weaken your powers, discover your plans, and make you lose this suit. He will ruin you to ruin your client the defendant."

"Charley, my dear, if I were so suspicious as you are, I should have peace neither night nor day. I have faith in myself, faith in human nature, faith in good-fellowship; the man cannot drink my health with tears of sincerity in his eyes, and yet be plotting my destruction. O my dear, my silly dear!"

"Tears!" cried the blunt Charlotte. "Tears of sincerity! Maudlin, crocodile tears, you had better say. All the faith you have mentioned isn't worth a copper, Geof. I wish you had faith in God, instead."

All this had been of no avail, and Charlotte had taken another tack, and wanted to go home. Geoffrey could finish his preparations there; they could leave the office in Mr. Alden's charge; communication would be

easy if anything new turned up ; they could be back in time for the trial. In almost any other circumstances, Charlotte would have advised to stay at the office and work. Now, she saw that only in retreat lay safety. Geoffrey was too good a fellow to refuse to gratify his sister in any way other than total reform, so he explained matters to his friend Alden, packed up his papers, and prepared to go home for a visit. Despite Charlotte's warnings, he told his convivial friend where he was going. Charlotte knew they would take home keen sorrow as well as joy, for Geoffrey's face already told the story of that wayward life which Charlotte had so long concealed from those trusting, unsuspecting souls at the homestead.

How many times did the good old mother arrange, change, and rearrange her inquisitorial spectacles during the first half-hour of Geoffrey's visit ! What was the keen questioning of the honest father's eyes as he looked at the handwriting of sin over the beautiful face he had loved so well ? After tea, when Geoffrey had gone out for a long

moonlight walk with Eva, the mother said: "Charlotte, there is something wrong. Tell us all: we must know some time."

And as the twilight deepened in the room, and then the place grew silver-bright as the moonbeams gathered in, Charlotte told the story of Geoffrey's success and his errors, of the past and its hopes and troubles, the present with its work and fears.

Heavy in God's sight upon the soul of Geoffrey lay the tears those gray-haired parents wept that day. Great weight of retribution must lie on every sinful son whose wayward and wicked life makes his father and his mother weep.

Urged by Charlotte's example, the interest of his parents, and by the new freshness of spirit and clearness of brain that spring from regular hours and absence of poisonous stimulants, Geoffrey, according to Charlotte's expectations, applied himself to his business, and his work prospered in his hand. The quiet purity that surrounded him soothed his excited spirit. On the green banks of the Happy River, he re

gained some of the zeal of youth that lately he had lost and broken. Seated on the rock-rim of the well-remembered spring, Geoffrey's thoughts rose clear and fresh as its treasure of waters. Link after link in the chain of evidence he welded with firm hand; bright thought after bright thought shone forth to be threaded as jewels to gain the judges and the jury before whom he should plead. Our Geoffrey was his old bright, happy, genial self once more.

Shadow of disappointment fell suddenly when before Charlotte, sitting in the doorway, stood the convivial companion from whose fatal wiles she had just rescued her brother. Geoffrey had wandered to study by the river, and Charlotte seized her opportunity.

"My brother is not here."

"Shall I wait, or call again?" This with courtesy.

"Sir," said Charlotte, for Geoffrey's sake ignoring courtesy, "you may do neither. My brother came to see his family and to work in peace. Our house and our hospi-

talities are free only to those whom we *know* and *trust*."

After this, what could the enemy do but return to the village, where Geoffrey was too busy to go? And there he might have uselessly waited a day or two, and then gone back to the city. But there are women who are for ever meddling—women, also, with whom a black moustache, shiny boots, kid gloves, and a twirling cane spell *gentleman*—women who are for ever dying to meet strangers and make new acquaintances. Eva was one of these women. She saw the stranger, and heard Charlotte's words. She took part with the unknown against that good sister. She despised Charlotte's explanation, and, in spite of Charlotte's warnings and entreaties, went off and told Geoffrey. Geoffrey was too kind to get angry, but he was sorry for his so-called friend. He bade Eva say no more to any one, and next day rode off to the village to welcome his deadly foe. There was no studying after that. Charlotte was left to work alone. The important speech with which Geoffrey

was to conclude his part of the great property suit was scarcely thought of yet; and now, as often before, Charlotte must blend hints and stray sentences from Geoffrey with suggestions of her own, and sketch out a rough plan, hoping tremblingly that in some hour of inspiration Geoffrey would work it up and use it for his victory. Sore days were these to Charlotte, and the parents even, while bridal preparations went on. The silly girl who had wrought the mischief repented, but was too trifling to realize what she had done. For a night and a day had Geoffrey been gone. Charlotte was fiercely restless; she worked in a frenzy. Evening came. As the excited girl paced up and down the hall, Eva touched softly the keys of the piano. The music came as balm. Charlotte entered the room and sat down in the window.

“Play for me, Eva.”

It was little enough for Eva to do, and she assented readily. Sweet, low chord after chord chased far off the demons of fear and despair. Resting her weary head against

the window, while the night winds cooled her heated forehead, Charlotte could think in orderly fashion now.

"I'm tiring you, Lottie dear," said Eva after a long time.

"Go on," said Charlotte. "My speech is nearly finished. I shall soon have only to write it out."

Eva played on wondering; her fingers tripped along the keys; her head was turned to watch Charlotte sitting by the window, while moonbeams crept through the rose and clematis vines to lose themselves in the dusky twilight of her hair, against which a white japonica, placed there by Eva, shone like a star. In that pale, sorrow-softened face, in those large eyes into which the tremulous moonlight shone, Eva found a revealing of a nature loftier and truer than her own—a nature too faithful to yield to a heart-break, strong still to live and suffer for its love.

Charlotte wrote nearly all night, copying Geoffrey's fragments and loose pages, getting everything into shape where he could

use it readily. Then, when the gates of morning were opened, an angel stole through with a good thought for the faithful sister. Charlotte refreshed herself with plentiful dashes of cold water, put on her riding-habit, had the stable-boy bring her favorite horse, and, while the others of the family slept, galloped to the town, and, stopping before the hotel, sent peremptory orders to the convivial enemy to appear before her. A little way off, the early train was puffing and snorting, making ready to thunder on its way. We promise you the enemy, awakened overearly from sleep, felt amazed at confronting Miss Hunter, who, from her position on horseback, surveyed him calmly.

“Sir, I have come to warn you. If you do not make haste somewhere on that train, I will telegraph to the chief of police to come and make your arrest.”

“Arrest me for what?” asked the threatened man.

“Answer that to yourself,” retorted Charlotte. “You know your own record. A man who wears disguises and goes under

an alias has reason for the same. I do not care to conceal from you that my only object is to get you out of my brother's way. God will bring you to justice if I let you go. I set the alternative before you. Your sin has found you out. Flee now again, and do not cross Geoffrey's way hereafter, or your days of liberty are few. There is the train, there is the telegraph office. You must go in the one, or I shall make use of the other."

There was undaunted resolution in Charlotte's eye. She had determined to risk this attack. She felt sure that there was that in this man's past which he feared to meet. If he did not take the alarm and depart, she could at least send for Mr. Alden to search him out. The man looked at her in a desperate scrutiny, watching for the least hint of uncertainty.

"Two minutes to train time—will you risk staying?"

No, he dared not risk it. He flung a cloak over his arm, and turned on Charlotte with a fierce oath. It had crossed her mind

that he might use a bullet instead; but God had helped her, and he was gone; and as the train whizzed off with the jolly enemy, Charlotte went up to waken her brother, who lay heavy with sleep and wine. Charlotte had learned how to bring Geoffrey back to himself—how to cool and calm his excited brain, to quiet the twitching nerves, to turn truant thoughts into safe channels. She took him home, and the next day, in the fresh, silent room, with breezes stealing through it from the garden, with nothing to disturb or to distract, Charlotte laid all those wearily prepared papers before her restored brother, and left him to work in peace.

Another week. The wedding was over. Geoffrey was himself again. He cheered the hearts of his parents with promises born of good nature rather than of good intention.

They went back to New York, and in the few succeeding days Geoffrey was too absolutely busy to turn aside to the devious ways wherein he found pleasure and *social life*.

He carried into court the blessed influences of home, of Charlotte's patience, of Oliver Alden's friendship, and never before had he shone so well. His case was won. Would that in that he had won every victory! but of him we must write that now, for this time at least, he lost himself. He celebrated his triumph with his boon companions. The Best Fellow in the World feasted and fêted all the good fellows over whom he ruled. The extravagances in which he indulged, the losses he met, were not even guessed by his anxious sister.

As for Charlotte, she had told Mr. Alden how she had dealt with Geoffrey's enemy. The detective had found other clues and other evidence, and by means of these a famous forger was brought to justice, and it was clearly proved that he had been feed to divert Geoffrey and destroy his papers, that his client might lose his case.

The record of the next year is one of folly and sin. The Best Fellow in the World was the slave of strong drink and of dangerous games. Getting drunk, he never got ugly.

Royally intoxicated, he was elaborately the gentleman, and was in court a brilliant orator, even when he scarcely stood steadily upon his feet.

CHAPTER V.



GREAT part of Charlotte Hunter's strength of character lay in her unlimited hopefulness. Hope gave her courage to work, and gave her also that happy heart that quickly found a compensation for every loss. For Geoffrey, Charlotte, like Gospel-charity, hoped all things, believed all things, suffered long and was kind, bore all things, endured all things, and never failed. She ever felt certain of some ultimate good; was sure that Geoffrey would repent, return from his devious ways, and gain some lofty, eternal good. Toward this future light she was ever looking and pressing: in its radiance the present shadows fled away. Each new effort, every event that occurred, was in some way to bring the coming blessing more near.

There is nothing to which we cannot in some measure grow accustomed. A constant want, or fear, or pain, or woe seems

in a manner to fit itself to our enduring. We must not look upon Charlotte as gloomy and miserable over Geoffrey. There was so much in him to admire: love dealt so tenderly with his errors, faith was so blind to many of his sins, he had so much present success in spite of his folly, and was so prodigal of explanations and promises, that Charlotte did not know how to despair.

The more Geoffrey sinned, the further he went astray, the more did his sister devote herself to him. She magnified his returns to sobriety and industry. She endeavored to become more and more his companion. For his sake, she mingled more in society, and gathered more friends about their home in the University tower.

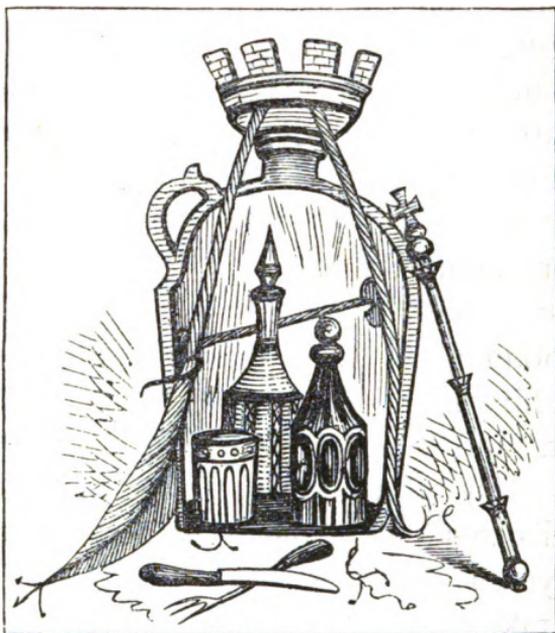
All the young lawyer's associates were not men of fashion, pleasure, and dissipation. His brilliant talents drew to him men of kindred abilities, the cultivated Bohemians of the metropolis. From many a queer corner and odd resort they gathered: artists and correspondents, authors and musicians, professional men and whole-hearted students,

and a grave, solid set of men, brought by Oliver Alden. These, gathering at times in the third room which Geoffrey had hired in the tower and furnished as a drawing-room, spent bright hours of improvement and enjoyment, where wit and cordiality were unhelped by wine or more harmful beverages.

Among congenial friends, the brother and sister worked and were happy. And though Geoffrey was continually going astray, Charlotte constantly found some new reason to hope and to expect his complete reformation. "Something would happen," she said often to herself, and sometimes to Oliver Alden. This "something" which she expected was a positive good; but the something that arrived was evil, very evil.

All unknown to his sister, Geoffrey was grievously burdened with what he called "debts of honor"—a style of debt which, be it remarked, is ever dishonorably incurred. How much he thus owed none but Geoffrey knew—more, certainly, than he could hope to pay, unless, as he said, "something hap-

pened." Besides these debts, he owed large bills, which Charlotte half-suspected, at hotels and restaurants for suppers and wine parties which he had royally given to all the



good fellows. Lastly, on this subject, as his sister very well knew, he had been absurdly extravagant in the furnishing of their drawing-room, but this was a bill which she hoped to find means to pay.

Fred Gay, once Geoffrey's college classmate, had been to California, and in a few years made some twenty-five thousand dollars.

This young man came to New York, bringing five thousand dollars in a belt with him, and leaving orders with his partners to forward the remainder of his money by express on the news of his arrival. He was a queer fellow, full of eccentricities, one of his notions being that he should die of a sudden attack of fever. He found out Geoffrey and the other good fellows, and they fraternized with him immediately. He had money to spend, and was lavish enough with it, and very likely it would not have taken many months to squander what he had made in a few years, when one day this lively Fred was taken ill, and believed that his worst fears were about to be realized.

Charlotte was alone in the evening, when a lad from the Astor House came for her brother. Geoffrey was off with his many friends. In an hour the messenger was back.

“Indeed, Mr. Gay is very ill, and will take no rest until he sees Mr. Hunter.”

Charlotte gave the boy a list of places where the truant might be found, and about eleven o'clock young Hunter entered his friend's room at the Astor House. Gay banished the attendants who were with him, and, speaking eagerly, said:

“It's come, Hunter! Just as I always told you.”

“Pooh, pooh! you'll be well in a week, my dear lad!”

“May be so—yes, I hope so. But, Geof, I've got that money here—the whole twenty thousand—and it's a burden on my mind.”

“Why didn't you take my advice, and deal with the banks like other folks?” asked Geoffrey.

“Didn't I tell you a bank ruined my father? and I've no faith in them,” said Gay peevishly.

“There are chances of loss everywhere,” said Geoffrey. “For my part, I think a well-reputed bank very much safer than a man's trunk or a belt about his body.”

“I’ve got to trust one now,” said Gay—
“sick, and with so many strangers about me.
What I want of you is, to take that twenty
thousand, and put it in a bank for me.
Choose the best one, I don’t know anything
about them.”

“But it is too late to-night,” said Geoffrey.

“Take it home with you, and attend to it
to-morrow. I can’t shut my eyes while the
money is here. If I live, I’ll get it, if the
bank don’t break; and if I die—you know
you drew up a will for me, Geof.”

Geoffrey unlocked his friend’s trunk, and
took out the parcel of money, saying, as he
did so:

“Gay, what a ridiculously inconsistent,
unbusiness-like fellow you are! You don’t
believe in banks; yet here is your fortune
in banknotes! Don’t trust them, and yet
take their paper! Your getting a fortune
at all must have been a mere stroke of
good luck.”

“Don’t talk: I’m sick. There, I feel better
already to see you in charge of it,” replied
Gay nervously.

"All right; I'll give you a line, a receipt for it."

"No need," said Gay, turning over, and looking up into the kind, handsome face above him—"no need. I'd trust you all the world over, Geoffrey."

"That may all be," said Geoffrey, opening the writing-desk; "but business is business, my dear friend. And there's the important document; mind you, don't forget where it is. Now, my boy, get to sleep, and get well. You ain't dead yet, nor anywhere near it. I wish you had a sister like Charlotte to take you in hand, but as you haven't, I commend you to good luck and the doctor."

Geoffrey shook hands with this friend who would trust him with his all, even to the world's end, and left his room, feeling every way worthy of this confidence.

It was now one o'clock. The streets were getting quiet, were lonely and deserted most of them. Geoffrey was unfortunately quite used to midnight peregrinations. He went briskly on his way, as he had done many

times before; Fred Gay's trust placed securely in the breast-pocket of his coat and guarded by his hand. At the corner of Bleecker and Wooster Streets, the evil one, who was watching for our young friend's ruin, sent two of his subordinates, one of whom sprang at Geoffrey from behind, wound an arm about his neck, and placed a hand over his mouth, while the other dexterously proceeded to rifle him. They had grappled a young athlete who was not to be despised. Geoffrey's first thought was for poor Gay's money, which he would save at the risk of his life if need be. He struck out furiously, freed his mouth, and, while he used feet and fists, lifted up the voice that had thrilled courts and won over juries in a mighty roar for help. By some happy chance, there were two policemen around the corner of Greene Street, who came swiftly to the rescue, and, Geoffrey's watch being broken from the chain and his purse wrenched from his pocket, the assailants grasped Fred Gay's precious package and fled incontinently.

“Pursue! pursue! Five hundred dollars to him who catches the thief and my money! I’m robbed!” shouted Geoffrey. And thieves, and policemen, and lawyer rushed madly down Bleeker Street. At this moment Geoffrey’s sole thought was to regain the property which had been entrusted to him. His own possessions might go, so he could save poor Fred’s treasure. In this frame of mind, he made long strides down Bleeker Street, until, at the corner of Macdougall, he ran into a pile of boxes before a grocery. As, breathless from the encounter with the boxes, he drew back, the topmost one fell from the pile, and something struck his foot. The blow, the fall, the dropping of that something on his boot, took but an instant. The flaring street-lamp at the same moment showed what had fallen to be the packet containing Fred Gay’s twenty thousand. The thief had flung it here, expecting to escape and recover it himself or to send some of his confederates to secure the prize. Strange that, as Geoffrey, the Best Fellow in the World, the man whom poor Fred

would trust anywhere, and who believed himself quite worthy of that trust, stooped to regain this money, the shameful thought came to him that here was means to defray those dishonorable debts of honor, and set him free! He saw the recovered money—rejoicing for Fred; he took it up—for himself. So sudden his temptation and his fall! He put the parcel in his bosom. He followed swiftly the steps of the robbers and the policemen, and finally found the latter coming back. They had lost their men near Greenwich Street. Geoffrey accompanied them to the station, gave an account of the attack and the loss, and what description of the thieves he could. A newspaper reporter, on the lookout for items, quickly got up one about Geoffrey's adventure, and rushed off to get it into type for the morning edition.

Geoffrey went home to Charlotte, and told his misadventure, and, strangely enough, rose early in the morning to send word to Fred Gay's attendant not to admit the daily papers to the sick-room, lest the account of the loss should make the patient worse!

How strong soever a man may be in his honorable principles, there is no estimating how shamefully he may fall if he has not divine grace to hold him up. Geoffrey had been losing money that evening, and drinking freely of brandy to console him for his loss. Perhaps the poison had driven him mad. Had this good fellow, this emphatically *best* fellow, ever believed that, given such strange opportunity, he could rob his confiding friend?

The story was in everybody's mouth. It rang—its changes and its sequel known only to himself—through Geoffrey's brain. Ah! the wine and the brandy he poured down his throat that day to drown in the fiery stream that accusing conscience which was so hard to kill.

While Charlotte, possessed with hearty sympathy for the sick Gay, was alert for the recovery of his money—while this friend condoled with Geoffrey over his losses, and that one admired his pluck, and a third wondered that he had not been murdered, the package of money lay heavy, hidden in

Geoffrey's bosom still, and he drank again and again, and thought he could now be rid of those debts of honor owed to the jolly good fellows by the best and jolliest of the crew.

While Oliver Alden was trying to find out the thieves and recover what was lost, and the first excitement was dying out, Fred Gay, from being ill, grew worse, and from worse got better. Geoffrey had not visited him. He sent word to Fred that he feared the infection of fever; he told Charlotte that he could not face the poor fellow, yet ignorant of his loss. Meanwhile he went over and over the facts: he had accepted a trust; he had indubitably been robbed, every one knew that; there was no blame to him; and here he had the money that had been stolen, and he would not face the fact that he had become a thief; but he drank harder and harder, and began to pay the debts for which he was relentlessly persecuted by some of the good fellows who had been so very good until they had become his creditors, and were now so many Shylocks demanding their pounds of flesh.

Geoffrey began to pay these debts—not honest bills for furniture and suppers, foolishly incurred bills, to be sure, they were—but he paid the shady debts, contracted in shady places, to a set of sharpers and black-legs who had seemed such exceedingly friendly and jolly fellows while they played their cheating games. He paid the money out thus by degrees during several weeks, while Alden was looking after the robbery and many other matters, and Fred Gay kept getting well.

As Charlotte had once told that convivial forger, God would find him out and bring him to judgment, even if she let him go, so now God pointed at Geoffrey with an unerring finger; pointed him out as a villain, when Geoffrey thought he had just got conscience stupefied, and was thus sitting quietly at home. It was a cold evening, and there was a fire in the grate in the little parlor, and Oliver Alden, Charlotte, and Geoffrey were sitting before it in all apparent comfort, when Providence, with such visible hand as wrote on Babylonish palace-walls, drag-

ged Geoffrey's sin to light. Geoffrey sat before the fire, Alden and Charlotte facing each other on either side of him. Alden was thinking of Charlotte, but Charlotte was thinking of Gay's loss. She looked over to Alden.

"Do you think you are ever going to get a clue to those thieves, and recover that money?"

"I hope so," said Alden, and added, as an item of his experience, "I have frequently found most light by searching out those whom one would be least likely to suspect."

"Why, then," said Charlotte carelessly, and her confident eye sought Alden's, "I think you must begin with Geoffrey—*my* Geoffrey!"

The fearful spell of sin was broken; Charlotte's clear, sweet voice smote on her guilty brother's ears like the voice of the resurrection angel. As Charlotte and Alden looked at each other, they saw Geoffrey's face between them, its fashion changed in one instant, not by indignation, but by guilt. His countenance was blanched and con-

vulsed; his eyes were full of horror; his jaw had fallen; cold drops of sweat rolled over his face; his knees shook together. His sin had found him out; vengeance unspeakable had overtaken him; his eyes were opened; he saw the amazing depth where he had fallen; conscience awoke like a strong man armed.

Charlotte read the story of her twin-brother's crime. Every trace of color faded out of her face. Her breath came heavily. She looked at Alden, and saw he also read this record. She gave him an imploring glance, which he, who had studied all her moods, so well understood. He must leave them. She could not bear a witness to Geoffrey's degradation.

He rose to go. As his hand touched the door, Charlotte gave a little cry. He turned; she could not speak, but he knew what her eyes asked, and he answered with a look. He would not divulge this secret. For the present it was safe.

He was gone.

“Geoffrey!” cried Charlotte—“Geoffrey!”

shaking his arm—"Geoffrey, speak to me! *You* have this money! *You* have committed this crime! Rouse up, and tell me about it. I must save you yet, *my* Geoffrey!"

Her Geoffrey still! Here was a love which could not abandon him—which reached down into the black pit of his despair and wicked treachery, with an angel's strength to try and lift him upward.

As often before in hours of lesser import, and as he never should again, Geoffrey turned to find refuge in his sister's loving strength. Never again shall the old University hold two such bruised and wounded hearts as ached that night, when Geoffrey laid before this sister the ungarnished story of his temptation and his fall.

"There, now, you know it all, and there's an end of everything for me, Charley," said Geoffrey forlornly.

"Oh! no; I hope not. We must save you yet, Geof," said Charlotte, stroking, with yearning tenderness, the bright hair she had pulled so often when her partnership and Geoffrey's concerned only a wicker cradle.

“Do what you can, Charley, to keep disgrace from you and the rest of the folks. It’s no matter for me any more.”

“Yes, it is, Geoffrey. I will do for you only what is fair and honest, and you can take a new start, and start right, this time.”

“I’ll agree to anything you say, Charley,” said Geoffrey. And Charlotte from this took heart of grace, and believed that all would yet be well.

It was no time now to set this man’s sins in order and claim his vows. The night was passing away. Charlotte took her Bible, and read the Fifty-first Psalm. Then the two knelt, and Geoffrey listened humbly enough while his sister besought for him forgiveness and a broken and contrite heart. Indeed, this gray, chill morning, that was even now wanly looking in at the tower window, seemed for them the dawn of better days.

There was no need to ask Charlotte where she was going when she early attired herself for walking. Geoffrey sat by a table, his head bowed on his folded arms; close by

his elbow lay that fatal packet of money. Alas! that the seals were broken! Charlotte took it.

“Twelve thousand here, Geoffrey?”

“Yes. But count it and see. No trusting *me* again.”

“Don’t talk that way, my boy. You have repented, Geof. Ask forgiveness for yourself, and then go down to your office and get to work. I’ll find you there. The business is behind-hand, and we have a case coming up to-morrow.”

Fred Gay was sitting up, convalescent, in his wrapper, comfortable; had just breakfasted. He was glad to see Charlotte, who had called on him several times during his illness.

With some brief preparation Charlotte began her story, recounting the robbery and the loss. Fred’s face grew blank and gray, as what man’s would not who had lost his all? But he was young and hopeful, and, oh! so happy that he had not died of the fever. Life was strong in him yet. And he said huskily, with an effort at cheerfulness:

“Well, I must go back, and make my little fortune over again.”

This patience cut Charlotte to the heart. She had now what was so much worse to tell. She flushed crimson, and then grew pale, and covered her face with her hand as she told the rest—that Geoffrey had been false. She did not tell that she had urged Geoffrey to come and make this confession himself; that he—pity for that too soft nature—had said he *could not do it*. He could not thus pain his friend, and meet his anger and his sorrow.

“There,” said Charlotte, taking the parcel, “is your money—what is left—twelve thousand dollars. I implore your patience; I can promise to pay you five thousand dollars within a fortnight, and I will give you my note for the remaining three, with Uncle Ames as my security. My brother is at your mercy. I beg you will not expose this grievous sin, committed, I believe, under the influence of liquor. Give him this other opportunity to lift himself up and be a man. I hope he will not again disappoint your confidence.”

“Miss Hunter,” said Fred, more shocked and compassionate than he could express, “I will not expose your brother if I never get another cent. As to security, I need none better than your promise” (here Fred was reckless and trusting as ever); “and you shake hands with Geof for me, and tell him to go in and win as a man ought with such a sister.”

Fred seized Charlotte’s hand and shook it violently.

“I hope you won’t distress yourself over this affair, ma’am. I dare say, it will all come out right. Anyway, you couldn’t help it. And it’s wonderful what mischief—if you’ll excuse me, what infernal mischief—that drink cuts up. I’ve a mind to say I’ll never touch it again.”

The first ray of light that had brightened Charlotte’s face since she learned Geoffrey’s defection shot into it now.

“Mr. Gay, if I thought by Geoffrey’s shame and sin, your soul, any soul, could be saved from the power of this curse—strong drink—comfort might begin to spring out of sorrow.”

She had risen when he shook her hand, and stood looking down at him, with wistful entreaty in the face which loving, and hoping, and caring had touched with the loftiest beauty.

“Some learn by others’ misfortunes, some by their own,” said Fred Gay, whom the recent near approach of death had in a measure subdued. “I pledge myself to you, never to taste again anything that can intoxicate, and I hope to be a better man from this hour.”

Here was an omen of good, and the day grew brighter to Charlotte as she went back to Geoffrey.

Oliver Alden was in the office, and the two were talking in low, earnest tones when Charlotte entered. Geoffrey had evidently revealed the whole affair to his friend, and Charlotte made therefore no scruple of telling all that had passed at Fred Gay’s.

“Fred’s a noble fellow,” said Geoffrey; “and as for you, Charley, the world doesn’t hold your equal. If you think me worth your cares, I’ll try again, for your sake; and

here I promise you that I'll never gamble again, never touch a card, nor go near a billiard-table, for your sake, Charley, and here's my hand on it."

"Any other promise, Geoffrey?" asked Charlotte, taking his hand. But a step was heard in the hall, and Charlotte passed into the inner office, and went to work. Geoffrey worked feverishly all day. He was in a state of high excitement. Intense relief contended with horror, shame, and remorse. Charlotte knew that the reaction would come, when Geoffrey, all crushed and unstrung, would go down into abject despair.

She stood at the foot of the stairs while Geoffrey was locking up the office. Oliver Alden came by. "I am going away," said Charlotte. "I must be absent about ten days, for matters that cannot be trusted to the mail. May I leave Geoffrey with you? Will you watch him, encourage him, and urge him to honest work?"

Said Alden, "You could not ask me anything which I should refuse. What man can do for your brother, you may look to me for."

That evening Geoffrey and Charlotte talked of her absence. Of course it was to raise money to make up for his fraud. Geoffrey could not go, for he found it just as impossible to face the disappointment and distress which he had occasioned at home, as to meet Fred Gay. He could not very well have accompanied Charlotte, for there were important cases on hand, and, if this firm was to live through these troubles, it must be by diligent attention to business, and by keeping recent missteps to themselves.

“Now, Geof,” said Charlotte, “I want you to cut loose from all these idle pleasure-seekers, and keep steadily at work while I am gone. You must give your attention to retrieving what you have lost.”

“I wish work could kill recollection,” said Geoffrey gloomily.

“I don’t; let past experiences and falls serve as warnings for the future. You have pledged yourself to stop gaming: pledge yourself now to absolute temperance.”

“Why, Charlotte, it was play, not drink, that got me into trouble.”

“It was drink that led you to play; and I *know*, Geof that, if you had been *sober*, you would not have taken the means you did to free yourself from debt.”

Geoffrey shuddered.

“I want your pledge, Geof,” said his sister.

“Charlotte, I’ll promise to abstain from drink, *if I can*.”

“If you *can*? Why, Geoffrey, by God’s help, you can do anything.”

“God seems a great way off—further than he used in the old times, Charley; so far off that I cannot find him or feel his helping.”

Oh! the infinite sadness of this commentary on “Remember *now* thy Creator!” How nigh had he been in the college-days of grace, when Charlotte had laid hold on the Covenant Angel!

“God is helping you, Geoffrey,” spoke Charlotte. “If you turn to him, he can bring good out of this evil.”

Charlotte set out for home next day. All the journey she was planning how she could unfold her story to the dear old parents. At

last, when safely within the shelter of home, welcomed, caressed, protected, once more, the strong Charlotte broke down into weeping; and how she uttered the tale she never knew. On through the night ran the Happy River, carrying the dead leaves of October beneath the stars, and still those sleepless parents heard its flow.

Charlotte had no time for delays. Next morning she saw the kind old father, standing alone by the fence, looking off vaguely into the distance. Something lonely and hopeless in his attitude told her that he was thinking of his only son. She went out to him, put her arm about his neck. "Father, I want my marriage portion."

"For what, my daughter?" But well the old man knew.

"You gave Eva five thousand dollars, father, and said you had as much for me—the savings you and mother made for years. Give it to me now, father; I will never ask it again."

"And with this you will—?"

"Pay so much that is owing to Fred Gay.

It is better that debt and *such* debt should be paid, father, than to have money in the bank. You know I would do that much for my Geoffrey, dear father."

"And what will you do, my daughter?" asked the proud and sad old man.

"Be my own portion when the time comes," said Charlotte, smiling through her tears; for this was such a miserable conversation, having such a sad occasion.

"I don't know as it is right to allow you to sacrifice so much for Geoffrey, Charlotte."

"It is not so much of a sacrifice as to see him go down unhelped. I feel sure that Geoffrey will do better and become all that we have hoped. It is, after all, just the liveliness and kindness of his disposition that have led him astray. He always was such a good fellow, father."

There were no secrets in the Hunter family. Affairs of the household were discussed openly, and what Charlotte designed was soon fully explained.

"You're not called upon to do it at all.

It was a great shame of Geof. I hope he'll turn over a new leaf now. But I don't think you ought to rob yourself or involve father," said Eva.

"It is all right about myself, and I won't let father meet loss through either of us," replied Charlotte.

George, Eva's husband, muttered something about his being sorry enough, hoping all would come out right, and that there were few such sisters as Charlotte. The mother hid both pair of spectacles in her pocket, and looked at her daughter with all her heart in her eyes.

When Charlotte concluded her brief visit, she took with her a check for the money her parents had held sacred as her marriage portion. She had another visit still. She must go to Uncle Ames. It was a hard duty, but Charlotte felt that she and Geoffrey could not go on unaided. She needed her uncle's name at least.

Having obtained that, and a plenty of hearty sympathy, which was very comforting, Charlotte set out for New York, feeling that

now her hope lay in finding Geoffrey at work, honest in his efforts to amend. If Geoffrey would be temperate and industrious, all would be well. Business was good; before the world, the reputation of the firm was unsullied. She expected Geoffrey to meet her at the depot, but Mr. Alden came instead. He had a carriage waiting. Charlotte's heart failed her: she knew there was something wrong. Suspense was cruelty, and Mr. Alden, as kindly as he could, told her the truth. Geoffrey had seemed in a frenzy of shame and despair. He said he could not work; he could not enter court; he could not meet his friends; he was a hopeless villain of the deepest dye; and, as if to make good his words, he had done little but drink since Charlotte left him, and was even now intoxicated. He had offended several of his clients by his failure to attend to their cases, and declared that he neither could nor would touch a case again. He said he wanted to do better, but he could not.

“The fact is,” said Mr. Alden, “the poor

fellow seems to have lost control over himself. It is a mania—a disease.”

“So I have heard Doctor Gray say,” replied Charlotte.

“And if a disease, it must be within the range of medical treatment.”

“So Doctor Gray said,” repeated Charlotte. “He looked at drunkenness with a physician’s eyes, and said he could cure it like many of the other diseases to which we are subject.”

“As far as I see,” said Mr. Alden, “you might as well break up this establishment. Your brother is of no use in his present state, and the first thing is to get him cured. If he is once well—sound in mind and body—he can build up a business again. To go on as he has the last few weeks is simple ruin.”

They had reached the University, and Charlotte went in alone.

The next morning Geoffrey had come to himself, and his sister told him what she had been doing.

“You have been working for me, and I

have been doing the worst I could. I see it—I feel it. Charlotte, I detest myself, and yet there seems some fearful spell upon me. All at once, I find that I am no longer master of myself.”

“Geoffrey,” said Charlotte, “will you *try* to be cured? Will you go to Doctor Gray, put yourself under his care, obey his orders, and let him master this appetite for you?”

Here was a gleam of hope.

“Charlotte, if you will agree to my cutting loose from this old life, with all its reminders, and starting all new when I begin again, I’ll do it. I feel as if I loathed this profession which once I loved so well. I see myself in every criminal in the dock. If you’ll agree to sell out, close up here, and, when I am myself again, bid me God-speed in some other line of life, I’ll try my best. I believe I shall be fit for something, Charlotte.”

Mr. Alden was present, and he sided with Geoffrey’s view, and offered to aid Charlotte in closing up. The leases of the rooms and office, the furniture, and the library were valuable, and he thought he knew of a quar-

ter where he could get a fair price for them.

Geoffrey, who had once been so energetic and manly, was now by intemperance and mental pain reduced to uselessness. Charlotte must do everything. He could not see anybody—could not talk with anybody. Charlotte must go and talk with Doctor Gray, and Charlotte must wind up their business. All they could rouse him to do was to empower Charlotte to do everything.

“I will see Doctor Gray to-morrow,” said Charlotte, “and can be back here early the day after. If he is willing to take charge of your cure, will you go there with me?”

“Yes, Charley,” said Geoffrey feebly. “I’ll do anything which you want me to.”

Again Charlotte began to hope. Here was surely the first step to reformation.

Geoffrey flung himself on the lounge and went to sleep. Tears came into Charlotte’s eyes as she marked the ravages made in his face and figure by that one fatal habit. What a wreck was this well-beloved Geoffrey!

And this dear little home, where they had often been so happy, and that business wherein they had embarked so many hopes, all must be given up. Intemperance had scuttled their ship and sunk them irretrievably. Such a lonesome look came over poor Charlotte as she made mental inventory of all that she was losing.

“Charlotte,” said Mr. Alden, “will you tell me how you raised that five thousand which you paid Gay, this morning?”

He was not used to call her Charlotte, but he was too good a friend for her to take umbrage at that or at his question. She replied with the simple truth that her father had set the sum aside as her marriage portion, and she had asked it of him now.

“It is hardly needful to tell you,” said Mr. Alden, “that I believe you a woman better and nobler than all others, and that I by no means esteem myself the best of men. But, despite all that, I wish that you would take me for what I am, and give yourself to me for ever, Charlotte.”

Here was a man whom she had learned to believe in—a man who had loved her without making love in set form. She dared not trust herself to question how she might feel towards him, but quickly made answer, “No; if I forsake Geoffrey now, he will never try any more. If he thinks I care for any one more than for him, and am deserting him, he will give up and be ruined.”

“But do you not care for some other more than for Geoffrey?”

“I have never measured my love for Geoffrey,” said Charlotte.

Mr. Alden took courage as she did not deny his implication: “Shall I wait, then, until Geoffrey is on his feet again?”

“You must do what will make you happiest,” said Charlotte, with a smile.

“I always enjoyed waiting,” observed Oliver Alden.

On the second day after that, when Charlotte came back from Dr. Gray’s, thinking she had settled affairs there for Geoffrey, and assured him a home and a cure, she found that, after violently breaking away

from Alden, poor Geoffrey had got intoxicated and disappeared.

“He has left town,” said Mr. Alden, “and I think he has gone home. Some longing for his friends and for peace may have seized him. You had better leave your business in my hands and go after him.”

CHAPTER VI.

IT was Tony Moreland who had been to the depot for two of those naughty barrels whereby his Aunt Katy made her living, and who now rolled them into the curious, scientific, and beer-selling shop, settling them in their places with an expressive kick. Says Master Tony :

“Haunt Katy, hi seed Miss Charlotte hat the depot, hand she’s got more’n ha peck hof trouble, I knows. She looked horful. Mr. George was there ’long with the kerrige. She goes to ’im, hand hasks some-thin’, lookin’ like folks do wen they hasks to see the corp’. Mr. George shakes ’is ’ead. She looked round, done out like, then she comes hup to me. Says she, tryin’ to speak keerless like: ‘Tony, ’ave you seen Mr. Geoffrey?’ ‘No, miss,’ says I. Then she gets hinto the kerrige, hand I knows she’s gone hand lost Mr. Geoffrey—”

"Is *that* all?" asks Katy, disappointed in the unsatisfactory termination of this gossip.

"No, 'tain't hall. Hit's my hopinion that whiskey his hat the bottom hof 'er trouble, whatsoever hit his. Hi say, likewise hi've said many's the time, Haunt Katy, wish't you quit the business, hor some night hi'm bound to rise hup hand knock the bungs into the 'oles hof hevery 'un hof them dumb hold bar'ls."

"Dumb" being the nearest approach Tony ever made to swearing, he had now reached his climax, and, taking a cloth of indifferent color, began to mop off the counter, wet with a filthy drizzle of ale, beer, and brandy from dirty mugs and tumblers.

"I'm sure," says Aunt Katy, "I'd be sorry for any trouble coming to that young lady and gentleman. I'd go a longer way to pleasure them than any others. Look out for that owl, Tony; you'll knock him over!"

"That howl's for ever in the way," grunted Tony.

"I wish, Tony, you'd brush off that squirrel a little."

“That here squirrel’s stood round hin the dust so long, ’e looks ’bout has seedy has Huncle Terry,” said Tony.

Ten o’clock. The night was dark and chill. The green branches were gone from Aunt Katy’s fireplace, and bright flames sparkled there instead. Uncle Terry, crouched in the corner of the settle, sipping beer or brandy, made a feeble attempt to be jovial, and, complaining of the sweeping winds and darksome roads, would not be gone. Aunt Katy dozed over her knitting; Tony read a dog’s-eared book. Some one is knocking at the door.

Who comes here? Not the famous Grenadier of nursery story, but a tall figure, in a fashionably-made brown cloth suit, with a handsome overcoat and travelling-cap. The glossy brown locks and beard are damp and unkempt. There is a wildness in the eyes, and some great sorrow, remorse, and sin have stamped uncanny lines on cheek and brow. There is a treacherous tremble to the voice once so sweet and true; but air and speech are a touching echo of the debo-

nair, elate, and right royal King of all Good Fellows. It is Geoffrey Hunter.

“Ah! Mrs. Moreland—Tony, my friend—and Uncle Terry, too”—that courteous bow all around, that lifts them up to the plane of the Best Fellow in the World, he so thoroughly treats them as his peers—“I’m late, to-night. I’ll have to trouble you for a seat by your fire, Mrs. Moreland. It is too late to travel in the dark.”

How eagerly does Katy bring her best chair, and humbly take his coat and hat, and feel her poor home all unworthy of its guest! Tony replenished the fire. His eyes were keen as his hunter uncle’s had been, and in those muddy boots, in the burrs, and dead leaves, and hooked briars caught in these fine clothes, Tony read a story of aimless wanderings, that weariness and cold had ended, and which this poor gentleman was vainly striving to hide. Then the boy’s cautious eye travelled up to the worn face, and to the eyes gazing so drearily into the fire. The way in which Tony put facts and signs together and made out the wan-

derer's story, was quite worthy of Oliver Alden.

Katy had already gone to her counter and was filling a glass. Tony went after her, took her by the elbow, and spoke in low, rapid tones:

"For shame, haunt! I thought better hof you. To give ha *gentleman* that cheap stuff made for paupers like Huncle Terry! Can't you see the gentleman's sick? 'E's cold hand faint; hout hof 'is 'ead like, going into brain-fever most like. Now, you *can* make good coffee; so give 'im a cup hof that, all 'ot hand good, hand treat 'im like a Christian."

"That's what I aim to do, Tony," said Katy with dignity, offended, yet convinced. "He is sick or wrong somehow, sure enough, and I'll make the coffee."

The two turned to look at their guest, who, unheeding their whispers, crouched over the fire and spread his hands to the blaze.

Uncle Terry had concluded his potations and taken the same position on the other

side of the hearth. There they sat—the Good Fellow and the Royally Best Fellow—different degrees of the same comparison; but for such stuff as gurgled in Katy's barrels, they might have both been something so different—the one, the honest, respectable village patriarch; the other, a leader among men by the divine right of the great gifts Heaven had bestowed upon him.

Katy went to make her coffee, and Tony brushed Geoffrey's clothes, took away the travel-stained boots, and brought a cushion whereon to rest his feet.

"Come, now, uncle, it's time you made tracks," he said, crowding Uncle Terry's hat on his head and twisting his scarf about his neck. But the old man only mumbled and tottered, and would not go.

"Uncle Terry seems rather shaky," said Geoffrey.

"Well, 'e's just where 'e might look to be hafter 'is guzzling—gone to the dogs! Nothin' like drinkin' to pull a man down. hand break 'im hup, hand work the mischief with 'im generally. Well, Uncle Terry!

hi've poured hout your ruin many's ha time, not hof my hown free will, tho'. So hi'll bear the brunt of it, hand take you 'ome. Peg along lively, now!"

Tony took the forlorn old victim off, and, presently returning, wiped the settle with elaborate care, brought a clean quilt and pillow, decorations of Katy's ever-unused state-bed, and Geoffrey, having drunk the coffee and expressed his thanks, stretched himself out on the rest thus prepared, and fell away to sleep.

"He looks fearsome bad, poor gentleman, and as you say, Tony, he's sick and wandering like. He's worked too hard and worn hissself out. As soon as it's morning, I'll run up to the farm, and tell Miss Hunter to bring the carriage for him."

Early in the morning, so early that the daylight had not quenched the stars, Katy was making ready to go on her errand. The new blue stockings were gartered over the sturdy legs that made nothing of a six miles' walk; Katy's best red petticoat was carefully held up from brushing against the

brown earth or the rime of frost ; over Katy's shoulders and head was drawn the ample bright-blue cloth cloak, which had done duty in Ireland before she went to England, and in England before she came to America ; the hood of the cloak covered the clean frilled cap, tied with a broad black ribbon which Katy wore as a token of her widowhood.

Away she went, frost-stiffened grass and leaves crackling beneath her feet ; away in the stinging morning air, the early sunrise flaming against her face—kind, honest, foolish, misguided Katy Moreland ; doing strange mixture of good and evil all the days of her life. I think an angel with any less welcome message would not have been so warmly greeted at the Hunter farm as was the taxidermist's widow when she came bringing news of Geoffrey. Doubly thankful was Charlotte when she found that her brother was only supposed to be ill from overwork. The carriage was made ready with pillows, hot bricks, and soft, warm Afghans, while mother Hunter in her grati-

tude prepared Katy's breakfast, and served her with her own hands as an honored guest. Blessed and never-to-be-forgotten hour to Mistress Katy when she drank Mocha coffee from a transparent cup, ate buckwheat cakes and broiled ham with a silver fork, and saw a fringed damask napkin lying by her own plate, when to crown all she rode home with Miss Charlotte in the carriage!

Whatever had been the indignation of the Hunter family at Geoffrey's wayward and wicked course, it was short-lived. It had vanished in that one night of anxiety when he was wandering they knew not where. When Katy brought news of him, they were prepared to receive their prodigal with unquestioning, unrebuking love; to put on him the best robe and the ring; and make a feast of gladness over his return. Geoffrey, ill in mind and body, penitent and exhausted, came home with a great longing for that home's peace and love. Upon his perturbed spirit the gentle ministries of his friends fell like dew from heaven. He was

wrapped in a profound calm. The tumult, bustle, and strife of the great city had died away like the echoes of battle. Temptations were gone; foes and flatterers were gone. Here were no cases to win or lose, no courts to plead before, no juries to persuade. The excitement, the success, the sin and sorrow of the past, fled like dream-land shadows, and slowly through the beautiful Indian-summer days Geoffrey came back to himself—came to renewal of hope and strength. He had been mad, but now was sane. He wondered at himself; at his recent conduct; at the love which had borne with him: Of that love he would at last prove worthy. Again, these may have been days of mercy when God was waiting to be gracious. Having no suits to plead on earth, why did not Geoffrey now retain in his behalf that Eternal Advocate who waits ever to plead in the court of the Father? This is an advocate who never loses a case; who never turns off a client; who asks no fee but a love which he himself gives us to feel.

Able now to hope and plan for himself, Geoffrey took an interest in the settlement of his affairs in New York, and in going to Doctor Gray. Mr. Alden, acting as his agent, disposed of his property in the city, paid the furniture bill, and an additional three hundred to Fred Gay.

It was neither Geoffrey's plan nor the doctor's that he should be idle in his new home. Activity and mental occupation were means to the cure. Geoffrey was to set in order Dr. Gray's accounts, teach the Greek classes in the academy, and be the librarian of the village association. Charlotte had feared to have her brother take the journey to Doctor Gray alone, lest he be again tempted by his evil habit. She hesitated to propose to accompany him, lest he should construe it as suspicion and watching. Quite unexpectedly Oliver Alden made his appearance, and, after a short visit, became Geoffrey's traveling companion.

"Why don't you marry that man, Lottie, I know he wants you?" said Eva.

Charlotte laughed. She felt so light-

hearted, now that Geoffrey was to be safe, and the burden of care for him was lifted from her tired spirit.

“I suppose you’ll settle down at home, now, and behave as a young lady should,” said Eva, assuming matronly airs. “I’m glad of it, you have been so singular, Lottie.”

“You are doomed to disappointment, my dear,” said Charlotte. “I shall be off in two weeks; would be gone to-morrow, did not civilized humanity demand such a variety of garments.”

“Where are you going, and what for?” demanded Eva.

“To Uncle Ames’s, to be his clerk, on a salary of eight hundred dollars; and he is to let me live at his house besides. I shall scribble enough at least to make my earnings a thousand; and I hope to save half I earn.”

Charlotte knew she was horrifying her sister by these utterances, and she laughed heartily.

“How I do hate to hear a woman talk of earning money!” cried Eva; “it looks so unladylike.”

“I’ve just as good a right to earn my living as a man, provided I know how,” said Charlotte, ventilating her old creed.

“You sound dreadfully avaricious,” said Eva. “But, if you are going to be at Uncle Ames’s, you’ll need bushels of new clothes, they’re so fashionable.”

Eva spoke with satisfaction; she doted on new clothes.

“Clerks are not expected to be stylish,” said Charlotte. “But I shall be thankful for your advice in remodelling my old garments, and making them whole and decent. Considering my circumstances, I think it a blessing that I have no prettiness as you have to set off with nice clothes.”

Eva took a peep in the glass at her beauty, which ever grew more beautiful in her eyes, and, indeed, in everybody’s eyes, and then set about giving her elder sister aid and advice in her sewing.

And now for the first time the paths of this twin brother and sister diverged and ran far apart—they were separated by Geoffrey’s sin. Charlotte’s hopes and plans were

changed, in a measure. Geoffrey had said that he should never resume the practice of law. He felt that it would for ever call up his sin, and he could not face either judge or prisoner, knowing how he himself had fallen. Geoffrey, with an aptitude for nearly everything, with an easy versatility of talent which could take hold of almost any occupation or profession, would choose for himself some new line of life, and be quite sure of succeeding, unless he relapsed into intemperance. With Charlotte it was very different. She could assist Geoffrey while he was a lawyer; if he chose teaching as a profession, she could help him in that; in any other course she could not stand with him shoulder to shoulder as heretofore. After her bitter disappointment and despair, Charlotte had come to feel that she should be quite satisfied if she found Geoffrey doing well, living a moral and happy life, even if that life lay apart from her own. As for higher aspiring, if Geoffrey had only longed for himself as ardently as Charlotte did for him, he would have been a Christian long ago.

Geoffrey's evil course had made Charlotte very ardent in the temperance cause, and before she left home she resolved to visit Katy Moreland, and see if she could not persuade her to stop selling beer and liquor.

At this proposition Katy laughed openly.

"Tony talks just so, and I tell him he can do as he likes about the business when I'm dead. Poor Tony! he gets right vexed at me. On hot days I may take a mug of ale to cool me off, and of a cold night some hot beer, with a bit of butter melted atop, to warm me up. No more, I assure you, miss; not a drop stronger; but Tony won't even touch that. Now, if I kept a disorderly shop or let men get drunk here, it would be my duty to listen to you in a minute. But it is just the drink now and the drink then, going and coming from work, or a pitcher of ale to carry home for supper. Uncle Terry stops longest, being old and slow and sociable like. But all is quiet and tidy, I do assure you."

"No use to arguefy with 'er, miss," spoke Tony from between a beer-barrel and a

raccoon. "The honly harguement I knows is to knock those bungs hinto the 'oles some night, and let the business run hithself hout."

"That would be downright robbery, Tony," said Aunt Katy, assuming the pathetic; "and I know you wouldn't go and treat her as fed and clothed you like a mother that way, indeed, Tony."

Pathos on Aunt Katy's part brought tears on Tony's; he dug his fists into his eyes, and remarked:

"It was a dumb shame if he wouldn't," and in muttered words registered some vows that fell only into the heedless ear of the stuffed raccoon.

"Even by the little liquor you sell, you may injure some one, Mrs. Moreland," said Charlotte. "There is Uncle Terry, for instance. You tell me his daughter is dead, fairly worried into her grave by poverty and hard work, and poor little Judy is coming up as she can. Terry might have been a very different man if he could have got no liquor to drink; and consider, yours is the only shop in this settlement."

“Yes; but, dear heart, if *I* hadn’t had this tidy little shop to use the little trade up, some dirty rascalion would have been sure to set up a worse one.”

“Even in that view of the case, you should have let this business alone. God will hold you responsible for the mischief you do, not for what your neighbor might have done.”

“Indeed, miss,” said Katy, aggrieved, “I give Judy nearly all she eats, and I put her up to go to school.”

“Yes; hand she learns like ha clipper; hand, my eye, hain’t she ha cute one, black eyes and little tight curls!”

Tony evidently greatly admired Miss Judy.

There was nothing to be made out of Katy, who thought she did as well as could be expected, and that many of her neighbors might do worse. “When Tony got a man and got his own head,” said Katy, “they should see what they should see.” Then she fell to talking scientifically, and indulged in memories of the defunct Moreland.

“There’s a widow moth—poor thing, flies

only at night—but Moreland was abroad at all times hunting. And yon spider is reckoned the biggest ever was found—bigger nor a tarantula, I've heard tell."

"'Bout as poisonous as whiskey, too," said Tony.

Overhead a doeskin was stretched out and nailed to the rafters; the head, stuffed with hay, hung dangling almost against Charlotte's bonnet.

"Moreland put it there to dry; I helped him do it. Dear heart, I didn't think he'd never take it down!"

Mrs. Moreland sought out new objects of interest.

"Do you see that case above Tony's head? That's a green heron—'Fly-up-the-Creeks' they do call 'em here, miss. They hardly ever call anything by the right name; they don't know. Fly up, indeed! just as if they *stayed* up the creek and never come down!"

Beyond the green heron was a groundhog, hopelessly stranded in a box of mixed nails, with its nose pushed into a rusty coffee-

mill, while the most forlorn of pole-cats, with hay bulging out where its eyes should have been, showed its teeth between a battered tea-caddy and a broken-necked decanter.

Queer Katy! she wouldn't move even to dust or repair her Moreland's penates. She might have had a decent, thrifty, original little shop there, but Katy was joined to her idols, and saw money only in glasses of ale and beer.

We now turn from following Charlotte's quiet way, to chronicle still the haps and mishaps of our Best Fellow, whom, in spite of all his devious wanderings, Heaven seemed still to favor.

In the buoyancy of his disposition, with health returning, with new hopes springing in his breast, Geoffrey found himself a happy and beloved inmate of Dr. Gray's pleasant home. The doctor was a friend of student days, yielding Geoffrey that tribute of regard that none seemed able to deny. His wife had been ready to welcome the wanderer and promote his restoration—ready from womanly humanity and sympathy with that

brave-hearted sister whose life was so entwined with Geoffrey's. Now that Geoffrey had come into her family, he won these sympathies and interests for himself, and the sisterly kindness of his hostess prevented him from ever feeling himself an intruder in their domestic circle. That part of Geoffrey's history which related to Fred Gay was known only to his own family and Mr. Alden; no hint of it had been given at the doctor's. Geoffrey soon found himself cordially received by the inhabitants of one of the pleasantest towns lying on the Hudson. Society here was free from many of the extravagances and temptations of life in the city. First for Doctor Gray's sake, and then for his own, our pleasant Geoffrey was made welcome, and speedily felt himself a man again.

Surrounded now at the doctor's by the books and appliances of the medical profession, Geoffrey began from curiosity to turn his attention to it, and soon found in himself the same interest for pharmacy which he had formerly experienced for law. His facile mind so attached itself to the

problems and discoveries of medicine and surgery, so rapidly received new information, and so acutely reasoned upon it, that he began to wonder if this were not *the* pursuit for which nature had especially designed him. Geoffrey was ambitious in a measure, and he saw that eminence was as possible of attainment to a physician as to a lawyer. He was benevolent, and thought that it would be a beautiful thing to spend life in healing the sick, soothing pain, preventing the spread of disease, and restoring hope to sorrowful and despairing hearts.

Geoffrey was avaricious of affection and esteem. He saw Doctor Gray's patients watching for his coming, greeting his entrance with an eager smile, hanging on his words as on the deliverances of an oracle, fear changing into confidence and woe to thankful joy when the doctor smiled good cheer. Geoffrey would relish being so desired, so trusted, so beloved. How sweet to win profound gratitude in the exercise of one's daily business!

"When I won a case," said Geoffrey to

his friend, "I made my client glad, but at the expense of the defeat and chagrin of the other party. In the pursuit of business, I sometimes won success for those by whom success was not truly deserved. At other times, the rights of both parties were nearly equally balanced in my mind; but I could only bend my energies to obtaining the triumph of one. Again, when guilt was clear, and the criminal in every way worthy of his punishment, there were often innocent families, parents, sisters, children, or a wife to lament his fate, and temper by their tears and their despair the satisfaction of rendering justice to an ill-deserver. Your profession has none of these drawbacks. You heal a sick man, and everybody rejoices. If he dies in spite of you, you know you relieved a great measure of his sufferings, and used the best efforts to save him. You regret his loss, and have keen sympathy to give his friends, and they love you for what you would have done."

"You paint it in rose-color," said Doctor Gray. "Sometimes friends turn against you,

and say: 'Doctor, somebody else would have done infinitely better.' Perhaps your patient gets restive, just as your cure is well in progress, and dispenses with your services, adding to the dismissal unkind remarks; again, all is going well, when some bungling nurse forgets or mistakes your orders, and brings danger or confusion. Often behind your back an interfering 'old granny' is guilty of some malpractice which would be absurd if it were not dangerous. You are called up of nights, and sent for in haste of days, to go miles for some mistake, or whim, or nervous excitement. If you tell the truth, you are not believed; if you tell a lie, you are universally condemned; if you hold your peace, nobody is satisfied. If you are calm and firm, you are styled cruel and heartless. If you are sympathetic or voluble, you are supposed to be frightened, and every one about you gets frightened likewise. My dear Geoffrey, don't fall in love with my profession without counting the cost."

"But you like your profession, respect it, enjoy its practice."

“Yes, on the whole I do,” said Doctor Gray.

“And as I never mean to return to law, having many important private reasons for forsaking it,” said Geoffrey with a blush, “and as your profession attracts me exceedingly, what studies, what preparation would be needful fairly to establish me in its practice?”

“For you, less than for many,” replied Doctor Gray. “Your reading is extensive; you are conversant with many studies which belong to our profession; and, as you are aware, you have a genius, a quickness of apprehension and of application, that are seldom equalled. I never saw any one like you, and I don’t suppose any one else ever did, except those who had the happiness of knowing Admirable Crichton.”

Geoffrey laughed.

“I hope you will not call me fickle if I now devote myself to medicine as your student.”

“There is one qualification which I deem important, which you lack, my friend,” said Doctor Gray seriously.

“And what may that be?” demanded Geoffrey.

“Every physician *ought* to be a Christian. The man who stands nearly every day face to face with death; who is frequently the only person summoned to the side of the dying; whose solemn duty it not seldom becomes to tell a patient that he has but a few hours to live, should be able with this astounding news to give some consolation, and to indicate the best use to be made of those precious last hours. The physician, as you say, frequently becomes the oracle of his patients, and then his usefulness can be immense, if he is able to point to interests high above his immediate profession.”

“That all may be true,” said Geoffrey; “yet, taking your profession through, we shall find a large proportion of practitioners who make no pretension of religion.”

“I am aware of that,” answered Doctor Gray; “but I do not believe with Pope that

‘Whatever is, is right.’

That there may be found among physicians

many irreligious, careless, or absolutely infidel men, does not prove that there should be such. There are also many ignorámuses and quacks. But, filling the profession with the men most suitable to its demands, we should find neither the scoffer nor the charlatan."

"I am no disbeliever," said Geoffrey. "I admire religion in its theory, and religious people in their practice. I take my fellowmen at what they profess to be, and when they say they are Christians I believe that they are. Piety has made Charlotte a vast deal better than I am; and, if you will permit me to be personal, I think that your religion is an ornament to you, and that you ornament your religion."

"Why, then, appreciating piety thus, do you not accept it for yourself?"

"It never comes home to me somehow," said Geoffrey; "or, perhaps, I have as much as anybody, but have a different way of showing it. I do not oppose myself to it, and, if I lack it, some day it may come to me. There was a day when godliness seemed nearer than now."

“A false notion—very false. Your complaisant indifference is often the most dangerous form of opposition. Of open and violent attacks on Christianity you might repent. Now, you cannot see yourself at all blameworthy. Piety won't come to you like the day-dawn, Geoffrey, breaking unprayed for. If it is worth having, it is worth asking, and the Sun of Righteousness generally shines only upon those who cry, ‘Lord! open thou my eyes!’”

“To go back, with your permission, to our first subject,” said Geoffrey, who found his friend's observations too personal, “I believe I shall study medicine. I am not too old to change my profession, and I think this just suits me. Perhaps I shall settle near you, Gray, and be so popular as to run you out of practice—a poor return that for all your goodness!”

“I shall gladly welcome you as a brother-physician; and all the recompense what you call my kindness demands, is to see you becoming worthy of yourself and of your great abilities.”

To Charlotte, Geoffrey wrote :

“What would you say to my writing M.D. after my name, Charley? I wish I had studied medicine in the first place. I believe it is just what I was intended for. I take to it naturally. If I had chosen that rather than law when I left college, we could have studied together, and you could have helped me in that. You do not change as easily as I do, so I suppose I must go on alone. As soon as I am ready to practise, Charley, you must come and keep house for me, and I will do better than I did before. A doctor cannot mingle so much in society as a lawyer, for his business demands him at all hours, and, having so much depending on him, it is an imperative duty to be cautious and always master of himself. You need worry about me no more, Charley my love; for, though I haven't signed teetotal, I have given up all that can intoxicate, and—great is the force of good example!—prefer a cup of coffee to a glass of wine. In parties here, they have lemonade and coffee instead of liquors, and a ‘wine-room’ is quite un-

heard of. How our New York friends would stare at such parties! But, after all, they are much more sensible, and indeed more hospitable, for they do not leave the guests used up in brain and body, ashamed of themselves and of every one else."

Charlotte was inclined to be dismal over Geoffrey's letter; she felt as if he were doing well only, because he had no temptation to do ill. She felt this so much that she wrote to Hector Gray about it:

"I fear your cure is not radical. Geoffrey may be sober, because other people about him are so, and he has no opportunity to be otherwise. He was always so susceptible to the influence of those about him. I fear that the fatal taste is not dead, but asleep; that the habit, so ruinous to him, is not cut up and rooted out to the very last fibre, but only clipped down below the surface, ready to spring up again."

Doctor Gray acknowledged in his heart the justice of her fears when he replied:

"What you say may be true. Earthly cures are superficial things at best. I can-

not supply my man with motives, nor can I make over his heart and sow it full of celestial grace. A poor little surface work is all I can pretend to, but I am doing that as well as I can. It is so often in hereditary, constitutional, or chronic diseases. We may seem to cure them; our patient is said to be well. For the time being he *is* well. But given the same occasions, let the same injuries, or exposures, or excesses recur that developed the disease in the first place, and the trouble is back again, and very likely 'the last error shall be worse than the first.' As far as Geoffrey is concerned, I am doing what I can for him, making open way for something better, and you and I, all of us, must pray that the better will come in and take possession."

Pray! Charlotte felt as if her life were one long struggling prayer for Geoffrey. Striving, agonizing in prayer for him, Geoffrey left to other people. The easy disposition of this genial Best Fellow was such that he could not bear to trouble himself. It was ill work to go grubbing down into mo-

tives, desiring spiritual renovations and revolutions. He shrank from having this Royal Best Fellow in the World proclaimed to himself the chief of sinners, having no goodness at all except in the name of another. And just as he left the burden of his soul's well-being to press heavily on other hearts, Geoffrey left self-denials and hard-toiling to other people, too. What he earned, he spent. He must dress well not to disgrace his friends. He bought books, and made presents, and put his name on charity subscriptions, and went easily along. He did not worry himself about certain debts in New York: they were out of sight, and, therefore, out of mind. He must take a new start in a new profession, and then, no doubt, money would flow to him in a perpetual stream. And then, if there were any little affairs that needed settling, he could easily attend to them. Meanwhile, who could criticise or condemn him? Not the Grays, who were unaware of previous entanglements. Not the new friends and associates, who had never seen so generous and thor-

oughly glorious a fellow as the royal Geoffrey. Not the dear, fond parents who weekly got long, spicy, loving letters, full of penitence for sorrows caused in days gone by, of promises for days to come, and cheering assertions for the present. Not Charlotte, whose life toward him was always patience, forgiveness, and half-idolatry. Charlotte read those long letters—for Geoffrey was the most faithful and delightful of correspondents—read them, and was so glad that he was safe and happy, that she was quite content to work, and save, and devote her earnings and her savings to making a free man of her brother, and sending him forth in his new profession unburdened by debt, free from reminders of past sins and sorrows.

Helped nobly by her uncle, who gave in the guise of Christmas and birthday presents, Charlotte was able to accomplish her purpose. Fred Gay had his own again, and Geoffrey was sent the receipted bills of his city creditors. We do not refer to debts contracted in gaming or billiards; that was mire in which Charlotte could not meddle,

and whatever Geoffrey had failed to pay in those shameful days when he held Fred Gay's money, he now gracefully ignored.

Charlotte was greatly afraid that, having been disappointed in Geoffrey, Uncle Ames should lose the affection which he had cherished for him. Never a good act of Geoffrey's which Charlotte did not find an opportunity to tell. Never a loving or a witty passage in those long letters which she was not careful to read in the family circle. What of the past circumstances had forced her to unfold now lapsed into silence, and Geoffrey was set forth by Charlotte only in his legitimate position of the Best Fellow in the World.

No word of coldness or condemnation did Uncle Ames give to Geoffrey. He spoke of his nephew with interest and kindness, but daily before his eyes grew the beauty and strength of Charlotte's character, and his heart received her as his daughter, while he often futilely wished that Heaven had given her to be his son rather than his

niece. By her lofty nobility of character, Charlotte won hearts worth winning; for the grace of his lips, all the world was Geoffrey's friend.

CHAPTER VII.



NEW era opens in Geoffrey Hunter's history. Hitherto the Best Fellow has loved himself first, Charlotte next, and other people in their order. Now awakes the strongest impulse, the noblest feeling of his life—an emotion congenial to his joyous and bountiful nature. Our Geoffrey is in love!

Our Best Fellow, like very many of such fellows, has been greatly selfish. Incapable of wishing to marry under any less influence than a profound passion which should fill his ideal of love, he had never found a being so perfect as to be worthy of his cherished model—Geoffrey Hunter. Geoffrey would have been shocked and indignant at this statement, but it is undeniably true. Charlotte was his sister; he loved her dearly; thought he had the first claim upon her, and accepted unhesitatingly the sacrifice of her life. Mrs. Gray was his kind, plain-speaking friend; he said she did him a great deal of

good by her advice and her pleasantly-uttered reproofs. Many young ladies had been agreeable to talk or dance with. For the rest, there were mothers, of whom his mother was the exponent—dear, good, true-hearted creatures, addicted to making warm stockings and delightful doughnuts; given to repairing one's wardrobe, and beaming satisfaction and curiosity through various pairs of spectacles.

Geoffrey had frequently made the foolish assertion that he admired all women so deeply that he could never make choice of any particular one as the object of especial adoration. Fate—shall we say?—now made choice for him, or was it the development of the secret predilection of long ago? We are not sufficiently devoted to psychology to discuss the question whether Geoffrey's love was a resurrection or a new creation. Enough, there was a love, and love ennobles.

Geoffrey now went out frequently with Dr. Gray to visit his patients, and accompanied him, one morning, on a ten-miles' ride, to see a Mrs. Foster. The doctor left Geof-

frey in the buggy, and our young man was dividing his attention between Hufeland's "Art of Prolonging Life" and the handsomely laid-out garden that rolled back from either side of the carriage-way, when a young girl came to the buggy, saying: "Doctor Gray wants the brown case."

Geoffrey handed over the case, wishing that it might have taken some time to find it; and then, instead of devoting himself further to Hufeland or the garden, began to stare at the windows, wondering if he might at least catch the shadow of this fair damsel passing by, and half-vexed at poor, unconscious Doctor Gray for not sending her on another errand. His patience was rewarded by seeing the pretty girl accompany the doctor to the door, and watch him as he drove away.

"What a charming young lady!" cried Geoffrey.

"Mrs. Foster's niece—one of the nicest girls near here," said Doctor Gray, consulting his watch and whipping up his horse.

"I suppose you couldn't tell me her name,

seeing I'm dying to know," said Geoffrey, laughing.

"Gone at last!" cried the doctor, lifting his eyebrows. "Surrendered at the first approach of the enemy—Geoffrey the invincible!"

"Pooh!" said Geoffrey. "Most likely she is engaged to be married, and you know it."

"No; she is notoriously hard to win," said Doctor Gray, and then he glanced again at the irresistible Geoffrey, and a troubled look came into his face.

"But her name?" persisted the Best Fellow.

"Oh! her name. She is Miss Zell Ranleigh."

"Zell! Little Zell Ranleigh!" cried our friend, while a swift panorama of a fairy child who hung fascinated about his chair, who hemmed him a pocket-handkerchief, who wept because she was not invited to the party, and who slyly lent him five dollars, swept before his mental vision.

"Zell! I knew her years ago in board-

ing-school. She was Charlotte's pet roommate—a witching child, and now become

‘Idalian Aphrodite, beautiful!’”

“Very far gone—dropped into poetry already,” said Doctor Gray. Then came the troubled look.

“I'm going to see her and reclaim the old acquaintance,” said Geoffrey, adding complacently, “Zell always liked me.”

No answer from Doctor Gray, and Geoffrey rattled on: “To start all fair in my new profession, I must have a wife. Alden will be running off with my Charley some day. I don't believe she'd leave law and love to be my housekeeper.” On this point Geoffrey had not hitherto had a doubt. “Oh! my mind's made up: Benedict must get married. How glum you are, Gray! Only you are married, I'd fancy you wanted the beautiful Zell yourself.”

Doctor Gray did not know what answer to make. He loved Geoffrey—wished him well. He saw him about to carry on a courtship in his own eager, dashing fashion, strik-

ing out of his way every obstacle ; winning the wife without a doubt ; but, when won, would he make her happy ? What surety was there that Geoffrey would not again madly go astray, and now wreck another life besides his own ?

Doctor Gray's piety was practical. He believed and had spoken that a physician should be a Christian ; he also believed that godliness should be the foundation of the family. God united in Eden a pair whose faces were set toward immortal holiness and happiness, alike his children, into whose joint home his presence came—who, fallen and driven from the paradisaic gate, cherished still the worship of the Eternal, and waited for the coming Christ.

Quick to appreciate the emotions of those near him, Geoffrey already felt the chilling influence of his friend's secret doubt ; and his mental thermometer began to drop down from its summer heat, and fall into the nipping regions of untimely frosts.

“ Miss Ranleigh,” said Doctor Gray, seeing that he must say something, “ is a Christian.”

“Very good,” says Geoffrey; “an additional grace. I have always intended to marry a Christian.”

“Perhaps,” said the doctor slowly, “Miss Ranleigh may have formed the same resolution.”

Long silence. They had passed several milestones before Geoffrey spoke again.

“Pray, do they—Christians, you know—often make that resolution?”

“They always ought,” said the doctor honestly.

“You are hard upon me, Gray,” said Geoffrey sadly.

“Not half so hard as you are upon yourself. What hinders you, Geoffrey, from standing among the sons of God? For ever and for ever the Spirit striving and pleading through human lips—why, Geoffrey, why so deaf?”

“Now, look here, Gray,” said Geoffrey, leaning back in the buggy and initiating an argument: “religion, we both admit, is a good thing; we should say that it would be a blessing and a safeguard in every family.

Now, if we cannot have a great deal of it, we need not refuse a little. Better, *I* should say, that one party should be a Christian than that two sinners should be united. If the children cannot have a Christian father, it is surely an advantage to have a pious mother at whose knees to say their prayers. If we cannot be as good as your lofty idea, my friend, let us be as good as we can."

"Learn, Geoffrey, as from a parable, from the early story of our earth; when the children of God united with the children of men, came a race of giants that were not of the race of heaven. Until then a consecrated line preserved the world from the fierceness of the divine displeasure. When the sanctity of the household was desecrated by the union of God's friends and foes, irreligion spread abroad—type and precursor of the flood—and the world was doomed."

"Beyond me; far beyond me. O Saint Christopher, my friend—you who can take a whole tree for your staff—how soon do you wade beyond my depth in these waters of

controversy! The immortal Geoffrey has not yet reached all knowledge."

Riding on through the ever-new beauty of the spring, most likely Geoffrey was weaving visions of his love, and filling his future with new light unknown before. As for Doctor Gray, though no croaker and augurer of evil, he mused of new dangers likely to beset his friend's way. Zell Rangleigh had been hard to win; but what if Geoffrey, known in childhood, had been the cherished hero of her life? Geoffrey was determined to press his suit, and Doctor Gray knew what his friend did not: that Zell was now wealthy. With this girl for his wife, Geoffrey would come into possession of abundant means; he would be no longer urged to labor and study by the spur of necessity; the temptations of fortune would surround him; ease and idleness would be apt to foster the old habit, probably now not dead, but asleep. What then? Why, this glorious Geoffrey would be lost to himself; his shining talents would be lost to the world; and the keen-eyed

doctor knew that Zell, who was among fair women what the delicate exotic from the tropics is among the flowers, would droop and die at the cold touch of sorrow.

At the first renewal of the old-time acquaintance with Zell, Geoffrey was spurred on in work and study by an unwonted desire to become worthy of love and confidence. Nothing was too much to offer Zell. Geoffrey would have rejoiced in gathering all earth's honors and emoluments to lay them at her feet. Doctor Gray loved Geoffrey too well not to rejoice in his new happiness; but he most emphatically rejoiced with trembling. Was this love to be Geoffrey's salvation, or Zell's destruction?

When Geoffrey announced his engagement, his parents were greatly delighted. They felt at once relieved of all the anxieties for him that had hitherto oppressed them. His father said, "All the boy needed to steady him was a good wife;" and the mother complacently remarked that "Geoffrey, being the Best Fellow in the World, was certain to make the best husband," and in her loving

maternal heart she felt that, though Zell was rich, and beautiful, and good, she was not too good for Geoffrey.

We wonder if Charlotte was jealous when she found herself dethroned from her empire over her twin-brother's heart, and learned that the little Zell of long ago had supplanted her in the Best Fellow's affections?

Yes, probably she *was* jealous, for she was not sincerely glad at the news, and hoped that the marriage would be put off for a while.

But now, on the whole, we think she had no sinister feelings, for she found herself often building bright air-castles for her brother's married home, and send more thoughts than formerly to one Oliver Alden.

It was on a bright May-day when Geoffrey first saw the grown-up Zell at her aunt's door. A year went by; May came again, and with it a letter from Hector Gray to Charlotte. Thus wrote Hector:

“Of course, you know, Geoffrey is going to be married. As I chanced to be the one to throw him in Miss Ranleigh's way, I

could not get it out of my mind that I owed her an explanation that might be a warning. I know you do not think that wrong; and you are sure that I said the best I could for Geoffrey. You can guess the result; my communication did not shake her love or her determination to keep her promise. I did not know the promise was made until then, but I think my story has made her cautious. Well, they are to be married, and she will have no grand wedding, for that and the succeeding receptions would be so full of temptations, and she means they shall shun very gay society. So what are this sapient couple going to do? Why, have a quiet, unexpected marriage at our sombre old village church! Then they are going to surprise my wife and me with a visit; then go to spend three days with a favorite cousin of Zell's, lately set up in house-keeping. Next, rush off to Uncle Ames's, and astonish *you* nearly out of your senses, and finally carry you in triumph to the dear old home to amaze the good people there abiding! You perceive some bird of the air has revealed to

me their secrets. It seemed to me that no surprise, however joyful, would compensate you for the loss of seeing your beloved Geoffrey married—at least, to be honest, my wife suggested that view. Hence this breach of trust and revelation of private plans. Now, if you like, you can come on, witness the ceremony, unknown to them; hasten back to Uncle Ames's, and be as surprised as is needful when this joyful pair make their appearance.”

Mrs. Gray was right. Charlotte Hunter would have been bitterly disappointed if she had not known of the arrangements for Geoffrey's wedding. All she wanted was to be present; they need not know, and, if it made part of their happiness to surprise people, they might indulge the harmless penchant.

She had always loved the winsome little “chum” of school-days. Now that she refused all style and splendor at her marriage, and chose this simple fashion, all for Geoffrey's safety, Charlotte took her to her heart of hearts.

The sunny first of June brought the bridal morning; it brought Charlotte also, who had reached the village by the night-train, breakfasted, and renovated her tasteful travelling-dress at the hotel, and now early took her way to an obscure corner of the church, to watch, unseen, the coming of Zell and Geoffrey.

The church was built of granite in Gothic style. Over the outside ivy crept and clung; the sunlight came through long, narrow windows of stained glass, and so made broken rainbows over the time-worn floor and incommensurable pews. Securely sheltered by a dusty column furthest from the open door, Charlotte sat patiently waiting, noting how the warm, fragrant air stole in the chill and shadowy place, and the bird-songs were borne in on the breeze, while one audacious warbler flitted in and went singing up into the dusty corners of the high-pointed roof. The pulpit, books, and cushions had lost their early gold and crimson splendors, and were tarnished and dim. Here, on a seat, lay a forgotten glove, a posy a child had

dropped, a tract unappreciated by its receiver, who possibly used his piety only in church and thought it a work of supererogation to carry anything good away. Charlotte mused of all the changes that had here shaken human hearts. What burden of woes had been brought to these now deserted seats! What words of consolation had here echoed that still, small voice on Horeb! What tremendous warnings must needs have been spoken! What fears aroused! Passing from the spiritual to the visible, what bridals had here been blessed, what baptisms, what burials, what gracious sacramental seasons! Hence had gone out rejoicing brides and grooms; souls with the benison of peace after alarms; still forms asleep, on which should dawn no brief to-morrow, borne away with weeping, hidden under the coffin and the pall.

But now these reveries were broken: the sexton came in and looked about. Two young ladies, out for a walk, guessed a wedding, and went into one of the front seats. Some children left their play to watch the

holy rite. Carriage-wheels grated near the door: now entered the minister and passed down the aisle, and now those waited for so eagerly by that unseen witness, Zell and Geoffrey, in all the beauty of their youth and hope—two of God's fairest creations seeming most fitly joined together. O Geoffrey! forgetting all else in this present gladness, how does that sister-heart, for ever faithful, join in the prayer for blessings on this act and hour! How does the great soul that could clasp a world if need were in its loving compassions, go out to that fair Zell who so trustfully puts her soul into another's keeping!

Few are the weighty words that bind these two for ever; full soon is welded the indissoluble bond. They have turned away from the altar of God, and Charlotte, from behind the pillar, marks them coming down through the church—Zell, child and woman, a dainty creature, fashioned for sunshine and right tender keeping; Geoffrey in the prime of his beauty, fit model for a portrait of St. John, son of thunder, and, still best, loving

and beloved. How Charlotte's heart went out to them, and still she would not speak!

The carriage rolled away; she heard it, but she did not see. The girls, and pastor, and children were gone; the sexton went here and there. A great, unutterable, heart-breaking loneliness came upon Charlotte. In all the world, twin-spirits went hand in hand—she only stood alone. She had lived for Geoffrey, and now Zell had claimed him. She stepped into the aisle, and stood looking toward the spot where those two had vanished.

Some one came up behind her and took her hand.

“What, Charlotte! mourning for the traitor! After *this* defection, he is not worth a tear!”

It was Oliver Alden, and he drew her hand within his arm.

“I knew,” he said, laughing, “that I should find you here, and that this extremity would be my opportunity.”

So they went out of the church, but Charlotte had gone suddenly into a tower of

strength, and was no longer out in the world lonely. So the birds were merry, and the flowers were sweet, and over all the blessed sunshine poured as doth befit a fair June morning!

It was almost time for the train which Charlotte must take back to her uncle's, and Oliver Alden went with her, though, we will admit, not without some hints that they might first return to the church, send for the minister, and bravely follow the example of Zell and Geoffrey. Those suggestions Charlotte promptly checked, though she certainly drew comparisons to Geoffrey's disadvantage between the brother who forsook her for Zell, and the faithful Oliver, who would not forget her for any woman in the world. Oliver left her at New York, with the understanding that he was to accompany Geoffrey and his bride when, in the course of a few days, they went on to Judge Ames's, and then go with them and Charlotte to the Hunter homestead by the Happy River—a river that would surely now sing gayer songs than ever before! Charlotte, musing

on surprises, and thinking that, while some were very joyous, others contained elements of regret, was false enough to Geoffrey to send a telegram to her mother, stating that she would soon come home with important guests. She did this knowing that good mother Hunter would be heart-broken if denied the privilege of setting her dwelling in especial order from garret to cellar, and filling pantry and cupboard with "good store of all that's nice."

"There now, mother," cried Eva, when this despatch came from her sister, "either Geoffrey has been getting married, or Charlotte has."

Mother Hunter gazed calmly into vacancy through her various spectacles, and then replied: "It is not Charlotte, Eva. She would not get married without letting her mother know all about it, and giving her a chance to speak her mind. It's Geoffrey. Yes; though he was always the Best Fellow, the best son, and the best brother, as you know very well, Eva, he would have his own way of doing things, and always

thought that what suited him would suit other people. He had such a merry disposition, God bless him! I hope his wife won't fret him, or cross him, dear boy! He is so jolly and good-hearted, it would be a pity to vex him. We must get at making



fruit-cake right away. I'm glad the hens and cows are at their best, and that we have so many fine young chickens. Do just run over in your mind, daughter, what our Geoffrey liked most, and we'll have it all.

“O dear!” said Eva. “Why, there are tarts and macaroons, mountain-cake, and almond-cake, pound-cake, chicken-salad, and plum-pudding, and fritters. Why, mother, he liked the whole cook-book right through. You know that as well as I do.”

“Yes, dear fellow, it was very easy to suit him. He liked a little of everything.”

“And now he’s married,” said Eva. “I *hope* he is. Why, Lottie will marry Mr. Alden, I’m sure. I’ve been right vexed at Lottie being such a dunce on Geof’s account. I can’t see as it was her business to stay single and work for him.”

“Oh! well, to be sure, he is such a good fellow, anything was a pleasure to do for him, Eva. Have we had all the curtains done up? And I’m glad we got a new carpet for the parlor; not that I care for myself, but Geoffrey always liked to have things handsome. Do you suppose his wife is beautiful? She surely ought to be; and rich, they say. Well, Geoffrey could always find as many uses for money as anybody I ever saw—he was so free-hearted. And good as

an angel she is, I hear. I'm glad of it, Eva. See, when she comes, that she has her own way in everything—she is our Geoffrey's wife."

"Dear knows!" cried Eva. After which lucid remark, she tossed her pretty head and went out of the room.

Those were right joyous days when Geoffrey and Zell, Charlotte and Oliver, were at the homestead, loved and honored guests. Had Geoffrey been even less dear and his transgressions more bitterly remembered, this young wife would have atoned for all, for the family received her with enthusiasm.

"She is just my ideal of a woman," said Eva to her sister half-reproachfully; "so delicate and sweet-looking, as if she lived to delight people, and so merry in all her ways. Not like you, Lottie, looking at life with such serious eyes, and handling such weighty themes. Not that I mean to blame you, my dear, for I have the highest esteem for your goodness—and only wish I had a tithe of it—but you are just a little too strong-minded to suit me, after all, Lottie."

Yet, in this dainty, child-like sister-in-law, there was a mine of strength which should be discovered in its hour; and while Zell loved all her new relations, rejoiced to enchant her kind-hearted father-in-law, to be petted by mother Hunter, to frisk with Madam Eva's babies, the strongest sympathy drew her to Charlotte, and those were the best hours when they two strolled off together in earnest converse, wandering along the green bank of the Happy River, under spreading beech or tasselled button-wood; or, seated by the swelling waters of Cold Spring, talked softly, while bird-songs filled up the pauses of their speech. It was here that they talked of Geoffrey. There was some knowledge of his past which could never be unfolded to his wife, but other part she knew, perhaps, overwell.

"The first thought of my life," said Zell to Charlotte, "must be to keep him from going back to that *unfortunate* habit. I want to make our home so happy that he will not need to seek pleasure outside of it; and to have there only such friends as will

not be a temptation. I wish he believed in pledges and in total abstinence. I do. And, O sister Lottie!" and here the bitter secret, which could no longer be hidden, spoke out, "we were at a dinner-party, the day before we went on to you, and do you know, my, *our* Geoffrey took a glass of wine? I looked so forlorn that he did not take a second, and he whispered to me that wine never did him the least harm. Yet I think it is dangerous, and I never shall have a drop of wine or any such drink in my house."

The news of the home-coming had spread even to Katy Moreland. Since the white-day when she had breakfasted under mother Hunter's auspices, Katy had now and then ventured a call at the farm, inventing an errand of some kind for each occasion, and had always been well received. Katy now got herself up elaborately, in a new cap, with a carefully-quilled border, a wide black ribbon tied under her chin, a blue gown spotted with white eyes until it made one feel eerie to look at it—this gown looped

above her best petticoat—and, summer though it was, on went the blue cloth cloak, always full dress to Katy.

Said Katy to Tony: “It is beneath me to call on a bride that is, and a bride that is to be, without a token. Sell a bird of Moreland’s I will not, but Moreland himself would have given a bird at such a time. So, Tony, it does not seem sacrilegious to me to take the cedar-bird to Mrs. Geoffrey, as has married a perfect gentleman, and the grebe to Miss Charlotte, ever the model of a lady.”

Having thus expressed herself, Katy set forth, holding a bird in either hand, and thus made her appearance in the parlor at the farm, and presented her gifts with this neat little speech, emphasized by two courtesies.

To Zell: “Here’s to you, ma’am, from me, and my Moreland dead and gone, and wishing you all health and happiness. And here’s to you, ma’am,” turning with the grebe to Charlotte, “wishing you the same, with respects from me, and Moreland, who killed it, and stuffed it, and would ask it

no better than your kindly accepting, both." And here Katy bobbed a bow to each of the recipients of her favor.

Of course, Katy was made to sit down and have some of Mistress Hunter's many varieties of cake, and samples of each were tied up for her to take home to Tony and Judy.

"I'm sorry mother has no wine for you," said Geoffrey, politely waiting on Katy as if she were a duchess. "It is an oversight in your housekeeping, mammy dear. But, Mrs. Moreland, I'll call on you, and have a glass of your ale for friendship's sake, and that will make it all right."

What did Katy say? To come in welcome? No; the quick-witted old woman caught a swift look of dismay or disapproval, that, unseen by other eyes, passed between Zell and Charlotte, and, though she did not apprehend the *reason* of the look, she quietly answered Geoffrey: "It would be better not, sir. I've nothing fit for a gentleman now, and it would worrit me to have you come. Cheap stuff, fit only

for hard workers, whose tastes ain't overdainty, sir, that's all; but I take your kind intention just the same."

"Well," said Geoffrey, never at a loss to make conversation with prince or beggar, "you must not forget to tell me how Uncle Terry is. Good-hearted and innocent as ever?"

"I've about lost my patience with him," said Katy. "He talks as smooth as ever; overworks Judy, fearing, *he* says, that she'll grow up idle and set a bad example. When I charge him with not providing decent food, or reg'lar meals, he says young folks like Judy often get indigestion from overeating, and the doctor don't allow Judy meat. The doctor, indeed! I was easy on Terry onct, I'll admit, sir, but he's carried matters too far. He's very neglectful of that child, and was of them that's dead and gone. But it do truly seem as if he gets gentler, and smoother, and more plausibler spoken every blessed day."

"A little too good and easy," laughed Geoffrey.

“Too ripe is next to rotten,” said Katy tersely, and then, abashed at her plain speech, added, “asking pardon, ladies and gentlemen all.”

“What a pity,” said Zell when Katy was gone, “that that nice old woman should sell such wicked poison!”

“Oh! she must sell something,” said the easy Geoffrey; “and I don’t know as Katy ever did any harm.”

“Perhaps,” said Charlotte, though morally certain that Eva would condemn her as too solemn, “God may hold her responsible for the premature death of Terry’s wife and daughter, for little Judy’s blighted days, for Terry’s worse than useless existence, and for other evils which we do not know.”

“Horrors!” cried Eva, throwing up a pair of white hands in a tragic attitude well calculated to display the rings she loved to wear. Then she darted to the piano and rattled off a merry waltz, while the youngest baby on grandma’s lap crowed and cooed with delight, and Eva’s other two toddlers spun and danced about through the room

like a pair of fairies out on a spree and wild with poppy dew.

During this delightful visit, all too short for what was to be enjoyed, the preliminaries for Charlotte's marriage were settled. She would have liked a quiet morning wedding at her father's house, with only the family present. But here Uncle Ames interfered with authority. His heart, he claimed, had adopted Charlotte as his daughter, and she must be married only from his house. Mother Hunter could not be guilty of disputing the fiat of her brother the judge. Eva and Geoffrey declared on Uncle Ames's side, as was natural, they being fond of dash, and show, and royal display, while Charlotte's own grateful heart, mindful of many favors received, admitted that her uncle had earned some right to dictate. Thus it happened that, while the dashing Geoffrey and the wealthy young Zell had been so quietly wedded in the solemn old church, with only those few stray and two secret witnesses, those grave students, Charlotte and Oliver, entered upon their new life with all the

fashion and style that Uncle Ames's taste or money could compass. Fred Gay, who had kept his pledge to Charlotte and was now prospering in business more wonderfully than ever, was one of the groomsmen, and made the bride her costliest present.

It was hardly worth while, Charlotte thought, all this flourish and display to usher in the quiet, bookish life she would lead with her Oliver; more fitting prelude would have been the sacred words softly spoken in the Gothic church, with the broken rainbows lying on seat and floor, and that clear-voiced bird that had lost its way floating under the high-pointed roof to sing the epithalamium.

But, as usual, Charlotte was pleasing everybody else first, and thinking of herself last of all; and we may safely say that Oliver cared for nothing but to make sure of his Charlotte.

One stipulation was made—there was to be no wine at the wedding.

“I will have no drunkards made by my marriage,” said Charlotte.

“No wine!” cried Eva.

“No wine!” echoed Aunt Ames in consternation.

“No wine!” groaned Miss Ames. “But Charlotte has said so, and you might as well try to shake a mountain as to alter Charlotte’s mind.”

“It really seems unlady-like to be so resolute,” said our dear Eva, who could show fight valorously for a new gown or gewgaw.

And, after all, there was a wedding without wine, and the guests went home as wise and happy as when they came, and Oliver and Charlotte, in stepping into their new estate, had not trampled on anybody’s heart.

Just outside of the New World’s Babel, the noisy city of Gotham, Oliver Alden had established his pleasant dwelling. There was comfort without ostentation, simplicity without meagreness; may be, it had an added advantage to Charlotte, in that it was on the side of the city and on the line of road lying toward Geoffrey’s abode.

Geoffrey was established at housekeeping and in his new profession. Zell had purchased a beautiful country-seat, and furnished it with everything that was supposed to please Geoffrey, unless, indeed, those naughty and dangerous drinks in which he had formerly delighted and which Zell would have none of.

The grounds about this home were charming; in the stables were horses of the best breed, in the coach-house all necessary vehicles for use or pleasure. Servants were plenty and well ordered. The lines had fallen to Geoffrey in pleasant places: he had truly a goodly heritage. But with the strange obstinacy which is the destruction of so many souls, our Geoffrey failed to see that the goodness of God should lead him to repentance. The jolly Geoffrey worked or amused himself, studied or idled, bounding all his hopes and plans by this earthly horizon which grows narrower with every departing day.

CHAPTER VIII.



ESPITE all Zell's precautions, the demon of strong drink gained an entrance to her home, coming slowly at first, and insidiously, in the guise of friend and physician; for, while Geoffrey had formerly claimed that a glass of liquor was needful to cement good-fellowship, he now asserted that he had in the study of his new profession ascertained beyond a doubt that varieties of intoxicating drinks were potent remedial agents to physic every ill that flesh is heir to.

It was impossible to make a recluse of the jolly Geoffrey. He loved society, and he loved therein to escort the wife who was his idol. Zell endeavored in the selection of friends and the acceptance of invitations to keep as near the safe side as possible; yet, after all, through the culpability of hosts not wise enough or brave enough to banish inebriating cups, Geoffrey by times fell into snares.

“Please, Geoffrey,” said Zell, “do always refuse wine or brandy, and take lemonade or coffee with me. It would be setting a better example to younger men, and, if people in our position set themselves against these cruel customs of drinking, they would soon be banished.”

“My darling child,” replied Geoffrey, pulling her curls, “it is not my forte to be a reformer. When Charlotte and I came into the world together, that unpleasant part was assigned to her. She runs a tilt against everything naughty; *I* cheerfully float with the stream.”

“Oh! but, Geoffrey dear,” pleaded Zell, “I would feel so much more safe and comfortable if you would only—well, if you would make up your mind never to touch these horrid things.”

“What a charming baby it is!” said Geoffrey good-naturedly. “Wants its husband to make a boor of himself as a standing custom, for fear he will one day be a fool!”

“No, indeed, Geoffrey, I am not afraid of that,” cried Zell, flushing and refusing to

listen to her fears; "only I thought you might do this when I asked you."

"Fact is, my angel," still jested Geoffrey, "I am the soul of honor, and could not endure the thoughts of breaking my word; therefore I fear to pledge myself to you on this matter, lest, being overtempted by the claims of friendship or necessity, I should forget my promise."

Zell, therefore, went into company with a secret apprehension that very greatly interfered with her entire enjoyment. There was a gnawing worm in the heart of the blossom of her life, its present work unseen, yet to be unfolded as the years went on.

"Geoffrey! O Geoffrey! what have you done!" cried Zell, about six months after their marriage, as she saw the servant carrying a hamper of wine into the house.

"My love, it is nothing but a few dozen of port and of the very rarest quality," replied Geoffrey blandly.

"But how could you bring it here when you know I do not like it?" said Zell with tears in her eyes; and then added, with a

decision worthy of Charlotte's self, "I have always resolved never to admit wine on our table, Geoffrey."

"What a little empress it is!" shouted Geoffrey, laughing; "taken a new style entirely, and becomes it most amazingly. There, my dear, I am not such a beast as to bring anything on the table which you do not like, nor in any way to interfere with your housekeeping. I got the wine, Zell, entirely for medicinal purposes, and shall keep it sacredly for that use. I have, as you know, frequently patients at the house, and often prefer to put up my own prescriptions, and port wine is many times needed—improves the flavor and efficiency. Into the office that goes, dear, and you won't be bothered with it at all."

A swift thought that the office might be the most dangerous place possible for the port wine, came into Zell's mind, but she did not like to hint a suspicion or a distrust of this dear Geoffrey. She twisted a fragrant twig of geranium into the button-hole of his vest, as she said coaxingly, "*You* won't

take the hateful stuff, will you, Geof? I know you don't need any medicine. Let us go and make it all up in prescriptions at once. We'll stuff quassia or rhubarb into every bottle!"

"What a medical genius!" laughed Geoffrey. "Come to dinner, Zell, and never mind. The port is safe enough for all me. I don't want it."

Indeed, Geoffrey, becoming nearly as popular as a physician as he had always been as a man, was getting known as the "Port-wine Doctor," that being one of his favorite recommendations. Geoffrey was doubtless skillful in his profession. He had a genius that laid open to him the heart of any study upon which he fixed his attention. He was, as we have just stated, popular. People liked a physician who drove up to the door in good style, with a servant at his side; a physician who came dressed with scrupulous neatness and the most elegant taste; who was posted on all the favorite topics of the day, full of merry conceits, and fluent in conversation, always happy, and

never in a hurry to present his bill. We do not doubt that the "port wine" added to his popularity.

Was a patient chilly, aguish, shivering with incipient cold, the doctor's mild prescription was clinched with the advice, "Take as much lemon-punch as you can drink smoking hot, just before you go to bed, and I warrant you'll be better in the morning;" or, "Don't like punch? That does not signify. - Hot spiced wine will do equally as well. Use whatever spice is most agreeable."

To the convalescent, wine whey was recommended as earnestly as beef-tea.

"A large glass of milk-punch the first thing every morning is what you need," Geoffrey would say cordially to another patient. "There's a tonic—a tablespoonful three times a day. Go out on horse-back as soon as you are able, and don't neglect the punch—the best of milk and the best of liquor to your taste, with an egg well beaten; that will set you up nicely."

While thus amiably tempting others, our

hero fell into temptation, betimes, himself. For instance: "I got the brandy you ordered, doctor. Won't you taste it, and see if it is good? I don't know anything about it."

Or again: "I sent for the whiskey as you advised. The dealer recommended it as a first-rate article; just try it, and give me your opinion of it."

At another place: "Taking my wine regularly, you see. Have a glass with me, doctor? You mustn't refuse your own prescriptions!"

"Geoffrey," suggested Zell, "are you not afraid to order so much liquor in your practice? What if you should develop a taste for it in somebody, and so be the means of making a sot?"

"No fear of it," said Geoffrey. "I should think using it as a medicine would be an antidote for taking it as a luxury. Did you never hear of a nation where, to keep the children from becoming drunkards, the mothers give them a cup of liquor with a little electric eel or fish, or wretch of some sort, in it, that gives the poor child a shock,

and so fills him with awe of the potion ever after?"

"But, Geoffrey, you don't put a '*wretch*' in it. You have it done up in just the nicest way to make folks like it."

"O simplicity!" said Geoffrey. "Don't you see, if I gave nauseous potions all the time, people would be afraid to send for me? Besides, according to your theory, the wine or whiskey is wretch enough on its own account. Your keen vision* can detect an awful-looking little devil lying snug on the bottom of each glass, and ready to leap down the throat, take possession of the heart, and then raise the mischief."

Though Geoffrey did not now spend evenings or nights in feasting and drinking, as he had done in New York, he was still slowly taking the downward way. He was so fond of Zell that he never wearied of her society, and suffered only necessity to call him from her side; yet, with all this fondness, he gave no heed to her dearest wish.

There was not a day now when Geoffrey did not take more or less glasses of wine,

whiskey, or brandy. With a friend, with a patient, before a cold drive, after a series of fatiguing visits, alone in his office when he was studying, after dinner to aid digestion—these were the times and the reasons that were making havoc with Geoffrey. Nobody could say he got drunk. His hand did not tremble, but sometimes his eyes were over-bright, and his tongue moved more swiftly, even, than usual, while queer conceits showed the influence of the stimulant he had used. He grew fleshy and florid, and pointed to this as proof of exceeding good health and of the wisdom of his ways.

Zell noted all. Her heart ached over it; she shed secret tears. Her dearest hope for Geoffrey, that he should conquer for ever this evil habit, become a Christian, and walk with her toward heaven, was perishing. Zell had set her love on one who was of the earth, earthy. Charlotte, coming at times to visit her brother, saw the change in him. Knowing all the wretchedness and horror of the past, Charlotte could in private remonstrate more plainly and forcibly

with Geoffrey than Zell could. "Remember, Geof. where all this led you before. Think on the grief that fell to my share. Such trouble would kill Zell. Can you dare the risk of bringing it upon her?"

"I'm safe enough, Charley. Zell is my security. My best sister, I most solemnly assure you that I have not been drunk once since I first went to Gray's, and I never mean to be. It was beastly of me. I recall it with shame. I repent a dozen times a day of it, if I remember it so often. I am master of myself now, Charley, and I mean to keep so."

"Still, Geoffrey, if you have the habit at all, on some sudden emergency it might get the better of you. In some trial—"

"There, there, Charley darling, you will make me blue, and disturb the admirable serenity of my nature. Give to the winds your fears; my dear girl: they will never be realized."

"When trial comes," said Charlotte. And, alas! trials came—came to this Geoffrey who so long had sailed in a pleasure-boat on summer seas.

To reach it, we pass over eight years from that happy June that smiled upon his marriage. They had been bright, glad years in the main, but each filled for Zell with a vague uneasiness, and these last two had brought hours of more poignant sorrow. From smilingly calling Geoffrey the "Portwine Doctor," people had come to say that he drank too much ; to hope he was "safe ;" to insinuate that he was not at all times master of his own words and acts ; and this very Good Fellow had been sought for through the house once or twice in the night-time by Zell, and found in his library, in a deep slumber that had a shameful meaning. The giant habit was regaining full sway ; ruin was imminent ; for Geoffrey, temporal and eternal ruin ; for Zell, the destruction of her dearest hopes. But now, with the close of this eighth year of her married life, came to Zell a call—a call out of this world of mingled good and evil. Zell heard, and straightway set her house in order. Geoffrey would not hear. For any other patient Geoffrey could have seen the danger ; but,

while he surrounded his wife with every comfort and with every care, he would not admit that she was departing from him. And now this gentle, child-like Zell grew brave—brave beyond earth's heroes; brave with the great courage of those who are conquerors over the best of all our enemies; brave with those good victors who go up higher to receive a crown of rejoicing. Paler yet lovelier every day grew Zell. And first the walks were ended, and then the rides, and then she came no more slowly and quietly down the broad stairway, gliding about like a little ghost in white. After this she passed no more from room to room; and then lay calmly all day on a couch, between two windows open, that she might breathe the sweet June air which she craved.

“You'll believe it now, my poor, dear Geoffrey, and you'll send for Charlotte,” said Zell, feeling that at last the truth he hated must have come home to her husband.

When Zell had laid down life's activities one by one, Geoffrey had also put aside by

degrees the cares of business. At first he refused to go out of nights or for long distances; then he visited only a few patients daily, bidding the rest call in other aid; and now, when Zell was a prisoner on the couch between the windows, Geoffrey refused to leave her side at all. His practice all passed into other hands; he had but one thought, one work, that was to linger and catch every look and word from her whom he was surely losing.

If Zell spoke a syllable of death, if she essayed a word of advice or of direction concerning what should be after she had left him, poor Geoffrey interrupted her with passionate emotion. He could not hear her, she must not speak on this bitter theme; and if she sought to turn his thoughts heavenward, that he might take hold of strong consolation, he implored her to forbear and not break his heart with the reminder that God was rending from him all he loved or lived for. He refused what comfort God was willing to give him in his woe. Unconscious of his selfishness, he also refused Zell

the happiness of feeling that his sorrow would be blessed to him, that by this apparent separation they should be brought nearer together, that a penitent Geoffrey would turn his face to the heaven whereto she had been lifted. Instead of this, Zell feared, with reason, that, deprived of the restraints of her love and company, Geoffrey would seek to drown his misery in strong drink, and wildly deliver himself to destruction. When she essayed to point out this danger and to entreat him to forswear for ever this fatal cup, Geoffrey would reply in this fashion: She need not fear; he could not and would not survive her; he would die on her grave. It was idle to think of his loving intoxicating drinks; he could love nothing when she was gone. Then he would beseech her to fight for life, to do battle with death for his sake, for him to take courage and recover. She must not leave him. And then he would upbraid God for cruelty in parting them, and, seeing her pained, would implore her pardon and protest that he would die when she died.

Zell's earthly hope lay in Charlotte, and she was so thankful when that good sister arrived. Charlotte came clad in mourning; it had been her garb mostly for these last six years. She had had children, but each had been taken in its earliest life, and the little ones slept in Greenwood, while the mother's heart was desolate, and, despite her husband and her books, Charlotte, like Rizpah, sat down in sackcloth, and, like Rachel, refused to be comforted.

The change in Geoffrey shocked Charlotte quite as much as the danger of Zell. Deep lines of grief were traced over Geoffrey's hitherto joyous face. His hair and beard were wild and neglected; his eyes at times fierce, at others filled with unutterable agony. His manner had lost all its old *bon-homie*, his speech was abrupt and disconnected. In truth, while all went well with him, Geoffrey had recklessly sapped the foundations of his mental and physical strength, and now in his hour of trouble he was weak and broken.

Oliver Alden drew Geoffrey out to the

lawn with him, and Charlotte and Zell were left alone.

“Dear sister,” said Zell, “God is calling me away, and I leave them with you. It seems as if they will need you both alike; see how my poor Geoffrey is changed.”

She pulled the bell-cord, and the nurse came in with her child—a laughing, dimpled, springing cherub, some six months old—and placed the little creature beside her mother. Zell’s wasted fingers stroked the golden rings of hair on the baby head, wistfully touched the loops of ribbon in the sash and sleeves, and with mother’s care mechanically smoothed the dainty white frock. Tears trembled in her eyes.

“Take her, dear Charlotte,” she said; “she is the most precious thing I have, and I give her to you; you will take care of her for poor Geoffrey, so that he will feel he has something left to live for, and she will comfort you. I think you are very lonesome, Charlotte.”

Charlotte was lonesome, and she grasped this little child as a gift direct from heaven. It was evident that the babe would never

lack for motherly care or devotion, and, seeing the child so safe, and that Charlotte would be happier, Zell almost smiled.

“When I am gone,” she said, “I want you to try and interest Geoffrey in the baby and in his business. He is neglecting both lately, for he can do nothing but care for me. Oh! if you could only get him to look to God for solace! But, of all things, Charlotte, watch him closely, and see that he does not try to drown his trouble—in sin.”

As Zell spoke, she turned away her face, and looked out of the window.

“He is preparing himself very poorly for the trial of losing me,” she added. “I have been so eager for you, Charlotte, for you can reason with him, while I can only pity.”

The little child was clinging already to its aunt’s neck. Charlotte could not speak just then, but she held Zell’s white, thin hand in a close grasp. The light of the departing day fell over the group.

“I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish, walking, hand in hand,
The downward slope to death.”

It was the old story so often repeated in this world of parting; they were lingering, a lonely band, on the brink of the river, where only one might cross, and yet it was the glad story of faith made perfect, of peace unutterable, of a welcome in waiting, and angels come for conduct to the farther shore, which, after all, lies not so very far away.

In those next few days Charlotte learned too well what Zell's warning had implied. Geoffrey scarcely tasted food; he loathed it, and would not eat; but again and again, during twenty-four hours, he would rush to his library, and, from his secret supply, renew a spurious strength with fiery stimulants. He did not realize that Zell understood what he was doing; that it pained her last hours. But perhaps we are wrong to say pained, for God had removed all thorns from her pillow, had filled her with perfect peace, and her dying was like the breaking of the day, when cloud after cloud is parted and lifted from the brightening horizon, when the moonlight pales before the morning, and the day-star wanes before the coming sun. So

Zell, her earthly labor mysteriously ended, was lifted upward into light and rejoicing; her feet to stand in even places, her hands to gather thornless flowers, and not a cloud, or fear, or chill regret to mar the perfect brightness of her eternal days.

And, now, here was Geoffrey, the man who had hoped, and planned, and lived only for this lower world, and his idol had been taken into a sphere beyond that where his thoughts had been wont to dwell. He could not follow her with the Christian's faith and bright anticipation. Lo! here was a man who made not God his trust, and his trial was his ruin. About the fair image that had once been Zell he hung, until she was hidden for ever from his sight, then, refusing all sympathy and every attempt at consolation, he locked himself in his library, and, in the wretchedness of his despair, drank to intoxication.

Day succeeded day, and Geoffrey's only desire seemed to be to keep himself stupefied; he dreaded the return of reason, and his first coming to consciousness was marked

by deeper drinking than before. He was deaf to the remonstrances of Charlotte, indifferent to the smiling child they brought to win him from himself.

“When we are sure he is unconscious,” said Mr. Alden to Charlotte, “we will have him carried to his room. Apart from these stimulants, he will return to himself, and I will go after Doctor Gray, who will probably be able to manage him.”

Doctor Gray thought he had never seen so miserable a spectacle as when he stood beside Geoffrey’s bed, and Charlotte partially drew back the window-curtain that he might look upon her brother’s face—old, wan, haggard, furrowed with sorrow-lines, even in his sleep you could see his overshadowing despair.

“This,” thought Doctor Gray—“this is unblest affliction; here is, indeed, the bitterness of grief.”

“What will you do for him?” asked Charlotte anxiously. “I am afraid he will become insane.”

“I shall make him comfortable,” said

Doctor Gray. "Give him some nourishment as soon as he rouses, and then try to keep him asleep for twenty-four hours. The poor fellow's nervous system is completely exhausted. Sleepless hours and that abominable poison, instead of food or drink, have done all this."

On the third day after this, Geoffrey awoke from a refreshing slumber. His frantic grief had for the time yielded to a subdued melancholy. He was like one recovering from a long illness, his energy exhausted, able only to rest and yield like a little child.

The tireless Doctor Gray was seated at his side.

"If you had let me alone, doctor," said Geoffrey in quiet reproach, "I should now have been out of this vile world."

"Could I have let you slip away from us when I was not sure you would have been benefited by the exchange, my friend? He who is really ready to die is also ready to live, if God wills it."

"What is better for me now than to die?" said Geoffrey.

“To live and work for the world. It yet remains for you to be good and to do good. There is no surer way of finding consolation for ourselves than in healing the wounds of others.”

“*You* might find solace so, but not I,” said Geoffrey moodily. “There is a great difference between us: your religion makes it. I do not doubt that you are the nobler and better man; but religion does not touch me, does not appeal to me. It did once years ago, but latterly I have only cared to be happy while I lived, and now I only long to die. Work, doctor, do you say? I can’t work without Zell. Live! how can I live without my wife? Do good! why should I, when all that was a good to me has perished?”

“But, my friend,” said Hector Gray soothingly, “other men have been tried as you have, have lost wives, and have been able to see them not lost, but set apart for a little time, and have learned to follow them up toward God.”

“I can’t feel so,” said Geoffrey fiercely.

“When she died, a great blackness settled down between us two, through which I cannot go to her nor she return to me.”

“I tell you, Geoffrey,” said Doctor Gray, “before prayer offered in the name of Christ, that blackness will disappear like mist before the morning. Besides, Geoffrey, you have your little daughter to think of.”

“She is safe,” said Geoffrey; “she has money plenty, and Charlotte will take care of her any way.”

As Geoffrey recovered strength and came among his family again, his gloom did not disappear. The same hostility that had risen in him against the law after his failure and disgrace in New York, now woke against his medical profession. He refused to practise any longer. What was the use of a science or an art that had not been able to save his Zell? Every sick-bed recalled her death; every patient set his loss more plainly before his mind. No! medicine was a cruel, a deceitful, a wicked sham of a profession. When it was mentioned, he would throw himself into a paroxysm of fury over

it, and as he seemed, moreover, on the verge of insanity, no one dared to dispute him.

We do not wish to insinuate that Geoffrey's mental danger was purely the result of his great loss. Not so; other men have loved as ardently, have lost as completely, have sorrowed as profoundly as Geoffrey; but Geoffrey, by his reckless and sinful course, had heaped up retribution for himself; he was the prey of remorse as well as of grief, and he had denied himself God's comforts and the light that might now shine upon his darkness.

Not only did Geoffrey now reject the profession which he had embraced with such ardor, but he abhorred the home where he had been so happy.

While a large portion of Zell's property had been settled on her child, the baby Zell, the house and all it contained, or that belonged in any way to it, were bequeathed to Geoffrey.

This he resolved to sell. He desired Charlotte to select and forward to her own home all those things which were most

closely connected with his lost wife. The rest he would dispose of, that he might have less to remind him of his bereavement.

“I would rent and not sell,” said Charlotte. “One day your feelings may be so changed or softened that you may desire to return.”

“No, never!” said Geoffrey. “You must come up here several times a year to look after that little spot yonder by the church; and, whenever I am lucky enough to die, bring me here and put me beside her.”

“Dear brother, I’m afraid you will repent when you have sold this loved and beautiful home.”

“I’ve made up my mind, Charlotte. I shall have what home can now be for me on earth with you, unless you cut me adrift—and then I shall go to the dogs.”

“My Geoffrey, you are as welcome in my house as I am myself. You know that. Do you think a visit home to father’s would be good for you? I’ll go with you, if you say so.”

“No,” said Geoffrey testily; “I don’t want

to go home. They'll be asking questions no end, and talking, talking. Say no more about that, Charley."

He exhibited the same strange sensitiveness about his little daughter as about other things, though, at her birth, he had rejoiced to name her Zell after her mother. He now ignored the name, and pertinaciously called her *Nellie*, desiring every one else to do so, and seemed to find satisfaction in persuading himself that the child in very deed belonged to Charlotte.

Alden and Charlotte both trembled at the thought of taking Geoffrey with them near to the city, where life to him had once before proved so dangerous. There seemed no other course left. Alden could not be very long absent from his business; Charlotte did not wish to leave him alone to the tender mercies of the servants, and poor, distracted Geoffrey she evidently could not abandon.

Two months after Zell had been taken from them, the home was disposed of. Geoffrey turned gloomily from the place where he had been so happy, and, a dreary,

repining, broken-spirited man, rebellious against God, who had so long dealt so very tenderly with him, his once generous, jovial heart now as a well of bitterness, he entered Charlotte's dwelling, himself, while pitied and fondly loved, yet from his errors a shadow and a nightmare even in that freely accorded home.

From Charlotte as from Geoffrey the buoyancy of youth had gone, while her brother was as well loved as in any of the years gone by. Her hopes were crushed, and she was more ready than before to grieve and despond.

To occupy Geoffrey's mind, and keep him away from the temptations of the city, was Charlotte's chief desire.

He had always taken great delight in the pursuit of chemistry, and had brought, or, rather, his sister had brought for him, to her house, his valuable library and apparatus. In earlier years, Charlotte had shared his readings, his experiments, and researches; the old study had a real charm for her, and she strove by her interest to win Geoffrey from

his miserable brooding over his troubles. There were times when she seemed to have succeeded; comfortable days when he thought, and reasoned, and argued on favorite topics, with something of his former brilliancy. Then gloom, deeper than before, settled over him; he would either rave fiercely or be sullenly silent, refuse food, and then seek oblivion in deep draughts of brandy.

Charlotte's life was full of apprehensions; she feared at one time that her brother would destroy himself, or, at another, that, in a fit of insanity, he might take other lives besides his own. The passing weeks were as a season of furious storms, with only ominous lulls between.

For the first time, Oliver Alden knew not what he ought to do; he pitied his brother-in-law; he sympathized with Charlotte; and, more than this, he saw Charlotte's health wearing away in these anxieties. Sometimes he wished Geoffrey might be sent to an asylum before Charlotte's health should be completely destroyed. In these days of

darkness, the little Nellie, for so only would her father permit her to be called, was a ray of sunshine. The child grew apace in beauty and sweetness like her mother, and, watching her baby glee, Charlotte loved to trace resemblances to the darling little room-mate of the far-off school-days.

From this loving sister and this winsome babe, Geoffrey would turn and lose himself somewhere in the city for days, coming home gaunt and woe-begone, bearing the indubitable marks of hard drinking.

He had returned once thus, and gone to his room in silence, when, coming downstairs for some errand, he found Charlotte had thrown herself on the library sofa, and was weeping bitterly. The sight touched him; he stood in the doorway irresolute for a few moments, then, coming nearer, he said softly :

“ These tears for me, my Charley ? ”

“ O Geoffrey ! ” cried Charlotte, “ why will you go away so, and do what you know is wrong ?—do what will ruin you, body and soul ? ”

“What pity,” groaned Geoffrey, “that I have lived to be your curse, when you have been my life-long blessing!”

“The remedy is in your own hands, my Geoffrey. Be the man God meant you to be. Show yourself worthy of the dear one you have lost. Be a father of whom your child may be proud. O my brother! because sorrow has come to you, do not make others wretched. Is it not worthier, Geoffrey, out of our sufferings to bring balm to others? You are allowing trial to destroy you, when, in its legitimate work, it would ennoble you, and so add a blessing to the world. You say I have always loved you; then, for my sake, Geoffrey, shake off this terrible habit.”

Geoffrey bowed his head, and sighed deeply. “Charley, you cannot understand in what chains I am bound. I do not know if I can leave this off. But this shall be the last time I return to cause you such grief. I will not again come back to be only a disgrace.”

Charlotte started up, and clasped her arms

about his neck. "Strive, pray, conquer if you can, my Geoffrey; but never fear to return even if you have failed; always come back, and let us help you to try again."

There was, after this, an unusually long period of peace. Alden and his wife had begun to take heart, when the morbid fit came again on Geoffrey—fasting, gloom, stolid silence; a burst of fury if aroused; sleepless nights; and before Doctor Gray, for whom Mr. Alden had sent in his despair, could arrive, Geoffrey had eluded their vigilance, and was gone they know not whither.

Days passed, and he came not. Doctor Gray returned home. Oliver Alden became sure that his brother-in-law was not in New York. Charlotte, at times, believed that he had committed suicide, and, unknown even to her husband, again and again, when it was advertised that a body had been found, did she go to see if the dead one were her brother. Many a ghastly corpse thus met her eyes, and water-soaked or blood-stained garments were laid before her for identification, and each time she came away relieved

of the apprehension that *this* lost wretch might be her brother, yet with a sharp despair gnawing at her heart.

On Charlotte's last expedition of this kind, she felt almost sure, from the description on the slip of paper she had placed in her pocket-book, that her search would now be ended in finding Geoffrey—dead, but she could then bury her grief, and this hungry fear would tear at her life no longer.

“The drowned corp, ma'am? This way. It's a fearsome sight for a lady. Yon's the room; I'll bring you there,” said a rough man, who stood waiting at the outer door.

Muffled in her veil, Charlotte followed him into a narrow, dreary, ill-lighted room, where a fearful something lay stretched out on a plank, supported by trestles. Stumbling behind her came the feet of men bringing a coarse coffin for him who had been “found drowned.” It was only when Charlotte lifted her heavy veil that she might look on this dead face, that she saw that some one stood at the body's head, and a voice of pity and dismay cried out “Char-

lotte!" It was her husband, and, as he hastily gave her his arm, he said:

"This is not Geoffrey, my poor child."

"You saw what I did, then, and thought it was Geoffrey?"

"Yes; and then, when I came, I stopped to take a few notes that might be of service for some one else. You must come no more errands like this, Charlotte."

"It seemed easier to come than to wait for some one else to tell me. It is so hard to sit at home and wait for evil tidings," said Charlotte wearily.

Alden marked her pale, worn face and heavy eyes. Something must surely be done to relieve the strain that was proving too great even for this strong, courageous heart.

"I went there," said Alden to his wife that evening, "because it was well to be sure. But I have no idea that Geoffrey is dead. I have men on the lookout everywhere. If he gets back to New York, I shall be on hand; if he turns up at your Uncle Ames's, I have instructed them. Now,

what I want you to do is, to take the little one and go to your father's. There is so much *heart* in Geoffrey, such a fund of affection, that I feel sure he will come to himself, and long to see his friends, his relatives, those that love him. He will be drawn to old-time scenes, to familiar places; he will be hungry for sympathy and a welcome somewhere; he will be home-sick, and I believe will find his way back to his home and his mother. The voice of the Happy River will call him in his dreams; he will be thirsty for the spring where he drank when a boy. He will long for the old-time room and for his mother's words. Your prodigal will return, Charlotte; if you go there, he will come some day. This is the greatest trial of your life, and it calls for the greatest bravery. You must make up your mind not only to be patient, but to be cheerful. It will not make matters better to pine and fade away. I need you, and the little one needs you. You must be true to yourself as you have always been."

Yes, Charlotte saw that. It was not well

to let the blasting influence of Geoffrey's distorted life through her fall upon the man she loved.

The earth was all lovely with the spring-time; health and cheer were borne on the wings of every breeze. Charlotte's heart responded to the voice of nature; it returned to rest and hope. She was going to her early home—a home that was sad for Geoffrey. She must lighten their gloom, and not add to it.

Alden's predictions about Geoffrey seemed to Charlotte to make her brother's return certain. Oliver was a man so seldom mistaken, he had been proved right so many times, that Charlotte could not help feeling sure that she was going home, soon to find her brother following her.

The noise, the care, the strange contrasts, the crimes, the woes, the stirring business of the city, were left behind. Charlotte went where she heard only the birds chirping to each other across the rippling stream, the cattle lowing home through the lanes, the lambs calling after their placid mothers, the

laborers talking of their homely toils and of the coming crop. Here was the well-known homestead, spreading out wings and additions in a fashion that showed land was not a matter of consideration. Here were Eva's children, frisky and full of play as kittens. Here was Eva, such a wonderful house-keeper now. Here was the white-haired father, who strolled over his farm, questioned his men, and for the rest, leaving work and supervision to Eva's husband, sat on the porch on the sunny side of the house, and, with his chair tilted back against the window, where his wife kept up a ceaseless knitting, read his papers, advertisements and all, not less than three times through. Here was that dear, faithful, tender old mother, whose household occupations had gradually slipped into Eva's nimbler hands, now sitting in her well-cushioned chair, always taking the part of any obstreperous grandchild who had come to grief, her knitting-needles and her tongue alike untiring, and now, as ever since Charlotte's eyes had seen the light, using two pairs of spectacles.

CHAPTER IX.

“**H**IM as rode past a bit ago is coming back, Tony. He rides like a man as knew not what to do. He’s like to get a wetting if he don’t turn in somewhere, and a thunderstorm coming up. A likely man, but rides as if the world was dead and he a dragging after its funeral.”

Tony had looked out of the window, between the dusty heads of the owl and the ’possum, as his aunt began to speak—looked and kept looking until the despondent rider had passed by; then jumped over his counter, jarring the ragged-tailed squirrel who had shammed to gnaw the same nut these many years, darted out of the door, and ran lightly along until he was abreast of the stranger.

“A thousand ’appy days to you, sir! And might I be so bold as to hask why you passes old friends without the time of day? Haunt

Katy and I would be overly pleased with the honor of a call from a gent as we is always proud to mention knowing.”

“As I live,” said the stranger, rousing to some degree of animation, as he turned to the well-grown, cheerful-faced young man, “it is Tony Moreland.”

“Always at your service, sir; and glad to see you riding about these parts. And would you pass us by? Haunt Katy’s growing old, and would take it more than friendly if you said a good word to her and looked at her birds. She’s fond of telling ’ow my huncle ’unted, sir.”

The rider half-reluctantly turned his horse’s head, and Tony, still talking, laid his hand on the bridle and led him to the door, where the legend “Taxidermist” and that other legend “Ale and Beer” were grown very dim under sun and rain.

“It’s Mr.—begging ’is pardon—Doctor Geoffrey, Haunt Katy. Not above stopping with us for a bit; and well you did, sir, for ere come the big drops; and I’ll lead the ’orse under shelter for you.”

“Glad I am to see you, sir,” said the voluble Katy, “and glad I am to know you found them all well at home. Mrs. George, —your sister, sir—was telling me you were travelling, and they were sore anxious you’d come back soon. Never was an old lady held her own like your mother, and the last time I stepped over I saw Mrs. Alden and the little one, and she *is* a beauty now, if ever child was.”

Tony, keener-eyed than his aunt, marked the hungry eagerness of Geoffrey’s face for this news from home. He saw that this wanderer had strayed about, longing and yet shrinking, craving a look at his dear ones, yet nervously fearful of going in among them. To Katy, Madam Eva had glossed over her brother’s absence with the specious name of travelling; but Charlotte had secretly taken Tony into confidence, and engaged him to keep watch in the neighborhood for her brother’s appearance. Tony had been at the farm only the day before, and knew that Geoffrey had not then been seen there; but now, politely ignoring the

fact that he had accosted him riding *away* from home, Tony said coolly :

“The shower’s heavy, doctor, and it will keep you from getting home to tea in time. We’ve a main fine cow, and if Haunt Katy couldn’t make chocolate fit for a king, I’d not mention it before you. Yet if you’d be so good as to make yourself at ’ome, and take the chocolate and some ’am and heggs with me and Haunt Katy, sir, we’d be proud of it to the end of our lives.”

Geoffrey seemed inclined to stay, and Katy, quite bewildered by an honor second only to her breakfast at Mrs. Hunter’s, hastened to do her very best in preparing supper; and Katy was a cook not to be despised.

During these years Tony Moreland had not given his time to attending to his aunt’s shop: he had worked in the coal-mine during the day and spent his evenings in study. Strong determination to improve himself and a good deal of natural ability had made Tony a very presentable young man. His oddities of dialect were not all lost, but

Tony's heart was in the right place, and he had strong common sense. His neighbors spoke well of him, and Katy stood a little in awe of her nephew.

While Katy prepared supper, Tony set himself to entertain his guest, anxious to keep him contented where he was until he was so strongly drawn toward home that he could not think of turning his back upon it.

“I'm sorry your 'ealth's not good, doctor; you don't look 'earty. Some say travelling is the thing for sick folk, but I'd like to see a place beat your farm for 'ealthiness and cheerfulness. There's your father, a sight good for sad eyes! Don't he look well, now, walking about his farm considering the crops, or tilted back on the side-porch reading the paper! Then them children! Why, you can 'ear them laugh 'alf a mile, I'll be bound. Last time I was up there—you wasn't come 'ome then, sir—your mother comes out to the porch, and nothing would do but I must have a glass of milk and a slice of cake. Land, I wa'n't 'ungry, but I

'ad to eat it all the same, she's so 'ospitable! Then there's that spring! Ain't it a picter! I walked round there, and there was a chipmunk whisking along the edge to drink, and the prettiest bobolink darting down to the water, and up again like a flash. Down by the river, sitting on the green bank, I see Mrs. Alden an' the little one. 'Here's where my brother used to come with me,' says she. I reckon you'll 'ave a pretty good time of it there, sir, after going about the world to see the sights and get the news."

Slowly over Geoffrey's sombre face the light had broken. That dear home came before him fair and clear against the background of his happy childhood. Love within him strove for mastery over pride and shame. Could he turn his back on those dear parents who had a welcome even for strangers, and, oh! so much more for him, the only son! Those children! his own child among them--his genial heart was drawn to their innocent glee. Those sisters—one kindly hiding his delinquencies, the other loyally waiting his return.

Here Katy, flushed and excited, opened a door, and showed a table neatly set, the linen of her own spinning, the blue-edged plates and cups her special pride, the good things laid thereon the work of her careful hands; for if there was dust in the curious old shop where Katy would not disturb what her Moreland had left, there was dirt nowhere else about the premises.

The skies had grown darker, and Tony declared they must have a lamp. The low rolling of the thunder had ceased, and the wild rush of great raindrops against the house had changed to a steady pour.

“A ’eavy rain, sir, but we need it, and it ’ll clear by morning. The ’orse is safe ’oused and fed, and here’s shelter, sir, for you, though it’s none too fine. I reckon you’ll ’ave to stay all night, it would be a pity to get a drenching. They’ll not worry, sir.”

Geoffrey shook his head. Surely they would not worry more than in these months past; they did not know him so near, they did not know how his heart was trembling

in the balance, questioning whether he should go or stay. They did not know how Tony's apparently accidental touches at home pictures, his seemingly idle words, were weighing down the scale in favor of those longing hearts.

Geoffrey had eaten nothing all day, simply because he dreaded stopping where he might be known or questioned. Katy's excellent meal did him abundant good. His spirits rose, life looked brighter than when, faint and hopeless, he despairingly turned his back on home under the gathering clouds. These people were too respectful to question him. They talked cordially, desiring to entertain their guest. Their ready homage came pleasantly to him whom lifelong all men had praised, and he had wandered, oh! so wearily apart from love and reverence. Besides this, Geoffrey's generous spirit was pleased to see people so innocently happy, so easily suited as Tony and his aunt. He had ever been not a cynical, but a genial student of human nature, and he liked to see these people developing their plans and sen-

timents, to ponder on a life so different from his own. The little house had been new roofed, an addition of a room made, and this had been furnished as a bedroom, wherein, Katy triumphantly remarked, no one had ever slept, and the carpet was of her own make, and the sheets and blankets were of her own spinning and weaving, and until this spring had been laid up in lavender picked in merry England, while as for the feathers in bed and pillows, they had all been ruthlessly plucked from Katy's geese by Katy's hand. Indeed, it took the good woman nearly all supper-time to describe this new room and its appointments. The reason of her praise was evident—she was about to offer it for the accommodation of her honored guest.

Returning to the shop, the rain still rattling on the roof, Geoffrey marked that, while all the rest of the house was renovated, this relic of the departed Moreland was untouched. Still from the time-stained rafters hung deer and squirrel skins, still the ground-hog rooted in the box of nails, the

owl eyed the widow-moth who perhaps had flown in his company on dark nights long gone, the raccoon grinned until he showed all his teeth, the blackbird overhead threatened to swoop down on the big spider, who



had grown heedless of his danger in these many years. In the largest case were to be seen a small crane, an oriole, a cedar-bird, and a humming-bird with a throat that blazed in the lamp-light like a carbuncle.

The beer and whiskey glasses on the battered tray were for the most part unused; the barrels, still turned on their sides, were neglected. Some happy ban rested on Katy's business, and Geoffrey guessed that Tony was responsible therefor.

Katy came in wiping her hands, having wiped her dishes.

"That's a gray-throated grebe, sir," said Katy, taking up her favorite theme and pointing to a bird plethoric in body and deficient as to tail. "There is another grebe as has ears—its feathers are perked up to look like ears, that is. This ain't that one, I gave that one to Mrs. Alden. Tony, what are you treading on my toe for? I wish your feet weren't so big. What do you suppose folk here calls that grebe, sir? Why, they calls it a—didipper!" Katy spoke with a scorn sufficient to wither the boobies who misnamed her bird. Tony had trodden on her toe, because he thought she was running on a conversational snag when she mentioned the giving of the bird; but, getting on the didipper track, the good woman

steered clear of the danger, and now, pointing to another case, remarked: "Moreland got his death hunting them, too. He did indeed, sir—poor soul! and we was married twenty-one years three weeks and five days."

"I remember you always seemed very happy together," said Geoffrey kindly.

"Happy enough, sir; a deal happier than many who thinks theirselves better off. I've never complained of my lot in life, doctor. It's my opinion now and ever, that a poor man who works his day's work is the very happiest man in the world. A poor man has nothing to trouble him but each day's work as it comes; when it's done, there's an end of it. He's no worrit about loss, no worrit about big profits, no worrit about anything."

Geoffrey's evening did not pass very heavily. He was glad to be resting in mind and body; glad to be reinstated even by this plain pair in his old position of a king among men. He was glad that the question of going home or losing himself

again in the bitter world need not be just now decided; he might sleep this night at least thinking that the die was not cast; he could go home if he chose. As he took a lamp to go to bed in that new room, Tony said:

“I have an errand to the farm in the morning, sir, if I might be so bold as to offer you my company, and to trot over by your side on my nag.”

Then, does anybody know why Tony, instead of going to rest in his attic over the kitchen, put the front-door key in his pocket, and stretched himself out on the settle in the shop, into which opened the only door from Geoffrey's room?

Next morning, when our Geoffrey woke, he heard Tony and his aunt moving and talking in the house. The sun was shining gloriously, and the earth was doubly beautiful after the storm. Our hero lay quiet, thinking for some time; then a restful look came over his face, for he had resolved that morning to go home.

When Geoffrey went out into the shop,

Tony was bustling about there with an appearance of great excitement.

“You are up early, my friend,” said Geoffrey.

“It is seven, sir; and I’ve been up this three hours. Haunt Katy’s making a cup of chocolate again for you, and if I’ve your leave, I’ll ride over to the farm with you—I’ve an errand to Mr. George. Please you take a look at who’s coming.”

“It is old Uncle Terry,” cried Geoffrey.

“So it is,” said Tony with unusual tartness; “acomin’, as he has come this twenty year, for his morning dram. Take a look at him! Wot a venerable bald ’ead! Wot a fatherly smile! Stepping along like he walked on heggs. Truly thinks he is about as good as they get ’em up, and always has an answer pat if any one accuses him.”

Here Uncle Terry put his benignant, withered old face in at the shop-door, bowed low over his cane, and, as he chirped “Good morning, sirs,” Tony briskly addressed him, with wrath increasing with language:

“Oh! yes; here you are! coming after the

beggarly elements that go to making fools and fiends, and no end of guys of people. A sensible, *philanthropical*, *benevolent*, an' altogether aggrawating old cove, ain't you, now? Where's Judy, I say?"

"Well! Judy," responded the patriarch, "why, Judy—oh! Judy was up with the larks, and off for an airing; took a little pleasure excursion, as one may say."

"It must a' been airy enough," quoth the unquenchable Tony, "scudding under bare poles, with scarce a yard of petticoat; and werry much of a pleasure excursion, chased out the door with a hickory cane. You needn't come here for a tip to enliven your imagination, it's lively beyond believing at this present minute."

"You'll give me a glass, Tony, sure? I never meant a morsel of harm, but joking; and I'll get the trembles and die without the brandy, Tony. You'll let me have a stiff drink, and Judy shall go back."

"Judy," said Tony—while Geoffrey eyed the old wretch with disgust—"Judy is tucked up warm in Haunt Katy's bed, and is going

to get some hot chocolate. A lively-dispositioned old gentleman, ain't you, now, to have around one? turning folks out-of-doors like that; a cheerful, chirrupy, agreeable old customer to 'ave around one. Judy aint going back to your 'ouse. I'll look after Judy; and I feel some responsible for you, seeing I allowed Aunt Katy to have her way selling whiskey. I'll pay your boarding at the county-house as my share of the business after this, and you needn't be afraid of the trembles, for you'll get a hot breakfast, which you ain't deserving. Mr. Geoffrey, the 'orses are saddled, and your chocolate is ready."

Tony led the way into the next room, leaving Uncle Terry whimpering in a corner of the settle for the brandy he craved far more than a breakfast—whimpering, and drivelling, and wiping his bleared eyes on his rusty old coat, a wretched spectacle of debased old age.

Who could describe that home-coming? when all the family rushed out to the porch to meet their Geoffrey; and Tony, simulating unconsciousness of any unusual demon-

strations, trotted quickly round the house. Perhaps Tony did have business with Mr. George, for he rode twice round the barn without seeing anybody, and then, with face as ecstatic as if he had met a hundred choice friends, set out for home.

Charlotte, who never neglected anything, ran and met him going by the gate.

“Oh! Tony, how can I ever thank you for your helping me as I know you have!”

“There now!” cried Tony, and bubbling over with the news he had to tell—“I’m going to have Uncle Terry shut up, and me and Judy are going to get married. I’ll put the old chap where he’ll be taken care of, but I ain’t going to let him abuse Judy any more.”

“Are you going to be married right away?” asked Charlotte.

“Not afore to-morrow,” replied the matter-of-fact youth. “I must get the old man looked after, the first thing.”

That afternoon Aunt Katy heard a great cutting and banging in the sideyard, and, hastening to look, there was Tony breaking

up barrels, and jugs, and all that had held cause of offence.

“Why, lad, boy, Tony! what are you doing?” shrieked Katy.

“Breaking up your business,” said Tony. “There’s an end of liquor-selling for good and all. I didn’t send for that last liquor you told me to, aunt; so you might as well quit expectin’ it. If you want a shop, I’ll set up as tidy a little grocery as you may want. Come, now, don’t look glum; let’s ’ave that shop scrubbed, and them wicious mugs and glasses washed and put by for decent uses. I’ve broke the whiskey-dealing up now, and I’ve got the hold man put where ’e’ll be safe; and to-morrow there’ll be a wedding ’ere, Haunt Katy, and we’ll all be ’appy for ever after.”

Aunt Katy couldn’t withstand the prospect of a wedding; she went to work to clean away from the shop the traces of her recent business, and Judy helped her with a right good will. Next morning, while Katy was baking some cake and pies, as she thought good for a wedding, and Tony was

off in the village buying a new suit, Eva and Charlotte drove up in the carriage with a nice trunk strapped on behind.

The driver carried the trunk into the new bedroom; the sisters convoyed thither the blushing Judy; Katy followed with open mouth and eyes, and, lo! there was such a wardrobe for the bride as Katy's wildest dreams had never conceived.

Eva did up Judy's hair in her best style, and she and Charlotte dressed the girl in a manner that made the happy Tony almost frantic with delight when he came home; and the clergyman at the village, who that evening married the pair, remarked to his wife that they were as well-looking a couple as one might wish to see.

"I had a mind never to come home, Charley," said Geoffrey to his sister, when they had strolled off together, and were seated by the river-side. "If it had not been for Tony, and his talk of home, I should have wandered away for the last time, and have been seen no more."

"And for what?" asked Charlotte.

“Because I felt I was only a disgrace to you all—a public shame.”

“There you are wrong,” said Charlotte. “In the first place, you stand as well before the world as ever you did. Who, beyond one or two close friends, who love you and value you for what you really are, knew anything of the circumstances connected with your leaving the law? Then, as a physician you always stood well, and were successful in your practice; as a student, you are quite well known, and your articles on chemistry have attracted a good deal of attention. You were wrong in New York this last time—very wrong; yet no public disgrace accrued to any of your friends, or even to yourself, for no one knew it. But when I say *wrong*, I am in error. I consider your habit a misfortune, a disease, rather than a crime. We say to a drinking man, Reform, be sober; we might generally as reasonably say to the fever patient or the consumptive, Be well, and expect him to obey.”

“But, Charlotte,” said Geoffrey, turning to her, as he lay on the bank with his head

supported by his hands, "there is a *sin* in it somewhere—the voice of conscience, of nature, proclaims that; the drunkard knows he is to blame somehow; and yet for particular acts of drunkenness, for individual 'sprees,' as folks call them, he is no more responsible than a maniac. I tell you, Charley, I have seen many a day when I positively *could not help* drinking."

"I do not doubt it, Geoffrey. The wrong lies in the *beginning*: if we trace very many diseases to their first cause, we shall find a sin lying at the root, and that root not so very far off. I do not mean the great general corruption of our natures, the sin that made us mortal, and death possible; but some known, bold wrong. In how many cases of consumption, palsy, scrofula, epilepsy, insanity, can you fail to point to some positive violation of moral law, and say there was the seed-time, and this is the harvest. A man has no more right, Geoffrey, to take glasses of liquor, and thus begin a disintegrating process in his brain, than he has deliberately to freeze and thaw his legs or his

arms, until he has induced mortification, and so destroyed them. The man who turns aside from sobriety, and begins to make a drunkard of himself, is just as guilty as he who is found dead with a fatal bottle, labelled poison, in his hand. If you are looking for a place to begin repenting at, then go back to those early days when you were mind-free, and I warned you to let this ruinous drink alone, and you would not. Do not think I blame you for what has happened at my house, or at your house when we lost Zell; then you were the helpless victim of disease."

"And a disease of my own making. I do not know but you are right, Charley. Still, when I practised medicine, I believed that alcoholic stimulants were very useful, even absolutely necessary, in fevers, in cases of nervous prostration, debility, or in an incipient cold; and I had high authority on my side. Dr. Todd, for instance, Liebig, Hammond, those doctors at Bellevue, and plenty of others."

"And you have just as high authority

against the use of alcoholic drinks in these cases; and the *statistics* are in favor of the opposition; now, you'll admit, Geof, that statistics, carefully collected, are worth more than theories."

"But, Charlotte, we know that the alcohol itself leaves the system very rapidly; now, why not suppose that it carries with it a portion of the disease, of the *malaria*, if we may call it so, of the system?"

"Why not admit the fact that it leaves the system demoralized, vitiated, open to injuries, and, from the subtle connection between the physical and moral part of our natures, leaves the mind deteriorated, and ready to seek that as a pleasure which was falsely given as a remedy."

"Dr. Marcet says," remarked Geoffrey meditatively, "that 'there exists in the substance of the brain a well-known attraction for alcohol,' and of that strange attraction I have myself been the victim."

"Is it not, then," asked Charlotte, "a fearful crime to lay one's self open to the influence of that attraction, to stimulate it by indul-

gence, to develop it when it is inactive, and likely for ever to remain so?"

"A great sin," said Geoffrey frankly, even bitterly—"a great, a fatal crime; and just as great a sin for the sale of this dangerous drink to be licensed, for its manufacture to be permitted. Every distillery, every liquor warehouse, every wholesale or retail place of traffic is a place under the direct patronage of the devil himself, and will provoke inevitably in some fearful shape the Divine fury. I feel all this, Charley. I look back with pain and bitter longing to those days when I was free and unscathed; when, in the name of good-fellowship, simply to be jolly and not to seem above my friends, cautious and calculating, I tempted my destruction. 'The Best Fellow in the World,' you know they called me that, Charley, and I have robbed the world of what I might have been in learning and philanthropy. I know I grieved—her, Charley; I have been your greatest grief. I have disappointed yonder two gray heads who set their hope upon me. The world's Best Fellow has made it no

better, and the King of Good Fellows is only a slave!"

"For this disease, there is, I believe, a remedy," said Charlotte.

"When you talk of the remedy, Charley, there's the rub. Some say the trouble is entirely in the morals, and they recommend you a *pledge*."

"A pledge is exceedingly good—in its place," said Charlotte. "I would say it is better late than never; but the true time for the pledge is early—*early*; at the beginning; before that fatal attraction, which we spoke of, has been tempted to show its power. The pledge belongs to the preventives, and I recommend it *to be taken in time*."

"And another party, my dear Charley, proclaim the disease of drunkenness entirely physical, and they attack it with material remedies. In some place in Europe—where, has escaped my mind—on the principle that *similia similibus curantur*, they assail the disease with brandy, and they give the patient brandy in everything—he sees it, tastes it, smells it, until he utterly

abhors alcohol for ever, and sometimes he dies in the process of learning to hate it.”

“The fact is,” said Charlotte, “that the disease of drunkenness is a disease at the same time of the physical and the mental nature. In its very beginning, it preys upon and weakens the will. I recommend denunciations, imprisonment, fines, hard labor; but I recommend them *not* for the *drunkard*, but for the *maker* and *seller* of drink. For him who has fallen a victim to this morbid appetite, and is so much diseased that he does not know his danger, does not want to get well, the law should interfere, should treat him as a monomaniac, should provide a suitable asylum or hospital, call it which you will, promptly put him into it, and see to it that there he has suitable remedies—exercise and medication to heal the physical injury, instruction and abstinence from the fatal stimulant to remedy the mental disorder. Still more, my Geoffrey, there is but One who sits higher than the human will; he only, who is God and King over all, can right that will when it has gone astray, can

strengthen it when it has grown weak, can purify it when it has become vile. So, as inebriation is a disease that primarily attacks the will, to the Great Physician the inebriate must turn for the first part of his cure."

Geoffrey sat up again on the green bank. He had thrown aside his hat, and the sunshine fell through the leafy boughs above him, and, lying on his flowing hair, touched it with something of the lustre and sheen of youth. He turned upon his sister eyes from which the laughter-light had faded.

"O Charley," he said, and the voice that had rung with merry music, and been rich and eloquent and so persuasive, was only a mournful echo now—"Charley! how happy is that young man who stands master of himself, his youth the sovereign and not the serf of his appetites; who is honest and upright as God made him to be; who hears the voice of God speaking in his soul and demanding his allegiance; who listens to that voice; who becomes the worshipper of Christ, and so is made for ever safe! To him a bondage to vice shall never come,

wreck and disaster shall not end the voyage of his life. He shall not reach a time when his heart, having perhaps a soft side for his friends and humanity for men, is hard as adamant toward heaven. He shall never find an hour when all his expectations are limited to this present world; when death brings neither hope nor dread; when the thought of salvation is only as a far-away remembrance of a child's dream of daisies in the spring."

Appalled, Charlotte turned away her face; tears were chilled in their fountain. She could find no words to answer.

Presently Geoffrey continued:

"To such a young man I would say: If you would make life worth living, and find it only the stepping-stone to a higher and better being; if you value your happiness, your coming usefulness, the peace of your friends, don't let this good occasion slip; be *man* enough to be a *Christian*: if you can't be one from feeling, be one from principle; if you cannot be a Christian by being very penitent, and very sorrowful, and very

happy, go over to God's side, because you ought to be there."

"You think, then," said Charlotte, turning full upon her brother, "that you would be advising this young man to do what would be undeniably best for himself?"

"Undoubtedly. Experience teaches me that. I speak from reason, but not from feeling."

"And this demand from God upon the young man's love and service, is that a just demand, a lawful claim?"

"Yes," said Geoffrey, with a coolness that bordered on indifference; "you know, Charley, that I have never cavilled at any of the assertions of Scripture."

"Then pray tell me," said Charlotte briskly, following up her advantage, "does your having withheld from God the whole of your life thus far, which is by your own showing his due, give you any right to deny him what remains? Does your keeping back part of the debt release you from obligation concerning the remainder? Having defrauded God of his property right in some

thirty-eight years of Geoffrey Hunter's life, are you not adding sin to sin by refusing him the twenty or thirty years that may yet remain to you?"

"Ah! but, Charley, I do not *feel* this."

"That is nothing; you recognize the *justice* of the case. Were you not saying to the supposititious young man, 'If you are not a Christian from feeling, be one from principle'? Apply to yourself the arguments used to your young man. God's law and demand is ever the same: it does not change to suit individuals. If he ever had a claim on any one, he has on you, Geoffrey Hunter, and you should be honorable enough to admit it."

Charlotte rose and turned away, leaving Geoffrey seated on the grass by the Happy River. She wished to give him time to think of the weighty subject of their conversation. Just where the road turned, she met her father. Nearly eighty winters had whitened the old man's hair, but he was hale and active still, and, now that Geoffrey had come home, the father was more than or-

dinarily cheerful, being filled with some secret joy.

“You are taking a long walk, father,” said Charlotte, as he turned to go with her toward the house.

“I saw you two sitting yonder,” said the old man, “and it carried me back to other years, when you used to go there for all your plans and studies. It almost seemed as if you were children again.”

“If it were not for Oliver,” said Charlotte with sadness, “I should wish we were back at childhood, to live our lives over again, and perhaps do it better.”

“Do not be despondent about your brother, my daughter,” said the old man.

They had passed along the lane, and Mr. Hunter stepped up the low embankment, to stand by the fence and watch the swift progress of the mowing-machine around the field.

“The day is getting hot, father,” said Charlotte; “perhaps you had better not stay out here in the sun.”

“This tree makes shade enough, child;

come under it." And the old man glanced up into the green boughs of the maple that waved above his head. "What was I saying to you about your brother, Charlotte?" he asked, leaning against the fence to rest. "Not to despond, was it? Well, I have a strong hope about him. I've never said much, not so much as I ought, perhaps; but I have prayed, and of late prayed a great deal, and I believe I have been heard. It somehow came into my mind that, if our Geoffrey got home to us this time, I would take it as a sign that so he would be helped to return to his Heavenly Father. I never told any one, not even your mother, that the night before Geoffrey came home I was very wakeful, and I prayed much of the time that he might return to me, and at the same time prayed that he might forsake the error of his ways and be a converted man. The Lord has answered one part of my petition, Charlotte, and I don't think I ought to doubt that he will answer the other."

Charlotte had never heard her father speak so freely of his own feelings or hopes.

His words encouraged her. She was just about to relate the conversation by the river, when her brother-in-law drove by on the mower, and cried out:

“You had better go up to the house, father; it is too warm for you here.”

“Ay, ay!” replied the old gentleman cheerfully, “that is the way grandfathers get ordered about.”

Charlotte was just reaching out her hand to steady him down the short declivity, when a stone rolled from beneath his foot, and he fell heavily backward, striking his head violently against the fence. At first Charlotte thought that he was dead, and her wild cry reached Geoffrey musing by the stream, and the men busy in the field, but the aged father's work was not yet done, and he returned to consciousness when they had carried him into the house.

All the physician as well as the son awoke in Geoffrey on beholding his father's pitiful state. He knew well that there was no practitioner in the neighborhood as skilful as himself, and his mother and sisters

desired him to take the case entirely into his own hands. Geoffrey insisted upon having the most reliable doctors of the county called, but they on coming could only approve what he had done, and admit that the old gentleman was in a dangerous situation.

“Such a shock to the system at his great age is almost sure to prove fatal,” said one, as they stood in consultation on the steps of the piazza.

“I wonder that he retains his consciousness,” said another. “As his strength begins to yield, I should recommend some stimulant to keep him up.”

“Sorry we cannot give you encouragement, doctor,” said a third to Geoffrey. “The good man is universally beloved, but you see the case clearly for yourself. He *may* be kept up for a time, days or weeks.”

They soon mounted their horses and drove away.

The little children were huddled, awe-struck, under a tree at a short distance from the house. Eva's husband nervously paced

the garden-walks; Eva in the dining-room was by the lounge where Geoffrey had authoritatively placed his mother, whom this sudden sorrow had completely overcome.

Geoffrey watched his brother-physicians drive away, and then returned to his father, by whom Charlotte was watching. The old man looked up.

“This injury is fatal, my son; I know that.”

Geoffrey dared not deny; he could not assent.

“What day of the month is it, daughter?”

Charlotte told him.

“Next Monday week I shall be eighty years old,” said father Hunter, after some consideration. “I am ready to die. I have lived long enough—if only—if only—” He closed his eyes wearily.

“Are you faint, father?” asked Charlotte.

“Somewhat, child.”

“Charley,” said Geoffrey hastily, “is there any wine or brandy in the house? The doctors agreed that he had better have some stimulant in case of faintness, and I am

of their opinion. You will see that some is procured at once. How will you take it, father?"

"I will take nothing of the kind," replied the old man, rousing himself. "I don't think it would be wrong, but simply useless; the strength brandy would give me would be transient, and when it left me I should be weaker than ever. I am better now. I shall surely die of this, but not to-day, my children; and I am ready to die, if—"

"Have you anything weighing on your mind, father?" asked Geoffrey, bending over the bed.

"Yes, son; I have something I must say to you, but not just now. I shall not die with it unsaid. You will watch with me to-night, son; none but you."

It was a watch that Geoffrey would have yielded to none; his whole care was for his father. His brother-in-law remained in an adjacent room, to be called in case of need; but Geoffrey was close beside his parent. About midnight the invalid reached from his bed, and clasped his son's hand.

“One thing only prevents my dying in peace.”

“And what is that, father?” But Geoffrey guessed the answer even as he asked. His eyes fell beneath his father’s gaze.

“Anxiety for you, my son. My poor boy, I fear the fault is mine that you have gone astray. Do not let me die feeling that through my deficiencies your life has been destroyed.”

“You have been the best of fathers,” sobbed Geoffrey.

“And you have been the most affectionate and winning of sons; and yet, my lad, very far from what you should be; and your soul is in great danger. Geoffrey, I do not ask you to promise to keep from drinking. You cannot do that in your own strength; but I do beseech of you to seek the Lord, that happily he may be found of you.”

“I do not know where nor how to begin, father. Once it seemed easy.”

“It is easy now, son. Cast yourself on God’s mercy; give yourself to him.”

“Father,” said Geoffrey, “if I so give

myself, if I so resolve, you know what will follow; that mania, that unquenchable, unconquerable thirst, that insanity for drink will come upon me; and what can I do? You know that I do not want to drink, that I wish I never might feel that craving again; and you know—but no, you cannot even guess—how, if by getting some supernatural help that shall resist the appetite, the strife will be worse than being torn of wild beasts. O father! it is so much easier to yield; it is so horrible to resist.” He bowed his head by his father’s side, and the dying old man softly stroked his hair as when he was a child.

“The strife cannot last for ever, my boy; at each renewal of the struggle the victory will be easier for you. You will be more than conqueror, my son, through. One who is mighty.”

“It is a fearful thing, father, to look forward to a life of wild conflict and iron self-denial. You, happy in having never fostered such an appetite as mine, cannot at all apprehend the trial you propose to me.”

“It has been the great error of your life,

my boy, that you have chosen that which is easiest and pleasantest rather than that which is right. When you lie where I am, Geoffrey, it will be too late for choice, and you will see yourself the victim of your own cowardice. You tell me I cannot realize your trial ; I tell you, boy, that you cannot realize the solemnity of lying at death's very door, nor the horror of knowing that that door will swing back only to blackness and despair."

Still Geoffrey remained silent, his head bowed close to his dying father's side. His doom delayed, perchance by his father's and sister's prayers ; good angels may have come and stood on either side to strengthen him.

"Geoffrey!" it was the faltering voice that should soon be hushed for ever.

"Father—I cannot."

"Son, you *must*."

Geoffrey raised himself and looked steadily into his father's face. The old man's eye grew bright, his voice was strong.

"Son, I tell you, you must. You dare not deny my last request—disobey my last com-

mand. I *will not* go out of this life with your soul's blood on my garments. Decide now for heaven. Promise me that you will now heartily and entirely follow your known duty, and give your soul to Christ. You are not ignorant of these things, my son. You have battled against the convictions of your conscience all these years. I have prayed for you so much of late that I am sure your heart has been stirred. Geoffrey, will you serve God?"

Those eager eyes held him as by a magic spell. Geoffrey felt as if the last hour of his opportunity had come. Now he was to choose for eternity: here, the battle, the victory over self, the peace at last which passeth knowledge; there, the infamous yielding, the floating with a current that would carry him to everlasting loss. Help came from on high.

"Geoffrey!" The old man had had power like Israel, and had prevailed.

"Father—I will."

Late, but not too late, the hour of redemption had drawn nigh—late, for before this man, saved as by fire, his soul garments

spotted by the evils of the flesh, lay, the remainder of his life, a bitter way.

The old man spent his eightieth birthday on earth. As the sun was setting, and he lay supported by pillows that he might the easier draw his few remaining breaths, his family came around him. Eva's youngest, a white-robed baby, lay on the foot of the bed asleep. Geoffrey's golden-haired child had climbed up to rest her bright head on the grandfather's pillow.

"Geoffrey!" spoke the dying parent, "if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

"By God's help," Geoffrey made answer, "I will never draw back."

Then, being satisfied, the old man fell asleep, his slumber so profound that only an angel proclaiming the coming of the Lord could waken him.

CHAPTER X.

HE old man, whose last work was, perhaps, his best work, had been buried. About his grave a concourse of friends had come, and had mourned for him as once a Father was wept by a people at Abel-Mizraim. The autumn leaves now were drifted over that narrow mound, and Charlotte's stay at the farm was ended, and, with the little child, she was going home.

“I wish I were going with you, Charley,” said Geoffrey, as he and his twin sister walked slowly along the lane on the last evening of her stay. “You have a magic to charm away the demon that sometimes takes possession of me. I fly to you to pity, to understand, to help me conquer, to rejoice when the battle is ended, and success has been nearly as physically fatal as defeat. I wish I were going; and yet I cannot leave mother, she is so determined to have me

stay, and she needs my care as a physician. Mother's days are numbered, but I can do something for her still. You leave me beleaguered, and sometimes taken possession of, by a legion of devils."

"And you know, Geof, that there is One who can cast out devils, and before whom they tremble."

"There is the right word in the right place. It is not every one, my Charley, who knows how to deal out golden apples."

"I am sorry to leave you, Geof, but not apprehensive; for I feel greater is He that is with you than he that is against you."

"Well, Charley, my aim has always been to take life easily, and have as jolly a time as I could. Now the strife has begun in dead earnest, and it is pretty hard on me. When you are gone, I shall have to chronicle for you my—"

"*Victories*," said Charlotte. "You will not suffer a defeat."

"Each encounter will be like nothing but Christian's big fight in the valley of Humiliation," said Geoffrey.

“Well, he won, and was a better man ever after,” replied Charlotte.

She went home. She did not know when she had been so happy. All the world looked glad and young, and the winter seemed more beautiful than summers past.

Letters came from Geoffrey—letters that made her smile and sigh :

“Was ever a man so tempted as I have been, Charley? I am reaping a whirlwind of my own sowing, and have the consolation of feeling sure this is only the small beginning of it. What might I not have been now but for that thrice-accursed drink! If ever a man cast about ‘firebrands, arrows, and death,’ the liquor-dealer does. Are you interested to hear of the last fight? It has left me a poor wreck, hardly able to drive a pen. It began in the old way. I felt horribly, mind and body in a turmoil, and one feeling slowly rose and took complete possession and absorbed every desire. I must have some brandy, I must have brandy, or I should die; and that grim resolution came out of somewhere, a resolution that I never

used to feel. I *wouldn't* have the brandy if I did *die* for lack of it. I looked wretchedly, of course, and mother and Eva *nagged* without meaning to, asking questions and advising. Matters got worse. I should soon be at the hotel *nolens volens*. I fled up-stairs, locked myself in my room, and to make sure flung the key out of the window. Then suddenly all the world grew so black, and all beyond the world so dubious, that I made haste and flung my razor and all the *hanging* things I could find out of the window also, and they went into that clump of lilac bushes. Then I tore about awhile, and discovered in the small closet any amount of bottles of nostrums of Eva's, and, not knowing what mischief lay in them, I locked the door, and out the window went that key. There was nothing left now but for me to act the madman at my leisure, and I practised that rôle until dinner-time, when Eva came judiciously to call me, and I roared out to be let alone. So I was let alone, only she and mother came to the door to listen several times, for I heard them. Tea-time,

and I refused to come out, and couldn't eat; bed-time, and along comes that outrageously foolish, reckless Eva, and, crying outside the door, was afraid I'd be sick and die, and, if I



wanted some wine, I'd better take it, she knew where to get me some. O Charley! if that door hadn't been keyless, and I had not been taking that old Bible of yours as a

weapon of defence against the adversary, I should then have been ruined assuredly. Did not that girl know that death was better than yielding? However, she meant well; all the trouble with Eva is that she never had any head. You, being greedy, my Charley, pre-empted all the head there was for the family. When morning came, the foes were whipped out for the time being, and mine was but a poor triumph, for I was about destroyed myself. When mother's dear old voice piped through the door, I very meekly asked for coffee, and Eva, coming up with it, was to her amazement sent out to hunt the key in the grass, and there she found the other things; and such a hub-bub! I think mother understood it, though; for up came the dear soul presently, and looked at me through every variation of eyes and spectacles; indeed, I didn't know there could be so many changes wrought with those three articles; then down-stairs she went singing Old Hundred. That evening I told her that she must see to it that Eva put every drop of wine or alcohol out

of the house, and never make such a dangerous offer again. Poor Eva! she cried all next day. All is quiet with me now, Charley; I can't tell how long it will be so. Sometimes I fear the end will be an attack of epilepsy, but *that* would be better than to die a drunkard. I can but die anyhow, and I trust I shall hold fast my integrity. I feel frequently like those lepers who sat outside of Samaria. At the worst, they could but die, and they saw a chance of something better. You are right, my Charley; only Divine help can pull a man through such difficulties as mine."

This was not the only time when Geoffrey in despair locked himself up and threw his key away. Again and again, as that winter passed, its fiercest storms were trifles to the wild contest between appetite and resolution in Geoffrey's breast. Never did knight of the olden time wage such furious strife with dragons as Geoffrey fought with the desire he had nourished within himself. This jolly King of Good Fellows had lost now his roystering followers and his convivial roy-

alty, and had become Christ's common soldier, sharply doing battle with the indwelling sin.

We are never tempted above that we are able to bear. With each temptation the way of escape is opened, narrow and thorny perhaps, but a way nevertheless, and Geoffrey, as each time he overcame, grew more a man, and pressed nearer the crown of life, the white raiment, and the Morning Star.

Few Good Fellows see such a year as this which Geoffrey lived through. Better for them if they did perhaps. For now, at last, was Geoffrey becoming worthy of his great gifts. His mind was growing clearer, his ambition was ennobled; the mental conflict died away. Geoffrey went back to his books and his studies, and a hope grew up in his heart that he should make his last days his best days, and do something at last for the world which is sorely in need of the work of truly Good Fellows.

Geoffrey's filial labors and duties were ended. Mother Hunter's spectacles were locked away; she should see no more

through a glass darkly. She was laid down beside the companion of fifty years of her pilgrimage, and, when her eyes again opened, they should be able to bear the light of an eternal day.

Geoffrey went to Oliver and Charlotte. He thought to study and work in quiet, but the retirement did not last long. He was called out to active life.

As Charlotte had said, Geoffrey's errors and falls were known to very few, his shining talents to many. He had been known as the foremost student, the successful lawyer, the skilful physician. If rumors to his discredit had begun to breathe when he left his first profession, they were quickly changed to praises when he at once began to study with Doctor Gray, made a happy marriage, and was soon well established in a good practice. Over Geoffrey's shortcomings, genius and fortune had thrown a veil; his generous, cheerful disposition had won him friends and closed the lips of reproach. Articles contributed by Geoffrey to various medical and scientific journals had

been received with great favor. His brother-physicians and the faculty of his Alma Mater had ever held him in high esteem, and when shortly after his mother's death he went with Oliver and Charlotte to Europe, and spent a year in study and in writing, on his return home he found himself elected to a professorship in a medical college connected with the university where he had graduated.

"There is now," said the gratified Geoffrey, "an opportunity for me to return to the world the kindness which it has ever shown me, to make my mark on time, and leave a generation better and wiser for my having labored for it."

In changing his character at this late day, Geoffrey had not lost his old-time appellation of the Best Fellow in the World.

Once he had claimed this distinction in virtue of wild jollity, exuberant wit, reckless expenditure, and unlimited ability to amuse and be amused. Now his students unanimously reconferred the title upon a man who gave hearty sympathy to those who

sorrowed and those who rejoiced; who considered others' happiness before his own; who thoroughly appreciated merit wherever found, and, never forgetting that he was a gentleman, by his courtesy lifted all his associates for the time being to his own rank.

Geoffrey was pleasantly said to have a hobby, and that hobby was supposed to be temperance. It is a steed by many as thoroughly despised as the famous gingerbread and hay Bucephalus of Mother Goose's melodies. Nevertheless, on this same hobby our Geoffrey had escaped from the very jaws of destruction, and he valued the charger accordingly.

"Physicians," said Geoffrey to his young gentlemen, "should be a band of apostles for temperance; on the contrary, they are too frequently the advocates of alcoholic drinks; and I believe a great deal of drunkenness may be traced to their prescriptions."

"You are teaching straight against many of our books, and some of our other professors, doctor," suggested one.

“My dear fellow, I am teaching right against my former practice,” replied Geoffrey. “I know whereof I affirm, for I have tried it. Here I stand, wrecked by false views and false practice on this very point.”

“We are none of us likely to stand in awe of making such a goodly wreck ourselves. There’s not one in ten of us will ever be able to attain your position,” said a jolly boy, who much admired Geoffrey.

“I fear, my friend,” said Geoffrey, turning to him, “that, if you know me as long as I shall know myself, you will see the wreck made evident.”

From his experiments as a chemist, from his practice as a physician, did Geoffrey bring his proofs against the use of distilled and fermented drinks. From humanity and religion he gathered his reasons.

“It is very convincing, professor,” said a student. “I cannot find any flaw in your argument; but, if these things are so, why have they not been recognized these many years?”

“The false,” said Geoffrey, “is generally

promulgated before the true, and there is nothing more tenacious of existence than a popular error. These truths have been proclaimed, however, for years and years. In that old-fashioned book which, doubtless, your mother values more than you do, and which you must come to value if you are ever going to be worthy of your creation, precept and example have been given on this point. Says the wisest man: 'It is not for kings to drink wine;' to judges and magistrates he says, 'Lest they drink and pervert judgment;' to the minister it is forbidden, 'Neither shall any priest drink wine when they enter into the inner court;' the provident is warned to abstain from drink, or he will not be rich; the strong man is forbidden, lest he come to 'woe;' the happy is told that drink will bring him to poverty and sorrow; and the Christian is exhorted to 'avoid drunkenness,' and to see to it that he does not partake of a drink that shall make his brother to stumble. It takes a long time to bring people up to viewing sins and follies from a Bible standpoint."

“The tipplers have a righteous Noah for an example.”

“The world makes great capital out of a good man’s sin,” replied Geoffrey. “Noah erred; the eyes of a world have been turned upon him, and men have taken for an example, or an excuse, that which was meant for warning. We have Daniel, Samson, John the Baptist, and the deathless succession of the Rechabites, for an example of total abstiners.”

The young man smiled. “You have a magnetism that always carries your point. I have heard say that, when you were in the law, it was next to impossible for a jury to decide against your client. The truth is, professor, there is spreading here a strong temperance feeling; the students are taking a position quite different from that they formerly held on this subject.”

“Thank God!” said Geoffrey in his heart. “I should like at least to turn as many to good as I have formerly led to evil.”

“Glad you came here,” said a venerable man, under whose eye Geoffrey had pursued

his collegiate course. "I always thought you were born to be a blessing to the world."

Then Geoffrey's heart rose up to condemn him, and pointed to sins of omission and commission. Alas! for those things left undone that we ought to have done. All Geoffrey's life should have been spent in some worthy work, and over these many years could be written the epitaph, "Worse than wasted."

It is a bitter thing to devote one's self, in all the golden hours of youth, to heaping up retribution, to have a memory that should brood in peace over the past, like a dove on its nest changed to a serpent that hides in the bosom but to sting!

There were many of the young men who now surrounded Geoffrey who were the advocates of alcoholic stimulants, prejudiced in their favor by early training, by their own appetite, or by false instructions from an overhasty class of writers and teachers whose theory chimes rather with their own desires than with facts.

"What the system wants is fuel, doctor,"

said a student of the last year's lectures, lounging in Geoffrey's lecture-room, "and alcohol belongs to the hydrocarbons."

"Adduce a single proof," replied the professor, "that, taken into a living body, alcohol unites with more oxygen, and becomes respiratory food."

The young man, taken aback, vainly racked his brains for the needful item.

"You cannot find it," said Geoffrey coolly. "There *is* no such proof in all the range of scientific investigation."

While the student still searched for a fact to make his position good, a friend came to the rescue, to call off the teacher's attention by a new question.

"Does not alcohol prevent the waste of the system?"

"Consider if this waste is needful. If atomic change is part of nature's law, is its prevention judicious? Is it not rather converting the human frame into a storehouse of poison and disease? To check change is not to add nutrition. If change is the only danger of humanity, if we stop that entirely,

shall we live for ever? Was De Leon's fountain supposed to be unlimited apple-jack, or the tree of life a vegetable distillery? My friend, alcohol gets out of the system a few hours after it is taken in; while in, it checks active change in the tissues. Will you be the subject of our experiments, and agree to keep taking in alcohol as fast as it is eliminated, to show us what the result of preventing atomic changes will be?"

The embryo doctor laughed and shook his head.

"Don't play with poisons, my boy," said Geoffrey.

Here a new-comer, a young man, who had read one medical book and a half and had heard three lectures, therefore thinking he knew everything, struck in with the often-repeated enquiry:

"Why, if alcohol is innutritious and injurious, do many habitual drinkers grow fat and hearty in appearance?"

"Accumulation of fat is quite often physical degeneration. Your experience will one day show you that the fattest people are not

always the healthiest or the longest-lived; assuredly not, where the carbonaceous deposit is morbid and induced by the presence of repeated doses of alcohol. If the accumulation of fat is in the heart, for instance—" said the professor.

"Or the *brain*, for instance," said a nagging youth, unkindly regarding the new student.

"It might prevent him from seeing the importance and wisdom of the professor's observations," chimed in a second young man, and, in the laughter that succeeded, the youth, who was so wise in his own conceit, slipped out—let us hope, to resume his studies.

But the reign of the royal professor over the admiring students was to be all too brief. Within himself Geoffrey felt fatal premonitions of the coming doom—the doom he had tempted in his rash career. Over the fair expanding of his middle age the blight should come, incurred by the folly of his youth.

"How indefatigably you work!" exclaimed a friend.

“Because the night cometh,” replied Geoffrey.

Nerves worn out before their time, the sharp renewal at intervals of the wild conflict between appetite and resolution, between soul and body, ushered in the ruin. The use of alcohol, *facts and statistics* show us, diminishes the capacity for mental labor even of the noblest brain. The intellect of Geoffrey Hunter, which might have made itself felt over all the world—perhaps, who knows, in all coming time—had been weakened by his long indulgence in intemperance, and could not endure the strain which his ambition to do good, his tireless zeal in some measure to retrieve the past, now put upon it.

A few brief years, all too few and brief for the work of a lifetime which must be compressed into them, passed. Thus long his immense physical and intellectual strength sufficed him even after reckless abuse. Then ill news flew from lip to lip.

“An irreparable loss!”

“Could have spared almost any other man better.”

“Strange. He looked when a boy as if born to live a hundred years.”

“Ah! that’s often the way. Your strong men break down all at once. We shall not soon again find a Doctor Hunter.”

Paralysis had seized our Best Fellow—Geoffrey the strong and the generous. The physical retribution had come. And what was Geoffrey now? A living soul, verily imprisoned in a body of death; a sentient brain, whose command could not now lift a finger nor move a foot. He lived, breathed, thought, spoke, and lay bound as in fetters of iron.

Now, when others cried “How strange!” “How mysterious!” “What a singular Providence!” did Geoffrey echo the words?

Not he. He knew too well the laws of being to think it strange that their transgression should bring a physical punishment. It was no mystery to him that the poisons which he had so freely used had induced disease. He did not think that Providence singular which prostrated him in the midst of his usefulness and in the happiness of his

reform. We live under a spiritual remedial dispensation; but God's mercy has set disease to dog the steps of excess. Those who sin against the laws of their physical being must not expect to escape the retribution of suffering and premature death. And this chastisement which appeals to all, even to those hardened beings over whom moral and spiritual motives have no power, limits crime, which without being thus circumscribed would prevail and fill the earth with violence.

Let every Good Fellow, let every jolly lad who aspires to fill Geoffrey's recent place, and be the undeniably Best Fellow and the Royal Good Fellow taking precedence of all, come look upon our Geoffrey now. Hector Gray, starting with less muscle and less brain than this our prodigally endowed hero, is hearty, honored, and happy, and in revered old age shall see his grandchildren gathered about his knees; but Royal Geoffrey lies here helpless in his prime, and through a long nightmare in which no agony of effort, no wild longing for release,

shall restore him liberty of motion, he drifts down to death, which comes at once too early and too late.

Fred Gay, who in all the early school-years was to the giant Geoffrey as a child, rescued by a pledge given not too late, has prospered in his business, attained large fortune, and scattered his benefactions in such golden stream that orphans have blessed him, joy has beamed on sorrowful hearts, the hopeless have taken courage, and Fred Gay is even richer in the prayers of the poor and the love of grateful friends than in dollars and cents, mortgages, and United States bonds.

Tony Moreland and his Judy shall see many days and children's children.

Eva's boys and girls are mocking the glad laughter of the Happy River as it flows along; but who of you gay fellows, with life before you and so many splendid possibilities locked in your coming manhood, will elect Geoffrey Hunter's course, and take his doom?

Is none of you willing to try this death

in life? Will none of you resign the strength of his middle age? Does no one court the bondage of paralysis? Is there no claimant for the long train of ills that may come instead? Beware, then, of flip and sling, of julep and spiced wine; of brandy, whiskey, roustering apple-jack, and seductive Tom-and-Jerry. See the danger that lurks in old Jamaica and best Bourbon; avoid the late wine-supper, the port and sherry for an after-dinner flourish, the champagne at the party, and the carouse that begins as it grows toward midnight and royally keeps up until daybreak. Take heed that you are not beguiled by rollicking festive songs, by sparkling glasses, neat cases of bottles, and costly decanters. When you go out to make calls on New Year's, stick to your coffee, and refuse the wine, no matter how fair the siren that proffers it; be hero enough to say that you *never drink*; be man enough to avow that you are an abstainer; be not ashamed to hold that the better part of valor is discretion and to fear the least beginnings of evil. Then you shall

all be truly good fellows, and that one of you who has Geoffrey Hunter's genius, who has his royal generosity, and buoyant good nature, and vigorous constitution---and who but hopes he can claim all these?---shall be the Best Fellow in the World, and stand at eighty years a king still among men, the glory of a generation that has passed, the model and admiration of a generation to come.

Here lies Geoffrey Hunter in his room at Charlotte's. Some one has carefully bolstered up his head on a pair of laced pillows, and folded his useless hands over the counterpane. Over him the crimson silk canopy is caught up by a golden hand, opposite him a fire glows in the grate, mocking the brightness of the flowers in rug and carpet. Those costly ornaments on the marble mantle Geoffrey brought from the Old World. It is Zell's beautiful face that looks down in smiling muse from the frame above them. Those books in the case are what Charlotte reads to her brother daily, though she sometimes thinks the amount which he is able to

hear and remember grows slowly less, and that chains of thought, once clearly linked, are broken and distorted now to the sick man's brain. He likes music sometimes, and there against the wall leans his little daughter's harp. She looks like her mother, and, now that the hour of meeting that dear one is so much nearer than the hour of parting, he has courage to call the child by her right name.

The sunshine comes brightly in at the bay-window that has been turned to a bower of green vines, which grasp in their frail hands the gossamer web of the curtains and so climb upward. There are painted jars on the centre table, holding hyacinths all abloom which fill the air with fragrance. Love has been busy here to make his house a bower of beauty, but far be the thought that luxury of furnishing, the sweetness of music or of flowers can compensate for the loss of that vigor that would carry him out into the busy haunts of men, that would with springing step pass over the long miles of frosty road, find pleasure in the steep declivity to be

climbed, and rejoice in stray encounters with the wind and rain. But there is no complaining from this man who lies here shorn of his strength. Geoffrey, the gay Sybarite of other years, is the hero of quiet endurance now. When all other weapons have been wrested from him in the battle of life, or by him early in the combat thrown away with reckless pride, patience is left him even to the end. He is never alone. It would be as useless for him to try to pull the bell-cord as to perform the labors of Hercules. His servant sits near, but Geoffrey pays no heed to him. Before his open eyes glides swiftly the long panorama of what might have been. Ah! shining heights of fame, where now his feet might tread! O long succession of good deeds done, of discoveries made, of important work accomplished, of loving hearts gladdened, of heavenly charities scattered abroad, of the poor enriched, the weak strengthened, the sick healed—that might have been. O reverend age endowed with love and honor; the ripe fulness of years that added blessings; of eight good decades

each better than the last; O hoary hair such as crowned his father!—all this that might have been. O blessing of the Lord that addeth true content, good example shed abroad, peace of conscience, joy of heart—that might have been. All this might have been but for the fatal cup for which he bartered his birthright. Now, though his repenting soul has been plucked as a brand from the burning, his wrecked body is an Esau finding no place for repentance, though he seeks it carefully and with tears.

Moon after moon waxes and wanes as he lies there. The tenacious life finds it so hard to flicker, and waver, and die out before its time. Slowly glide the days, each of which he eagerly searches for a death that does not come. He waits in patience, and the end arrives at last. The Best Fellow in the World is dead. Let somebody elect his successor.

They carry him away, and lay him, as he ordered years ago, in that sacred spot where Zell was buried. And now, is the fell curse ended? Has the ban of the drunkard lost

its power at last? Not so; for even out of Geoffrey's grave the sin of his life reaches for his child. The father's grapes have set the daughter's teeth on edge. Yet a few swift years, and Charlotte, often bereaved, shall be robbed of the child of her affection. Geoffrey's sin must deal yet another blow to the sister whose faithful love was the choice blessing of his life. Not for himself alone does the drunkard transgress. Vitiating his own system, he poisons the current of his children's blood.

Sing, Happy River, under winter ice or through the summer green, still blithely running on the destined way. No human weakness nor woe disturbs the swift, bright current of the stream. The feet that walked beside it tarry on the way and are for ever quiet. Hushed are the voices that chimed with the ripple of the waters. New birds build nests when the old-time warblers come no more up from the South. Youngsters spring up where the old have fallen. With other summers, other blossoms come. Swell up, O spring! in the basin of living rock,

though the lips that once drank here are crumbled to ashes. The wayfarers that turned aside here to rest are always resting. The rivers and the springs, for ever fed, for ever flow; and the hearts that sinned, and suffered, and repented wait in silence until the time when all things shall be made new, when unvexed skies shall shine on a regenerated earth, when all the world shall be as Eden of old, the garden of the Lord; when every heart shall be royal, and when the history of Good Fellows shall be no more full of haps and mishaps, darkening down to death, but a bright succession of better and better things, sweeping up from glory to glory along the lofty eternal heights which are given as the glad possession of an immortal race.

APPENDIX.

THE following statements concerning inebriation and alcoholic and fermented drinks, we have collated from various well-known authors, and offer now to the serious consideration of the readers of the haps and mishaps of "The Best Fellow in the World":

"Water is the only fluid which does not possess irritating, or at least stimulating, qualities; and in proportion as we rise on the scale of potation, from table-beer to ardent spirits, in the same ratio we educate the stomach and bowels for that state of morbid sensibility which in civilized life will sooner or later supervene."—*Dr. Johnson.*

"Every kind of intoxication disturbs the voluntary operations of the mind by poisoning the brain, and thence impeding the influence of the will upon the circulation, by preventing its control over the nerves of sense and action."—*Dr. Jones in "Man, Moral and Physical."*

"Interfering with the affinity existing between the blood and the air, allowing the accumulation of carbon or other noxious agents in the circulating fluid, and thus arresting the action of the nervous system."—*Dr. Moore.*

“By disturbing the chemistry of life to such a degree that the nerve-matter no longer duly subserves its purpose as a medium through which the soul exercises volition and perceives sensation.”—*Drs. Good and Cullen, quoted by Dr. Jones.*

Hippocrates declared that water is the most reasonable and useful drink, and, more than any other, suited to the necessities of the human frame.

“It is remarkable that all the diseases arising from drinking spirituous or fermented liquors are liable to become hereditary, even to the third generation; increasing, if the cause be continued, till the family becomes extinct.”—*Darwin.*

“It is earnestly desired that no such experiment will ever be repeated in the armies of the United States. In our own mind, the conviction is established by the experience and observation of a life, that the regular routine of alcoholic stimulants by a man in health is never in any circumstances useful. We make no exceptions in favor of cold, or heat, or rain, nor, indeed, in favor of old drinkers.”—*Dr. F. H. Hamilton, work on “Military Surgery,”* pp. 70, 74.

“Persons who have a morbid craving for alcoholic drinks are the offspring of persons who have indulged in stimulants, or who have weakened the cerebral organization by vicious habits.”—*British Psychological Journal.*

“At the period during the Revolutionary War, when the army received no pay and had not the means of procuring ardent spirits, it was healthy.”—*Dr. Mann.*

“On examining the details of reports concerning sickness and mortality in the army of the East Indies, it was found that the ratio of sickness and mortality among teetotalers was from five to ten per cent. less than for the men using alcoholic or fermented liquors.”—*British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review.*

“The drunkard not only enfeebles and weakens his own nervous system, but entails upon his family mental disease.”—*Dr. Brown (England), on “Insanity.”*

“The alcohol by its presence also diminishes the temperature, the strength, and the power of endurance.”—*N. S. Davis, M.D.*

“That the appetite for alcoholic drinks and the state of inebriation are diseased conditions of certain organs and structures is susceptible of the clearest demonstration.”—*Ibid.*

“All this, fearful as it is, would be of trifling importance did the punishment descend only on the individuals concerned, and terminate there. Unfortunately, this is not so; for there is no phase of humanity in which hereditary influence is so marked and characteristic as in this. The children unquestionably do suffer for or from the sins of the parent even to untold generations. And thus the evil spreads from the individual to the fam-

ily, from the family to the community, and to the population at large, which is endangered in its highest interests by the presence and contact of a 'morbid variety' in its midst."—*Dr. Elam, in work on "Physical Degeneracy."*

"We, the undersigned, are of opinion :

. . . "That the most perfect health is compatible with total abstinence from all such intoxicating beverages, whether in the form of ardent spirits or wine, beer, ale, porter, cider, etc.

"That persons accustomed to such drinks may with perfect safety discontinue them entirely, either *at once* or gradually after a short time.

"That total and universal abstinence from alcoholic liquors and intoxicating beverages of all sorts would greatly contribute to the health, the prosperity, the morality, and the happiness of the human race."—*Address of 2,000 Physicians of eminence in England.*

Professor SILLIMAN, of Yale College, analyzing adulterated liquors, found :

100 gr. sulphuric acid to the gallon.
 45 " oxide of lead " "
 21 per cent. alcohol.
 10 " " molasses.

"Intoxicating liquors are unnecessary and positively injurious ; in health, liquor is always injurious, impairing the functions of the brain, the stomach, and, indeed, the whole organism."—*Eliphalet Nott, D.D.*

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