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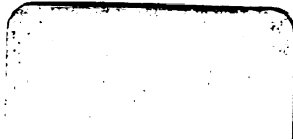
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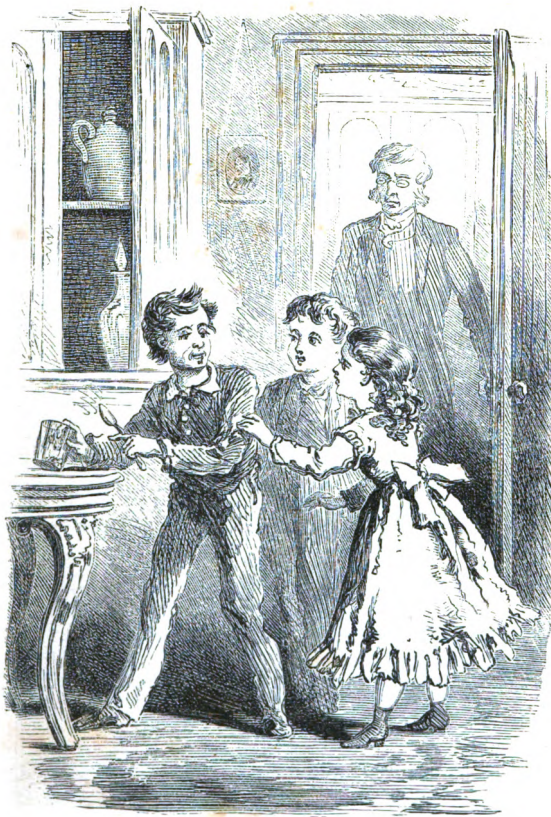
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THE GIFT OF
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"I LOVE IT," cried Solomon.

Jug-or-Nap



NEW YORK

National Temperance Society & Publication House,

No. 172 WILLIAM STREET.

JUG-OR-NOT.

BY

MRS. J. McNAIR WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF

*"John and the Demijohn," "Ohio Ark," "Priest and Nun,"
"Almost a Nun," etc.*

*"Drink water out of thine own cistern, and running water out
of thine own well." — PROV. V. 15.*



NEW YORK:
NATIONAL TEMPERANCE SOCIETY
And Publication House,
172 WILLIAM STREET.
1870.

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P R E F A C E .

OF all great questions many views can be taken. The only inducement I have to write another Temperance Tale, when there are so many, is, that, as far as I know, the physical and *hereditary* effects of drinking have only been handled in medical journals, which few beside professional men care to read.

We have a great many tales of drunkards who beggar their children, turn their household out of doors, break the family crockery, and finally freeze on some winter's night with an empty bottle by their sides. But there is a more dangerous form of drunkenness. While all decry the ragged sot who lies in a ditch, how little do we hear of the *respectable* drunkard, who lives in luxury and dies in all the odor of refinement and church

membership, and sleeps under a tall monument bearing the inscription that, "take him all in all, to know him was to love him; we ne'er shall look upon his like again; and 'tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all!" Such a man leaves a name behind him that makes his very iniquities respectable; he gives his sons good business establishments, and his daughters liberal dowry, and no one comes boldly out to tell how he has entailed a curse upon his descendants to the third and fourth generations, and given in fee simple to his heirs palsy, consumption, scrofula, insanity, and drunkenness.

Some of these *facts* are dealt with in the following tale, which has its prototype in real life, and treats of physical truths.

J. McNAIR WRIGHT.

CONTENTS.

I.	
THE FAMILY DEMON	Page 7
II.	
MISS TOT AND MR. WITTLES	89
III.	
SYBIL AND THE DEMON	75
IV.	
TEETOTAL ABSTINENCE	108
V.	
COLD WATER CURE	143
VI.	
FILLING UP THE MEASURE	177

VI**CONTENTS.****VII.**

LOSS OF THE PHOENIX 211

VIII.

THE FATAL LEGACY 247

IX.

THE SQUIRE'S RECKONING 280

X.

THE LAST OF THE DEMON 814

JUG-OR-NOT.



I.

**"VISITING THE INIQUITIES OF THE FATHERS
UPON THE CHILDREN."**

ONCE upon a time a certain portion of one of the banks of the Ohio River was ornamented with a very handsome house, set in very handsome grounds. The house was large and well-built; it had bow-windows, and windows of stained glass artfully placed where the sunbeams would cast a many-hued splendor through some favorite rooms. There were balconies for morning reading and sewing, and long piazzas where one might enjoy the moonlight, or even walk up and down comfortably on rainy days. The

house lacked nothing that could make it agreeable,—library, parlors, wide halls, easy staircases, dining hall with walls beautifully frescoed in vines and fruits and game, bathrooms, bedrooms crowded with luxuries,—all were in this house; and beyond all these, it was owned by its inhabitants, and backed by bank stock enough to fill it with furniture and servants, and there was no dread of the sheriff, no burden of debt. Outside of the house you might believe yourself in fairy land: flower-beds embroidered the lawn, grand old trees offered shelter, white statues of fawns and dryads, and cupids and nymphs, peeped from green bowers; there were summer-houses, hot-houses, and graperies; terra cotta vases, and urns, and jars held clusters of bloom-like tongues and depths of harmless flames; two fountains leaped into the air in reckless glee, and were wooed back to earth by a bed of shells and mossy stones. Strangers passing by held their breath to gaze, to admire, and also to

elvy. We often idly covet what, if we knew all its history and enormous liabilities, we would not take for a gift, or indeed on any terms. I told you this house and these grounds were like fairy land; in very truth they were demon land. I give my word of honor that the place was haunted; a cloud of enchantment hung over it like an invisible and poisonous mist; there was a fatal malaria in its moral atmosphere, and in the veins of this household, fever, and madness, and the seeds of death were hidden all ready for fearsome development. The family had an evil genius, ruling them from birth to death. There was a bad spirit among them,— a spirit like the afrit of Arabian story; shut up in small space in a narrow stone prison indeed, and that prison kept in a dark closet; but the demon-spirit could come out on occasion and could expand so as to fill the whole dwelling.

Father, mother, children, and servants were all under the demon; one inmate of the

house was free from the spell, and she was a waif,— a nursling brought from another home to this.

The owner of the house was Squire Arnot, and he had about him a goodly family of seven sons and daughters. Thus far death had made no break in the domestic circle. Poverty had ever stood afar off. Theirs was a happy heritage, and but for the enemy themselves had introduced, all their future might have been smiling peace.

The beauty of an afternoon in early May had drawn these people to the lawn and the front veranda of the house, commanding a view of the river. Leonard, the eldest of the family, a young man of twenty-two, had wheeled from the parlor a couch whereon his sister Annie, next himself in age, passed all her days. Eighteen years of infirmity had perchance been long in passing; but they were, as years ever are, short in the retrospect, and their fruit was garnered up in heaven. "Tribulation worketh patience,

and patience experience, and experience hope," and all these graces had been wrought in Annie Arnot. With patience shining mildly from her worn face, the words of experience on her lips, her eyes alight with the hope of good things to come, no wonder that Annie was the central thought of this home, as she was to-night the central figure of the group.

"Master," asked the fishermen of Judea, "who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should have been born blind?" If question of similar import had been asked about Annie's crippled condition, prompt reply must have come: "The parents." On Annie the curse had first fallen; the sin of the father was visited on the child; but God is merciful, and sends his judgment slowly, and thus far no other blow had descended.

Leonard, leaning against the door, in his robust frame and glowing health, a striking contrast to his suffering sister, was the especial idol of his mother's heart, and next to

him in her fond pride was Sybil, her second daughter, a brilliant girl now nearly eighteen. Sybil was seated on a stone lion that guarded one side of the front steps, and was enlightening Henry and Estelle on the subject of an excursion to Blennerhasset Island, where tents and camp equipage were to be taken for a week's stay, and "Uncle Doctor," the family factotum, must be forced to go. Father and mother and Annie were left out of the calculation; but without them the party would be nine strong, and to Sybil, ever alert for amusement and variety, afforded prospect of unlimited felicity. Sybil was like Leonard, ruddy, well-developed, and black-haired, — children like their father, and beautiful exceedingly; but when Sybil's eyes were lifted, and her easily excited laugh rung out, "Uncle Doctor" sometimes trembled. At Annie's feet was to be found Alice, sister next to Sybil, and two years Henry's senior. She had a pretty, velvet-covered, and gold-clasped book in her

hand ; it was a Bible, the gift of her pastor to her on the previous Sabbath, on her admission to the church. Between Alice, Henry, and Estelle there was a close resemblance, and indeed the beauty and the fine abilities of this family were frequently remarked.

"Leonard," said Annie.

Leonard at once bent forward.

"I want you to take these five dollars to Mary Burgess ; she is most likely in great want, now she is sick."

"To Mary Burgess ! Not I,— not if she perished of want ; indeed I should be glad to hear she was dead !"

"Leonard ! she was your nurse —"

"And yours too. More's the pity !"

"If I can forgive her, you can."

"Never ; you could forgive any amount, but excuse me. I saw her crossing the bridge a month ago, and really I would have been glad to see her tumble off, and get, with interest if possible for long delay,

just such a fall as she gave you. Drunk she was too — as when she let you fall!"

"Leonard," said Annie, "I feel we owe Mary Burgess something. It was in our house she was tempted to her ruin. She was a sober girl when she came here, and here she became a drunkard. She ruined my body indeed, by letting me fall when she was drunk; but she loved me, and it nearly broke her heart. Yes, Leonard, if she ruined my body, *we* ruined her soul."

"Nonsense, Annie, I don't look on it in that light at all! Nobody asked her to drink."

"But temptation was forever in her way; on the table, and in our baby doses too,—one remedy for everything. Poor Mary, hers has been a ruined, beggared, drunken life!"

"And what has yours been, dear Annie? —always a prisoner and shut out from pleasures. There's Sybil, going to take us all off to Blennerhasset, all but you," cried Leonard, passionately.

"Then in this oblige me."

"In anything else, but I never will hold out a finger to that wretch; and your idea of injury done her, and of reparation owed, is absurd."

Annie glanced down and met Alice's great violet eyes; here was a messenger to her mind.

"You will do it, dear?"

"Yes," said Alice; then deprecatingly to her brother, "Forgive, as you would be forgiven, Leonard."

"No great trouble to forgive you or Annie the sum total of your life errors," laughed Leonard. "Do as you like, but don't ask me to go against my conscience; I have a morsel of that article, and it is dead against helping Mary Burgess. I shall ask mother not to give you a fragment of anything for her;" and Leonard placed himself on an adjacent window-sill to talk to his mother.

Now Mrs. Arnot was one of those mothers who always promise whatever is asked, and

always assent to whatever is proposed ; so any pledge Leonard might beguile from her would in no wise interfere with permitting Alice to fill a basket at the store-room, or Annie emptying her own purse and her mother's, for the object of Leonard's abhorrence.

Mrs. Arnot was a tall, refined, graceful woman, a little past the freshness of her bloom, having nothing to complain of but the cares incident to house-keeping, and Annie's misfortune ; always kind, half querulous, and plaintively submitting as to some serious affliction ; given to sighing and good offices ; asking nothing distinctly and authoritatively, but according everything to everybody. To-night Mrs. Arnot was burdened by the fatal knowledge that supper was ten minutes late, and might be ten minutes later ; and this reflection was mildly preying upon her spirits, and making her sighs unusually frequent. It was not that the household were getting hungry and rebellious, for the head of the family was off somewhere with " Uncle Doctor ; " the

trio about the stone lion were intent on Blennerhasset, and Annie and Alice were planning good deeds to come. Besides these olive-branches mentioned, two others, younger, gay creatures, ten years old, believing, child-like, that earth was made for them, were sitting on the stone edge of a fountain, leaning over, and jubilant at the distorted reflection of their faces in the troubled waters. They were Cyril Arnot and his cousin Genevieve Charles, or Vivra, as all called her. The olive cheeks flushed with healthy crimson, the heads crowned with waves of gold-brown hair, the great gray eyes that bent over the water, were fair to see. If anything, the girl had the more generous physical development, and as they were alike in person, so were they alike in taste. The same out-door sports; the same achievements in gardening; the same hunting of beetles, snails, and butterflies, to be called a museum; the same gathering of frogs; tadpoles, and water-weeds, for an aquarium, delighted them.

Vivra had come to her uncle's a year before, in the first grief of orphanage ; but a child's deepest woes are short-lived, and taken generously home to warm, honest hearts, Vivra forgot her troubles. Not that she forgot her parents, but she had the all-conquering faith of a child trained in a Christian home. To her, the grave no longer held her parents : they walked the golden streets, and watched her from the jewelled battlements of heaven ; to her ear, listening to the soft music of summer nights, dropped echoes of celestial song, and tones well known and well loved mingled with the strain. As Mary, bending, weeping, saw angels sitting in a tomb, this child's buoyant hope, looking through her tears, forestalled the resurrection of the just, and saw her lost ones, soul and body, entered to their high inheritance. Annie, thinking of tender hours of converse on sacred themes, of the morning and evening hymn, and sweet revealings of prayerfulness and love, called Vivra a gracious child, while Leonard,

mindful of rides, and rows, and romps, and the young spirit never daunted, and young muscle never tired, called this same Vivra a "jolly little soul." Leonard delighted to tell, how, the boat being carelessly upset one day when they were out rowing, Vivra, touching bottom with her feet, after the first plunge struck out boldly for the shore, and valiantly gained it without uttering a word, while Cyril, boy as he was, had vented three piercing shrieks before he could understand that there need be no danger of drowning in four feet of water.

"That was because she has such a fondness for water," said the squire, referring to certain strong temperance principles which developed themselves in Miss Vivra. And it was true indeed that Vivra was not under the family demon; she had been born out of the influence of his curse. Where her cousins had heired iniquity to the third and fourth generation, Vivra had a heritage of mercy, and could claim the promise of the Lord for

kindness, shown unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments.

At last Mrs. Arnot's sighs and her anxieties were ended by the peals of the supper-bell, and Susan, Annie's new maid, came through the hall, server in hand, to get her young lady's supper.

"Where will you eat, Annie?" asked Leonard, his strong hands always ready to move the couch.

"Here, on the veranda," said Annie, who could not sit up to the table.

The family took their places in the dining-room. There was no blessing invoked, but Vivra, and Alice, and "Uncle Doctor," who was there for the time being, bowed their heads in silence, "speaking to God in their hearts."

Susan, at Mrs. Arnot's elbow, held out her server for some of the best that was on the table. The server bore one of those dainty porcelain sets, whereby an effort is kindly made to cheer up lonely meals. Beside the

china, with its devices of scrolls and flowers, was a napkin girt with a silver ring, and a sunbeam falling through a window of red glass upon this ring, it suddenly blazed like a carbuncle, and put a modest silver salt-cellar, lying under the depressing influence of a blue pane, quite out of countenance.

Squire Arnot evidently missed something about the supper-table, for he asked, "What's the matter to night?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Arnot, with a sigh of martyrdom, "the chambermaid got the supper."

"And where is the cook?"

Susan vanished, and Mrs. Arnot replied from behind the tea-urn, "The cook is off duty again."

"Intoxicated?" asked the squire. "This is getting to be a serious fault with her."

"Ship her," said Leonard, tersely.

"I believe all good cooks drink; it is a failing peculiar to them," said Mrs. Arnot; she had been already martyred by late

supper, and, in view of her trials from cooks, her sigh was almost a groan.

" This cheese has not more than half brandy enough in it," said the squire, tasting critically.

" Cook put the larger half of the brandy in her own mouth," said Sybil ; " that's what made her burn the turkey on Leonard's birthday, — so Tom says."

Tom, a shining little darkey, who was darting noiselessly about the table, doing his duty as waiter, smiled all over his face at hearing himself referred to as authority.

" A serious matter, a serious matter," said the squire, shaking his head, whereon his abundant black locks waved down to his shoulders, in the style of an old-fashioned wig, and in hair and beard he boasted there had never been found a thread of gray.

Sybil was wont, roguishly, to observe that " her father was declared to be the handsomest man in the State, and that she herself looked just like him ! "

"Why don't you take my advice, mother?" said Leonard.

"Because, my son, it is altogether likely that the next cook would drink just as much, and it is not likely she would understand her business as well as this one."

"Cooks drink, and we found, by fatal experience, that nurses drink," said the squire, thinking of Annie's miserable accident.

"We're all going to be cooks up at Blennerhasset," said Sybil; "and that we may follow the rules of the guild, you must give us a basket of champagne."

"Certainly," said the squire, considering this proposition entirely in order.

"And, mother, we're going to take Tom to wait on us," said Estelle; and Tom was so overjoyed, that he was forced to set down a dish of preserves, and make an errand to the china closet, to prevent smiling out loud.

As the conversation turned on the picnic, in the arrangements for which Vivra and Cyril had no voice, these two nodded to Mrs.

Arnot for permission, and slipped away from the table. They first visited their gardens; in the centre of Cyril's ten feet of ground was a scraggly bush, which he examined with interest. "I tell you, Cyril," said Vivra, "you can't make a moss rose out of that cabbage rose, and you needn't try."

"Yes, I can," said Cyril, "and you can make splendid dwarf pears out of quinces,—I read it in a book."

"Where is the book?" demanded Vivra, incredulously.

"Miss Tot's got it."

Vivra began to weed her own garden. "This fuchsia looks as if it had a fever, for the leaves are all turning red, and the auricula is going in a consumption; see how delicate it is! Let us go down to Miss Tot and ask her about it; and we'll look at that book about making pears out of quinces, for I know it can't be done."

This difference of opinion made no hard feeling between these cousins; they clasped

hands and started off for Miss Tot, whose small house lay at the foot of a hill, just outside of the squire's domains. Miss Tot's yard was a marvel of floral beauty; she made part of her living by selling plants, seeds, and medicinal herbs. In a distant corner, a boy of Cyril's age was weeding, carelessly and indolently, as if he put no heart in his work. The same could not be said of Miss Tot herself; for the children saw her through the open door in a very agony of application. She was sitting by her table writing a letter; her mighty shoulders shook over the herculean task; she grasped her pen almost as she would have wielded a hoe, and drew a broad, irregular track of ink across the page; over her big, florid face the drops of sweat rolled freely; her eyes and mouth worked and twisted over every letter; she spelled each word half aloud as she wrote it, and having come to the end of the terrible labor, and signed herself Keziah Patience Tot, she wiped her pen, and her crimson face,

read over the name with some satisfaction, and heaved a great sigh of relief.

"O Miss Tot!"

"Ah, Miss Tot!"

Two gold-brown heads were thrust into the old rude threshold; four shining gray eyes beamed on Miss Tot; the setting sun threw a shaft of light over these fair heads, and crowned them with glory; a pair of cherubs might have escaped from some rare old picture and framed themselves in this plain woman's doorway. Miss Tot appreciated the visitation.

"Bless you, my dears! Bless you indeed!" she said, cordially. "Ah! I wish it had pleased the Lord to make Solomon like either of you; but that wasn't to be expected. Like from like, and you don't raise pinks from dandelions; no indeed!"

"That's just it, Miss Tot! *Can* you make a moss rose from a cabbage rose?"

"Yes, that is it, Miss Tot! Can't you make pear-trees out of quinces?"

"And we want you to see about our gardens!"

"I'll come over, my dears. I was just writing a letter to my cousin Sam'l Wittles, and I want Miss Annie to do the directions for me. Yes, I've been writing to Sam'l, as a matter of duty; it was powerful hard work, I admit, but one must do duty, and I hope the Lord will remember me concerning the labor of my hands." Thus did Miss Tot emulate Nehemiah, who cried, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this also."

"Maybe you'd like to hear the letter," said Miss Tot.

The eyes beamed more than ever over this proposal, and the children stood before Miss Tot, as, drawing a long breath, she began to read from a blotted sheet of foolscap, her literary production.

"DEAR COUSIN SAM'L:— Hoping you are in good health, such as this leaves me, I think you must now come home. And there is duties from parents, and so duties of children to 'em, and sometimes the child is

father to the man, as you must be, by coming home and looking after your old gent. Which I am sorry to say has took to drinking uncommon indeed. Likewise as my hands being full of Solomon, which is a legacy to me from the dead, and burdened with a besetting sin, I can't take care of your old gent; and, Sam'l, in this world one can't do another's duty, which duty the Lord lays on you indeed. You must come home that the old gent don't bring down his gray head with shame to a drunkard's grave by reason of a broken heart for your stepmother, which was good truly to you and to him. Having lived respectable for seventy years, the old gent must be took care of, which do by coming home to mind him which minded you, which was when you was too young to mind yourself. So no more now from me till I meet again.

"KEZIAH PATIENCE TOT."

"And patience I ought to be, sure enough, for two pages of foolscap is that letter, and four evenings have I been at it; and I have my doubts that the spelling is wrong, I do indeed."

"Don't you think you've got 'which' in pretty often?" criticised Cyril.

"It's likely, not having written a letter for

ten years; if I thought Sam'l wouldn't get the meaning —"

"He'll know," said Vivra. "It's plain enough, and it's a very good letter. It isn't as if you were making compositions, and had to be particular, or do it over again."

"Bless you, no, I hope not!" said Miss Tot.

"Come along over to Annie then, and she'll send it off for you, and you can tell us about our flowers; two of mine are sick with fever and consumption, Doctor Tot!" cried Vivra, merrily.

Miss Tot laughed heartily, tying on her sun-bonnet. "If you'll excuse me, my dears, I'll spruce up Solomon and take him along. I can't leave him; he slips off when I am gone, and haunts the tavern like a spectre."

Miss Tot called her "legacy," and began to polish his face and hands at the pump. She combed his thin, light hair into an humble imitation of a stump fence, along the middle of his head, and inducted him into a

blue jacket, short in the waist, but superabundant in brass buttons. Solomon was a weasel-faced, furtive-eyed lad, and, wriggling from his aunt's hand-clasp, he shambled along the side of the road by himself; gradually getting out of easy hearing while still in sight. The great questions came up, "*Can* you make moss roses out of cabbage roses? *Can't* you make pears out of quinces?"

"Yes, my dears, and no, my dears, to both of you. You can, and you can't. You can't do it by cultivating; for the more you cultivate, the *more* cabbagy and the more quincey they become. But you can do it by grafting, yes, indeed."

"And what is grafting?" asked Vivra.

"Cutting off the wrong kind of top, and putting on the right kind," said Miss Tot, sententiously. "Now, there's an instance in my Solomon; he isn't the right stock; his father before him was a tavern-keeper, sold whiskey, and drank whiskey, and Solomon

takes to whiskey likewise. The only hope for Solomon is to be grafted."

"O Miss Tot!" cried the jocund Vivra, "are you going to graft Solomon? Are you going to cut off his top, and whose top are you going to put on?" and Vivra fairly shrieked with laughter over this absurdity, Miss Tot echoing her mirth.

"Well, my dear," said Miss Tot, soberly at last, "there's a greater Gardener than I, for human flowers. The good God can graft his grace on my poor Solomon, and do the bad stock away; he can make him a plant of glory, from a root of besetting sins, my dear. Miss Annie told me a remark I never *shall* forget: God can graft grace on to a crab-tree, and no more will the fruit be crabs but grace; and for that grafting I hope and pray for Solomon."

"And we all need grafting," said Vivra.

"They graft peaches when they're so high," said Miss Tot, bending over and holding her hand near the ground; "and it

'pears to me you're one of that sort, grafted early;" and then Miss Tot looked at the beautiful boy at her other hand, and thought that, like Solomon, he came of a fated stock, and the grafting of grace could only prevent the bitter fruit.

While Miss Tot thus went to the squire's house, gave her opinion on the sick flowers, and talked over the subject of "Cousin Sam'l" with Miss Annie, the squire and his half brother, "Uncle Doctor," were having a conversation. The squire complained of a cutting disappointment in Leonard. Leonard would not study; had left college after his first term there, refusing to go back; would enter into no business that pleased his ambitious father; was averse to politics, and now was resolved to invest a certain ten thousand in a share of a fine new steamboat; and while the other owners were to be captain, pilot, and clerks, Leonard desired for himself the boat's bar, saying it would be, according to his way of thinking, very much

the "easiest, pleasantest, and most profitable position."

"No pride, no intellect, no ambition!" groaned the squire; "and such a good heart, and such a splendid-looking fellow too!"

"And what else could you expect, my brother?" said old "Uncle Doctor," sadly. "Leonard exhibits just those traits which he derived from you, and which you have cultivated. Every generation of liquor-drinkers, from father to son, grows weaker; the brain deteriorates."

"Weaker!" cried the squire, impatiently. "He's strong enough, — a perfect young Hercules!"

"But no intellect, no mental energy, as you just stated; no honest pride, no steady purpose, no lofty reachings. He is just a great, kindly, well-made animal, and you made him so. Don't put the blame on him."

"I'm sure," said the squire, brusquely, "that those four younger children have remarkably brilliant minds!"

" Ah, yes, fine minds ; but there the evil develops in another way ; fine minds, but where are their bodies ?" quoth " Uncle Doctor," looking as if for an atom invisible to the naked eye. " Where are their bodies ? Those homes of the soul are too frail, too frail. I tell you, brother, the taint of liquor has destroyed their blood ; brain enough, but too little body. I'm afraid your children will shine on us for a little while, and fade back into heaven. Then do not charge on Providence the shortness of their lives, but on yourself ; you have set at work the ordained causes of ruin."

" You're mistaken ; you must be mistaken," cried the squire. He was not angry, for though his good half-brother's words were severe, his eyes were almost tearfully tender, and the cadences of his voice were gentle as a mother's. To the charge of being mistaken he simply shook his head.

" Cyril is less open to objection in a physical point of view than the others ; but

the only hope for Cyril is out-door exercise, plain food, and no liquor."

"There's Sybil," said the father, eagerly.

Gloom deepened over "Uncle Doctor's" face.

"And Annie, — good brain and body until that fall."

"And she was let fall by a woman who learned to drink in your house. Brother, you have given your children a fatal heritage; doom lowers over your house; I tremble at the coming years. You have never been drunk in your life, yet, since you were eighteen, you have habitually used liquor. The curse that in most cases falls heaviest on the doer of wrong has passed over you to your children; they will suffer for your sin, and though now you have not your match perhaps in the State for strength, appearance, influence, and keenness, liquor, if still indulged in, will work destruction. How many times have I told you this?"

"I don't believe it; can't believe it," said the squire.

"You must choose between that jug of poison, or a broken heart and a painful death."

"Nonsense!"

"If I could make you see this, you would clear your house of this fatal poison at once."

"I can't see it! I'll keep the jug awhile longer; it has always been a good friend to me; is always, except to the weak, the ignorant, and foolish."

"Seven sons and daughters, — such sons and daughters! — and all doomed!" groaned the doctor.

"I cannot take your view; it is extravagant."

"Uncle Doctor" wandered to the library. On the table stood a glass, in the bottom of which was a quantity of moist loaf-sugar. The squire had been reading his paper and drinking Bourbon. He had left the glass, and now above it bent Cyril, Vivra, and Miss Tot's Solomon, — Solomon eager and craving.

There was a spoon on the table. "Let us eat that turn about," said Solomon.

Vivra's lip curled. "Aa-h, it's got whiskey on it!"

"That is what makes it good. I *love* it," cried Solomon.

"Eat it, then," said Cyril; "we don't care for it."

Solomon grasped the glass, and thrust his long, bony finger into the sugar.

"Don't you do it!" cried Vivra. "Your aunt wouldn't like it, and it is bad for you. I'll give you some good sugar, — lumps out of the bowl."

"This is better," said Solomon. He was about to fill his mouth, but "Uncle Doctor" took the glass away. Solomon, with a sly air, was sneaking from the room, but "Uncle Doctor" led him back.

"Children, never encourage a taste for liquor. Sol, if you use whiskey, you will be first an idiot, and then you will die, long before you are as old as your Aunt Tot."

"How do you know?" said Solomon, sulkily.

"Because I am a doctor, and have read and studied a great deal. I knew your father. I told your mother long ago, when you were a little squeaking baby, that if you got liquor you would be a fool, most likely. Now, my boy, stick to cold water, and you may be a man for your aunt to be proud of."

"I don't care," said Solomon.

"What will it do to me?" asked Cyril, eagerly.

The doctor put his arm about him. "If you use it, I do not expect you will ever be as old as Leonard."

"Don't use it, then, — not a drop!" cried Vivra.

"I won't," said Cyril, clenching his fist in his energy.

They heard a smacking, and turned about. Solomon had possessed himself of the coveted glass, got behind "Uncle Doctor," and eaten up all the sugar.

II.

"SO THE CURSE CAUSELESS SHALL NOT COME."

To Blennerhasset Island did Sybil, the all-conquering, take "Uncle Doctor," despite his murmurs about his patients; Leonard, Alice, Henry, and Estelle, who always looked at matters of amusement through Sybil's eyes; Vivra and Cyril, despite Mamma Arnot's sighing protestations that they would be burned to death, sun-struck, and finally drowned, before they returned to the family roof-tree; Tom, for all the mater-familias, the cook, and the maids declared Tom could not be spared; a supply of dainties sufficient for a regiment, and fit to feast a king; and a basket of champagne, — though "Uncle Doctor," Alice, Vivra, and Cyril protested against this part of the stores. When these nine excursionists went aboard the boat with their

tents and their utensils, their camp-chairs, baskets, and hampers, and took from the Arnot mansion the light of their countenances, and the music of their voices, they left a desolate, quiet, lonesome place, and made such change as a few days of sharp January would work in the gardens of June.

Mrs. Arnot mildly wondered what induced them to run off in this fashion, and leave so wide a void; and opined that her existence would find a dreary termination, before they all came safely home. Poor, gently oppressed, and comfortably melancholy Mamma Arnot! slowly near her life were dawning out of the future those days when that band of beauty and brightness should have gone, not for mirth to Blennerhasset Island, but by strange paths to that land whence none come to tell the nations of the joy or woe.

Miss Tot probably thought her favorite Annie might be lonely, and she dressed herself elaborately for an afternoon call, and appeared at the squire's, flower-pot in hand.

Miss Tot wore her best gown, and a bonnet brilliant with bows of ribbon ; a yellow silk shawl beamed like a rising sun on the broad disc of her shoulders ; a green veil floated behind her as she panted upstairs, and was presently seated in the bow-window near the invalid's couch.

"I've brought you a new rose," said Miss Tot, holding out her plant. "The loveliest cream color, a little shaded off to salmon as you get into the heart of it ; and then the smell ! It truly seems to me as if a heap of talent had been laid out on that little rose ;" and Miss Tot's voice was reverent, if her words were queer.

"Thank you for it," said Annie. "I shall love it dearly ; I love all beautiful things."

"That's because you've been standing, or, as one may more appropriately say, lying, all your life at the gate called Beautiful, of the house called Beautiful. Yes, my dear, I've noticed when the Lord sets apart any of us for special afflictions, he sets apart by higher

feelings also, and I suppose it's a compensation."

Here the house-dog began to bark violently, and the gardener cried out, "Let him alone, sir!"

"I hope my Solomon isn't getting into any trouble," said Miss Tot, uneasily.

"Go and see, Susan, and give him some cake, in the arbor," said Annie.

"I hope you'll excuse the liberty I took in bringing him; but I could not leave him alone. He haunts the village tavern as a ghost does the graveyard, if such there be. He has a hereditary talent for whiskey, my dear; he does, indeed."

After this mild form of affirmation, Miss Tot paused to take breath, and Annie said:—

"I'm afraid he will not be much comfort to you."

"I didn't take him for comfort, my dear, but for duty to my flesh and blood, and from affection to him, because he's all the kin I have left but Sam'l Wittles; and he's only a sec-

ond cousin ; and, lastly, my dear, why does anybody take a legacy? Because it's given to them ; yes, indeed," said Miss Tot, triumphantly.

"And old Mr. Wittles is going on badly, too," said Annie.

"Badly, to be sure, and there's reason for it, which most people don't know ; but it's been the experience of my life, and very observing I am, because I am given to observing my plants ; and besides, I've talked with your uncle about it, and he agreed to me, with scientific reasons, and a very learned man is the doctor."

After all this preamble, Miss Tot came to the reason why old Mr. Wittles had easily fallen a prey to strong drink.

"I've been told, by my mother, that when my cousin, old Wittles, was a lad, he took to drinking, and drank hard ; and I've observed that them that once drinks are very liable to take to it again, being tempted. Reformation aint to be depended on, and the best way for

young folks is never to make the habit in the morning of their days, for it's mighty apt to return upon them suddenly, like a strong man armed; and as to reformed drunkards themselves, I *do* rejoice over them, but hope they will none of them be vainglorious, for their feet are ever set on slippery places, and let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. As I told you, the doctor explained the science of these facts, that strong drink is a house-breaker that works the mischief with the brain, opening about a thousand little doors in it, and losing all the keys, so they are always open to his coming in again; and if he doesn't, why, it aint of man that willeth, but of God, that showeth mercy; yes, my dear!"

"'Uncle Doctor' believes much in inherited tendencies," said Annie, and she sighed.

"Yes, my dear, there are things in nature that can't be gainsaid nor resisted. God has made his rules, and it would be a poor time of day for creation, if he set his laws aside for

us poor humans. All we have to do is not to fall foul of orders."

"And when the law *has* been broken, all that remains is for us to bow our heads and wait the blow," said Annie, more to herself than to her companion.

Miss Tot caught the words, and replied, "'He maketh the wrath of man to praise him; and the remainder of wrath shall he restrain.' Now, if you *will* excuse me," — Miss Tot always emphasized the wrong words, — "I'll go look after my Solomon;" and going out Miss Tot passed the pastor of what Squire Arnot called "his church;" the pastor having come to make his weekly call on Annie, and hearing as he came these last words.

"Annie," he said, "you remember Archimedes said he could have moved the world if he had whereon to place his lever. Prayer is the lever which, rested on God's eternal promises, can move the world."

The pastor had Annie's full confidence, also "Uncle Doctor's;" he knew what Annie

meant when she said "Turn aside even our family doom?" Now the pastor did not think the doom would be turned aside, for sin blossoms into vengeance; but he knew that God bringeth good even out of evil; so he replied from Scripture, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Meanwhile Miss Tot went to find Solomon. Solomon was crouched outside the kitchen window; the window was open, and just inside was the baking-table, and cook concocting goodies. Solomon had a huge slice of cake, given him by Susan; he motioned with the hand that held the cake: "Gi'me some of *that!*"

"This?" questioned cook, touching a paper of cinnamon.

"No, *that*;" and Solomon, huddled up with his chin on his knees, shook the cake-filled hand.

"This?—this?" said cook, touching sugar and raisins and cream.

"No, no, no, — that, — in the bowl!" and the lank arm gesticulated wildly.

"Oh, that's brandy; what will you do with it?"

"Pour it on my cake; it's good. Gi'me some."

"There, then," said cook, dipping out a little, "pour it on, and let's see." She laughed as he eagerly filled his mouth with the wet cake; but Miss Tot was on hand to prevent a second bite. "O Solomon," she said, giving a great sigh, "how very bad the 'besetting' is, to be sure! You'll break my heart, unless the Lord forbids it;" and she took the cake away.

"Let him have it; no harm," said cook.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," said Miss Tot, oracularly.

"He was trained t'other way, long enough before you got him," said cook.

"I know it, to my sorrow," replied Miss Tot, leading her captive off, but not in tri-

umph. Her yellow shawl took a melancholy tinge, and her veil drooped like the tail of a depressed rooster, while her best poplin's rustle was a sigh, instead of that subdued stir of satisfaction, wherewith it had begun the afternoon's progress.

"Solomon," said Miss Tot, "I'm trying hard to do my duty by you; but *aint* it reasonable that you should do your duty by yourself?"

"What's duty?" asked this modern Solomon,

"Doing right; and *was* it right to go for brandy, the which I've forbidden you, Solomon, and the doctor likewise, and which is a poison bound to destroy you, Solomon?"

"Why don't it destroy everybody?" asked Miss Tot's "legacy."

"It does mostly, in the long run."

"Well, then, who cares? If it's long run, that's enough. I don't want to live longer than old Wittles, and he goes it strong."

"He hasn't all his life, or he'd be dead

long ago. Besides, Solomon, if you drink whiskey it will spoil your brains, and you can't make a man of yourself, buy a house and good clothes, and maybe a horse and wagon."

"I don't want to make money," said Solomon; "pappy allus told me you had enough for me, and I'd get it some day. What's the use of getting any for myself? You needn't try to scare me, 'cause it can't be done. Lots of drinking folks have a jolly time. Pappy allus give it to me, and they all live long enough — ever so long."

"'Because judgment of an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil;' that's Scripture, Solomon," said Miss Tot, who appeared to be very unhappy now.

"I don't care for Scripture," said the "legacy," and pranced backwards along the road, facing his aunt, and singing in a high, cracked voice: —

"Old King Cole was a jolly old soul,
A jolly old soul was he," etc.

Miss Tot hurried home, pulled off her finery, rushed into the garden, and weeded desperately at an onion-bed, meditating meanwhile on the history of Absalom.

On Monday the family excursion had started for Blennerhasset, and on Saturday they were to come home. Sybil thought it would be charming to spend Sunday on the Island; but this proposition "Uncle Doctor" and Alice vetoed, saying the Scripture was "withdraw thy foot from the Sabbath," not doing our pleasure on the holy day. Vivra and Cyril demanded to be taken back in time for Sunday school, and Henry always agreed with Alice.

No rain had interfered with the pleasure of the party; they had made booths and swung in hammocks; they had fished, and rowed, and cooked, and eaten, as they chose. Tom, collecting fuel, lighting fires, washing and breaking dishes, and running errands;

had been so happy that Sybil declared his mouth had widened an inch on each side, and was encroaching on the legitimate territory of the ears. The champagne had been used up, and Sybil had made milk-punch twice a day; "Uncle Doctor" and the two children being the only ones who refused these dainties, the others having been brought up on them, and honestly seeing no harm in them.

Leonard had arranged for a steamer to stop for them, and take them home Saturday afternoon. In the morning the elders of the party were in a stir of preparation for a grand "farewell dinner," and the succeeding departure. Cyril and Vivra, not finding themselves wanted, disappeared with their fishing-tackle. At the extremity of the island the water was shallow, and an old willow-tree overhung it. The children climbed into the branches, reaching out over the river, and, dropping their lines, caught no fish, but any number of bites, which were quite as satisfactory.

"Cyril," said Vivra, who was a leading spirit, and always took the initiative, "let us get up a temperance society. I'll be president and you'll be secretary. We'll have a pledge, and "Uncle Doctor" will sign it for one, and Annie, and Miss Tot, and we'll try to get Solomon too, for fear he'll die a drunkard; and Tom, and Susan, and suppose we *could* get cook!"

"Mother'd be glad of that," said Cyril, "so she would not burn any more turkeys. But, Vivra, will the pledge be against all kinds of liquor every way?"

"Yes," said Vivra, positively; "'touch not, taste not, handle not.'"

"Then I'm afraid we'll starve at our house," said Cyril. "We have whiskey everywhere,— in the pies and the cake, in the cheese, the pickles, and the preserves, in the puddings and the sauce, in the jelly, and the lemonade. Why, Vivra, if we don't use any of that, we can't use anything. I was reading in cook's recipe-book the other day,

and almost everything ended with, 'now add a little port wine,' 'throw in a glass of brandy,' 'a tablespoonful of good Bourbon,' 'one tumbler of sherry,' 'two glasses of good apple-whiskey,' and so on."

"If I was tyrant of this country," said Vivra, looking very severe, and referring mentally to her last history lesson, "I'd forbid every drop of every kind of intoxicating liquor."

"I hope you'd forbid nutmeg too," said Cyril; "for I do hate nutmeg."

"Cyril," continued Vivra, "don't you know how, in the book of Daniel, it tells of Daniel and the three Hebrew children, who lived on pulse and water, rather than defile themselves with the king's meat, or with the wine that the king drank? Now, we can get bread and butter, and milk, without whiskey in it; and very likely we could have sugar to our bread, and those are better than pulse and water. And besides, Cyril, God loved them for it; and don't you know, he saved

them from the fiery furnace, and made Daniel third ruler in the kingdom?"

"I'll do it," said Cyril; "but there isn't anybody to put us in a fiery furnace, and we can't be third ruler either, Vivra."

"We can be first ruler," said Vivra, buoyantly. "Who knows but you'll be president some day?"

Poor children, chatting and fishing in the weeping willow of Blennerhasset! Already the years, like Nebuchadnezzar's strong soldiers, were bearing them into the mouth of a seven-times heated furnace, and unless "one like unto the Son of God" walked with them in those scorching flames, they should forever perish.

For them remained also the possibility, not of being "third ruler" in an earthly kingdom, but conquerors, and more than conquerors, over sharp temptations, and reigning kings and priests unto God.

Home went the picnic party, and the Sabbath dawned upon them, and they went

duly to church. Squire Arnot and his wife were members of the church; being church-members, were they Christians, — parts, members of Christ? There was no family altar, no blessing asked at table, no religious conversation; but they regularly attended church, gave to every collection therein taken, paid a full share for congregational expenses, sent a Christmas gift to the pastor, and had a Bible duly laid out on the centre-table. These were the only signs of a life which they professed to have “hid with Christ in God, and to live by faith on the Son of God.” Was there to them any such life?

The fountain in their garden leaped high, because its source was high; its pure drops, flung beyond its basin, gave the surrounding sod a richer hue, and brought adjacent blossoms to more abundant growth. So should not Christian life rise high like its supernal source; diffuse life and vigor in solitary places, and pour out its richness in the sphere of home?

Going from church, Alice Arnot fell into conversation with Miss Tot. The Arnots were not snobs ; they had wealth enough, and position enough, and confidence in themselves enough, to dare walk publicly with Miss Tot, even when she was arrayed more brilliantly than the king in all his glory, — in a yellow shawl, a green veil, and a purple gown.

"It did my heart good, Miss Alice, my dear, to see you come out in the morning of your days on the Lord's side. Remember thy Creator before the evil days come ; yes, my child ; and now to you to live is Christ, and to die is gain," said Miss Tot, impressively.

"Yes, I feel so," said Alice. She was a shy girl, and spoke but little. Miss Tot, however, could talk enough for two.

"That's it, my dear, rejoice in the Lord ; and I rejoice mightily for you, and on Miss Annie's account too. Now you can talk of things touching the King. As for your dear sister, she don't get such church privileges as

we do, and sometimes I think she pines for good religious company."

"Why, my father and mother are Christians," said Alice.

"Oh, why, yes, so they are," said Miss Tot; and there was an interval of silence, broken only by Miss Tot's reproving the "legacy," once for whistling Jim Crow, and twice for dancing. Finally, she said, "There's no rule against our judging ourselves, my dear. 'Judge not' don't apply to number one; contrariwise, 'Examine yourselves,' says the apostle. I hope you'll look to it that you're a genuine, out-and-out, active, live Christian, and that you'll set yourself to put by shyness, and to comfort that poor, dear Miss Annie accordingly, for 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend;' so says the great Solomon, and I humbly and sincerely wish *my* Solomon was like him; I do indeed. Though for that matter his countenance is sharp enough now;" and Miss Tot looked gloomily at her hatchet-faced

nephew, that is, as gloomily as her broad, ruddy, perennially smiling face could look.

"And I'm glad you all came to church to-day. Good sermon, very. As for me, I say with David, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord,'—though no one said it, and contrariwise it lay upon me to say it to Solomon many times, before he got in a frame of mind, *and* in a suit of clothes suitable to come."

"You are very good to Solomon," said Alice, "and I hope the Lord will bless your care to him."

"I hope so; yes, indeed, I hope so. But if he don't, why I don't doubt I'll see the plan plain in the next world. There's many a Providence don't get unravelled here; but the Lord keeps the reckoning, and he'll spend some part of eternity going over it with us. Yes, my dear. Here 'We see through a glass darkly,' we do, indeed!"

"How much Scripture you know!" said Alice, admiringly.

"Reasonably. I have only four books: Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, Gardening Book, and Juggernaut Book; and on that last I'm laying up some observations for Miss Annie. Good-by, my dear;" and Miss Tot took a long step, and jerked up Solomon in the beginning of that enlivening strain, —

"There was a frog sat on a log," etc.

Home went the Arnot family, and scattered about the house to await dinner; and the Sunday dinner was always the grand feast of the week, when the table, ever well supplied, superabounded in luxuries. "Groaned under a load of dainties," we are aware would have been the proper expression; but truth will not permit us to use it, for Mrs. Arnot's dining-table was a solid oak "extension" of the best make, and would have stoically upborne a ton and been incapable of creaking or groaning about it.

The squire said the sermon was excellent, the minister a smart man, well worth his

salary, and should have a barrow-load of their best cherries and strawberries next day; after this he took up a newspaper and lost himself in the markets. Sybil read "The Hidden Path," — not eminently beneficial or Sabbatical reading; Leonard dozed on the lounge; Henry and Estelle had their Sunday-school books; Alice went to her room to read a life of J. B. Taylor, — a book very delightful to her, though Sybil said it was "fearfully dull," — and Cyril and Vivra went to Annie to tell all they had heard in church and Sunday school.

The squire and his wife were of those who are "at ease in Zion;" upon whom the herdsman of Tekoa cried, Woe! Woe! — "stretched upon soft couches, — drinking wine in bowls — grieving not over Jacob's affliction!" thus were they. In earlier days they had run well; what had hindered them that they had not attained high things in the Christian life? What had hindered? The demon in the closet had hindered! The evil genius of the

family had blasted their religion; it was blighting their social and their physical life, and blighting also their spiritual natures. But the end was not now; they were putting far off the evil day, yet it was slowly drawing nigh.

Monday, and Squire Arnot was standing on the broad gravel-walk, a little distance from the house, his arms folded behind him, his head bent, his face troubled, and Leonard near him, talking earnestly, but embarrassed as he talked, and switching his boots with a little rattan.

"You won't think better of it, Leonard?" said the squire.

"I'm sick of staying here out of business," said Leonard.

"Look up some other. 'The world is all before you where to choose.'"

"I have chosen — this," said Leonard, evidently vexed.

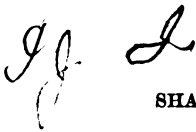
"I don't like it; it is beneath you," said the squire.

"You set too high a value on me; it just suits me. You will get used to the idea, and the business will pay. There, now, father! I should choose for myself; you did."

"But not such a choice," said the squire.

"Every man to his taste, and I can't wait any longer. A share in the Phoenix I must have now, or somebody else will snap it up."

"Well," said the squire, slowly, "we'll argue no more. It disappoints me miserably. You, my oldest, fail of the mark I set for you. Annie, our oldest girl, has only before her her bed and her coffin. Your uncle shakes his head over Sybil—why, I can't tell; and in fact I am disappointed in my children. However, Leonard, take your way. Order Jake to bring the buggy and the grays around, and we'll go to the bank, and you can suit yourself about the Phoenix. I'll be glad to hear you've changed your views within the year, even if you lose a couple of thousand by it."



SHALL NOT COME."

63

Leonard went around the house to find the coachman; he was to have his way, buy ten thousand dollars' worth of the Phœnix, have the bar on the boat, keep it in good style, eat well, sleep well, dress well, joke and and laugh, and see plenty of people, have no work to do, no care, and be on the river, which he dearly loved, and could boast of "his boat" being undoubtedly the finest side-wheel boat on the Western rivers. Yet for all this Leonard felt depressed; he was cutting his father in a tender spot; he was disappointing him, as he had many times before, — wounding his pride and grieving his love; and had the consciousness that all the family agreed with his father's view. As Leonard was kind-hearted and affectionate, this knowledge pained him. His mother said nothing, but her face was clouded and her sighs were many. She thought Leonard should be no less than judge or State's senator, and — he was going to be a bar-keeper!

The demon laughed in the closet.

The money was paid; more money supplied Leonard's bar. The Phoenix was in fine order, and began her regular trips, passing the squire's house once or twice a week, and when her whistle was heard, Harry, Estelle, Cyril, and Vivra rushed to the bank, and there was great shouting and waving of handkerchiefs.

Home from lucrative work in the South came Samuel Wittles, in obedience to his cousin's letter, to be the guardian of his father; and soon after his return he presented himself to pay his respects to the squire, bringing the old man with him.

"Glad to see you back, Wittles," said the squire, heartily; "we need a first-class carpenter here as well as anywhere. How's your father?"

"He's chipper," said Mr. Wittles, who had left his father on the back porch and had come round the house to find the squire. "He'll do well enough if I look after him.

Lonely was the old gent, and he went to the tavern for company, and there he got drinking; but no harm in the old gent's intention."

"How old is your father?" asked Mrs. Arnot.

"Seventy if he's a day," said Mr. Wittles, "and always a good father to me. If you'll excuse me, I'm uneasy about him, for fear Tom or the cook will offer him something, and make all my work to be done over again. Tee-total abstinence is his only safety."

"Bring him around then," said Mrs. Arnot; and as Samuel Wittles' hard-featured countenance, grizzly head, and blue swallow-tailed coat disappeared about the house, the squire remarked, loftily, "Yes, total abstinence is beneficial to weak-minded and ignorant people, and people who lack physical strength; but for all, why, it is sheer nonsense. How are you, Mr. Wittles?" and the squire shook hands with the old man, and set an arm-chair for him on the grass.

"Yes, seventy," said Mr. Wittles junior,

eying him cordially; "the old gent is seventy if he's anything, and good for twenty years more if I nurse him up, and totally abstain him."

"But how can you watch him, and do your work?" asked Mrs. Arnot in an undertone.

"The old gent has a horticultooral taste, very," said Mr. Wittles; "and Cousin Tot and me have concluded to set him at raising flowers in our lot like she does in hers, and in the spring she'll start a flower-boat for summer trade, and to give Solomon a change, and keep him out of bad company; and while she runs the boat the old gent will run the gardens, occupying his mind. Cousin Tot can't stand the strain of Solomon near the tavern all the year round. Well, she's got her duty in Solomon, and I've got the old gent, and the Lord above lays out all jobs; he is the Master Builder; all we have to do is to use the lumber he lays out and follow orders, and he'll mind the main chance. I never heard of any piece of work of his

turning out different from what it ought to be." From these remarks we see that Mr. Wittles was a kindred spirit to his Cousin Tot.

The squire said that "Uncle Doctor" shook his head over Sybil; through all the brightening summer the wise man's head was still shaken.

"Uncle Doctor" came to see Annie every day, and sometimes these two talked soberly of that family doom, and impending fate, in which nobody but themselves would believe. "I know what you say is true; your experience, your medical knowledge assure me of it. You bring Scripture for it too; but does not 'visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children' conflict with that other passage, 'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father'?"

"There is no conflict, Annie," said the doctor; "there is a physical and a temporal judgment; there is also a spiritual penalty.

The soul that sinneth it shall die, for its own sins, and none other. Your father's sins will not doom his children's souls, if they turn from sin to holiness; but just as scrofula and cancer taint the blood, and descend a fatal heirloom from generation to generation, so a love of strong drink, and the long array of diseases — fever, insanity, and consumption — bred of strong drink, poison the veins of the drinker's children. Your father don't believe it, won't believe it, loves his children dearly, would lay down his life for them, and yet he has ignorantly and systematically been killing them. Such a man too, noble, brilliant, generous — "Overcome by a view of his brother's virtues and vices "Uncle Doctor" caught up his hat and rushed downstairs. He heard Sybil's excited laughter; then Alice speaking: "Why, Sybil! how oddly you speak and act! — you are so queer!"

Then he heard Estelle, also, as she said, "Yes, Sybil, I've often noticed it; they'll

call you fast some time if you don't look out."

"My dear," said Mamma Arnot, mildly, "pray have a little guard over yourself, and do not be so rash."

"Uncle Doctor" walked into the room, straight up to Sybil, took her hand, felt her pulse, put his hand under her chin, lifted up the bright, charming face and looked into her eyes.

"What's the matter?" said Sybil.

"Mamma said 'rash,'" replied the doctor, cheerfully. "What rash is it, — nettle or canker?"

Sybil laughed. The doctor touched her brow, and let his hand rest on the top of her head. "Do let me be! Take off your hand; my head's as hot as fire!" cried Sybil. "Feels as if forty thousand red-hot wheels were whirling about in it."

"That's bad; how long have they whirled?"

"Oh, for a year I guess," said Sybil.

"We'll trepan you and remove them, if

you say so," said the doctor, merrily, and went into the garden. Once behind the shrubbery his gay air vanished, and he went up and down in a brown study; that ended, he came into the house, hung his hat on the rack, and casually remarked that he should stay to tea.

"Perhaps Leonard will be here too," said Mrs. Arnot. "This is the day for the Phoenix to go down, and he sometimes stops off."

Cyril and Vivra said they should go to the bank and see; and this was no great promise, for the bank ended their lawn, and there was a place there for the boat to make a landing.

"Uncle Doctor" went out on the porch. Sybil went there too, and sat down on the balustrade. Presently the four younger ones rushed by like a small hurricane, going to the bank to watch for the Phoenix. "Uncle Doctor" put his chair in front of Sybil. "Do you ever want anything very much, — have any intense desires for anything?"

"No, I don't know as I do," said Sybil, lightly; then seeing that he was in earnest, she added, "There, now, I don't mind telling *you*; yes, I do want brandy horribly sometimes, — so much that if the river were brandy I'd jump in; if my blood were brandy I'd open a vein. I'd have it any way!"

"And do you have it?"

"Yes, take a drink of it, and the horrible stuff tastes so badly and burns my mouth so, I hate it; but there's that craving coming every now and then, for the very taste I hate. You think I ought to be ashamed; but why? It seems just as much a part of my nature as a love of music or a merry heart."

"I know it is; you are not to blame for it."

"And you think I'll yield and be a drunkard. Bah! no, I won't."

"No, you never will," said the doctor. "What else?"

"Nothing, only when I bend down little black imps jump over my head to the floor,

and at night a tall red giant looks out of the closet door. I know they aint there, and I laugh at them, but I see them just as plain."

"And how long have the imps jumped and the giant looked?"

"Oh, about a year." Sybil's hands worked nervously.

"Sybil," said "Uncle Doctor," taking the restless hands and folding them between his own. Sybil became very quiet. "Uncle Doctor" looked down, his gray head bent almost to the hands he held as he pondered. "Sybil, there are diseases of body and of mind. Perfect rest and peace is a balm for both; sometimes a cure for both. Very likely you never heard of 'religion' as a doctor's prescription, and I'm afraid, child, it is a prescription you have little relish for. Sybil, I *will* not conceal from you that I am somewhat troubled about you; you have symptoms I do not like. I shall prescribe a little for you; but my most earnest advice is to turn your heart from all earthly things,

and seek the Lord while haply you may find him."

Sybil made no answer. She was touched; she felt awed by "Uncle Doctor's" words; but she was sure life was strong in her and death far off. She knew "Uncle Doctor" was learned in his profession; he was consulted from far and near; the best medical journals were eager to get a treatise from him. Sybil felt that any opinion and advice of this uncle was likely to be correct and to the point; but he did not speak more plainly, and she let the matter pass.

Squire Arnot called his brother for something, and they walked up and down until the bell rung for supper.

The doctor was a wise man on many matters, and the squire had called him to consider whether the bay mare had better be exchanged for somebody's roan two-year-old; and to give an opinion on a pair of steers, thought to be worth fifty dollars more than had been offered for them. The doctor dis-

missed these topics promptly, then said in a low tone some words about Sybil.

The squire's ruddy face took an ashen hue. "It cannot be; it is the worst thing that could befall us. It must not be! you must save her!" he gasped.

"Who doubts that I will do my best? But I'm afraid that the decree has gone out. If I am to do anything you must give me my own way about her."

The squire stopped, resting his arm on the white shoulder of a marble faun. "What can be worse?" he moaned. "How am I bereaved in my children, — disappointment on every hand, Leonard, Annie, Sybil. Had ever father so heavy a load to bear? There seems a curse upon them all."

"Have I not told you so?" said "Uncle Doctor." "'And the curse causeless shall not come.'"

III.

"I WILL SET BEFORE YOU A BLESSING
AND A CURSE."

UP the river, around the bend, the watchers on the bank heard the loud whistle of the Phoenix, and saw the smoke ascending from her pipes. Sweeping about the curve she came in view, a goodly sight; the gilded dome of her pilot-house shining in the sun, her mighty wheels on either side dashing the water into foam under their rainbow-painted houses, the obedient river parted before her stately prow, — a noble craft indeed, and worthy of long and successful voyaging, if Christianity and common sense had banished from her the *Bar and Sunday Travel!*

Leonard did not stop; the Phoenix ran close to the shore, and the four who were waiting for him saw him standing at the

side. He shouted merrily at them, waved his hat and his kerchief, then he swung something shore-ward with a strong arm. The "something" proved to be an empty bottle which he had charged with a letter to his mother; the bottle shivered to fragments on the bank, and Cyril picked up the letter and carried it in.

"So Leonard did not come?" said Mrs. Arnot, with a good deal of disappointment in her tone; she had just taken her place at the table, and Susan was waiting for Annie's supper.

"Here's a letter for you; he flung it to us in a bottle," said Cyril, producing the document.

"Just like Leonard," said the mother, fondly, — "to think to send me a letter, without keeping me waiting for the mail."

And just like Leonard thought "Uncle Doctor" to send it in a bottle; but this thought he did not speak. With all a mother's pertinacious affection Mrs. Arnot

clung to her eldest born, and indeed but for the moral disposition and feebleness of purpose which he had inherited, Leonard was a young man well worth loving. Thoughtful for others, generous and jolly, handsome and strong, what might not Leonard have been if his father had not encouraged, and his mother tolerated, that wicked demon in the closet? However in her heart Mrs. Arnot might assent to any propositions about Leonard having thrown himself away, and descended from his legitimate position, she would not permit a word reflecting on him to be said in her presence. If any one transgressed this tacit rule, she put on an air of such martyrdom as speedily made the offender sensible of error. *

Happy in the fondness and liveliness of Leonard's letter, Mrs. Arnot did not observe that a terrible agony filled her husband's face; that his food was untouched; that he studiously avoided looking at any one, and that a sympathetic pain brooded over "Uncle

Doctor." As for Sybil, she was striving to banish the words of warning and exhortation which had been addressed her, and she kept her brothers and sisters entertained by an unusual flow of merry conversation.

After tea the squire and his brother went out together, and to get away from the family made their way to the stock-yard, and leaned over the fence.

"Father will have no thoughts for anything but those steers, until they are sold," said Sybil lightly to Henry. Meanwhile the doctor was saying, "Premonitory symptoms of insanity, and I've long dreaded it."

"Explain these symptoms," said the squire, hacking at the fence with his knife.

"Her appetite is too strong for her will; on occasions she craves brandy and must have it, even while she hates it. This symptom, unattended with others, becomes drunkenness, and is common; but Sybil has other developments. She sees things, and knows that she does not see them. Her

imagination is morbid and ungovernable; but reason as yet sits in judgment upon it. When the day comes that imagination is wild and rampant, and reason has lost its power of decision, poor Sybil will believe in her imps and her giants, her black sprites and her red ones, and the momentary delirium of the present will be the long and heavy burden of the future."

"And my Sybil must be a maniac! I had far rather see her in her coffin," moaned the squire.

"My brother, we can neither choose our afflictions nor our punishments," said the doctor.

"And what shall be done for her? Money should be poured out like water, if it would help her."

"She must go away, and I must take her," said the doctor. "Her mother cannot leave Annie, and Leonard would only lead her into excitement. I will offer to take Sybil and Estelle on a winter's journey, and you will

consent. I shall try change of scene, careful medical treatment, and *no* liquor, and see if she can be saved."

"You attribute all this to liquor?" said the squire.

"I attribute *all* this to liquor. You know I love and honor you as a man and as a brother. I humbly confess you have qualities far above any I possess; yet while you are a man that all other men respect and love, there is a curse upon your house, a curse upon your children, and it comes through *you*. My brother, the curse is strong drink. Cry to God, I have sinned; cast out now all this that does offend, and who knows but he will be merciful to you, and no more afflict?"

"I would if I believed it," said the squire, "but I *cannot* believe it; it seems the veriest nonsense. Talk to me about cursing my family with drink, when I have never been drunk in my life. My hand has never trembled, my brain reeled, my eye grown dim; I have never staggered a single step."

"All this from some unhappy constitutional strength," replied the doctor. "The curse falling so far harmless on you, has been transmitted to your children."

"Your words are hard, as usual," said the squire, throwing his arm over his brother's shoulder; "but since we were boys you have been my best friend, and now how can I thank you for offering to devote your time, and to go counter to your quiet tastes, in attending to my child? It will be a large expense, but that I bear —"

"Say no more," said the doctor, hastily. "I often think your children are as dear to me as they are to you; at all events, I have only them to live for, none else to give my means and my time, and these are as freely theirs as the air they breathe."

Before the household retired they had some lemonade prepared, and after the recent conversation with his brother, the squire could not add the usual flavor of Bourbon. The doctor secretly dropped into Sybil's

glass a potion of something which should prevent the nightly visitation of the red giant. Next morning Sybil was making some bouquets on the front portico, when "Uncle Doctor" came up and playfully offered to help her.

He sat down, studiously disarranging her work, and said, jestingly, "Tell me some more of your foolish fancies; they may help me to get up a paper on 'whims,' and if they do I'll go halves with you of what I get for it."

"I don't know of any," said Sybil, listlessly; "only when I lie down and shut my eyes, balls of fire fly about, and I swing in great circles, and I think the queerest things, and everybody stares if I say them out."

"You've called me an old fungus because I stay here so closely; but I've a mind to travel this winter, and I wish Estelle and you could go with me," said the doctor.

"Where? when?" cried Sybil, flashing into interest. "We must; father shall say yes."

O you dear old uncle, won't it be too nice for anything?"

Father, as might have been expected, said yes, after a little apparent hesitation. Mamma Arnot was quite astonished, but yielded to circumstances, and in September "Uncle Doctor" vanished with his two nieces from the bank of the Ohio, and turned towards the Atlantic coast. The girls were very happy, Sybil wildly so; but after they had gone, a very dark cloud settled over the house. Henry, Cyril, and Vivra were at school, and the squire, calling his wife to her room, told, as gently as he could, the doctor's fears for Sybil. They had not been made known before, lest the news should creep to Sybil herself; but the doctor had desired the mother should be made aware of the impending trouble.

Mrs. Arnot did not leave her room that day, but in the evening she went with feeble step and pallid face to Annie's room, and sat down by her daughter's couch.

"Some new trouble, mamma; tell me," whispered Annie.

Mrs. Arnot buried her face in Annie's pillow and burst into tears. Alice came into the room and knelt down at her mother's feet, clasping her hands, saying, "Poor, dear mamma, what is it?"

"It is about Sybil," sobbed Mrs. Arnot.

"And what of our Sybil?" said Annie, growing chill.

"Your uncle says she is going insane, and that there is very little hope of saving her!"

Alice gave a low cry; Annie's arm tightened a little about her mother's neck; theirs was unspoken sympathy. Alice kissed her mother's quivering hands, and Annie stroked her hair.

"Susan!" cried Annie, sharply; "come to mother."

Susan hastened and lifted up her mistress. "Poor, dear lady, this is the third faint she has had to-day; she must stay in bed sure and certain;" and she rang the bell for Henrietta,—

a strong, kind, elderly woman, who had been Cyril's nurse. Kind-hearted Mrs. Arnot always gently pitied a drunkard's wife, but few wives of drunkards have a heavier lot than hers. To all this present and coming misery in her children, had she doomed herself by marrying a man who was fond of his wine!

"Poor mother!" sighed Annie, as the insensible form was carried from her room by the servants. "Her trouble is the heaviest of all; she bears all our burdens on her heart."

The sisters sat talking softly for a few moments, and then Alice went to inquire for her mother's welfare, and send Susan to prepare Annie for the night.

In these days of darkness it was Annie, the helpless cripple, who encouraged Alice, consoled her mother, prevented the apprehensions of the seniors from weighing on the younger members of the family; who set before her parents the necessity of meeting

the days brightly, and making the household happy; and it was Annie, who, if truth were known, was to be thanked for a cheerful fall and winter, and merry holidays.

Leonard was home for a few weeks when navigation was stopped by ice in the river. He could not be brought to believe in any danger to Sybil, though "Uncle Doctor's" letters stated that his patient made no improvement, but that bad symptoms were even aggravated.

"There is one thing," said Mrs. Arnot, — setting her teeth, and a firm look growing into her mild eyes, — "my child shall never have any other home than this; the roof that covers me shall shelter her; she shall never go to an asylum."

In March "Uncle Doctor" wrote that he was coming home; delay was useless; Sybil wanted to return. By this time it was evident that Estelle shared her uncle's anxieties.

When the travellers were home again, all saw the change in Sybil. "Uncle Doctor"

said there only remained to watch her unsuspected, and keep her calm and happy.

To Annie and Alice it seemed especially of importance that Sybil should spend these last hours of opportunity in finding an eternal hope. "Uncle Doctor" had tried every remedy, had consulted every famous physician within the range of possibility; there was now the great Physician of the soul, whom these sisters importuned unceasingly. Sybil seemed softened, seemed touched by their tender interest; in her wayward and fitful hours came times of quiet, when she spoke to them freely, questioned and answered, and seemed concerned for her own soul. How far these feelings went, none can ever tell; if root of grace were there, ruinous winter came all too soon for fruit to be brought forth.

On a May night Mrs. Arnot was expecting the Phoenix down, and that Leonard would come home. Her sleep was light; she heard every sound; the whistle pierced the air

above the bend. In another moment there was a wild shriek behind the house, echoed by one in front, and then a noise and outcry at the rear door. Mrs. Arnot sprung up and reached her dressing-gown; the squire was quickly ready to go down, lamp in hand; Alice and Estelle rushed from their rooms, — Alice, the thoughtful, wrapped in a large shawl and with slippers on her feet, but Estelle in her long night-ropes. From Annie's door Susan entreated Henry to find out what was the matter. Meanwhile the squire opened the hall door, and Tom, the black boy, who slept over the coach-house, rushed in, shaking with fear, his teeth chattering in his head. In his terror he forgot his habitual awe of the squire, and, catching him by the sleeve, cried out: "Oh, the ghostis! the ghostis! I seed 'em with my eyes haunting the house. Somebody's gwine to die, sah!"

"What folly is this?" cried the squire, angrily. "What do you mean, sir, rousing

the house with some idle tale of a ghost?" Estelle began to laugh.

"O sah, true as preachin', I hear a noise and I looked out, spectin' robbers, and aint afraid of 'em, and there was a great, awful ghost, all in white, stealin' flowers, sah, and somebody's gwine to die, and I hear it scream right out!"

"I heard a scream too, in front," exclaimed Mrs. Arnot; and here Nurse Henrietta, half dressed, came hurrying downstairs, shrieking, "Miss Sybil's gone; slipped out of her room!"

"She's in the river!" cried Mrs. Arnot, and was darting to the front door, when Leonard's voice was heard, and Henry made haste to open it. Leonard came in hatless, carrying Sybil, who struggled fiercely, but when placed among the terrified group began to laugh. The poor girl's black hair streamed over her shoulders, and was ornamented with the folded buds of sleepy blossoms, that had closed when the sun went down; her long

night-robe was damp with the heavy dew, her feet were soiled with the red clay of the bank, and a thorn had torn one ankle so that the blood dropped slowly down. Sybil was Tom's flower-pilfering ghost, and, startled by his scream, she echoed it and fled toward the river, running into Leonard's arms, as he came up from the boat. "Uncle Doctor's" prophecy was fulfilled. Sybil, the family beauty and pride, was insane, and in the closet off the dining-room was the demon, cause of all!

Great trouble roused Mrs. Arnot. She ordered the younger members of the family to their rooms, despatched Tom for "Uncle Doctor," had Henrietta light a fire in the sitting-room, and aid her in bathing Sybil's feet, and putting on her hose, slippers, and wrapper. Against all this Sybil fought fiercely; she struck her father and Leonard with all her might, but contented herself with making faces at her mother and nurse, probably in humble imitation of all the imps

and giants by which she had been so long haunted.

"Uncle Doctor" came in unusual haste, and when the ruddy morning light appeared, its beams were carefully shut from the sitting-room, where Tom's exhausted ghost was lying, put to sleep by strong opiates, her unbound hair yet tangled with flower-buds, the once brilliant face all worn and white, the mother's and the father's fondest hopes all wrecked in her, and reason never to return to its deserted throne.

Mrs. Arnot would not agree to having Sybil sent to an asylum; she contended that in "Uncle Doctor" the maniac had the best possible medical attendant; that Henrietta, vigilant and strong-armed, would be an admirable keeper, and her child must be where she could see her daily, and where, if reason returned, a mother's eyes could hail the first ray.

A large room in the highest story of the house was made a comfortable prison. Well-

stuffed carpet, immovable furniture, barred windows, and strong doors made it safe and convenient ; a niece of Henrietta was engaged as maid ; and now when the family gathered about the table, a place was vacant, and while Susan stood on one side of Mrs. Arnot, with a server bearing china ware for Annie's use, on the other hand was Martha, with a tray covered with solid metal dishes for Sybil ; and soon these dishes bore ominous dents, and Sybil quite often cuffed Martha's ears with the spoon which was brought her in lieu of knife or fork, — Sybil, who had once been so gracious and so kind, and delighting in making everybody happy.

When Sybil removed to her new room, Alice took the melancholy risk of setting in order her sister's recent apartment, and arranging her possessions. She found the poor girl's diary with this last entry : " They want me to be a Christian ; and I know I ought to be. I wish I had attended to religion long ago ; but I thought it was

dull. It doesn't make them dull, not nearly so much so as I am. Yes, I will be a Christian, if God will help me, and if I can see anything, or think of anything, but these imps that swarm about my head, and all those giants and skeletons that grin in the corners." The page had been closed hastily; before the ink was dry, as if her goblins had frightened poor Sybil from her work. Alice read the blotted record many times, and with a burst of tears carried it to her mother and Annie. Out of the land of darkness came Sybil never again to add to that record one single word.

And now while the squire saw "Uncle Doctor's" prophecy for Sybil justified, he was as far as ever from believing that he had tempted for his child her fearful malady; that he had sown in his family broadcast the seeds of death. He clung obstinately to his moderate-drinking, as he called it, though it was an indulgence

that for most men would have been immoderate. Nightly the "jug demon" got so much worship about bedtime, that it grew bold, and its breath pervaded the lower part of the house like the fumes of a sorcerer's incantation. Macbeth's witches mixed in their dainty kettleful.

"Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog;
Adder's fork and blind worm's sting;
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell broth boil and bubble;"

and if in modern brandy and whiskey, adulterated with lead, and vitriol, strychnine, kerosene, and vile weeds, colored with the refuse of dyers' vats, ancient boots, and fruits that have spoiled on the importer's hands,* there is anything better than the delectable mixture of the witches' caldron, we are not sharp enough to apprehend it. Yet such a demon-decoction as this our elegant and boastful squire worshipped with

* See "Seven Curses of London," pp. 83, 84.

his household. The squire paid his allegiance openly, before everybody, as he had a right; his wife followed his example in a hesitating manner, with a little sigh as she sipped her sling; the servants did their part surreptitiously, from the cook who had punch with a stolen lemon, to Tom, who drenched with whiskey a big lump of sugar, which he had plundered from the table.

Some careful calculation would show how much the squire was yearly out of pocket, by means of his servants' devotions to the family demon. Eggs, lemons, sugar, and spice, and demon itself disappeared with astonishing rapidity, and Mrs. Arnot was gently melancholy over the heavy expenses of house-keeping, and wondered where the money went to, and where the stores went to, and where the demon went to, and also where all the good servants went to, that there should be such a continual hegira of drunken domestics from her household;

and amid all her wondering forgot, or failed to see, that her home policy was training up the servants to be drunken fathers and mothers, drunken husbands, wives, and citizens.

That juvenile temperance society, whereof Vivra was to be president, and which was organized in the Blennerhasset willow, made, as might be expected, no great progress. The small secretary got himself a blank book, and wrote out in a fair round hand a pledge. Vivra, Cyril, Annie, Alice, and "Uncle Doctor" set their names to it; next Miss Tot, and Wittles, senior and junior, affixed their signatures. Vivra beguiled a pledge from Susan when the girl had a headache, and Vivra bathed her forehead with cologne, and tied it up in her best kerchief, as if cambric and hemstitching were a panacea for this malady. Susan said Vivra was "the moral of an angel," and, having given her pledge, she clung to it, and in many temptations at the squire's, who knows

but this pledge was as a sheet-anchor to her better purpose? for, though holding that service long, Susan was temperate all her life. Solomon signed the pledge over-readily because Cyril had; but it became the melancholy duty of the young secretary to record that Solomon fell away from his promises whenever he had opportunity.

"Uncle Doctor's" opinions and anxieties for his brother's family had been fully expressed to the pastor; but there seemed never any overt act which the pastor could make the occasion of a solemn reproof and admonition. So little was the squire affected by his potations; so free was he from the slightest suspicion of visiting bar-rooms, taverns, or grog-shops, or trafficking at all with the small country liquor-dealers, that there seemed no point to attack his favorite error. Leonard was a bar-keeper, and this his father publicly and sincerely deplored. When the squire supplied himself with liquors, he did it liberally and genteelly,

sending to New York for barrel, baskets, or cases of the beloved poison. It was a delicate matter for a pastor or a church officer to challenge with drunkenness a man who had never been drunk in his life; or with setting a bad example, a man whose morality was the admiration of the whole community. The squire was as opposed to groggeries and deplored drunkenness as much as anybody; he spoke with tears in his eyes of his pain at having his son selling bottles of wine and glasses of brandy on the Phoenix. Yet for all this, drunkards in the community were pleading that the squire drank as much as they did, and the squire was saying he was annoyed at seeing people so deficient in physical stamina and in self-restraint as these poor sots.

The difficulty was that the squire had a strength which these, his humble imitators, did not consider, and, rashly following his example, they fell into a ruin which he had thus far in his life escaped.

Summer passed away. Miss Tot had gone out in her flower-boat, taking Solomon with her, and in the fall she returned, bringing her "legacy," who was a growing trouble with the growing years.

No mother has ever watched a cherished child more carefully than Samuel Wittles watched to keep from his father's gray hairs the drunkard's shame.

Rest, recreation, business, — all were as nothing to this plain, middle-aged respecter of the fifth commandment, compared with keeping the grip of the demon off his honored old gent, who was a poor wreck to all eyes but his, looking through the golden light of filial love. This honest purpose, this tender respect, and clinging affection crowned Samuel Wittles' grizzly head with glory, and no man in the community failed to esteem the son, who honored his father when perhaps no one else thought him worthy of honor.

November stripped bare the trees, and

reaped the gardens with cutting winds, while the drops of the fountain lay as hoar frost on the crisp grass; the very stone fauns, and nymphs, and dryads on the lawn seemed to shiver in the gale, and early came and long lingered the night shadows.

Over the Arnot homestead other shadows gathered; faint at first, and only noted by the keen-eyed old man, who loved his brother's house so well.

The squire owned a broad cornfield on the upland, and there one day the huskers were busy, and, like a wise householder, he was out looking well to his servants' ways. Old Mr. Wittles had been allowed to take part in the work, as employment was needful to his contentment, and Miss Tot's tavern-haunting spectre was also there, working a little, sporting about the field a good deal, and audibly wishing that some of the yellow ears could by magic be converted into good corn-whiskey.

"Uncle Doctor" watched his chance, and joined his brother coming home.

"I want to talk to you about Alice," he remarked.

The squire started. "Alice is looking delicate," he said; "don't tell me that anything serious is to be apprehended. I cannot bear it; my burden is already heavier than I can bear!"

The doctor was silent.

"What is it?" asked the squire, in the dreary tone of one steeling himself to a new pain.

"I have always felt that she would die young. She has no physical endurance, — one of those delicate organisms which tarry here but a little while. I see now her life limited to but a few months."

"It cannot be! shall not be!" cried the squire, passionately; "take her to a warmer climate; give her change of air. Do something for her."

"I am doing all I can," replied "Uncle Doctor." "I might order her to Cuba or St. Augustine; but it would only be to begin the

long separation so much sooner, and she would never come home alive."

"But why not take it in time?" cried the squire.

"There was no time to take it; the seeds of decline were born in her. With only ordinary care she would have died a year or two earlier. Some life-works, to use a homely phrase, are only wound up to go just so long."

"She must go to Cuba. I must save my child," said the father, bitterly.

"You cannot disturb her great calm," said "Uncle Doctor;" "her peace is from heaven. Let me tell her plainly that her state is precarious, and let her choose; let her mother also choose whether she will part with the child now, or when God wills. Cuba is good for some, but useless to her, I am convinced."

"Alice," said "Uncle Doctor," "you are not strong; your health is failing."

"I know it," said Alice, calmly.

"I apprehend consumption."

"So do I," said Alice, holding out a white blue-veined hand, so fragile that even "Uncle Doctor" started.

"And your father wants you to go to Cuba, to try and get better."

"Are you *sure* it would cure me?" asked Alice.

"We cannot be *sure* of anything."

"I am sure it would not," said Alice, "and I want to stay at home with my father and mother. You would not want me to die so far away," she said, turning to them, "and I am very happy here."

Her father, strong man as he claimed to be, was sobbing like a grieved child; but the mother's grief was too deep for such expression.

A few days after, the pastor came to visit Alice, and then going to the library to call upon the squire, he found him reading the "Agriculturist," and sipping betimes from a tumbler of old Jamaica, which stood at his elbow.

Here was a text. There was much kindly converse, then the pastor said, touching the glass, "I deeply regret that my friend uses this."

"It's meat and drink to me, and you see I thrive on it," said the squire, smiling, and expanding his broad chest, and shaking his ebon locks.

"Let me speak frankly," said the pastor. "Do you think one man in a hundred, we may say one man in a thousand, could habitually take what you do of these drinks and thrive on it?"

"No," said the squire, honestly, "I suppose not; *but I can.*"

"And many men go down to their graves yearly, go to temporal and eternal death, failing where you succeed. Is it worth the sacrifice, losing so many to prove that one can do it?"

"No, not to them; but I have proved that I can. Why should I deny myself of what is useful and agreeable to me?"

"As useful and as agreeable as meat?" asked his friend.

"About six of one, and half a dozen of the other," laughed the squire.

"You are a Christian," said the pastor, taking his parishioner at what he professed to be. "I will speak to you from the word of God. You *do* owe a safe example to your fellow-men, — an example safe for them in all their mental or physical weakness. 'Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. And through thy knowledge shall thy *weak* brother perish, for whom *Christ died?*' Take heed, lest this liberty of yours be a stumbling-block to them that are weak!"

The squire mused. He was a keen man, and he had read his Bible; at last he said slowly, "'Let no man judge you in respect to meat or drink. Which of you judgeth another? To his own Master he standeth or falleth.'"

"And how, I ask you as your spiritual friend, and appointed guardian, do you stand in this matter to your Master? Are you using your liberty to build up the cause of Christ, and to strengthen the weak in the faith? 'If any man see thee, which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?' and strong drink is an idol, after which many souls go astray."

"It is possible that you are right," said the squire, slowly. "I respect your judgment certainly; but I do not see as I must be forever measuring my strength by other men's weakness. You could not expect a giant to use a dwarf's chair, or wear a school-boy's clothes. I believe that I got this relish like other mercies. I am given a pleasure, and ability to use it; why should I deny myself what God gives me? I receive all with thanksgiving. Tea is bad for children, and cucumbers throw some people into spasms; but

therefore must I be denied tea and cucumbers?"

"Tea is proved to supply a waste in the system of adults and the aged which does not take place in babies or youth; and cucumbers never destroy anybody's moral character, even when they produce spasms. The issues you start are trifles, one way or the other; but the question of strong drink is a great question, and has great results. The Bible gives us a plain rule: 'It is better neither to eat meat, nor to *drink wine*, nor anything whereby my brother is offended.'"

As the pastor went home over the rustling leaves of autumn, strewing the roads, as he heard the winds sigh, and branches creak, they took a voice: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils."

IV.

“RACHEL WEeping FOR HER CHILDREN, AND
WILL NOT BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY
ARE NOT.”

THAT was a cold winter; the ice came early in the river. The Phoenix was laid up at Pittsburg, and home came Leonard with a huge trunk of presents; and full of love for his family, full of good-humor, and resolved to believe nothing unpleasant.

Leonard took “Uncle Doctor” roundly to task for saying there was anything the matter with Alice.

“All she needs is plenty of good punch, — milk-punch, — and cheerful company; and she’s going to have them. I’ll make the punch myself; got the very best whiskey for it, pure article; and I bought an Alderney cow so as to have rich cream for it.”

"Give her all the cream you choose; but I don't believe she'll take the punch," said the doctor.

"Now, see here, uncle, that is just some of your old foggy nonsense," said Leonard, slapping his relative affectionately on the shoulder. "You've never used 'the cup which cheers and sometimes inebriates,'—though it has never had that deplorable effect on me; and you haven't half the size and power of my father, and *he* has used these beverages, which you come down on in such a particularly lively manner, every day for thirty years and more."

"And I am sure, and grievously sure, that even for him there is a day of physical reckoning laid up."

"Tut! tut! you're blue, and need a little flip to enliven you. There now! there comes Alice, with Estelle, up the walk. How *can* you say that girl is sick? Where will you find a brighter pair of eyes? And as to her color, it's beyond description! There's nothing

the matter with her, unless excess of beauty and genius are a disease;" and Leonard rushed out to meet his sisters.

"Uncle Doctor" suspected that Leonard was not as confident about Alice as he pretended, for his jovial face grew very grave as he watched her, seated at the piano that evening; and when she left the instrument and placed herself by him on the sofa, he took her hand, and looked at it long and intently, and finally crushed it up so violently in his own, that Alice started, crying, "Why, Leonard, you hurt me!"

"Oh, forgive me! I wasn't thinking. But, pray tell me, why don't you sing any now, Alice?"

"I don't feel like it; the sing has all gone out of me," replied Alice, "and there are plenty here to sing without me. How well Vivra's and Cyril's voices chord!"

"And is the 'sing' never coming back?" asked Leonard.

"Yes, some time," said Alice; and "Uncle

Doctor" felt that her heart added, "but not here."

A stormy Saturday put it in mind to Vivra and Cyril to get their blank book, and look over the meagre records of their temperance society. Leonard insisted on helping them in the examination, and teased them considerably; for they were now nearly twelve years old and stood upon their dignity. Cyril called "Uncle Doctor," to consult him on the propriety of excising Miss Tot's "legacy" from the rolls, as said youth had run away to the tavern and come home drunk.

"A boy twelve years old drunk! How disgusting!" cried Leonard; "he ought to be sent to the penitentiary!"

"I saw that boy drunk," said "Uncle Doctor," "when he was eight years old, — dead drunk, — lying on the grass, and I predicted then, what will most surely come to pass, — that he would become an idiot from the use of liquor."

"See how feeble the effects of your society

are," said Leonard, teasingly, to Cyril, "when it cannot keep its members from drinking."

Cyril looked very gloomy, but Vivra said promptly, "'You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear,' and no temperance society can cure a boy who has such strong hereditary tendencies to whiskey as Solomon has."

Leonard laughed loudly, and, pinching his young cousin's cheek, said, "Oh, stealing some of 'Uncle Doctor's' thunder! But such big words don't become you at all."

Even "Uncle Doctor" smiled at Vivra's grandiloquence; but Cyril suddenly broke into a cry, and fled weeping from the room; and no one had seen Cyril cry for a year.

"What's the matter with the boy?" exclaimed "Uncle Doctor."

"Vexed, because we spoke jestingly of his society, — it was too bad. There, I'll give him my knife to make up; take it to him, Vivra, and tell him I did not mean to hurt his feelings," said Leonard.

Vivra went off, knife in hand, puzzled at

Cyril's symptoms; but sure that Leonard had not made a proper diagnosis of his case.

"O son of a prophet!" said Leonard, stretching himself on the lounge, and looking up at his uncle, "since you have so truly foretold the future of Miss Tot's Solomon, unfold mine also. I don't anticipate idiocy for myself; and as long as I keep up to my father's weight, I shall not apprehend consumption."

He spoke gayly. "Uncle Doctor" regarded him in silence. Leonard had his father's height and weight, his ruddy complexion, waving locks, and deep, rich tones of voice.

"Such weight may do well enough for a man on the verge of sixty; but it is not to be coveted at twenty-five. Since you ask me, I tell you that liquor may dower you with palsy or apoplexy, and I believe you especially liable to the last; your build is very favorable to it."

Leonard laughed loud and long. "I don't believe a word of it," he said. "You know

'a prophet is not without honor except in his own country, and in his own house;' and while all the medical profession pays you reverence, and accepts your assertions as unassailable truths, your undutiful nephew gives them no credit. Apoplexy or palsy for me! ha! ha! ha!"

"You'll believe it when it comes," said the doctor.

"Oh, unhappy Cassandra never believed until the event approved the prophecy!" cried Leonard, jesting still. "Now I'll tell you one thing, 'Uncle Doctor;' you're out there. I'll never have either of those afflictions you mention; you may bet your life on that. You're mistaken, I know you are."

And here indeed Leonard was right, and "Uncle Doctor," for almost the only time in his life, was wrong; for neither palsy nor apoplexy fell to Leonard's share.

"Let me advise you a little, my dear uncle," said the reckless youth. "How

much better it would be, if you were a comfortable old gentleman, sipping Jamaica, and smoking a pipe after dinner with my father, instead of filling your head with musty lore from ponderous tomes, from every other page of which a skeleton, or a fragment of the human form divine, shocks the eye. Why will my beloved uncle be like a fateful raven, forever telling of doom? and, lastly, why won't he let me drink my modicum of proof brandy, and sip my moderate toddy, in smiling peace?"

"My dear boy," said the doctor, kindly, "I believe in this mode of life you are injuring yourself and other people."

"We'll let the other people slip by for now," said Leonard, "and mention how, leaving apoplexy and palsy out of the question, I am hurting myself."

"Then, chief of all, it hurts you religiously. As long as you indulge in drinking and selling liquor there is little hope of your becoming a Christian."

"As to that," said Leonard, "I respect religion with all my heart. I believe it a good thing; it has made perfect saints out of Annie and Alice, but it does not appear suitable for any one so entirely earthly as I am. I discover in myself no religious propensities, no pious instincts. Very likely, when I was made, the devout element was left out."

"Leonard!" called Mrs. Arnot.

Leonard went to his mother.

"Uncle Doctor" turned over the leaves of a Bible lying on the table, and read this Scripture: 'Ephraim is joined to his idols — let him alone.'" But the good man's heart yearned over his carelless nephew, and he cried, as was cried over Israel, 'How can I give thee up!'"

Southward drifted the ice and melted away; the turbid river swelled high in its banks; the green leaves and blades crept forth; back came the birds from sunny lands. Leonard was off on the Phoenix again, and

Miss Tot was getting ready to go out in her boat.

Vivra and Cyril owned a little skiff, in which they rowed, up and down, as they chose. Going out one evening on the water, they found rare matter of interest hidden beyond an adjacent curve of the bank, — it was Miss Tot's flower-boat.

The river glowed crimson and purple in the sunset light; there had been a little cloud on Vivra's face, for she had caught some ominous words about Alice passing between her aunt and uncle. But melancholy was foreign to Vivra's nature, and "Uncle Doctor" had privately charged her to keep Cyril as happy as she could; so when she saw this curiosity moored in the bend, she cried out that they would row toward it. The craft might have been a relic of the deluge. Held to the shore by a rope, yet with no gang-plank for communication with *terra firma*, was a genuine ark, fresh and clean, made of new unpainted

pine lumber, its roof rounded, and perhaps water-proofed by a covering of tarred canvas. The ark was alike at both ends, had two long steering-poles reaching from the roof, and at front and rear a platform with a small railing, and each platform was in a blaze of flowers. There were a few boxes of flowers fastened in some occult manner to the roof; more flowers looked from the small side-windows, and reflected in the river, this ark, bearing a chosen portion of earth's flora above a watery world, lived again, reduplicating its beauty, its shadow-flowers swelling to their prototypes above, and melting into a reflected heaven.

"There's Miss Tot's boat; let's go aboard!" cried Vivra, and presently they had pulled their skiff alongside.

While they were approaching the flower-boat, Vivra saw Solomon clamber to the roof, carrying a bundle and a tin water-can. He treated the boxes of oleanders and hydrangeas to a sprinkling, and then put

each one in solitary confinement, by thrusting into each box a slender iron rod, which was made the support of a canvas shrouding which he took from the bundle and tucked securely down under the bottom of the box. Having thus secured the prisoners, Miss Tot's spectre, looking more spectral than ever, set sharply against the background of the evening sky, executed a pirouette upon the roof, snapped his fingers exultantly, and, drawing a suspicious-looking bottle from his pocket, he was putting it to his lips, when he spied Cyril's boat close upon him. He thrust the bottle under the covering of a hydrangea, clambered down from the roof as quickly as he had ascended, and, leaning over the side, stretched his hand to Cyril to draw his boat close up, and then fastened it with a boat-hook contrived for such purpose.

"I say, Master Arnot — mum's the word," whispered this promising youth.

"Eh?" said Cyril.

"I say, you saw me upon the roof, didn't you?"

"No," said Cyril.

"Oh!" said Solomon blankly, and then looked askance at Vivra. He knew, if Cyril had not seen him, for Cyril had been rowing backwards, that Vivra's gray eyes had marked him as he drew out his bottle.

Here Miss Tot appeared, and shook hands cordially, we had almost said furiously, with her young guests, and said 'Bless you!' two or three times over. Then she hustled her visitors into a seven-by-nine cabin, covered with a carpet as glowing as her own face, and furnished with so many of the comforts of life that it looked as if it would barely hold Miss Tot's voluminous proportions; but, by a little judicious managing, Cyril and Vivra were safely established on a small settee, covered with "turkey-red." Solomon was fixed like Jack Horner in a corner, where he had a flower-pot instead of a Christmas-pie to solace

him, and Miss Tot enthroned herself in a good oaken chair, which was placed before a small red-covered table, and which absolutely squeaked as her ponderous figure settled into it. ●

"Well!" said Miss Tot, genially, beaming all over her face, and rubbing her fat hands.

Vivra was taking in the small apartment, from its mistress to the four books on the table, the two stools in worsted work, — relics of the school-days of Solomon's mother, — and the flower-pots set wherever flower-pots would stay.

"Here we are!" cried Miss Tot, "and I wanted to see you, sure enough, bless you! Off on my cruise, and shall not return empty, if the Lord pleases to prosper me. I meant to stop a bit nigher your house; but my Solomon got mixed up in the steering, and before I could set all right we'd floated here; and you know, young people, that my boat is like time, it can't run backward,

like life in the same point, and so on. Indeed, my boat is text and sermon to me many a time, as Solomon knows. Solomon likewise knows it was owing to his 'besetting' that I got here below where I meant to be. Now the effect I don't so much mind, but the cause I do, and Solomon's 'besetting' is the trial of my life;" and Miss Tot shook her finger at the youth in the corner, who seemed in nowise disconcerted by the administration of such public rebuke.

"The 'besetting' has been very bad lately," said Miss Tot, speaking as of a serious case of measles or small-pox.

"That aint nothing to make such a fuss about," sulked Solomon.

"It is indeed," said Miss Tot; "everybody knows I'm so down on whiskey — I'm a teetotaler. I'm fat, but it aint whiskey-fat. I'm red in the face I *do* admit, but it aint whiskey color; it's a light heart, and hard work, and living out of doors does it; and

I shouldn't be surprised if I lived to the age of Methuselah."

Vivra burst into a merry laugh. Miss Tot laughed too. "Not that I covet that age, my dear; for, I thank the Lord, when I die I shall be like a flower transplanted."

It was very indecorous in Vivra, but at the sudden thought that it would be the transplanting of nothing else than a big sunflower, or crimson dahlia, Vivra laughed again.

"How merry you are, my dear!" said Miss Tot, cordially. "Bless you, I like merry folks."

Her perfect good nature made Vivra ashamed of her own apparent want of propriety.

"Indeed, I look to that time," said Miss Tot, pursuing the theme of her own mortality. "I'm happy enough, but I've had my troubles. I'm left an orphan, and my only sister, Solomon's mother, — and a soft, pretty little soul she was, — is dead, and his father

is dead;" and she added, as Solomon had wriggled out of the cabin, and was kicking his heels against the side of the boat, "It does seem a dreadful pity that he didn't die a little sooner, if he intended to die at all, for he cultivated the besetting sin to that extent that I don't think I ever shall be able to dig it up, root and branch. I don't indeed!"

"I should think he'd give it up for your sake, as you are his best friend," said Vivra.

"Best friends count but very little when whiskey gets the upper hand; it's a fight between me and the sin continually," said Miss Tot, with dignity. "The poor heathen in India worships Juggernaut, and *my* heathen worships a jug; and to my mind one is quite as bad as the other, and I can't say as he is to blame for it, more than heathen infants."

Here Solomon thrust his head in the small door, sent his hand in beside it, with

the forefinger crooked and beckoning at Vivra.

Vivra suspected some communication about the surreptitious bottle, and went out to him.

"I say, you aint going to tell, be you?" said Solomon.

"No, if—"

"If what?"

"If you'll give it to me to throw away."

"Why, now, I say that's too mean; it's the last drop I'll get this trip, mebbey."

"All the better."

"If you make me give it up I'll drop myself off the boat and drowned!"

"I'm not afraid of it," said Vivra; "you don't like water well enough to do that."

"I'll go bring it to you," said Solomon.

"No, Cyril must," said Vivra, sternly; "you would take a drink on the way."

"O my eye! aint you hard on me?" groaned Solomon.

"I'm kinder than you are to yourself,

and you know you signed our pledge," replied Vivra.

"O my eye!" said Solomon, "aint that a mean pledge that comes between a fellow and everything all the time?"

When Cyril and Vivra were rowing home they emptied Solomon's whiskey into the turbid Ohio. Solomon knew, if he refused it to them, his aunt would be informed, and confiscate it, and he had a coward's dread of that lenient woman.

Miss Tot's boat was quite a matter of interest to the family. Everybody went to visit it, and Alice, expert with brush and pencil, made a pair of pictures of its exterior and interior for Annie, which were duly framed and hung up, and were in after years centres of many precious remembrances.

Annie remarked to Henry that she would like to see Miss Tot before she went away, and as Annie's slightest wish was household law, the gardener was sent to stay in charge.

of the flower-boat, while Henry and Cyril rowed Miss Tot and some of her flower-pots to their house. Miss Tot took Solomon with her.

"I hope I'll be excused the liberty, but I can't leave Solomon; he'd fly off on a tangent at once," said Miss Tot, who had a great fashion of picking up phrases, not always knowing what they meant. This one about the "tangent" particularly suited her, as she opined that said "tangent" meant Solomon's beloved indulgence in inebriety. In this opinion Miss Tot was not solitary, for the gardener apprehended the same meaning, and remarked, "Very likely he would."

Solomon being seen safely on board the skiff, Miss Tot followed him. In consequence of her additional weight the boat settled almost to the water's edge, but presently righted again, and Miss Tot was rowed up stream.

"I don't see why you brought me,"

whined Solomon. "I hate riding in a skift, and I hate skifteses."

In the garden Miss Tot remarked to Henry, "I hope you'll excuse me; but honesty is the best policy, and a word to the wise, you know, Master Henry; if you'd just see that no encouragement is afforded to my Solomon's besetting sin —"

"I'll look after him," said Henry; and Miss Tot went upstairs.

"Some little ways nearer home since last we met," she began to Miss Annie. "And so am I. I'm truly astonished that your gardener hasn't trimmed that big syringa twice as close; it would be for its good. A knife is as good for a shrub, as afflictions are for us. Many a thing we cling to is a dead twig, or an overgrown sucker eating out our life beyond our knowledge; but the Lord is a wise Master Gardener, and cuts us close here, and tills and prunes, and so on, until we are ready to break into full bloom up above. He's a merciful Gardener too, or he'd have cut me

up root and branch long ago. I thought of that last summer, when I threw out a flower that wouldn't do very well, and I rowed right after it, and brought it in."

"Did it live?" asked Annie, with interest.

"Yes, my dear, it did indeed; surprising; and it is a lasting warning to me not to despair over Solomon."

"I trust Solomon will not disappoint your hopes at last," said Annie.

"Bless you, my dear," responded Miss Tot, "my hopes aint set on him; they used to be. Why, when he was a little fright of a baby, I was that proud of him, that, the naming being left to me, I called him after the wisest man, with some idea that he'd be like him; not reflecting that my whiskey-selling brother-in-law wasn't in the least like King David, nor my poor little sister a beginning to Mrs. Bathsheba, who must have been truly a woman of spirit, though I can't say I admire her, for I don't. Well, my dear Miss Annie, when I look back on my hopes and my pride,

and see how my expectations have perished ; when I compare my poor Solomon — so very peaked and undersized, and, as I'm speaking to friends, so undeniably weak in the upper story — with the Bible description of Solomon the king, dressed in splendor, on his great throne of ivory, apes, and peacocks, — of gold and ivory, I *should* say, if you'll excuse, me Miss Annie,— why, I *do* get excited sometimes, and it makes me laugh and cry both together, though not naturally nervous!" and Miss Tot, who was clipping away at the house plants on Annie's stand, dropped into a chair, and laughed, with little sobs and two or three tears between.

After her call, Miss Tot repossessed herself of her "legacy," and was on her way to the skiff landing, when she met the squire.

"I stopped by your boat just now, Miss Tot, and I want that Daphne Odorata for Miss Alice, if it is for sale," he said.

"Some of our flowers were for s-a-i-l last night," said Solomon, nothing daunted by the

excellent squire's imposing presence. "That old punt of ours went down the river a ways, with her fig-trees in it."

"It was your besetting sin did it, Solomon; the punt didn't untie itself by any means," said Miss Tot, "and the least said, soonest mended."

"If the punt is not too far off, my sons will go and bring it back for you, Miss Tot," said the squire. Then, speaking to Solomon, he said:—

"I understand your besetting sin to be a love of whiskey, Solomon, and I conclude you had better let it entirely alone; it is evidently too strong for you, and will be your ruin. Any man who sells liquor to a lad like you should be imprisoned. Indeed," added the squire, turning away with a bow, and speaking to himself, "no one but a druggist or a wholesale dealer should be allowed to sell liquor. This peddling whiskey by the glass is ruinous." The squire bought of wholesale dealers.

The boys were getting the skiff ready, and

Miss Tot stood on the bank. She found "Uncle Doctor" there, and asked him what he thought of Alice.

"Failing constantly," said the doctor, "and will probably go very suddenly at last. It's a miserable thing to have a curse working in a family, Miss Tot."

"The curse is hard upon the family; but it will fall light on one so well prepared as Miss Alice. Why, doctor, what is it but setting a lovely flower out of the suns and the storms, that make the garden too hot or too cold to hold it, into the King's palace? Seems to me, the curse is turned to a blessing for her when it lifts her up into glory before she's pricked with the thorns of this curious life."

"Perhaps so," said the doctor; "but God promises long life as a blessing, and I must confess I like to see folks live out their time, and do a good work down here."

Alice was sitting on the front portico. She was comfortably established in an easy-chair, and draped in a thick cashmere shawl by her

careful mother. "Whom the gods love die young," thought "Uncle Doctor," as he saw her delicate, beautiful face rising from the bright folds of her shawl.

"Uncle," said Alice, "you know Leonard, poor boy, won't believe I'm going away from him, and he won't let me have any earnest talk with him. Now when we see plainly that I am going to go very soon; when I am not strong enough to be about the house, we'll have Leonard home, and then he'll believe it, and I'll have him promise that he'll leave that bar. I know he won't refuse me."

Now no one must think that "Uncle Doctor" had discouraged this girl, had taken from her the spring of hope, and had allowed her to give way to low spirits, and fairly imagine herself into an early grave. On the contrary he had labored unceasingly to baffle disease, and sometimes had been himself deceived by her energy and cheerfulness, and had had hopes for her that had inspired the whole family. Her tranquillity

had been favorable to restoration, and had kept disease at bay ; genial and happy, she took each day as it came, and only to Annie would she speak, and that not frequently, of a lassitude and increasing feebleness, that told her the end was not far away.

The squire was enjoying the spring evening on the veranda ; Estelle and Henry were off for a ride on horseback, and Mrs. Arnot was with Alice in Annie's room. Alice could not endure the evening air, and her mother would scarcely be absent from her half an hour.

Vivra and Cyril were mounted each on a stone lion, preparing their algebra lessons for next day. The squire, stretched in his lounging chair, monarch of all he surveyed, and tranquilly smoking his cigar, might have been happy beyond the common lot of mortals, had not that family curse fallen successively on each of his four elder children : his eldest son descended to the station of a bar keeper, two daughters so fragile as to have

scarcely a hold on life, and another a maniac, apart from her family, her wild laughter, or bursts of wilder song, coming ever and anon from her upper room. While the squire and the children were thus without doors, Mr. Wittles came about the corner of the house, and the squire, perceiving he was intent on some business, called him up to sit on the porch.

"Well, Wittles, how do you find business?" asked the squire.

"Business is good; hands full all the time."

"And how is your father?"

"The old gent's chirk, thank you; picking up remarkable. Happy as a king raising the flowers, and that cute about them he nearly beats Cousin Tot. Ah, he's renewing his youth constant."

"I'm glad to hear it. He must be lonely up there by himself, and a care on your mind too; and then your house-keeping; you had better get married, Wittles," said the squire.

"I *do* think of it, on the old gent's account.

A lively, pleasant, young person in the house would keep him cheerful like, I know. Yes, I'll admit I have been looking about, and I thought of Widow Grant," replied Mr. Wittles.

"And what does the widow say?" asked the squire, with a twinkle in his eye.

Mr. Wittles sighed. "I didn't speak to her partic'lar on that point, but some of the neighbors did. It's surprisin', squire, how much faster a man's neighbors can get on in his business than the man can himself. Yes, the neighbors mentioned to her as she might be asked to be Mrs. Wittles, and says she, 'when she was that, she'd see that old man out of the house quicker.' Yes, sir, she said that of my honored old gent, that has claims on me no other human has or can have. I heard it, and, not to be deceived, I went and asked her plain, did she so speak concerning my old gent."

"And what did she say?" asked the squire.

"I don't justly remember her words, but

the gist of them was that such was her opinion."

"And what did *you* say?"

Mr. Wittles scratched his head, and considered.

"Why! 'Good-evening.' I guess that was about all."

Cyril and Vivra had been apparently intent on their slates, but really more engaged with Mr. Wittles' revelations than with their algebra.

"You must try again, Wittles," said Squire Arnot.

"Just now I'm thinking of something else. There's a deal too much business doing in those saloons in town, and many young men getting led astray."

"I'm sorry to observe it," said the squire.

"And I'm thinking of forming a temperance society."

"Hem! well, it *might* be useful," said the squire. "Liquor is dangerous, like fire, in the hands of weak people, children, or idiots."

"And I wanted a little help and countenance in the work from you, squire," said Mr. Wittles.

Vivra, listening eagerly behind her slate, thought Mr. Wittles' idea brilliantly aggressive, thus to talk of forming a temperance society, in the very centre and stronghold of the jug-demon's dominions. Then she remembered the nettles, and their lesson. Touch a nettle, and it stings; grasp it close, and it is conquered. Bold dealings are best dealings, and it is not well to be over-dainty in handling vices.

"Oh, ah-h, Mr. Wittles! Well, what do you want? I do not entirely approve of temperance societies, unless in exceptional cases. Total abstinence they advocate, I believe," said the squire.

"Yes, sir, tee-total abstinence is my watchword," said Mr. Wittles.

"Your watchword is open to objections," quoth the squire.

"There's one thing can be said of it: no

one ever died a drunkard that held to it," said Mr. Wittles.

"No, I suppose not," said the squire, admitting this truth.

"Tee-total abstinence," repeated the carpenter. "Yes, squire, it's my view, as a plain man, that taking liquor is a thing young people had better leave off before they begin. Oh, tee-total's the word for me. I like the sound; it's musical and sensible to my mind."

"It will probably not do the community any harm," said the squire. "I suppose you want a society room, and I'll give you that one over the cooper's shop, rent free, and very likely Mrs. Arnot can find you a carpet and chairs, and a stove when you want one; we have an attic full of such stuff. If you start a library, or want papers or magazines, you can call on me for something. Now what more *can* I do for you, Wittles?"

"It's uncommon liberal, and very like yourself, squire; and if you'd give me your

name, by way of example and leading off, the notion would take like wild-fire."

"That I can't do," said the squire, drawing back. "No, that would be against my life-long and well-sustained opinions. Very likely the doctor will put down his."

"And won't you take those off *our* society book?" cried Cyril, eagerly.

Mr. Wittles looked at the squire. The squire recalled what "Uncle Doctor" had said was Cyril's only chance of life. "If you put your name to anything," he said, "you must consider your honor pledged to keep it. You may sign the roll if you choose, but, Wittles, you need not expect him at the meetings; he is over-young for such doings, and in the fall we shall send him off to school."

Growing lovelier every day, Alice was yet with her family when August came, going about the house with soft, slow step, and ever more dear.

As "Uncle Doctor" had predicted, the end

came suddenly, for she fainted at the breakfast table, and in a few hours had almost drifted out of life. For several months Annie had not been able to leave her room, and now only tender messages could bear the farewells of these two loving sisters.

Alice asked for Sybil; but Sybil was at her wildest, and could not be brought down.

It was the day for the Phoenix to come past the house, and Tom was stationed on the bank to signal Leonard off; and if Alice had an especial wish it was to wait until her brother came, whisper her last warning, and make her last request. Alice had no warning, no entreaty, for her father; for she knew him only as the best and wisest of men. Her love blinded her to his faults, and "Uncle Doctor" had never breathed to these younger children the slightest condemnation of their father. The day wore away; Alice had said her farewells to her family; the sunset flushed her white face; through all

this glowing beauty she would speed heavenward.

She drew from under her pillow her crimson-covered Bible, her pastor's gift, and looked about. She beckoned Henry. "Take it, my brother, you are going to college; let this arm you against temptation, and teach you how to live."

The Phoenix had rounded the point; all save Alice had heard the whistle and the bell. Tom's gestures had brought Leonard ashore in breathless haste, and with long bounds the young man crossed the lawn and came up the stairs. There was silence in Alice's room, where all but Annie and Sybil were gathered. Leonard flung himself by his sister's couch and clasped her hands. She was gone—her last warning and her last wish to him forever unspoken.

V.

**"FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH; LAY
HOLD ON . . . LIFE."**

NOT far from the squire's, on the bank of the river, was a small cemetery. It was dotted with handsome monuments and headstones, surrounded by a close-cut arbor vitæ fence, and between the various family lots were low borders of box, with blocks of marble to mark the corners. Here, first of her family, they laid Alice Arnot, seed of resurrection blossoming; and here, as her heart-broken mother often mourned to herself, she slept the days and nights alone, — gone from the household band the gentle presence which had been everywhere a blessing. And would the father admit now that there was a curse called upon his house? No; he said the girl was too good and too

lovely to live ; such ever died young. But despite this apparent unbelief, he gave some credence to his brother's opinions, for he remarked to the family that as "Uncle Doctor" did not think liquors agreed with the constitutions of the children, he preferred they should not have any, and that as little as possible should be used in the cooking. Still, brandy cheese and peaches were expected at the supper-table ; the squire utterly despised a mince-pie that was not brandy-flavored ; and still after dinner and at bedtime he sipped his Bourbon, and his Jamaica, having, as he said, proved that they were good for him, and feeling quite sure that a change would be detrimental at his time of life ; he needed something to keep his vigor intact, now that he was beginning to grow old ; and in vain did "Uncle Doctor" assure him that whiskey would sap all the foundations of his strength.

"You are an excellent doctor, but a little bit of a fanatic," said the squire.

"Uncle Doctor" had come to live at the squire's, on Sybil's account. He could control her better than any one else, and daily took her out on the grounds, unless she were unusually violent.

Early in September Henry entered college, and Cyril was sent with him to attend a grammar school.

There had been talk of sending Estelle and Vivra to the city to school; but Mrs. Arnot could not part with them in these days of loneliness. Besides, Sybil showed a great fondness for Vivra's society, and sometimes, when every other means to quiet her had failed, Vivra could sing her to sleep.

Mrs. Arnot had gone with the squire to make some purchases in town, and "Uncle Doctor" had been summoned away; the sunny afternoon had drawn towards its close. Sybil had not been ready to eat any dinner; but, a lull in her extravagances occurring about four o'clock, Nurse Henrietta sent Martha for a nice meal for the patient. Estelle

and Vivra were alone downstairs, and Vivra was passing along the lower hall, going for a flower for Estelle to copy in her drawing, when she was nearly deluged by hot coffee, and a shower of metal dishes rattled about her head, the baluster preventing any severe blow.

Sybil had snatched her tray, — having caught her attendants for once off their guard, — and had flung it over the top of the well-staircase, and now came tearing down the stairs crying "The river! the river!" at the top of her voice.

Estelle darted from the parlor, and clasped her arms about Sybil, while Vivra sped to lock the front door and pocket the key.

Sybil wound her arms about Estelle, and, far superior in strength, waltzed along the hall, carrying her sister with her, and singing "Come, gather water lilies! come to the river!"

Vivra ran to help Estelle hold the prisoner, but Sybil could pull them both about, and would evidently get out of the rear door

before any of the servants came to their aid. In this extremity Vivra recalled the power of music; she had a rich, strong voice, and broke into a favorite hymn. Sybil's wild pace checked a little. Estelle caught her cousin's idea, and joined her clear soprano in the strain; slower moved Sybil, yielding a little to control, and, singing still, the girls drew her to the parlor, and placed her in a chair, with one accord beginning a second tune as soon as the first was ended. Sybil's arms dropped quietly in her lap; she leaned her head against Estelle's bosom, and lifted her eyes, gazing upward in rapt attention. Estelle stood by Sybil, her arms clasped about her captive's neck; Vivra knelt before her encircling her waist, and thus they sang. The crazy girl, little resisting such soft thralldom, heard in a great calm, and finally, worn with a day of violence, fell gently asleep. Henrietta and Martha had come down, and drawn out of sight, just as Sybil began to yield to the influence of the music.

"Uncle Doctor" came home and found his three nieces thus, Estelle and Vivra singing softly by turns, lest their charge should waken.

"Music and flowers have always been the strongest controlling influences with her," he said; and after this triumph of young voices in casting out demons, as did David's harp, Nurse Henrietta often sent for one of the girls to come and sing to her possessed young lady.

At another time Sybil, with insane craft, had eluded vigilance, and got out of doors, when Vivra saw her, and, succeeding in turning her eyes toward a bed of many-hued verbenas, Sybil sat down in the midst of it, and destroyed the gardener's treasures until her "Uncle Doctor" came to be responsible for her.

The Arnot house had once been famous for hospitality, and overflowed with guests; but now that death had been among them, when Sybil, the wit and beauty, was no more

her happy self, and pain was a constant watcher at Annie's couch, the stir of society had died away, silence and gravity settled over the place, except where Estelle and Vivra went in the unconquerable cheerfulness of girlhood, or Leonard came home, resolved to brighten everybody by his presence.

Henry and Cyril came home for vacations, and had all the life and frolic natural to boys, and long tales of their adventures to tell; so the household was a happy one, if not so mirthful as of yore. And there were long, beautiful calms between the demon's outbreaks, such as come between tropic storms. When Cyril came home in the winter, he had several long and private talks with "Uncle Doctor." Months before, Cyril had confided to this wise old relative the reason of his burst of tears the day their juvenile temperance society was under discussion. Vivra, quoting "Uncle Doctor," had spoken of hereditary tendencies. They knew this theory applied to Solomon, whose father had

sold liquor, and drank it until he died with the drunkard's madness ; but they did not know it could in any wise apply to their own family ; for the squire was the pink of propriety, and condemned drunkards and dram-selling unsparingly.

Yet Cyril was conscious of a fierce appetite, though he did not apprehend how he came by it. He thought Solomon could not crave liquor so much as he did himself, and he had some undefined idea that if he gave way to the taste, he would become a miserable slave to a bad habit.

All this he unfolded to "Uncle Doctor," in hours when the old man and the boy paced up and down the walks, the one all trustfulness, the other full of the wisdom of experience.

"You must consider this propensity as your greatest foe ; if you yield to it, it will kill you ; strong drink would be a deadly and a swift poison to you."

"I'm so ashamed of such a taste !" said

Cyril, flushing. "I love the smell of whiskey and brandy, and wine always looks as if it would be *so* good. I want it more and more all the time, but I have never used any yet; except what little comes in the food, — and they're getting better about that, — for you know I signed a pledge."

"You needn't be ashamed of the desire, any more than you would be of a cross eye, or a red head; it was born with you; but you should be ashamed of yielding to it. Never do that. All your life may be a fight against this tendency to indulging in strong drink; but you can conquer if you arm yourself with faith and prayer," replied "Uncle Doctor."

"It seems hard to be made worse than other folks," said Cyril, moodily.

"Not as badly made as some," said his uncle, cheerfully. "Look at poor Solomon, with a taste for whiskey, and no mental, no bodily strength to resist; he falls a victim at once. Baby innocence, Cyril, my boy, is

not half so grand as well-trying and conquering virtue. Arm yourself for conflict. I have hope it may not last all your life ; you may be more than conqueror in the morning of your days. The Scripture says, 'There hath no temptation overtaken you but such as is common to men ;' and 'he will with the temptation make also a way of escape.'"

"Ah, but suppose I fail, and become a sot, a disgrace to my family?"

"Don't be a coward. Be a hero. Some of earth's greatest battles have been fought in tempted and struggling hearts. These are the battles watched by 'so great a cloud of witnesses,' whose heroes go up to receive crowns and palms in the presence of God. 'Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city,' and Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon were nothing to those spiritual warriors who achieve victory over mighty besetting sins. I hope great things from you, my boy."

Smiles which had long been absent from

Mrs. Arnot's face came back during those holidays, when she had her three sons at home, and Estelle and Vivra were lively and healthful in their company, and during the clear, cold days they were sleighing or skating, and in the evenings they sang as they had sung long ago. There was a little faint, almost smothered, religious life in Mrs. Arnot's heart, and though most often she, like Rachel, mourned for her children and would not be comforted, there were other times when she could agree to the will of God about Alice, and could see her child better off, being called higher up, to the presence of the King in his beauty.

The cold weather went away with the holidays; the spring came early, and Estelle and Vivra spent most of their spare time at work in the flower-beds and borders; and when Sybil was more than usually peaceable, she was brought down to be with them, her guard of honor, Henrietta and Martha, lurking conveniently near at hand. Sybil had

such a strange fashion of planting everything with the roots in the air ! probably because all life had become so perverted and distorted to her. She also horrified her sister and cousin by catching two toads, and planting them, heads downward, and hind feet vainly struggling in the sunshine. These new-fangled blossoms were speedily and privately rooted up by Vivra, and sent on their way rejoicing, while Sybil was blissfully intent on some fresh design.

This spring Solomon rebelled against going in the flower-boat with his aunt. "I'll stay at home and keep the gardens with the old gent," he said.

"I don't want him," whimpered the old gent; "he's a bad young man, and teaches me bad habits."

"There now," said Mr. Wittles, "the old gent won't have you, and that's enough."

"Then I'll stay and do carpentry work," said Solomon. "I'd like to roof housen."

"I won't have you either; the old gent is

my charge, and I won't have you where you'll corrupt his morals," said Mr. Wittles.

Leonard, upon hearing of the rebellion in Miss Tot's empire, waylaid Solomon, and threatened to send him to a reformatory school, if he did not go with his aunt, and this menace wrought so effectually upon Solomon, that he agreed to obey.

Miss Tot paid her farewell visit to Annie.

• "Sometimes I wish my strength might be divided between us, Miss Annie, my dear," said Miss Tot, looking tenderly at her frail little friend. "I feel like I had enough for two; but the good Lord he knows best. Here's a fine view of the river," continued Miss Tot. "The Ohio's a handsome stream, sure enough, muddy though, and don't look much like that river you and I are expecting to see, that makes glad the City of God. I'm inclined to feel sometimes as if losing Solomon, that I set such store by, would dim even the shining of that river to me; but likely not, for 'sorrow and sighing shall flee

away,' and 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' Yes, indeed, my dear!"

"I'm very sorry that our hopes are doomed to be disappointed in him," said Annie, despondingly.

"Oh, hopes, my dear. I have *feelings*, I'll admit; but as to *hopes*, why, if I was to build up any hopes this side of heaven, I'd choose a better foundation than Solomon; he leans toward liquor far too much to build hopes on. The leaning tower in the missionary book is just nothing in comparison. His father and his grandfather before him were of the same inclinings, and such most generally get worse, instead of better. Truly the Bible says, 'Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him and makest him drunken also.' Ah, I tell you, my dear, the Lord's very down on all such proceedings, and visits the iniquities of such fathers on their children. Solomon's grandfather died of palsy, at seventy; his father died at fifty of tremens, and Solomon will be

likely to die an idiot before he sees thirty ; so your uncle says scientifically."

Miss Tot took out her pocket-handkerchief and wiped her eyes diligently.

"I don't know what I can say to comfort you," said Annie. "I can sympathize with you, having such fears and such feelings myself."

"Oh, yes, my poor Solomon and his besetting sin," sniffed Miss Tot. "The other Solomon had a besetting sin, but it wasn't whiskey. He was a thorough temperance man, if I read his writings correctly, and most likely would not have objected to giving a lecture on the same, if so invited. Yes, indeed!"

Miss Tot paused to recover breath, and Miss Annie cheered her with biscuits and lemonade, and after this mild refreshment Miss Tot went her way.

When the flower-boat was two or three days' journey down the river, the swift-going Phoenix overtook and passed it, and Solomon, seeing that Leonard was not on hand at

home to put him in a reformatory school, decamped quietly at night, and left his deserted aunt to go her way alone, as her boat would not run backward, being dependent on the current.

The squire was having a laundry built behind the house, and Solomon had set his heart on nailing shingles on the roof.

Mr. Wittles was putting up the laundry, and was apt to begin work early. Thus one morning, when the sun was rising to Mr. Wittles' view over the east end of the laundry, Solomon rose over the west end, with his long lank locks stuck full of bits of straw, he having slept that night in the tavern barn. Solomon sat down in front of Mr. Wittles.

"Here I be!" he cried, blithely, stretching his pale, silly eyes to their widest extent, thrusting his tongue first in one cheek and then in the other, and finally running it out several inches in front.

"Now," observed Mr. Wittles, confidentially to himself, "I look upon this as a judgment.

I'm bad enough I know, but I should like to be certain which of my sins provoked this."

At the left of her uncle's home, Vivra had a favorite arbor. Now, when the spring was daily unfolding its beauties, this latticed retreat, draped in honeysuckle and running roses, and furnished with rustic seats, fashioned by Cyril and Henry out of wild-grape vines, was at its loveliest, and the pleasantest place possible wherein to study.

This summer-house was in full view of the new laundry that was being built, and between it and the laundry was the kitchen pump, with a platform about it. The squire had located his vegetable garden at a respectful distance from his house, and green sod and gravel walks went quite up to the kitchen door, closely clipped evergreens and frames of dahlias bearing them company.

Usually from the laundry Vivra heard no sound but the regular blows of the workmen's hammers, the steady grate of the saw, or the occasional fall of a fragment of wood ;

but the day after Solomon's return her French lesson was interrupted by a constant stream of talk, and, looking up, Vivra saw Miss Tot's "legacy" mounted on the roof, plying hammer and tongue. He seemed in a lively mood, and constantly getting livelier. When foreman Wittles was on the roof, Solomon was forced to work nearly as fast as he talked, and Vivra saw the grim carpenter looking terribly annoyed at his rattle-brained subordinate. Let Mr. Wittles leave the roof, and Solomon's hammer would lie idle; he would shy shingles in a jocular manner at his fellow-workmen, and kindly volunteer various exploits for their edification, remarking that he "didn't care a skip" for that grizzle-headed carpenter, — an assertion which he made good, by going vigorously to work the instant said grizzle-head rose over the roof.

At length Solomon's hilarity so gained the ascendancy that he began a lively song about

"The fellow that looked like me,"

threatening to give this truly unfortunate in-

dividual "particular fit's ;" and, as his song proceeded, he lay back on the roof, keeping time with heels and elbows.

"I take it," observed Mr. Wittles, "that this is the kind the prophet Zechariah mentioned, saying, "They shall drink and make a noise !"

At this stage of Solomon's ecstasy the foreman took him by arm and collar, and with much difficulty got him down the ladder into the yard. It was evident that Solomon was drunk.

The severe countenance of the foreman never relaxed at Solomon's gibes ; he dragged him to the pump, where the boy dropped in an inert heap. Mr. Wittles placed his victim's head in a position convenient for the execution of his evident design, and, grasping the pump-handle, deluged him with a steady stream of clear, cold water. This violent treatment he continued, with some small intervals, for several minutes ; after this Solomon seemed returning to his senses, sat upright, and wrung out his dripping hair.

During this operation his captor eyed him sternly. Solomon bore no malice ;he polished himself, much as a cat makes her after-dinner toilet in the sun, and, looking up with a leer, remarked, "Ah, ha ! was it you did that, old Wittles and drink ?"

"Wittles I may be," responded with dignity the owner of this euphonious name ; "but drink, of the variety which you take stock in, I am *not*."

"Oh, want a drink, do you ?" said Solomon, grinning ; "do you take it straight ?"

"I take it straight," said Mr. Wittles.

"Ah, ha ! Take it clear, old feller ?"

"Clear," responded Mr. Wittles.

"Try it, then," said the infatuated Solomon, bringing up from the depths of his pocket a pint bottle, nearly full of rye whiskey, and handing it to Mr. Wittles.

That implacable worthy coolly emptied and washed the bottle, filled it with clear water, and returned it to Solomon, who, with idiotic smiles, restored it to his pocket.

"Oh, you need some more! I see it plainly; you are not yourself, poor specimen as self may be;" and Mr. Wittles, returning his patient to position, plied the pump-handle with renewed energy.

"Ah, ha! you did that, did you, Wittles and drink?" said Solomon, coming gasping from this cold-water cure. "Pooty powerful on cold water, aint you now?"

He sat up as if meditating, muttering "pooty powerful" several times. At last he got out his bottle and took a drink.

"Ah, ha!" he said mildly, missing the beloved flavor, "you did that, too, did you? Well, now, *that's* more'n I can stand;" and he blandly threw the bottle at Mr. Wittles, but missed his mark by some ten feet.

The external and internal application of cold water had however a beneficial effect, and in the course of fifteen minutes Solomon was himself again, only thoroughly wet.

Vivra came out of her arbor, and offered to send Tom to give Solomon a dry coat, and

put him to sleep in the room over the carriage-house.

"And what comes after that?" groaned Mr. Wittles. "Must I be responsible for my Cousin Tot's 'legacy,' having a duty of my own?"

"No, I'll speak to uncle, and he will make it right some way," said Vivra, and beckoned Tom from the dining-room.

"My young friend," said Mr. Wittles, laying his hand on Tom's shoulder, "see what whiskey has done for this individual. When an individual takes to whiskey, he's quite likely to come to grief. 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' is the motto of our temperance society, Thomas, and I hope you'll keep to it particular. Tee-total abstinence, and leaving off before you begin, and as Cousin Tot says, 'Discretion is the better part of valor.'"

The squire, having compassion on his overburdened carpenter, signalled a passing boat, and sent Solomon down to Miss Tot, promis-

ing him a visit to an inebriate asylum if he ran away again.

The squire had promised to take Vivra and Estelle to attend the college commencement, and to come home with Henry and Cyril. Leonard was arranging for a river trip during vacation, provided the water was not too low for the Phoenix to run.

To make Estelle happy, and guard her health, seemed Mrs. Arnot's chiefest care; for Estelle missed Alice much, and was daily growing singularly like her.

This excessive solicitude of Mrs. Arnot magnified every change in Estelle's health, and in May the girl having taken a slight cold and being a little feverish, her mother would not trust her away from herself at night, but took Estelle into her own room, leaving Vivra in sole possession of their joint apartment.

The night was warm, and Vivra's window-sash was raised, and the blinds closed. She was a fearless girl, and being aroused in the night by some one knocking softly, she neither

shrieked nor fainted, but sat up in bed, and listened to know whence the noise came.

The knocking was at the window.

"Who's there?" demanded Vivra.

"It is I; let me in, won't you?" said the knocker.

"Why, that can never be Cyril!" exclaimed Vivra.

"Yes, it is," was replied, in a very despondent tone.

"Well, I'll let you in pretty soon," said Vivra, and, rising, she began dressing herself, got her wrapper from the closet,—for she was an orderly damsel, and could find all her possessions in the dark,—and finally she procured a match, lit her lamp, and unhooked the blinds.

Cyril stepped off the balcony into the room, looking very crestfallen, and Vivra gave him a cordial welcome and a kiss.

"What does this mean?" she asked.

Cyril had found himself a low seat, and had hidden his face in his folded arms.

"It means I've run away from school," he replied.

"When did you run?" asked Vivra, smoothing his waves of gold-brown hair.

"This morning," said Cyril.

"I don't see how you ever got home this time of night."

"I got off at the South Station at ten o'clock."

"And walked five miles. O poor boy!"

"Where's Estelle? I thought she slept here too," said Cyril.

"She isn't well to-night, and is in her mother's room. Why didn't you come to the door?"

"Because I didn't want to frighten mother and rouse the whole house, and have everybody talking and wondering, and I knew you and Estelle were not cowards and would be quiet."

Annie's room was next Vivra's, and Vivra heard her speaking to her maid.

"Annie's awake," she said.

"I wish I could see Annie," said Cyril.

"I'll go tell her you've come," said Vivra, and went to her cousin's room.

"Poor child! he's got into some trouble," said Annie, tenderly; "bring him in here, Vivra;" and Vivra led Cyril in.

Annie held out her little, feeble hand to this big, rosy, melancholy, golden-pated boy, and Cyril, with a sudden sob, rushed over to her, and, falling on his knees, hid his face in her pillow and began to cry.

"I'm afraid we'll keep you awake and make you worse," said Vivra, uneasily.

"Miss Annie don't rest much at night," said Susan.

"You can go to bed, Susan; Miss Vivra will be with me," said Annie; and when Susan had gone, she said soothingly, "Now, Cyril, tell me all about it."

"I've run away," said Cyril, the pent-up excitement of many hours breaking forth.

"I see you have; but why?"

"I daren't stay any longer!" said Cyril.

"I expect you meant to do right. Now suppose you go to the stand and bathe your face and brush your hair, and that will help compose you, and you can sit down quietly and tell Vivra and me all about it. We would like to hear the whole story."

Cyril took this very reasonable advice, and was ready to unravel the mystery of his return. He became more calm, sitting down close by Annie's bed, and holding her hand, while Vivra near by kept her bright eyes on his face, her sympathetic countenance changing with every change in his story.

"You see," began Cyril, "at our school the boys are all the time drinking wine, and such things, and teasing other folks to take it; and you know, Annie, I want that sort of stuff too much any way. Well, I never would go to saloons, because it was against the rules, and because of my pledge; and my chum would bring some now and then, and make sling, to study by, you know; but I didn't touch that. The other night

Billy Judkins had a birthday, and he made a party, and he got a whole lot of nice things from the confectioner's, and he said we were all to come and help him eat 'em, and then we were all to go and help pay for 'em, because it was his birthday."

At this view of the sharp Billy's party, Vivra went into such a fit of laughter as forced Annie to laugh too, and beguiled a smile even from the unhappy narrator.

The laughter, smothered to avoid disturbing the family, finally ceased, and Cyril proceeded.

"I didn't know that Billy got any wine ; but he did, a whole lot, and he brought it on just as we were having such fun telling stories ; and quilts hung to all the doors and windows to keep the watchmen from seeing, — and that was last night, — and Billy said we must all drink his health. So I said no at first ; but the boys teased me, and Billy got mad pretty near, and it looked so good and it smelt so good, that finally I took a little,

and then a good deal, and I got silly, and the boys laughed, and finally chum and Billy pulled me to my room and took off my boots, and put me in bed with my clothes on, and — and —" Here Cyril's tears overflowed, and he hid his burning face in his hands.

"Broke your pledge! O Cyril!" cried Vivra, reproachfully.

Annie sighed. Was the curse falling here, the curse of drunkenness, on the brave boy, the family idol?"

"I broke my pledge," groaned Cyril, "yes, I did; and I didn't wake up for prayers, and chum got me excused; said I had a headache; and when I got up he gave me a glass of whiskey and water to make me feel better. I asked him where he got it, and he said he had a whole jugful in the closet, and we'd have some every day. I didn't touch it, I *daren't*; but I grabbed my cap, and I ran out the back way, and I kept running, and by and by I got to the depot. I hadn't thought of coming home till then; but

I looked in my pocket-book and found I had enough to take me to the South Station, and a quarter to get my dinner ; so I got on the train and came along ; for I know if I stay there I'll be made a drunkard, and I'm afraid I'll be one any way."

"No," said Annie, "you will not, you shall not, my poor boy. You shall conquer temptation. 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'"

"But you don't know how hard I have tried, and then at last I gave up—and got drunk— Oh, dear!"

"'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin,'" said Annie, solemnly.

"No," said Vivra, excitedly ; "you can resist more yet. You must never break your pledge again, if keeping it kills you ; better to die doing right, than live doing wrong!"

"Yes," said Cyril, moodily enough ; "such a mean fellow as I am oughtn't to live. I ought to die, and nobody cares."

"Oh, yes," said Annie, "we all would care. I should care a great deal."

"And so should I," said Vivra. "There now, Cyril, you shan't die, and you shan't be a drunkard!" Her gray eyes flashed, and she clenched her small fists in her excitement.

"Come now," said Annie, "you must not stay up all night. In my sitting-room you will find some lemon biscuits, and some raspberry vinegar. Go help yourself, for I see you have had but one meal to day; and then go to bed."

"I'm going to stay with Annie the rest of the night; so you can have my room, and not disturb the family going to yours," said Vivra.

"Good-night, Cyril," said Annie, kissing him; "dear boy, I am glad you came home; you must thank God who gave you strength to run away from temptation, and ask him to help you."

Great was the astonishment of the family when Cyril next morning walked in to break-

fast. Estelle was almost well, and Mrs. Arnot, relieved of distress for her, was ready to faint with anxiety about her boys ; but Cyril's tale quieted some of her fears.

"This is a most surprising thing," said the squire, ill-pleased ; for he was ambitious for his sons at school. "I did not know you were so weak as to be overcome with a little wine — or to be afraid of it."

"I was afraid of being a drunkard," said Cyril, earnestly.

"Come, now," said "Uncle Doctor," "I disapprove entirely of Cyril's course in breaking rules, and having private suppers. But I think, as that came out, the best thing he could do was to hurry home out of the way of temptation."

"I suppose they'll expel me for running away," said Cyril, "and I'm very sorry, father." His voice choked, and he looked so truly miserable, that Squire Arnot half smiled.

"I'll see about it ; I'll see your teacher,"

said "Uncle Doctor." "I am going to-morrow to look after Henry; have meant to for a week past."

"There's no need to look after Henry," said Cyril, plaintively. "He won't do anything wrong like I do. Henry's religious. He took me to prayer-meeting the other night, and he got up and spoke, and he's going to write to you about it; and he talked to me just like a preacher. You needn't think Henry's going to act like me."

This news about Henry was a ray of sunshine in the general gloom. It spread a quiet happiness through the whole house. The squire *seemed* to be religious, and he wanted his children to be religious. Mrs. Arnot was a weak Christian, as she was a weak woman every way; but she coveted the best gifts for her family. Annie and "Uncle Doctor" rejoiced, as the angels do in heaven "over one sinner that repenteth."

"Uncle Doctor" had not been moved to go and look after Henry because he feared

he would misbehave. The doctor had more faith in his nephew's moral than in his physical strength. He found him well and happy, and highly esteemed, however, and having settled Cyril's affair at the grammar school, and arranged that the brothers should board together in the village, where Henry could exert a good influence over his junior, "Uncle Doctor" came home comforted, and Cyril was sent back to school.

VI.

"FILL YE UP THEN THE MEASURE OF YOUR
FATHERS."

"I HAVE only Mr. Wittles' advice to you," said Henry to his brother, as Cyril put his strap of books over his shoulder, and prepared to present himself at recitation in the grammar school, having learned all back lessons. "The word is *tee-total abstinence*, as Mr. W. musically puts it, 'and leaving off before you begin.' Don't stop one moment where wine or strong drink is placed before you—even if it is a party; the instant these poisons come in, you owe it to yourself to go out. Like Cassio, you have 'very poor and unhappy brains for drinking,' and 'I could wish well, courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.'"

"It seems now as if I never would touch another drop," said Cyril. "'Uncle Doctor's' last word, and he said it as if he meant it, was to quote from the Bible, 'Do not drink wine nor strong drink — lest ye die.'"

There is scarcely a boy's school where there is not some juvenile fiend ready to tempt the weakness of his companions, and delighting in nothing more than in seeing them yield to some sin that does so easily beset them. Is gaming the attractive vice, then this youthful emissary of the Evil One has a pack of cards forever in his jacket-pocket, and if strong drink is the lure, it is ready at his hand.

So resolved were one or two of the grammar-school boys to make Cyril drink again, and see if a flight home would be the result, that Cyril was forced to keep out of the way of his schoolmates, altogether to avoid them, and had scarcely any companions of his own age. This gave him more time for study, and some of Henry's friends at college

kindly allowed him to join them in the gymnasium, and at base ball on the campus ; so his health did not suffer from lack of exercise. Squire Arnot, coming with the girls, at the close of the term, to attend commencement and grammar-school examinations felt very proud of both his boys, seeing them at the head of their classes, and Cyril's "conduct" roll being creditable, with the exception of the unhappy wine party and flight.

On the road home the delighted squire gave each of his four young people a handsome watch and chain, and Mrs. Arnot celebrated their return with a grand family supper.

Much to Leonard's delight, when the river had got very low, and the Phoenix was preparing to lay up, they had a rainy week, and then a June flood ; and everything being thus prosperous, Leonard sent a telegram to his father to be ready with the boys, Estelle, and Vivra to go on board the Phoenix

when she came down the river, and have a pleasure excursion to Cincinnati.

Mrs. Arnot consulted "Uncle Doctor" as to the dangers of the way; would Estelle be likely to take cold from the night air; would the Phoenix be likely to blow up and Leonard run greater risk of being lost by having his friends to take care of; and was there any danger of the family getting the cholera in the city? "Uncle Doctor" thought it would do Estelle more good than harm to go, and had no apprehensions that the boat would blow up, had not heard of any cholera, and thought Mrs. Arnot had better give her children her blessing, and send them off to enjoy themselves.

"If Estelle were likely to dance herself into a heat, and go out on the guards, or sing till her throat were tired out and do the same, like so many girls one meets travelling —" began "Uncle Doctor."

"I hope my daughter and niece both respect their position too much to dance or

sing on a *boat*," began Mrs. Arnot, with great dignity.

"Very well, then, if they do, let them go, that's all," said "Uncle Doctor;" and having, as he designed, turned her mind from the dangers of the way to a vindication of the family standard of propriety, he went out to see his patients.

Cyril took his scruples about the party to Annie.

"They'll have whiskey and wine, and Leonard will offer it, you know; and I'm afraid I'll yield."

"Your father will not let Leonard insist very violently, and you will have Henry and Vivra to help you do what is right," said Annie. "You cannot expect always to keep out of the sight of liquors, neither do I advise you to run into temptation; but here seems to me opportunity to try your strength without too imminent danger of failing. But, Cyril, whatever help your friends may be, and however well it is to keep out of

sight of your enemy, there is for you one sure safeguard, — the grace of God. Have that, Cyril, and you are secure. God will not let his child fall away to the adversary. God will be strong in you to will and to do his good pleasure. If God shall open your eyes to the 'exceeding sinfulness of sin,' you will fear and hate it enough to fly to Christ as your only refuge, your only safety."

"Yes, Annie, I know it," said Cyril, meekly.

The squire and his party of four stood at last on the bank waiting for the Phœnix; Tom was behind them with the portmanteaus. Two bright faces were gone from them since they had waited years before for the boat to take them to Blennerhasset. Leonard, in his best looks and his best clothes, by all odds the finest-looking man on the Phœnix, welcomed his guests aboard. He proudly escorted his beautiful sister and cousin to their state-room, bidding the chambermaid look well to their comfort, and congratulating

himself upon the pleasant days in store for him. The river was broad and deep, the banks were in their June beauty, the moon was at its full, making night fairer than the day, and all things seemed to have conspired to produce happiness. Leonard himself was the first to bring discord. He had a separate table for his company, inviting to it one or two of the officers of the boat; he had furnished bouquets for this table, by the aid of the home gardener, and he had also furnished wines. Iced punch Leonard thought indispensable to June; and, not to seem illiberal, he had champagne and Madeira for those who chose them. Estelle had no objections to champagne in small quantities. Father and mother drank it, and though "Uncle Doctor" had said "Beware!" she was wont to sip the wine whenever a glass was offered her; she had been brought up to it. Henry, Cyril, and Vivra refused punch or wine. Leonard's brow clouded a little, and the squire felt half vexed that his children

should be "singular." "The doctor objects, so we won't press the matter," he said apologetically to Leonard.

"It's more than the doctor with Henry," said Leonard. "It is 'O thou invisible spirit of wine! if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee — Devil,' and 'O that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains!' — isn't it, Henry?"

"Yes," said Henry, good-naturedly. "I object to it morally, as well as *scientifically*, as Miss Tot would say;" and at the mention of Miss Tot, Leonard grew pleased, and laughed.

Leonard had a clerk or servant, and to him he left much of the business of selling in the bar, keeping a close watch on him; knowing that your bar-tender is not often your honest man, — the poison he sells seeming to destroy his moral sense. Leonard had found his bar all he had promised himself it would be, easy work and heavy pay. A more mischievous position than this Leonard could

not have chosen ; his genial manner, his capacity for constant drinking, and only getting jovial, and never drunk ; his father's wealth, and his own social position ashore, — made Leonard a fatal tempter to numbers of travelling youth, and indeed to many persons of more mature age. Leonard boasted that no boat's bar on the Ohio was so profitable as his, and that it would one day be worth, like many bars on the Mississippi, ten thousand a year.

Not yet thirty, Leonard looked nearly as old as his father, loved liquor much better than did the squire, had not a spark of pride, and was indeed, as "Uncle Doctor," in all sadness, said, a great, handsome animal ; his spiritual birthright flung away by his father's hand.

There were a number of young people on the boat, coming down from Pittsburg, and when supper was over the saloon was cleared for a dance. The boat's band, — composed of a bald-headed negro, who looked more like a fat Chinese than an African, and

who had nearly blown his eyes out of his head performing on a horn, a Yankee boy with a flute, and a German with a violin — took their places, and the merriment began.

"I suppose you won't dance, as it's on a boat?" said Leonard to Estelle and Vivra. "But you will excuse me to do my part. We officers have to make ourselves agreeable to keep up the reputation of the boat."

Estelle and Vivra watched the dance for a few moments, and then with Henry and Cyril went out on the guards. Their father was already there, smoking.

"Let us go up to the pilot-house," said Henry.

The river gleamed silver in the moonlight; dark shadows lay along the bank; here and there, high up, they could see the red and green headlights of some other steamer; and, lying low along the river, like a glow-worm, creeping south-west, the signal-fire of a coal-barge or a lumber raft. The

windows of the pilot-house were open, and as they stood outside they were close to the men at the wheel. Ever and anon, the air shook with the crash of music, the bursts of laughter, and the noise of the dance below.

"Confound that dancing!" cried the pilot, a gruff old fellow. "If there's any one thing I hate on a boat it is getting up a dance. I nearly lost my life by one once."

"How was that?" asked Henry.

"It was a darkish night, stormy and windy too, and we took on just such a set of wild heads as we've got below to-night, and a dance they must have. It was their last dance, and I believe many of them danced themselves into perdition. They kept up such a row, that I couldn't hear the whistle of another boat that came tearing down on us around a bend, in full force of the flood current, and all steam on in the bargain. I tell you we came together like a

couple of locomotives, and we crushed up like thin glass. It makes me shiver to think of that saloon full of dancers, and that bar full of drinkers, going under. There were twenty of us saved, mostly deck hands, and one or two of the men passengers, and the head clerk. Since then, dancing aboard boat gives me the horrors."

"I should think it would," said Henry.

"Then there's drinking. I hope you won't take offence, young people. I think Mr. Arnot's a tip-top fellow, and I wish he didn't keep a bar. I nearly lost my life from the bar once. A great many of the river captains are fond of their toddy. We were going down the river, and at six I went to my supper. It was light enough for people whose eyes weren't whiskey-fogged. Cap'n he comes up to take the wheel. I went to the table, and the waiter was just bringing me a cup of coffee, when dash it went over my face, for the cap'n was drunk enough to have run us aground, and

we sunk in seven minutes ; and thirteen lives lost that time, and the cap'n and the bar-keeper among them, poor fellows ! ”

“ Do you think there's any danger to-night ? ” asked Estelle, timidly.

“ Not a hair. I can see if I can't hear, and I can tell you, I don't put any whiskey in my mouth to interfere with my sense. The boat's a good one, and well-officered, and well managed ; nothing to complain of in her but the bar and Sunday travel ; if we'd quit those two leaks, the owners would haul in money, hand over hand. I often tell 'em so ; but they don't believe it.”

The girls went early to their room, but the dancers and then the piano were going until midnight, and, as beside the unaccustomed noise, Estelle was frightened by the pilot's narration of river tragedies, she scarcely slept until morning.

The girls rose early to go on deck. The twilight gray was just flushing into red, and long shafts of golden light leaping up the

east illuminated the tops of the trees, while the masses of hill and forest dwelt still in the night gloom, and far above, the sky, a changeful opal, showed first violet, then gold, and then the summer blue.

The dewy grass shimmered in the light, jubilant voices of the birds rung along the woods and fields, the smoke of newly lit fires curled from the houses on the bank, and gathered in to be milked and watered came the cows about the barns, while over the pastures strayed the sheep after their breakfasts.

What pity that so much beauty of earth is marred by so much vice! From these fresh, unsullied mornings, before man's iniquities jar discord to the tune, or are blots to the picture, we can give some guess of what will be millennial beauty when nothing shall offend.

There were both discord and blot this morning, for Estelle and Vivra, chancing to glance to the lower part of the boat, saw a

shabby man lying on a bale of goods, in a drunken sleep. His sleep was nearly ended,—so nearly that a waiter coming by and giving him a rude push, he sprang up fiercely, and, grasping him, began a fight which increased in noise, oaths, and blows.

Estelle and Vivra, albeit high above the confusion, started back in affright, and saw Cyril and Henry just behind them.

"Why, I thought that he was asleep and drunk!" cried Vivra, referring to the man.

"So he was; 'but it has pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath; one imperfectness shows us another, that we may frankly despise both,'" said Henry, who was apt in quoting Shakespeare.

"It seems so horrible," whispered Vivra to Cyril, as they walked up the boat, "that our Leonard should make his money by such a poor man's ruin and disgrace. Did you notice how clean his collar was, and how his coat was mended? I dare say he has a good wife, whose heart he is breaking."

Yes, unknown to Vivra as was this man's history, she had shrewdly guessed something near the truth. There was more that she never knew. Swearing amendment to his wife, he had taken all her small savings, and, with full intention of doing better, had started for a town where a friend had promised him work. Lured to drink by Leonard's clerk, he had spent the remains of his money; then in his fight with the waiter so destroyed his carefully mended garments, that he was ashamed to present himself at his new place, drank again, and, making a misstep when the Phoenix stopped at the next wharf-boat, was drawn under by the current, and came up no more. "Died of Leonard's whiskey," was this the eternal verdict? Who shall say? At least Leonard made sure of keeping the news from his brothers and the girls, saying he "did not wish to mar their pleasure," and feeling secretly afraid of reproachful eyes.

Late in the day the Phoenix stopped to take on sheep and cattle, always a work of time, as

these brutes have serious objections to river-voyages. Anticipating long delay, our young friends were much delighted to see lying near Miss Tot's flower-boat.

They at once decided to call upon her, and Leonard, ever alert to gratify, had a row-boat lowered from the Phœnix, and the four sent to make their visit.

"Here's a pleasure!" cried Miss Tot, beaming out of her little cabin more radiant than ever. "Yes, indeed, my dears, one and all. If you'll excuse me, Master Henry, I'm glad to know of your casting in your lot with the Lord's people, and considering to-day if ye will hear his voice, youth being in-deed the time to remember."

"What do you do with your boat, when you get ready to come home?" asked Henry.

"Sell it for lumber, and always have a good opportunity. Moreover, have to thank Mr. Leonard for his kindness in always giving me and Solomon a free ticket home in the Phœnix, and always treating me kindly."

"And where is Solomon?" asked Cyril. "I hope he hasn't run away again."

"No, Master Cyril; but sorry to say he has been run away with. A little jug of whiskey got on board somehow, and run off with Solomon to that extent that he is now sound asleep, and the jug emptied and broken by myself."

"I should think you'd get completely out of patience with him," said Estelle.

"Oh, no, indeed, my dear! Why should I?" cried Miss Tot. "Poor fellow! he hurts himself much more than me. Bless you, Miss Estelle, we must consider the way he has been brought up on it. Then he's all the kin I have, and my own nephew, and I had the naming of him; though as to the name I made a miss of it, as you all perceive. Solomon indeed! and to consider his upper story, it's weaker every day, and as soft as dough, and not likely to get harder, and he running to destruction as swift as an evening wolf after prey, as says the Scripture. Yes, my dear,

young friends," continued Miss Tot, in a hortatory style, "never drink liquors that intoxicate, no matter whether they do it or not for to some few they do not, and it always comes true, which Isaiah the prophet says, 'Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it;' and some *like* it bitter, as strong beer, but I should say it was a perverted taste. Now in all your lives this question will come up, — Will you have the jug, or will you not? I should say *not*, by all means."

When they were going back to the Phoenix Miss Tot sent Leonard a tea-rose and a geranium, each in full bloom, stipulating that they should stand before the "big looking-glass in the saloon." "For truly," she whispered to Vivra, "I couldn't find it in my conscience to ornament the bar."

There was no dance on board that evening, but much merry conversation in the upper part of the saloon, and more harmful amusement at the lower end; for gathered about the tables most distant from the ladies, were men

playing cards. Gaming for money was forbidden on the Phoenix; but the men played for drinks, and thus Leonard received all the profits. He cordially took a hand at each table, lost a bottle or two of wine, which was more than made up to him by the demands on his bar. It was little to Leonard that from this betting and buying some poor wretches went into Cincinnati penniless; that one man who had tried to reform and signed a pledge, and been sober six months, got drunk that night over his cards. No; Leonard cared for none of these things; whiskey-selling was hardening his heart, and he was used to these affairs, and on ran the Phoenix down the river, and hourly her score of iniquity was running up, and at midnight she reached her dock, and the stir of unloading began; but strong boat and well officered and safe as she was, the day was coming when her last load should never be taken off, and she should make her dock no more.

Squire Arnot and his children, except

Leonard, spent the Sabbath in the city, and went up the next trip of the Phoenix. They did this to avoid being on the homeward journey on the Sabbath. The squire would not have minded this Sunday desecration much, for he was accustomed to seeing boats running on the Sabbath; but Henry and Vivra had strong objections to infringing on the quiet of the Lord's Day, and Estelle and Cyril wanted a sojourn in the city; so they put up at the Burnett House, and got ready for a "good time."

If it had not been for Henry, it is possible that Cyril might have been led away to drink at the hotel bar, where many boys not older than himself were sipping wine or toddy, and at table a precocious youth of thirteen disgusted Vivra by daily calling for and drinking his bottle of wine at dinner.

But of all things Cyril dreaded a habit of drinking, and desired to flee from it. Armed with strong resolutions, aided by Henry, and more than all guarded by such invisible

legions of angels as Elisha's young men saw about the hill of Dothan, and called to the help of Cyril by Annie's and "Uncle Doctor's" prayers, he came unscathed and strengthened through these fires of temptation.

When once her treasures were at home again, that fearful and nervous mother, Mrs. Arnot, breathed more freely, smiled and was glad, and the days of the summer vacation slipped swiftly by, measured only by the bloom and fading of the summer flowers and the opening buds of autumn's gorgeous children.

Henry had a low pony carriage, in which he often took Estelle and Vivra to drive. The girls were chatting together in the light of an August sunset, sitting meanwhile on the stone brim of the fountain, when Henry called to them to get their hats and come for a ride.

Their road followed the river for a distance, then turned and wound among the hills, reft into hollows, swells, and gorges, —

footprints of some mighty sweeps of water long ago, but now all grass-grown, and tree-set; circling slowly, the road neared the river once more, and now Henry stopped.

Perched on one of these hills, among a mass of ancient fruit-trees, were three small cabins. They were brown and old, their roofs sunken and twisted, a serious misunderstanding having evidently taken place between the walls and the foundations,—the latter being some niches forward, in an evident attempt to get to the bottom of the hill, leaving the unhappy houses to their fate.

The doors of the cabins were of old style, divided across the middle; the windows were each of four small panes. At first sight one might call this a home of poverty, and perhaps of indolence or vice; but the manner in which the window-panes shone in the sunlight, the appearance of an excellent vegetable garden, with many fine borders of flowers, and a bench of well-scrubbed pails and pans, would refute this opinion. In fact, these hill-

side cabins were the abode of our friend Mr. Wittles.

"Let us go call on him," said Estelle.

"I don't see why, being a carpenter, he doesn't fit up his house better," remarked Vivra, as Henry tied the pony to the gatepost.

"Because," Henry made answer, "the place belongs to his father, and the old man cannot bear to have it altered. Mr. Wittles is very careful of the old man's feelings, and yields to all his whims."

"It always looks pretty up here," said Estelle; "the houses are like queer little birds' nests among the green."

So the young people were soon climbing the hill, and, being seen by Mr. Wittles, he came out to welcome them to his family mansion.

The severe countenance, wherewith Mr. Wittles superintended his workmen, was now decked in smiles; the radiance of his face seemed to illuminate his grizzly hair and whiskers, as moonlight tips the brush and

thorns of waste lands. He hopped down the path like a robin, and declared that "here was an uncommon honor."

"The old gent will be particular glad to see you. He's as brisk as a bee," said Mr. Wittles, conducting them to the house. "The old gent" was sitting close to the stove in an old-fashioned chair.

"Summer and winter I keep a fire for him," explained Mr. Wittles. "The old gent is troubled with a coldness in his bones. Ah! old gent, here are some ladies from the squire's come to see you. How do you do to-day?"

"I'm nicely, Sammy," said the old gent, bobbing his head in a particularly lively manner. "I'm nicely. Do you know anything about a treat, Sammy?"

"Yes, old gent, I know all about it; it's coming."

"Do you mean to give that young man any treat, Sammy?" asked Wittles, senior.

Now one might suppose Henry was in-

tended by the words young man; but the old gent had quite another person in view, as his son was aware.

"Think I'd better?" asked Mr. Wittles.

"No, Sammy," said the old gent with great earnestness. "No! the young man's been taking a horn. No treat for him, Sammy;" and Mr. Wittles, senior, chuckled to think of the young man's deprivation.

Mr. Wittles, junior, meanwhile, intent on his duties as host, politely showed his guests the beauties of his habitation and the surroundings. The flowers might be common flowers, but were dear to Mr. Wittles' heart as descendants of flowers which his mother had planted. "I keep the seed year in and out, and the roots too. It seems as if they are the very flowers she handled. Step-mother was a cousin of own mother, — nice woman, and took an interest; kept the flowers going, and respected my feelings. Yes, truly, those flowers seem to come to me fresh from mother's fingers every year," observed

Mr. Wittles, in whom the filial tie was beautifully strong.

"Sammy, do you know anything about a treat?" piped the thin voice of the old gent.

"It's coming," said Mr Wittles, as he pointed to where the river might be seen through a break in the hills; told the age of his paternal fruit-trees, and gave some anecdotes of his robins and wrens, and a learned cat-bird on terms of confidential friendship with the old gent, who had once splintered and mended its leg, which had unfortunately got broken.

"And the young man won't get any, Sammy?—on account of the horn, you know," persisted the old gent.

"No, not any," said Mr. Wittles, with patient kindness, as a mother replies to the pertinacity of a young child; and then he began to expatiate on the bees, who were boon-companions of his remarkable old gent, never feared him, never stung him, and on

the rare virtues of thyme, buckwheat, and mignonette planted by hives.

"Yes, Sammy, he took a horn. Ah, didn't I tell you so?" cried Mr. Wittles' old gent triumphantly, as a loud, harsh noise of discordant song came from the top of an apple-tree, and our young people recognized the untuneful throat of Miss Tot's "legacy" denouncing vengeance on —

"The fellow that looked," etc.

"Why, there is Miss Tot's Solomon," cried Vivra.

"Yes, miss," replied Mr. Wittles, his summer airs dying, and his mental thermometer falling below zero at the chilling thought of his incumbrances. "He's broke out again, and he's come to me. It looks like a special judgment on me. He tries me dreadfully, and I'm afraid he'll demoralize the old gent."

"That treat, you know, Sammy," began this ancient individual.

"If you'll excuse the liberty I'm taking,"

said Mr. Wittles to his visitors, with elaborate politeness, "I'll give the old gent his treat;" and Mr. Wittles made a large tumbler about one-fourth full of loaf sugar, filled up with fresh water, stirred it, and presented it with a spoon to his father, who, having thus obtained the chief object of his desire, lapsed into a paradise of sipping and tasting, muttering between whiles something about the young man who was to have no treat.

"When I tried to break him off liquor," remarked Mr. Wittles, "I knew I must do it square, and have no half-way work; but seeing he liked something to be tasting at evenings, I got up this treat, and he fairly delights in it. Yes, the old gent's been a sober man since I came home, and though he's a *little* childish now, when he was in his prime I tell you now, you couldn't have found a man better worth looking at."

The relics of Mr. Wittles' old gent's prime were of such inferior quality, that the visitors may be pardoned for not fully accepting his

son's statement. Here Solomon, perched in his airy height, and considering himself a true bird of song, began to shout:—

"Though I leave you now in sorrow!"

"Small sorrow to me," ejaculated Mr. Wittles; "and he's afraid to come down on account of my pump. I'll souse him well when I get him, and that will keep him quiet for a few days. Likely Cousin Tot will get home this week. I'm looking for her."

Henry, however, called Solomon; and, trusting to the protection of strangers, the "spectre" began to come down.

"Any more treat, Sammy?" questioned the old gent from his high-backed chair, having sipped all the sweet supply from his glass.

"No more to-night," said Mr. Wittles, pleasantly.

"Ha! I thought so! But there's to-morrow, Sammy."

"What a philosopher he is!" cried Mr. Wittles, admiringly.

Here Solomon entered, leering and chuckling, and being asked where his aunt was, sang his response:—

"Come, love, come! the boat lies low,
Floating on the waters of the O-hi-o-oo!"

and presently added the pious wish:—

"Swift may the tide flow, —
And light may the boat go, —
That Aunt Tot's in."

"I've got an idea about that young man," said Mr. Wittles, very deliberately; "he's cracked."

At this Wittles, senior, pricked up his ears, got up and walked all about the "legacy," eyeing him intently.

"Oh, no, Sammy," he cried huskily, "he aint *cracked*! he's as good as new!"

"That's so," said the musical Solomon, cordially.

"He's cracked," said Mr. Wittles, decid-

edly, — "cracked in his head, and whiskey did it."

Here Solomon broke out: —

"Blow, winds, blow, o'er the dark-blue sea,
And waft my Aunt Tot home to me!"

his voice breaking horribly on the last note.

"You're right, Sammy," said the old gent. "He *is* cracked, — he don't sound true;" and he went back to his chair well satisfied.

"Say, old one, why are you like mouldy cheese?" asked the modern Solomon.

"I aint," said Wittles, senior, not appreciating the conundrum.

"Yes, you are. Answer — 'cause you're Wittles kept so long you're spoiled. He! he! he! he! he!"

"If you'll excuse me—" cried Wittles, junior, in wrath, darting at Solomon to put him under the pump; but Solomon sprung away, and scrambled up a tree.

"We are going now. I hope he will not

trouble you," said Henry to the carpenter.

"I'd read him a mighty temperance lecture, if it would do any good. There's a plenty of texts on it. There he goes again." Solomon was singing "Roy's wife." "It aint true yet of him what Isaiah says, 'They shall not drink wine with a song.' There's many a good temperance volume; but the Bible's the best, and nobody need try to make out it aint temperance, for it *is*. Yes, the good book treats that subject werry plain."

"Treats, did you say, Sammy?" chirped the old gent; "any more treats to-night?"

"I hope you won't think me stingy with him," said Mr. Wittles, apologetically, as he accompanied the young people through his garden to their carriage; "but I know what his constitution will bear, and just how much he ought to have, and I'm quite intent on doing what is right by him, who was always a good father to me in his prime."

And under the shining stars Henry drove home in his carriage, thinking there might be some starry crown and exceeding great reward for the man who kept with loving heart the fifth commandment, and did honor to the hoary head of age.

VII.

"FOR THEY HAVE SOWN THE WIND, AND THEY
SHALL REAP THE WHIRLWIND."

THE boys were gone again. The autumn was passing. In the mellow October days it was pleasant to take the walk to church over rustling leaves, when the winds bore the fragrant breath of pine and cedar, and on the naked branches of beech and locust the red-bird whistled his farewell, and the aldermanic robins winked their black eyes and strutted with red swelling breasts, and promised to be no summer friends, but to tarry when the winter came.

Home from church Miss Tot was walking with Estelle, as once she had walked with Alice.

"It's a matter of curiosity," said Miss Tot, taking a sharp look that her "legacy" did not

escape either the bounds of Sunday propriety, or the public road, "what we'd do without Sundays. They're mile-stones on our road to heaven, shortening the way. Miss Annie says a deal of poetry about them, which, not being sharp at pomes, I can't remember; but if I didn't have fifty-two Sundays in a year to go to church, I don't know what I should do, that's all."

"How do you get time to go to church, when you're off with your boat?" asked Estelle.

"I *take* time, my dear. I tie up Saturday evening near a church, and to church I go. I set in some of the plants and lock the cabin door. To be sure the door aint strong, and there's flowers all about, and when I'm home there's the garden; but I can safely say I never lost anything by leaving it in the Lord's care while I went to worship at his house. 'He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.' The Lord kept all the coasts of Israël while the people went up to

his feasts, and so he keeps all my coasts, — or the boat and the garden, which is much the same thing, — while I go to feast my soul at church. Yes, my dear, the Hivites and the Hittites may rage and roam on other days, but on Sunday they're kept from working destruction."

"The Hivites and the Hittites?" questioned Estelle.

"Yes, my dear; by them I intend the rough boys, and the crows and chickens. For the boys I do sincerely wish they'd been brought up to fear the Lord and eschew evil; and as to the crows and chickens, the Lord created them for good purpose doubtless, though they're the hereditary enemies of flower-gardens, as whiskey is of human kind. I make no complaint of any of them; but, as I tell you, Sundays they *are* restrained."

"Suppose they shouldn't be," said Estelle, roguishly, "and you should get home and find all destroyed?"

Miss Tot almost turned pale at this supposition, but replied, firmly : —

"I find also, my dear, that all things work together for good to them that serve God, and I hope you find it so too. 'As for me,' said Joshua, 'I will serve the Lord.' He spoke for his house likewise; you, not yet having any, are called on to speak only for yourself. Give me thy heart, says the Lord; and, if once you give, you'll never repent, Miss Estelle, and you'll shine on more and more unto perfect day, the Lord giving you grace. I hope you'll think on these things, as the apostle says."

"I do think on them," said Estelle, and as she parted from Miss Tot, and went homewards, she thought still more.

The boys were home at Christmas, and the squire remarked that Henry looked thin, and warned him not to study too hard. "Uncle Doctor" proposed that he should remain at home a while; but Henry laughed at the idea, and said he was getting on far too well

to make any break in his studies. He meant to be class valedictorian.

In the spring Leonard had some business near the college, and he invited Vivra to go with him and visit the boys.

When Vivra came home she soon found an hour to steal alone to the room where "Uncle Doctor" was poring over the "musty volumes containing skeletons and fragments," which were Leonard's favorite abhorrence.

"Uncle Doctor," said Vivra, "I wish you'd go and see Henry; he's taken a bad cold, he says; he coughs just like Alice did, and he has just those bright eyes and red spots on his cheeks. 'Good, healthy color,' *he* calls it; but I know you would not say so."

"I'll go to-morrow," said "Uncle Doctor," putting away his skeletons, and taking out his note-book. "I've been looking for trouble with Henry this some time."

He looked at the note-book a few moments, and then at Vivra. Vivra, now nearly sixteen, was an image of health and vivacity;

her abundant, wavy hair brushed back from her healthful face; her eyes kindling with mirth, or growing at times wistful and tender; her ready smile displaying rows of hard, white teeth, such as if common to humanity would bring dentists to beggary; a figure well made and elastic, having none of that fatal, willowy grace common to American girls, — all this satisfied "Uncle Doctor's" eye and heart "scientifically," as Miss Tot would remark.

"You at least are free from the fate that hangs over your cousins," he said. "You have been much to us, Vivra; but I apprehend the days are coming when you will be much more. If you alone are left to solace childless hearts; if you become the only young and happy creature about this doomed and troubled house, your life will have seen much sorrow; but sorrow, well used, brings heavenly grace, and you can be a great boon to those who have lost all but you."

"Dear 'Uncle Doctor,'" said Vivra, bend-

ing forward to smooth the old man's furrowed face with her firm, well-shaped hand; "you must not look so much on the dark side of things. There will be Leonard, Estelle, Cyril, and I to fill the house; and I am sure you can cure Henry. God will hardly take him from a world where he can and will do so much good by living. The world needs young men like Henry, who are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

"The iniquities of the fathers upon the children," sighed "Uncle Doctor" to himself, through wakeful night-hours.

Next day "Uncle Doctor" went off "to look after Henry." Mrs. Arnot was visibly uneasy during the next three days; and at the end of that time her brother-in-law returned, bringing Henry with him, bag and baggage, an unwilling captive.

"O my dear son, I know you are sick," said his anxious mother, while his father shook his head, and looked wistfully into his face.

"No, I'm not, not at all," said Henry; "a

cold to be sure, but never felt better in my life; and what "Uncle Doctor" means by invading my sanctum, and bringing me home in this style, I don't know. I had a mind to refuse to come; but I know in this house "Uncle Doctor" is the power behind the throne, who must ultimately be obeyed; and so I came along. I hated to leave Cyril too."

"Cyril will do well enough," said the squire, grasping his son's arms. "You're thin, Henry; you're overworked; you need horseback riding for a while, instead of Greek; and I dare say you don't have good enough board there; you need some of mother's dinners to set you up. Don't look in a book again until the doctor gives permission."

That evening the squire and "Uncle Doctor" kept a vigil in the library. They were talking of Henry.

"I've been watching for symptoms like Alice's," said the doctor; "and as you thought

I did not seize time by the forelock then, I do so now. There is nothing very serious now, only premonitions."

"It's that boarding," said the squire, testily. "Henry was well enough at home. Boarding-houses cut down the fare so. Why, when I was there, if you'll believe it, they had nothing in the world on the table but mutton-chop, potatoes, and boiled rice; and topped off with an apple-pie. I won't be sure there were no pickles. Henry wants fowls and eggs, puddings and chocolate, custards and whipped creams, and sirloin roasts."

"I propose," said "Uncle Doctor," "to put him on a diet of salt beef and pork, hard biscuits and sea air; in other words I recommend a sea voyage; let him go before the mast, and work like a sailor, in a ship where he'll be well treated, and if he falls ill will be taken into the cabin and nursed as he ought to be. There's your wife's cousin is a ship captain, and I believe he is in port now. I saw something about him in the paper

lately. We had better take the boy to Boston and see him safely off, and he may come back tough as a pine knot."

"And he may never come back — and break all our hearts," said the squire, despondently.

"I think he'll come back, at all events," said the doctor.

"Well, you must talk to his mother, and to him, and I'll agree to whatever is best. I'll go South with him myself, or to Italy, or anywhere," said the squire.

"I'll run up to Pittsburg with him tomorrow in the Phœnix, and consult some of our best men, if such is your wish, and when we get to Boston we can take advice from the 'faculty' there," replied "Uncle Doctor."

The squire went up to bed about midnight; he met his wife in the hall in her night-dress and slippers, lamp in hand. She had been to Henry's room to see if he slept well, if he breathed easily, if he had night sweats, if he

coughed. Poor mother! hers was a burdened spirit.

There were many plans discussed in the family conclave, and with different physicians; but all ended in "Uncle Doctor's" recommendation being followed, and Henry was sent to sea, rather pleased with the idea of going, comfortably provided for, and accompanied with the love and prayers and hopes of all his friends.

The cloud which had lightened a little settled darkly over the house when Henry was gone.

Estelle took her trouble, and unburdened her heart to Annie, dear Annie, suffering ever, and comforting all.

"Henry made me promise that I would be a Christian," sobbed Estelle, "and O Annie, I will! He told me I must be a comfort to poor mother, and set a good example. He told me to mind 'Uncle Doctor,' and not use any wine, and to help Cyril be good and sober. I mean to, Annie! I do mean to; but

oh, if Henry never comes home —" Estelle could say no more.

"He will come home," said Annie, confidently. "I am sure the Lord will grant us that, — that mother should not have the double grief of having him die among strangers. And then, Estelle, he may come home quite well. "Uncle Doctor" hopes so, and the other physicians said it was almost certain."

Everybody longed for Cyril to come home to cheer them, and make the house less lonely; and the school-boy looked no less eagerly for vacation than did his friends. He was ready to enter college the next term; but felt very unhappy that his brother's safe-companionship was taken from him.

Vivra went with her uncle to be present at the examination. Mrs. Arnot could not leave Annie, and Estelle would not leave her mother, so Vivra was sent to keep the squire in good spirits.

There was to be a boat-race between clubs

of two rival schools on the afternoon preceding the closing school exercises. Cyril had been urged to take part in out-door exercises by his uncle, and was one of the oarsmen, the best, the boys said. Vivra and her uncle watched the pretty sight of the racing boats; gayly painted shells they were, with a crew of four, each dressed in gay uniforms of white and scarlet, with jaunty caps, and the crews bent vigorously to their oars, intent on doing their best before the watching crowds along the bank.

Vivra was not at the spot where the boats came in, but she expected Cyril's boat would win, and he return to his boarding-place flushed with the pleasures of victory. He came about dark, however, with heavy step and downcast face, and, bolting into her room, with sudden resolution dropped down on the floor before her, crying:—

“O Vivra, Vivra, I have failed again!”

“What! not won?” cried Vivra, amazed at his excitement.

"Oh, worse than that, worse than that, Vivra; hate me! I've been drinking. Yes, I'm a fool, and a beast, and not fit to live!"

"O Cyril, Cyril," said Vivra, bending over her cousin, who had been indeed the brother of the last six years, one with herself in age and sympathy, and as she spoke striving to look in the face hidden in the sofa-cushions, "can this be possible, dear boy? How were you tempted?"

"We got so hot and tired rowing, and our boat won, and everybody cheered us, and they brought us a pail of something to drink from the silver mug that was the prize, you know, and then it was, lemon punch! I drank at first without noticing what it was, I was so excited and so thirsty, and then — then I drank twice more when I *did* know; and, oh, I wish I was dead! What will Annie say? What will Henry say?"

"That it was wicked to wish you were dead, and that you must try and try again; for yielding will be fatal to you."

"I believe I was born to make a beast of myself," said Cyril.

"No, you were born to be a brave Christian man," said Vivra.

"This don't look much like it," groaned Cyril.

"This may be intended to show you how weak you are in your own resolutions, and make you look higher for help. Besides, you are not drunk, nor anything like it. You have transgressed a safe rule, and broken a pledge, by taking lemon punch; but it might have been worse."

"Yes, but you know what Henry repeats: 'Reputation, reputation, I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial.' O Vivra, I have lost all confidence in myself."

"I am glad to hear it," said Vivra. "It now remains for you to have confidence in God, and look to him to help you. Though you fall you shall arise, and see that your feet are set on a rock, so that you do not fall again."

This affair was talked over with Annie and "Uncle Doctor," who spoke to Cyril much as Vivra had done; but it was not discussed with the squire, who would have been unable to see anything in it beyond a very singular notion against taking a harmless drink, very suitable to hot and tired people, to prevent exposure to sudden changes, and which had not injured Cyril at all.

Temperance had no spiritual aspect to Squire Arnot. At home Vivra and Cyril went out much together for rides or walks; and the old time-pleasures of collecting bugs and butterflies, or queer objects, for their aquarium, were now more than ever in vogue, and with more intelligent appreciation of their specimens.

The two were walking through the village one day, when a tow-topped urchin ran up to them, holding fast to the over-large band of his ragged trousers, and giving it a hitch once in a while, when the depending tatters interfered with the freedom of his heels.

"Want a fossil, Mister Arnot?" cried this little chap.

"Yes," said Cyril, ready to put his hand in his pocket for a penny to reward the juvenile contributor to science.

"There it is!" cried the precocious child, whirling around, and pointing a small grimy finger up street, to where Mr. Wittles' old gent was creeping slowly along the sunny side of the road.

"For shame!" cried Vivra. "Don't you know it is wicked to mock the old?"

"All of 'em does it," replied the offender, jumping out of reach of the slap Cyril was prepared to give him. "See what's behind of him!" and he ran whooping down the street.

Old Mr. Wittles came slowly along with bent form and trembling steps. He had a stout cane, which was fastened by a ribbon to his wrist, as he was apt to drop it and could not stoop to pick it up. The old gent's hat and coat had been brushed till both were nap-

less, but both were objects of his special pride; for the hat had a broad crape band that had been put on at his first wife's funeral (and which he had worn at his second wedding), and the coat was ornamented with numerous brass buttons, which it was his delight to polish with his hand on Sabbath afternoons while his son Sammy read the Bible to him. It was not often that Mr. Wittles' old gent ventured so far from his own gate and his work among the flowers, for he was afraid of the village boys, imps of mischief, who delighted in teasing him.

The heat of an August afternoon, driving out some of the chronic "coldness in his bones," had tempted him to a walk, and already his coat-tail was decorated with a long streamer of newspaper, to which the tow-topped boy directed Cyril's notice, and which Cyril indignantly hurried forward to remove. Unconscious of the sport made of him, the old gent came on, his watery eyes winking at the ground, and a pleased, childish smile on

his withered face. Other eyes than Cyril's had flashed with indignation at disrespect to feebleness and age, and Mr. Wittles, junior, came scrambling down from the scaffolding where he was working at a house, and reached his father just as Cyril was unpinning the offensive paper, and Vivra was asking how he did.

"Thank you for your goodness to my old gent!" cried Mr. Wittles; "and I must say that I wouldn't mind if some of that same stock of bears, which took it in hand to punish those Jewish boys for disrespect of bald heads, were about these parts. It hurts me terribly to have my old gent made sport of, and if I could only find a marrying party to make the house cheerful to him, so he wouldn't pine to get out, I'd ask her in a minute!"

Mr. Wittles brushed his father's coat with his hand, and straightened his hat.

"I'll walk home with him," said Cyril.

"Not to trouble you —" began Mr. Wittles.

"It is no trouble. I had rather do it than not."

"Yes," said Mr. Wittles, with a spice of vanity, "many a marrying party is suited with *me*, but not with him. If one was suited to be agreeable to him, if there was anything that I could do for such a party, in nice furnishing, or clothes, or money, I'd take pleasure in doing it certain. It does look strange, miss, that, when Scripture bids us honor the face of old men, and says hoary hairs are a crown, and when length of days is promised as a reward of merit like, when an old gent gets well on to eighty, the boys must pull his cane, and pin papers on his coat-tail, and all the marrying parties have objections!"

Vivra laughed, and told Mr. Wittles she hoped he would find the right person yet; and then Cyril took the old gent home.

Miss Tot's summer journey was much shorter than usual. She sold her flowers and boat, and came home with her "legacy," in

August, doubtful if she should make another trip; for the idiocy "Uncle Doctor" had prophesied was fast settling upon Solomon. He was singularly altered in many respects. He loved liquor as well as ever, and while he did not think of seeking it, yet, if any wicked person offered it to him, he drank greedily. He obeyed exactly what he was told to do, but orders must be explicit; for instance, his aunt having given him an axe and a stick, and told him to chop, and forgetting to tell him when to stop, he continued the exercise for an hour, until the stick was reduced to almost infinitesimal fragments. He also took spells, as his aunt called them, when he would take a fixed position, and stand, even for hours, entirely motionless, and "utterly *disregardless* of sun, rain or cold," as Mr. Wittles' explained to the doctor. So now it was no unusual occurrence to see Solomon's lank figure, loose habiliments, and hatchet face set against the sky, in field or on hill-side, scarcely to be recognized from the farmers' scarecrows

about him, and quite as much despised by thieving birds. Many a panting, weary tramp did Miss Tot have after her luckless "legacy," to bring him safely home, lest, striking an attitude, he might stand out all night.

The tavern-keeper, besotted as most of his tribe, sometimes beguiled Solomon within his doors, and gave him liquor, "to see how much he could hold," he being of those who "drink and are not filled with drink," and able to swallow unlimited quantities.

"Oh," said Miss Tot one day, bewailing to Vivra; "his grandfather was a dunce, and his father was foolish enough, and foolisher was his mother to marry a man such as his father; and my poor Solomon's a fool, and I hope the Lord 'will not lay this sin to his charge.' And I am of those, Miss Vivra, who have looked for much, and it came to little; yes, my dear, I expected a parson, or a professor, or a judge, out of Solomon; and all has come to his turning into a scarecrow such as the crows make a mock at, and the robins stand

on his very head ; and if I could only turn him into a little baby again I'd be content to tend him all my life ; or if I could find some island all unknown, and fly away with my poor dear from tavern-keepers' temptations, and foolish boys' tormentings, I'd do it in a minute, my dear ; I would indeed ! ”

Coming events do not, outside of poetry and fancy, often cast their shadows before ; the greatest trials of life, our sorest afflictions, fall unheralded. Mighty storms break forth like tropic tempests from heaven, where but now all was clear ; and hearts have been paralyzed by a bolt dropping from a shining sky.

So sudden and so terrible was now the woe that broke upon the Arnot household, in the sunny calms of a late August afternoon, when peace seemed abroad on river and on shore ; when good news from Henry had diffused joy over the home ; when the mother smiled on her younger children, from eyes that were never to smile again, and for the last time the

squire read his paper, took his Jamaica, and shook back his unsilvered ebon locks from an unfurrowed brow.

The family mansion lay among its trees and flowers in the sunshine. In the highest room, Sybil, pacified for a time with flowers, made wreaths like a little child. Susan sewed, while Annie slept. Mrs. Arnot pursued her half-indolent netting, while Estelle, at her feet, read to her a poem of Longfellow's, and in the bow-window Cyril and Vivra bent over their aquarium, book in hand, comparing the living specimens with engraved plates, and trying to give each its appropriate name.

It was the afternoon for the Phoenix to go down, and Mrs. Arnot was sure Leonard would come off for his clothes. Alas, the Phoenix was even now very near! The summer air was rent with a mighty cry of horror and of pain, and how no one ever knew, but the next moment the family were all on the bank but those two doomed daughters and their attendants, and the servants crowded from

their work; for high into the air rose with that shriek of agony great dense clouds of smoke, and now the Phoenix dashed into sight, a mass of flame! The wind bore the thick smoke of burning oils from the lower deck into the pilot-house, where, instantly giddy, choked, and blind, the man at the wheel was striving to bring his boat ashore.

These steamboats, built of light, dry wood, covered thickly with paint, loaded with combustible materials, are like a mass of tinder; fire makes terrible headway on them. What is but now a handsome craft, full of business, of luxury and pleasure, going her route assured of safety, is in hardly more than a moment a seven-times-heated furnace, rife with death in its most horrible form. And now in such a drifting funeral pyre as this, where the whirling flames fed on oils and alcohol, and piles of tarry coal, and beams of resinous wood, the fated passengers and crew of the Phoenix strove to escape death, or dared it in less painful form, leaping wildly overboard, caught

by the flames, bewildered by the smoke, and drawn under the hull by the rushing waters.

Horrible to endure and horrible to see! and how was the agony of the hour augmented, when such fate overtook a son at the very door of his boyhood's home; when the wild shrieks of the mother were to be heard calling on her idol's name, as she stretched her hands to the burning terror where he must be!

High climbed the flames about the pilot-house. "Leonard! my son, my son!" screamed the mother, thinking she saw her child leap from the side of the burning boat; and with that cry she fell prone upon the ground, a long unconsciousness mercifully coming in the midst of pain.

Down even into the water rushed the squire, cutting loose his row-boats, which no hand could unfasten speedily enough. Neighbors and laborers had gathered, and the loud voice of the excited father called his son, and cried of coming help to the sufferers struggling in the water.

Just below the lawn the Phoenix was brought to shore, her hardy pilot blackened, scorched, and breathless, saving himself when duty was done, even a third time, from the jaws of death. Gaining the shallow water, or putting forth the swimmer's skill and strength, pale and exhausted survivors of the catastrophe came ashore. Brought in by the boats, by Cyril, and Mr. Wittles, who swam boldly out to help, and by uninjured boat-hands, who had saved themselves at the first moment of danger, were ten burned and wounded sufferers. With none of these came Leonard.

Vainly had the father, brother, and uncle gazed into each white, awe-struck, saved face ; And now a more woeful sight, — dead bodies were rescued from the water, and carried up the bank, and still the search went on along the river as night closed down, and still no Leonard's face was there. The charred hulk of the Phoenix smoked and smouldered at the bank, while over it, weird and uncanny in the moonlight, stood Miss Tot's Solomon, peer-

ing at wreck and loss like some awful ghoul preying on a disfigured corpse.

The squire's house was a hospital; the dining-room, the sitting-room, and library, the spare rooms, and even that apartment long sacred to memories of Alice, were filled with the doctor's patients; and once in the long misery of the night, damp with dew, his boots running with river water, lantern in hand, and a speechless agony in his eyes, the squire came home, crying: "He must be here; Leonard *must* be of those we brought in!" and went and looked upon every bed at every wounded stranger, and as he did so at "Uncle Doctor's" side, the stately head, unbowed by stroke of grief before, was whiter than "Uncle Doctor's" own.

Pale but calm, Estelle was her mother's nurse, watching the faint signs of a life that seemed nearly ended, and anxiously feeling now and then for the pulsations of that broken heart that still stirred languidly in that mother's bosom.

Unlikely as it might have seemed, Mr. Wittles and Miss Tot were the wisest of nurses to the injured ; some of those who had come off safe from the Phoenix were nursing others less fortunate than themselves, and the remainder were distributed among families at the village. No one could tell anything of Leonard. One man remembered seeing him rush from the bar into the saloon ; but that was all. Cyril was yet searching for his brother. Martha was giving aid to all. "Uncle Doctor" went from room to room. Sybil, rendered frantic by the fire and the confusion, was taxing all of Henrietta's powers. Susan found Vivra, who was busy everywhere. "O Miss Vivra, come back to Miss Annie. I'm sure she's going to die," she cried. Harder than ever had been Annie's lot in this most miserable hour, hearing all the outcry, unable to help, or even to know events as they passed. Annie, as in all her troubled years, had striven hard for patience, to be calm and make no trouble ; but the shock had been

too great, and all Susan's care and the attention "Uncle Doctor" had not failed to give his favorite, seemed vain to restore her.

"I shall stay here," said Vivra; "our Annie needs me most." Annie was no difficult patient; she took the composing draughts "Uncle Doctor" administered, and when the weeping Susan laid her back on her pillow, thanked her with a smile. "What shall I do for you, Annie?" asked Vivra.

"Pray for me," Annie whispered.

"Our minister is downstairs; shall I call him?"

"No; others need him more," said Annie.

Vivra clasped her arm over her cousin's neck and prayed. Susan knelt close by, crying softly.

"Vivra," whispered Annie, "comfort mother, — comfort her when we are all gone. I am going to sleep." She placed her little thin hand under her cheek, and presently the lids drooped over the tender blue eyes. While Susan slept, exhausted, and unknown to Vivra,

who, with ear bent down, listened for every sigh and stir, Annie's sleep grew deeper and deeper, — so deep at last that only the voice of the Resurrection Angel could invade its calm. When that stream, the terror of many, had grown so narrow that Annie had crossed it with a step, Vivra could not tell; she realized at last, in her intense watching, that her cousin had gone over to the sunrising side of Jordan, and amid the pain, the terror, and the suspense that ruled among them, so profound seemed Annie's peace, so great her salvation, that the tears stood in Vivra's eyes unshed as she went for "Uncle Doctor."

The squire's grand parlor was all the lonelier that day for its one inmate, — the slight form of Annie lying under the chilling whiteness and rigid folds of the linen drapery. From the wall laughed down a portrait of Annie, as a year-old babe, — a picture full of promise; but a curse had crossed the promise, and long pain and early death had been Annie's history.

At twilight Annie was no more alone ; they carried in the stalwart figure of Leonard, rescued from the river, and placed it by his sister's side. There they lay, eldest son and daughter of the afflicted house ; the mother, who with heart full of love and blessing had bent over their infant cradles to watch the beautiful slumber of childhood, was now unconscious of her double loss ; but while the mother's tears were yet to come, the father's heart and hope were crushed already. Often the parlor door swung silently open, and the squire, bowed and gray and aged already by sorrow, came in to look again upon his eldest children. He came alone, but when he came that brother-heart, that lifelong had joyed in his joy, and wept with his sorrow, followed him unseen, and "Uncle Doctor," fearing many things, hung watching him beyond the open door.

A long and slow procession wound out of the double gate, and took the roadway from the squire's to the riverside cemetery. Alice

was no more to lie alone; they brought quiet company for her silent sleep.

The squire was not in the family carriage. "Uncle Doctor," Estelle, Cyril, and Vivra occupied it, for Mrs. Arnot was so near to death that her husband could not leave her side. To the white stone bearing the name of the departed Alice must be added others, inscribed with the names of Leonard and Annie.

There are few but know that desolate gloom coming to a house that seems all empty, because one well beloved has gone; this home was now doubly desolate when the room of Annie was vacant, and when Leonard's step would no more ring along the walks, nor his jolly voice echo through the halls. Estelle threw off her wrappings, and went to comfort her father, and resume her watch at her mother's side. Cyril threw himself, weeping, on a lounge in the sitting-room, while Vivra, seated beside him, strove to comfort him in this heart-grief as long ago she

had sympathized in childish troubles of broken toys and stormy holidays.

"Uncle Doctor" visited his patients, — one or two sufferers from the Phoenix disaster being yet in the house, — and then where went he?

He went to the dining-room, and opened a narrow closet in the wall. The house was very still; some of the servants were acting as nurses, and others were sleeping after the extreme fatigue of several days past. Tom and the gardener had already gone to the cemetery to see that the new-made graves were decently smoothed and finished, and to plant myrtle over them as over Alice, that the spring might call out in its beauty the dear blue flower of hope and love above their dust.

The doctor opened the closet door; on a shelf stood punch bowl and ladle, decanters, goblets, wine-glasses, kept bright and shining all, by Tom's zealous care.

On the floor beneath the shelf was a stone jug. The doctor drew it forward a little to the light of day; here was the demon of the

family, — here the evil genius, — here the curse! What had it wrought!

But for it, this dreary day had never come; those seven sons and daughters might yet have made glad their father's heart, and, as "Uncle Doctor" sadly thought, a troop of rosy grandchildren, happy sprites, might have filled the place with glee instead of the ghosts of buried joys that now spread about gloom and tears.

But for this demon, potent though shut in stone, Leonard had now been a good and busy man; it was this that had wasted his life and thrown him in the way of early death; this judgment of the father and the son! But for this, Annie had been well and living still, her mother's friend and comfort; but for this, poor Sybil had not watched her sister's bier with eyes that gathered no meaning from the sight; but for this, Alice had not faded away in that consumption, that most frequent judgment upon the children of those who follow after strong drink. Come of a

healthy stock on both sides, Alice, Henry, and Estelle were poisoned with a taint which, if hereditary, is most deeply deplored. The demon had sown in them seeds of early death, as madness had been Sybil's portion.

Yes, men and women, who love the wine when it is red and giveth color in the cup, by this fatal taste you build your children's tombs. You may stand well before your fellow-men, and dwell in wealth and honor, but He who is strict to mark iniquity sends down to the third and fourth generation the curse of nature's broken law.

VIII.

“WHAT WILL YE DO IN THE SOLEMN DAY?”

THE home was so lonely now that it did not seem possible to let Cyril go away that winter. A tutor was brought into the family to keep up the same studies he would have pursued in college, and also to superintend the lessons of Vivra and Estelle.

The news of their great loss had not been sent to Henry, the doctor fearing the effect it might have on his health, and daring to risk nothing during this absence from his family. Henry wrote cheerfully, saying that he was better, and telling tales of sea adventure and of many lands. During the winter he was cautiously informed of Annie's death, as for that he had long been prepared by her increasing feebleness.

November winds were blowing keenly,

when, wrapped in great-coat and shawls, "Uncle Doctor" came in from a long ride and visit to a patient. The fire burned cheerfully in the grate; the young people were at their studies in the library, and Mrs. Arnot was not yet able to leave her room. Tom had placed the squire's arm-chair before the fire, brought wrapper, slippers, and newspaper for his after-dinner reading, and had, according to the only custom he had known in the house, placed at his master's elbow a little stand, with a decanter half full, and a glass, beside his open cigar-case. Having thus fulfilled all his duties, Tom had retired to the pantry to wash the silver, and "Uncle Doctor" found his brother alone.

"Uncle Doctor" stood on the rug and began to undo his wrappings; he looked at the squire.

"Doctors sometimes make prohibitions as well as give prescriptions; I must prohibit this after-dinner glass of yours. It will put a sudden end to your life before its time."

"I sometimes think I've lived long enough ; length of days is length of sorrow," said the squire, moodily, taking a defiant taste of his liquor.

"No man has lived long enough until his appointed time comes ; no man has a right, directly or indirectly, to shorten his life. Besides all that, the diseases of the stomach consequent upon drinking are of a slow and painful nature. I would not see you suffer physically. How many times in these thirty years have I begged you to do away with this habit?"

"And in all these years your prophecies of consequent disease have not been fulfilled. I must infer that the disease is a myth. When I see its symptoms I will give up what thus far has seemed only to conduce to health and comfort."

"Symptoms !" cried "Uncle Doctor."
"Well, here is one. Your appetite is very irregular lately."

"Not from the Jamaica ; that is all that

keeps it up; broken hearts, brother, breed poor appetites."

"Uncle Doctor" sighed, and began folding up a long plaid scarf, making no reply.

"And the broken heart, you will lay to my charge too, I suppose," said the squire, testily, for he had grown strangely peevish lately; "bringing a curse on my house, as you call it."

It was long since the doctor had mentioned the curse; family woes had grown too heavy for him to make reflections on one who bore so great a share in them.

"Yes," said the squire, "I know how it is. Annie was hurt by her fall, and that you lay to me, because I exposed the nurse to temptation, keeping liquor in the house. I say the fall was an accident, — such as many people's children meet with. Then you say Sybil got astray, because she had no mental ballast, — the brain tissue injured by *my* taking Jamaica and Bourbon! I don't believe a word of it; it's nonsense. I *won't* believe it.

You set up for a new light ; your assertions are just new-fangled theories ; if these things had been so, it would have been found out long ago."

Now, if there was one thing dear "Uncle Doctor" could not endure, it was to have a medical fact called nonsense, or scientific truths challenged. He had given his coat and scarf to Susan, and drew up a chair before the grate. Susan brought him a cup of tea after his cold ride, and he sat sipping it ; he must make reply, and could defend his cherished profession without wounding his unhappy brother.

"The world is waking up to the truth," he said, calmly. "The science of medicine is very slowly unfolded. We human beings, last of God's creation, are such wonders of his skill, that it takes us very long to know ourselves ; but this especial knowledge is not quite as new as you suppose, and I am not its only possessor."

"How absurd !" cried the squire, secretly

irritated against himself, and ready to vent that irritation even on the man who had been lifelong his truest friend. "If I take strychnine it will kill me; it would not leave me unharmed, and pass over to vent itself on my child, or my grand-child."

"That's a different thing," said "Uncle Doctor." "Strychnine is a swift poison, which will not remain in the system; it does its work and goes its way. Sun-stroke may kill a man or not, but cannot be an inherited disorder. Cancer and scrofula, on the contrary, are diseases that may sleep in the blood for years; lie dormant even a whole generation, and then break forth. So the poison of liquor, distilled, or fermented even, is a poison that can remain in the blood, changing the constitution of the brain and the composition of the blood, itself a leaven of poison leavening the whole lump."

"There's Leonard," pursued the squire, almost a monomaniac over his misfortunes;

"how am I to blame for him? He chose a business,— as every man must, — not exactly the one I desired for him; but every one loved and admired him, and he was not the only one who was lost on the Phoenix."

"Come, brother," said the doctor, "you must not dwell on these things. "You loved your children, and few fathers have taken more pains to make their families well and happy—as far as you know how. Your children have all loved you devotedly; you must think of that, and of how bright you made their lives while they were with you."

"Yes," burst out the squire; "to my children I could give wealth, and home, and education, and position, and they are taken from me; while every clodhopper and ditch-digger has his cabin swarming with healthy little wretches, no good to themselves or any one else. It is unjust; it is dark and mysterious that such a fatality should pursue children as bright, and good, and beautiful as mine. These inscrutable providences, as

some people call my family misfortunes, are a tangled web to me."

"Sin not, nor charge God foolishly," said "Uncle Doctor," gravely. "'Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and he shall lift you up.' Do not talk of fatalities and inscrutable providences, as if all these trials that have come upon us are the Lord's fault. Be still, and know that he is God, and a good God, who is ready to comfort the sorrowing. Come, the day is cold, but a walk over these breezy hills will do you more good than to sit by the fire. There's a pair of oxen, over at Turner's, that beat yours; come over and see them; maybe you can buy."

The squire took less interest now than formerly in prize oxen and sheep; however, he put down his paper and prepared to go with his brother; more to get away from his own company than for any other reason.

As he was getting on his boots, the doctor meditated. The squire was too obstinate,

to refuse liquor when it was offered him, but perchance he was enough impressed by his brother's arguments not to *ask* for it. That evening "Uncle Doctor" gave Tom a private admonition not to produce the after-dinner tippie, unless it was especially ordered by his master.

Spring came at last ; the winter had seemed long, but the longest winters pass away day by day. Now, again, the hyacinths unfolded long, curled spires of bloom ; then the primrose shook out pink petals to the wooing winds ; the crocus waved its golden bell, and the snow-drop held dew in its heart until the sun was high ; again the beetles scrambled through the grass ; the bees, heavily freighted, swung to their hives ; and birds that the lost ones had loved built their nests about the Arnot homestead. When the gladiolus pierced the earth to send up blood-dripping swords, and when the royal lilies began to unfold, Mrs. Arnot walked slowly up and down her garden again with Vivra and Estelle, a gray and

sorrowful woman; yet with something in her heart fuller and richer than had been there before; for going so near to death, she had learned of a higher life, and the baptism of sorrow had been followed by the unspeakable baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Grief had made Squire Arnot petulant and moody. Perhaps this was not the work of grief alone, though unsanctified sorrow bears bitter fruit; for already the once rich and vigorous nature of the squire may have been jarred to physical discords, to be true no more.

People said, "the squire was greatly changed; and no wonder, he had had so many troubles, poor man!" The change was not less moral than physical. He did not remit attendance at church, nor his usual benevolence; outward proprieties were, as ever, regarded, but his words to his fellow-men were less genial and hearty; prayer, praise, and exhortation in the house of God kindled no light in his eye; he was utterly irresponsive. There were days

when the inner bitterness so welled up that "Uncle Doctor" thought him ready, like Job's wife, to curse God and die. To none was this change more apparent than to the pastor, who had been for years his faithful friend.

The pastor was visiting the squire one day. A plan for remodelling the church was under discussion. The squire was listless and ill at ease; he rang his bell impatiently, and Tom's shining face was presently at the door. "Bring me a glass of that French brandy, Tom!" he said, and as Tom disappeared, added, "I'll see if that will brighten me up. I feel utterly stupid!"

"Let us discuss something else, then," said the pastor, rolling up the architect's plan, "and do not trouble yourself with this to-day, and, dear friend, do not take that brandy."

Tom brought the desired glass on a server, put it beside the squire, and departed. There was an odor of brandy about Tom, which would suggest that he had helped himself to the French distillation before he helped his

master. It is true Tom belonged to Mr. Wittles' temperance society, and had received many lectures on "tee-total abstinence;" but the temptations of his daily life were stronger with Tom than Mr. Wittles' exhortations. When Tom had left the library, the squire took the little server in one hand, and with the other began idly turning about the glass of bright-hued liquid, holding it between himself and the sunlight, which fell through the bay-window.

"You share my brother's prejudices," he remarked.

"The doctor attacks this practice," replied the pastor, "on the medical ground; he looks at it in the light of science. Now of that I know little, except what I have received from him, and of course we are aware that his opinion holds high authority in his profession. The few observations I have made on the effects of these strong liquors sustain whatever theories he has advanced; but when I speak to you on this point, it must be out of

a full heart, anxious for your temporal and spiritual welfare, and I must plead the moral reasons for abandoning, even now, what I know to have been the habit of your life."

"The old story, I suppose," said the squire, "of setting a bad example. Now if everybody followed my example, and went no further than I, there would be no bar-rooms, no grogeries, no drunkards."

"As to that last point," said his friend, "let me differ with you. That very glass of brandy you have in your hand would make some men thoroughly drunk; by taking it you lead men astray who were born without that physical and mental strength you possess. There's Tom, for instance; may not the boy go out of your service a ruined fellow?"

And here, though the pastor spoke at a venture, he was very near the truth, for the day seemed imminent when Tom's increasing fondness for liquor should cause him to be expelled from Mr. Wittles' temperance society, and the squire's family.

"As I have often told you," said the squire, "I cannot see why, for Tom's sake, or any other man's sake, I must deny myself what is useful and agreeable to me as my meat and drink."

"To men of this world the demand might seem exorbitant," was the reply; "but, dear friend, *you* claim a higher principle; you are a member of Christ's church on earth, and need I tell you that to give up even lawful meat and drink for another's good is no extravagant sacrifice to one for whom Christ died? 'The kingdom of God is *not* meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.'"

"Well," said the squire, slowly drinking his brandy and setting down the empty glass. "Time was when this was merely a matter of taste; it was a simple refreshment, an innocent gratification of what was to me a natural appetite. But *now* it is a necessity. I am a broken man; terrible nervous shocks; the great troubles through which I have passed

have shaken my natural strength. I *need* now the tonic, the exhilarant, I find in these drinks ; my hand trembles, my head is dull, my digestion is impaired ; I need these things, and, Tom or no Tom, I must have them."

"And does the doctor consider them a necessity to you?"

"No, the doctor's got a hobby, and he rides it to death ; he will not believe there's any virtue in liquor ; and there he's dead against one-half his profession."

"And, as I have heard you say, he is almost at the head of his profession in this country."

"Certainly ; I say nothing against his skill, neither against his heart, for he's true as steel ; but I must know my own feelings and needs better than he does. I'm a law unto myself physically, as the Scripture tells me I am morally. 'To the pure all things are pure.' I drink in faith, my conscience approving."

The squire was enlivened by his French brandy ; he had lost the dulness from his head ; he felt warmer and brighter, and he

wheeled about his chair with a little laugh, and spread out the church plan on the table.

"All things indeed are pure," said the pastor, gravely, going for his answer to the word of God; "but it is evil for that man that eateth with offence. 'Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.'"

Now the squire, in moments of sober reflection, did condemn himself; he could not but feel that there was truth in "Uncle Doctor's" words, and that he had himself been traitorous to the profession of religion which he had made, and had brought leanness into his own soul. But the squire was a proud man, and an obstinate one; he would not confess himself at fault, nor give up his darling vice. To his pastor's last words he gave no answer but a slight shrug, and began some calculations on the plan which lay before him.

His friend thought the present question one of great moment; he believed eternal interests

hung upon it ; he must, at any risk, do his whole duty to this parishioner, whom he both loved and respected and pitied. He laid his hand on his arm. "Squire Arnot, perhaps on this very point God has been holding a controversy with you all these years. You are not doing your best for yourself or your neighbor ; you are falling short of your own highest mark. 'Who art thou that contendest with the Almighty?' 'Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace.'"

"Let this subject be at rest," said the squire, bluntly. "If all that has passed in my family results from my habit, it is now too late to retrieve ; the deed is done, — why say more about it? I don't believe it, never will, and have made up my mind for myself."

After this no one ever mentioned the subject of drinking to the squire again. He noticed Tom's negligence about the after-dinner potation, and bade him bring the Jamaica without fail. He took his swallow of brandy before breakfast in the dining-room,

occupying the time and place which ought to have been devoted to family worship; and thus braving everybody's opinion and silencing his own conscience, Squire Arnot dared his fate.

In this pleasant spring-time weather, with lessons to occupy them part of each day, and out-of-door exercises and recreations to fill up the remaining hours, blessed with the natural buoyancy of youth, and happy in each other's society, Estelle, Cyril, and Vivra threw off much of the sadness that had made the fall and winter days seem so tardy in their flight, and once more cheerful words and ripples of laughter broke the long stillness of the Arnot home. This returning liveliness was much encouraged by the elders of the family; it was natural and healthful, and new saddles and riding-habits were bought, a new pony carriage came from the city, and excursions were organized, while riding and rowing were much approved.

Estelle and Vivra were busy in the honey-

suckle-covered summer-house; they had some wire baskets, and two great shells hung on cords, and in these they were putting moss and trailing vines, thereafter to hang them on the front veranda. Mr. Wittles had been sent for to repair the pump platform. Miss Tot's Solomon had followed the carpenter, who had, in consideration of his unfortunate condition, become more tolerant of his society than formerly. Solomon, however, associated the pump with the cold-water treatment he had received at various times from Mr. Wittles, and not venturing too near the fatal spot, hovered about the fence, where he suddenly became transfixed, with his eyes on the top of the chimney, and there remained. Mr. Wittles looked unusually cheerful; his face was smiling, his eyes twinkled, he hummed a stave of "old hundred," and even whistled a few bars as he sawed three planks and drove in a sufficiency of nails.

"Mr. Wittles!" called Estelle; "when you are done there I wish you would come and

put a nail in this seat; and part of the lattice here is loose."

Mr. Wittles presently came to the summer-house and began to nail up the lattice. "I'm glad to see you so well and cheerful, young ladies," he said; "and I'm feeling uncommon cheerful myself."

"That is pleasant, certainly," said Vivra. "I suppose your father is well."

"Chipper, chipper," said Mr. Wittles, stooping to shake the seat that needed a nail, "and well provided for now, I hope. Maybe you'd like to hear that I've found a marrying party who has no objections, and I'm to be married. Cousin Tot says 'Better late than never,' and she's most generally right."

"We are glad to hear it," said the girls, referring to the projected marriage, and not to Miss Tot's accuracy.

"Perhaps," said Mr. Wittles, correcting the crookedness of the seat, and remarking that he had better put in a new sill to the door

while he was about it, "perhaps you'd like to hear how it came about."

Of course the girls were quite delighted to be informed of the process of Mr. Wittles' courtship, and they replied to this effect, Vivra's large eyes gleaming with fun, as she set a root of "Wandering Jew" in one of the shells.

"You'll remember, miss," said Mr. Wittles to Vivra, "the day Master Cyril was so kind as to take home my old gent, meeting him pestered by boys in the street. The old gent *will* have his walk now and then, and about a fortnight ago he came out, and I was roofing the school-house, and saw him going slow-like along the opposite side of the street. Now just across from the school-house a very tidy young woman sat sewing by a window, and I'll not deny that I'd been thinking, as I drove on shingles, what a nice marrying party she'd be, only that I was discouraged with so many objections to my old gent. Right before her window the string to his

cane broke; providentially, I suppose, for it never did before,—though Cousin Tôt says strings must break some time, and that was old; he couldn't go a step without it, and he couldn't pick it up, and I was making haste to come down, when out comes my young woman,—not *my* young woman then, of course,—and she picks up the cane, and puts it in his hand. The old gent bobbed a little bow to her, and not so handy as in his prime, and, his hat loose from less hair on his head, off rolls the hat, and the wind blows it over the road. Now, miss, she ran for the hat, not knowing, with the objections ever in my mind, I was watching from behind the school-h'us chimbly, and she brushed it clean with her kercher, and put it on his head, and then down went his cane again. Then she saw that a string was wanting. She brought him inside the door, and gave him a chair; then she gave him a glass of milk—and how I blessed her behind the chimbly! It wasn't beer, nor oider, nor such trash; and lastly,

she ties a new string on his cane and sends him off rejoicing. I put on my best suit, when the old gent got to bed, and I went to thank her for her goodness; and she looked a sight better nigh at hand than from behind the chimbley, though Cousin Tot does say 'Distance lends enchantment.'

Mr. Wittles had got the door-sill measured and marked out, and the old one removed, but delayed, still bent at the door, to nail on the new sill until his tale was told. "Not to be too long, I took her a bunch of posies,—mother's posies,—next day, and next time I went I asked her if she had objections; and if you'll believe it, young ladies, she hadn't to me nor to the old gent, nor to the house, so long as the old gent don't want it altered, and the day's set for two weeks; and if that young woman don't have a power of pretty hats and new dresses, or anything else she puts her eye on, it will be queer, that's all I've got to say."

Mr. Wittles began to hammer vigorously

at the new door-sill, and the girls, thanking him for his confidence, carried their baskets to the veranda. As soon as they were out of the carpenter's sight, they rushed to find Mrs. Arnot, and tell her the story. Mrs. Arnot had forgotten how to smile, even at the mirth of these two good and happy young creatures; but she listened with interest to the tale, and readily agreed to Estelle's proposition, that herself and Vivra, under the cook's direction, — this cook was not the one who burned Leonard's birthday turkey; that unfortunate had already died, like Mary Burgess, in the county poor-house, — should make a wedding-cake of grand size and magnificent decoration to grace the marriage of Mr. Wittles and the young woman who had no objections. Mrs. Arnot increased the girls' delight by advising them to search the village for a neat dinner-set to present with the cake.

In September Cyril entered college as sophomore, and the tutor disappeared from Squire Arnot's. Before this, however, the

young woman had married Mr. Wittles; the wedding-cake had been eaten, and was quite a triumph for the young bakers, and a French governess came in the tutor's place to superintend Estelle's education; while the squire declared it his duty to send Vivra away to school. Estelle did not want to leave home, and, moreover, "Uncle Doctor" did not think it safe for her to be away from his care; but Vivra, happy girl! having no hereditary doom pursuing her, went to school soon after Cyril left home, and pursued her beloved studies with all her might.

In these months passed at home, and with maturing Christian character, "Uncle Doctor" believed Cyril had gotten the victory over his inclination for strong drink.

The lad was strolling about the lawn with his uncle the evening before he went to college, and the doctor was giving him much good advice about exercise, food, sleep, recreation, and study. "Like J. B. Taylor, make the service of God your first business; the

care of your body your next, and let advancement in your studies come third in your esteem."

"And how is it about my besetting sin?" asked Cyril, with a half smile on his face as he thought of many queer remarks delivered *ex cathedra* by Miss Tot, in his younger days.

"God will be strong in you 'to will and to do of his good pleasure.' He freely offers his grace to every man, and no man need perish of inherited tendencies to evil; for all can get the grace of God to withstand, and, 'having done all, to stand.'"

The devil spreads full many nets in colleges; every young man who is receiving an education is getting armed for the service of God or of Satan. Guardian angels and assaulting powers of the air watch, we doubt not, our college youth, who must perforce be strong for good or evil.

Cyril found in college many who had also been his classmates in the grammar school.

Among them were wicked youths, going astray themselves, and who earnestly desired to see others fall. These knew that Cyril had, and feared, a love of intoxicating drink; that he waged sharp warfare often whether he would be appetite's slave or master; whether indeed he would have the jug or not. His father, we see, had decided for the jug; and undeniably this increased the likelihood that the son would choose the same. So he would indubitably have chosen, had not in him a new and masterly element been introduced, even the grace of God, which is able to defeat the wiles of the Evil One.

But all of the college youth were not tempters; some—and many of these had been Henry's friends—were children of the light, who followed after holiness, who went to the house of God in company; and these were ready to strengthen their young brother in the holy faith, and encourage him not to fall away into any snare or wile of temptation.

Tempted, discouraged, self-distrustful, but strengthened from earth and heaven, and becoming daily stronger from enduring temptation, our young sophomore pursued his way, leading a brighter and more natural life, thus removed from the shadows of his haunted home, and set among companions of his own age; having indeed all the sophomore pride, that despises the freshmen, takes liberties with the juniors, cordially envies the seniors, and, standing just within the gate of the Temple of Knowledge, believes the whole edifice has been explored, and, pluming itself like a pigeon in the sun, to the secret pleasure of lookers-on, supposes itself an eagle ready to take flight into the remotest depth of the skies. O proud and happy days! limited to three hundred and sixty-five, which must speedily slip from the chain of time, and the sophomore become a junior, and believing less of himself, because he has learned more of something else, devotes all his hours, let us hope, to humility and hard

study, his last chance of making something of himself, before the magnificence of the senior year converts him into the pompous censor of others, and entirely devotes him to flaunting his honors before inferior eyes!

Seas rolled between these two brothers, Cyril and Henry,—the elder now wandering in the "Flowery Kingdom" beyond the Pacific, and the other busy within college walls, sending their greetings to each other across the dashing waters, and hoping yet to stand shoulder to shoulder in work in the world.

We feel lonely when we think of that winter in the Arnot home, that had once been so full of stir, of happy confusion, and of children. The family reduced to four, the squire and his wife, Estelle and the governess, if we except the servants, and Sybil, who could no more form a part of the household band. But the time had come for the great upper room to be empty. It was a cold, hard winter; and at its coldest the

snows were removed, and the frozen earth broken to make another grave at the cemetery, for a fierce fever had burned poor Sybil's blighted life away, and she who for these years had known no rest went to her rest at last. As Sybil lay in the heavy sleep that was to end in death, it was a comfort to her stricken mother to pillow her head, as in childhood, on her bosom, to count her slow, quiet breaths, and to think of that last entry in her poor child's diary as her one gleam of hope concerning her.

Spring bloomed over the world again, fair and sweet as earth's first days in Eden, or that long spring that shall break above the first resurrection from the dead,—spring, a season as far as may be removed from heat, and chill, and tempest, God's pledge of the resurrection and the life to come.

"Uncle Doctor" had a tender interest in that plot of ground where four that he loved so well were lying. He went there in the spring, on an afternoon when the gardener



"UNCLE DOCTOR" AT ANNIE'S TOMB.

p. 277.

had been at work, clipping box-borders, rooting up unsightly weeds, training out the myrtle-runners, and loosing the soil about rare white flowers that shed their fragrance over the early called. No one was at the cemetery, and "Uncle Doctor" sat down on one of the marble blocks that marked the corner of the lot, removing his hat, as, from tender old romance about them, he always removed it in the presence of graves. As he sat there, a step drew near, — a reverent step. He looked up; it was Miss Tot, come with a wreath to lay on Annie's tomb. Miss Tot stood and looked until tears overflowed from her eyes. "To think of all this," she said, turning to the doctor, "from one mistake!"

"From one *sin* rather," said "Uncle Doctor." "'Some men's sins are open going beforehand unto judgment, and some men they follow after;' the sins of him that loves strong drink go before, and follow after too."

The passing spring brought happiness from far. Henry came back to his native land, and going first for Cyril, the two brothers reached home with Vivra one joyous morning, and brought delight to all the house.

Together Cyril and Henry visited all their early haunts, explored the woods, and climbed the hills. To meet them on a breezy summit scrambled, one day, Miss Tot's Solomon, and, standing before them, began to empty his pockets; snails, hop-toads, tree-toads, worms, beetles, dead spiders, little lizards and slugs, — a truly loathsome burden, — he distributed over a soiled handkerchief.

"I got 'em for you!" he said to Cyril. "I knowed you was a bugologist. I want a cent for 'em."

Cyril gave the poor fool a silver coin, and privately emptied out the collection, with the exception of two new slugs.

"What made us to differ?" he said to

Henry. "The same fierce thirst was born in us both; see now the difference."

"There is but one answer: the sought and found blessing of God," said Henry.

IX.

**"THOU HAST A LITTLE STRENGTH, AND
HAST NOT DENIED MY NAME."**

It was natural that Henry should wish, in the beginning of the next collegiate year, to return with Cyril to his studies. "I am twenty-one," he said, "and I can enter junior; it is late enough for me to graduate at twenty-three."

"If you go back there, you will never be twenty-three," said "Uncle Doctor."

"I'm well, perfectly well, and keen for study," said Henry.

"Too keen for it, and not well enough," replied his uncle.

"Take the ship's soundings and see where she sails," laughed Henry, tapping his chest.

"I know before I begin, and the soundings say the ship sails near shoals."

"A poor life that can neither work nor study," cried Henry.

"Softly," replied his uncle. "By exercise out of doors, by plain food, and little application to books, you may live to grow old; you may be a good man of business, a staunch supporter of the church, a good brother and a faithful son, the advocate of good principles, a worthy citizen. Would you break your mother's heart by your early death?"

"No," said Henry. "I see I must yield to your will."

"To God's will rather. 'Submit yourself therefore under the mighty hand of God.'"

In thus submitting, Henry allowed Cyril to go back to college, and remained at home, doing the best he could: a very precious son and brother, upon whom his parents and sister learned to lean, and to whom the poor of the neighborhood looked up as a friend and helper.

Henry stood during this fall as a friend to

one who needed friendship greatly, and this was Tom, so long a servant, and a good servant, in the Arnot family ; but going now, like many of his compeers and predecessors, the drunkard's way. The squire first professed himself astonished at Tom's derelictions, made many strictures on servants generally, and on Tom in particular, and concluded by saying that Tom must forthwith be discharged ; and was it not evident that a servant too drunken for one family to keep was too drunken for any other family to hire? Tom's fate seemed likely to be the mud in the gutter, and final delirium in the county poor-house. But here Henry came to the rescue. He wanted Tom plead with, watched, kept and encouraged to better ways.

The squire truthfully replied that he had often remonstrated with Tom ; that Mr. Whittles had bound him by pledges, and had both exhorted and reproved him, and "Uncle Doctor" had watched and reasoned with him ; while Miss Tot, seizing the delinquent in shady

lanes, or at by-corners, had held up Cyril as an example, and Solomon as a warning; yet all had been of no avail.

Henry still kept vengeance from falling upon Tom. He argued that the boy had no friends; had never lived anywhere else; had been wholly in their care, and learned his bad habits among them. The family was divided on the Tom question. "Uncle Doctor" was ever inclined to mercy. Mrs. Arnot and Estelle always took Henry's view; they admitted that they were unresigned to tarnished silver, cracked tumblers, forgotten duties, and heedless service at table; but they were not prepared to send Tom adrift with all his iniquities upon his head. Something must be done. The squire suggested sending him up into Vermont, where liquor is not allowed to be sold by one part of the community to reduce another part to brutishness and beggary. Mr. Wittles remarked to "Cousin Tot," that he'd heard that Salt Lake City was a model of temperance propriety, no groggeries being

allowed, and that, peradventure there Tom, the luckless, might be delivered from himself. "Cousin Tot" was busy removing some delicate plants from the garden to her flower-pots, that they might receive shelter on chilly nights. She pressed the earth about a dainty white fuchsia, trained its beautiful foliage with tender fingers, and sprinkled it with a dressing of hartshorn and water. She was now prepared to reply to Mr. Wittles.

"Sam'l, that's dodging the question. If God's law aint strong enough to hold a man, what are you going to hope from Vermont law, or Mormon city law, which last place I do not approve? Sam'l, you're cutting at the leaves and twigs of that obnoxious vice, when it's duty to dig it up by the roots; it is indeed!" Miss Tot shook her head portentously. To say the least of it Mr. Wittles was mystified; what heterodox opinions he had been advancing he could not discern. Miss Tot continued: "I saw the small value of earthly restraints in the case of my poor Solomon and

his besetting sin. All these outside laws and restraints, Sam'l, are just nothing when the grace of God is lacking. Pledges and laws, I'm convinced, indeed, are good in their way, and strong enough to keep from drinking such as have no inclinations to it; but to a man that's got a giant thirst in him, they're just like new ropes, or seven green withes, on Sampson; they are indeed."

"I dare say that is true," assented Mr. Wittles, who seldom differed from "Cousin Tot."

Miss Tot took up a verbena which was sickly, and held it into view. "Yes," she pursued meditatively, "this plant can live without its top, but it can't live without its root. I'll not deny that a top is a good thing for a plant, fair and flourishing; it is a witness for the goodness of the root; but, Sam'l, you must have *root!* I've heard of men who loved temperance; who even spent their time lecturing it and preaching it; yet it was all top; they had the whiskey thirst, and they hadn't

that root called grace, and they died drunkards. As to Tom, it's folks' bounden duty to do all they can to save him; but they'll never be sure of him, until he gets grace in him. No, Sam'l, they won't indeed."

Meanwhile Tom, carefully guarded against his failing by Henry, was doing a little better, and the squire's threatened vengeance was delayed.

Early in December the doctor's forebodings about Henry were justified by the poor fellow having an attack of hemorrhage. The family were in consternation; they read the favorite's doom as sealed, and the parents were overwhelmed by the threatening of this fresh calamity.

"We'll sell out and go to a warmer climate," cried the squire; "this atmosphere is the ruin of my children!"

"It is their native atmosphere," replied "Uncle Doctor," "and ought to be good for them; and I must tell you plainly, brother, that in a hot country you would not live six

months; you would die sooner there than your children will here. Besides a change would be dangerous to Estelle."

"And what is to be done?" cried the squire, pacing his library in great excitement. "Is the boy to die like the rest of them, and leave us in our old age? Shall we be left altogether desolate?"

"The first thing," replied his brother, "is to get the better of this present difficulty, then let him go off on another journey; travelling agrees with him, and he may be established in good health, and be no more liable to these attacks."

"I can never consent to his going away alone," began the anxious father.

"No," said the doctor, "we will send Cyril with him."

Here was a new blow to the squire; could he have no son finish with highest honors a collegiate course? He flung himself into a chair, and groaned aloud.

"Let the matter rest here," said "Uncle

Doctor;" "we will make some definite arrangements when the time comes."

Henry got better from his illness rapidly, and in a few days the doctor left home long before the family were up, and returned next evening with a very charming companion, namely, Vivra.

The squire looked earnestly and anxiously at his niece, fearing at first that some dangerous symptoms had necessitated her return; but Vivra gave signs of nothing less than the most perfect health and vigor; cheerfulness so overflowed from her happy organization that it enlivened everybody about her. Indeed, Vivra was exempt from the poison of the demon; she had inherited no tainted blood; had laid herself open to no disease by tampering with that fatal stone jug. She was, finally, what the squire's sons and daughters might have been, had the squire admitted no evil genius to his house.

"What did you bring Vivra home for?" questioned the squire.

"To cheer us up. To show Henry the bright side of life, and to make Estelle happier," said the doctor.

"I can't have Vivra sacrificed to us," said the squire.

"She looks little like a sacrifice," replied the doctor; "she's as jolly as a lark;" and just then came from Henry's room the sound of Vivra's merry voice, telling tales of boarding-school life, and a peal of laughter from the listening Estelle.

"There! that sounds something like it!" exclaimed "Uncle Doctor," rubbing his hands.

Vivra's return had been well planned just before Cyril's; but when once Cyril got within the shadows of his own haunted home, neither Vivra, "Uncle Doctor," nor common sense, seemed capable of keeping him from utter melancholy. Cyril was sure Henry would soon die of consumption, and that Estelle and himself would immediately follow him. "There's a doom on us," he said bitterly.

In vain "Uncle Doctor" assured him that none of the family had fewer consumptive symptoms than himself. Cyril was sure he knew better than "Uncle Doctor;" that he gave every evidence of the fell disease, and had at the most but a few months to live. These were certainly cheerless forebodings for a young man of scarcely nineteen.

Again, failing of supporting the "immediate decline" theory, Cyril felt himself on the verge of insanity; he was going mad like Sybil; he already had hours of partial insanity; he had bad dreams, and wakeful nights; mania was at hand, and the great upper room was secure of a second tenant. These apprehensions, freely expressed by our friend Cyril, did not conduce to family cheerfulness; indeed we may say they diffused melancholy, and to his own miserable views Cyril converted every one but Vivra and "Uncle Doctor." "Uncle Doctor" was almost indignant.

"These ideas of Cyril's are all nonsense," said Vivra.

She was in "Uncle Doctor's" sanctum, her old relative seated comfortably in his easy-chair before the grate, and Vivra leaned against the mantel-piece facing him.

"Utter nonsense! sheer folly!" said "Uncle Doctor;" he is neither going into consumption nor insanity; but you do not need to be told that one can imagine themselves into anything."

"There's some excuse for Cyril," urged Vivra; "the family have been so unfortunate."

"Yes, and the more misfortunes the deeper his gloom will become; and he will worry himself into his grave long before his time. Cyril has every chance of being a strong, healthy, happy, active man if he will only make up his mind to it; let him overcome these fears and this gloom, and resolve to live."

"Then," said Vivra, "he ought not to stay here any longer."

"No, nor at college, for close study does

not agree with him. I believe the Lord provided for him in his taste for natural sciences. He is what Solomon Tot calls a confirmed 'bugologist.'

"Then let him go hunt bugs, and in studying them forget himself," said Vivra.

"Vivra, you are free from these family dangers; you've got a sound body, a sound brain, and a sound heart," began "Uncle Doctor."

"Thank you, uncle!" cried Vivra, laughing.

"On account of all this soundness," said "Uncle Doctor," "I take you into my confidence. I think your Cousin Henry in a very precarious state of health, and that a journey and a stay of months, or even years, in a warmer climate, is all that will save his life; that will give him a chance at least. As to Estelle, I have apprehensions about her, and in the spring I would like to take her up into Minnesota to stay until fall. But meanwhile I feel that your uncle is likely to break down

at any moment ; his vigorous health will give way suddenly, and he will be the victim of a painful disease that has been coming upon him for years. Now what can I do ? ”

“ Well, first, ” said Vivra, “ where do you want the boys to go ? ”

“ I had thought of Brazil. A trip there would be interesting and healthful ; it would benefit Henry as much as anything is likely to do, and it would be very useful to Cyril ; he could pursue there his favorite studies, and fit himself to be afterwards a useful member of scientific expeditions. The boy will have more money than he knows what to do with ; why not benefit the race, and extend the useful knowledge of the century by searching out almost unknown regions ? The idea makes me young again. ”

“ Then send off the boys to Brazil at once, ” said Vivra ; “ put them in the spirit of it by your own enthusiasm. See, I am in earnest for it already ! I could talk of discovery and research, and travellers’ adventures, as bril-

liantly as Othello talked of war. Why, uncle, you and I will combine our forces, and make our first attack at breakfast to-morrow. Shortly the whole family will surrender; victory will perch upon our banners; in less than a month the boys shall turn their pilgrim feet to Brazil."

"Good girl!" said "Uncle Doctor," laughing; "but how for the rest of us?"

"In April you shall depart in peace with Estelle to Minnesota, leaving me in charge of the family; my honorable position shall be strictly *sub rosa*. I belong to the secret service, and am set to spy out my uncle's symptoms. I shall be so noisy and troublesome that it will seem there are at least half-a-dozen young people about; nobody will miss the rest of you at all, and at the first appearance of danger I will inform you."

"And your school-days must end now, when you love study so well, and when our family misfortunes have so much hindered you?"

"I can study delightfully alone ; banish, if you please, the French governess, who has been here too long, and is my favorite aversion, and I shall become a second Olympia Morata, left to my own devices."

"Uncle Doctor" was about to assent cordially to Vivra's plan, when he reflected that, in benefiting his brother's unfortunate children, he might be imposing upon his dead sister's more happily constituted daughter.

"I'm afraid this would be what your uncle calls sacrificing you," he said, hesitatingly.

"No," said Vivra. "My uncle and aunt have for years been the kindest of parents to me ; my cousins have been loving brothers and sisters ; nothing I can do is a sacrifice, and to add to their comfort is my happiness."

"It may turn out," said "Uncle Doctor," "that before you lies a long vigil of sick nursing, your patients suffering, querulous, and lingering of slow disease."

" 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' " said Vivra. " We are now to preserve health, and not to nurse the sick ; when the evil becomes heavier, we shall be given greater strength."

" All this trial you can escape if you choose ; you can go back to school ; your father's relatives are more fortunate than ourselves, and constantly desire you with them ; and, lastly, your Aunt Jane wants to take you to Europe, and you could go for saying you would."

" And do you think, then, that duty has so little weight with me ? " asked Vivra. " Could I desert those whose prosperity I have shared, because I am too cowardly to share their adversity ? To-morrow, ' Uncle Doctor,' we must open the attack about Brazil."

Vivra tweaked " Uncle Doctor's " ear as she passed him, and left him to plan for his nephews' journey. She proceeded to the parlor, where she challenged Cyril to a game

of chess, and persuaded Estelle to the piano. On her way to the parlor she stopped in her own room, and got a volume of beautiful engravings for Henry, and was fortunate enough to meet Tom in the hall, with the night's mail, which she carried to her Uncle Arnot.

The Brazilian campaign opened, as Vivra had advised, next morning at breakfast, and with every prospect of success.

It took but discussion, during one sunny winter's day, to set the expedition in a favorable light before everybody. To think that Henry was well enough to travel, that himself was worthy of being travelling companion, and that they could at once find health, flowers, bugs and butterflies, cheered Cyril's heart, sent the fantasies of approaching consumption and insanity into exile, and Cyril was suddenly himself again. This change in her youngest at once won over Mrs. Arnot, while Henry, seeing the sunshine without, and the jardinette of bulbous plants in full

blossom within the bay-window, was suddenly seized with intense longing for such latitudes of bloom and birds and sunshine as he had recently traversed, and his eye brightened and his voice grew cheery, as he thought of good sea-breezes laden with health, of leaping waves all sparkling in the light, and of tree-crowned mountains, and tropic forests, where, with a brother-companion, he could seek for health again.

Henry proposed to take Tom with them, as he was a most excellent servant when sober, and he had no intention of permitting him to be drunken. The trip was now decided upon. Mrs. Arnot had parted with four children at the demand of death; she must now part with two who were going to fly from disease to distant lands, and who, long parted from her, might even never return. "Uncle Doctor" and the squire went with the young men to New York to see them fairly started, and Mrs. Arnot, being left alone with the two girls, the house was

so desolate that even Vivra could scarcely bring cheerfulness into it. Miss Tot, with a friendly and practical interest in Vivra's house-plants and blooming jardinette, came several times in a week to see them, her coming always hailed with pleasure; and her "spectre" following in her wake and hovering about the door, never willing to remain at home by himself, and obstinately bent on not entering the squire's house.

Meantime the squire and his party had reached New York, and waited nearly a fortnight for a vessel; for this was before the "American and Brazilian Mail Steamship Company" was established. A commodious vessel, well officered, and with strictly temperance rules, Henry considered indispensable to his comfort; and at last this happy craft was found. The cargo and the passengers were aboard; the steward had finished his purchasing, and the clerk had secured all his papers; only a fair wind was waited for, and now the fair wind came. "Uncle Doctor"

took a last look at the state-room, to see that nothing needful was forgotten, gave his last charges, and now those two elder brothers, the squire and the doctor, went ashore, Henry and Cyril stood on the deck, waving hats and hands, and slowly the sails filled, and the Petrel dropped down the bay. Off Sandy Hook the pilot went ashore, and the ship stood bodily out to sea. They had fair winds, bright, sunny days, clear moonlight nights, when the ocean satisfied to the full the sense of beauty; gorgeous pageants of sunrise such as are not known ashore; and clear, calm noons, when all the land and its inhabitants seemed forever lost, and themselves alone left between the water and the sky. There were head-winds and storms, roaring surges, and a ship tossed like a toy upon monster waves, creaking and rocking, and making the landsman rue the day he left the quiet shelter of his home. Henry, long a traveller, bore these trials of the ocean with more equanimity than Cyril.

Again there were long calms in those lazy tropic seas, when the sky was one clear opal, the winds were sound asleep, the waters were as glass, the pennon hung stirless down, the useless sails were furled, and perfect rest seemed all creation's heritage. To Henry, this rest was welcome; he swung in his hammock, calmly rejoicing in repose; while Cyril, whose strong life called for activity, paced the deck, longing for a wind from any quarter, and impatient to be in motion.

All voyages have an end; some, to be sure, in storm and wreck, their cargoes delivered to old ocean, and their passengers and crews finding homes deep down beneath the brine,—homes shell-paved, coral-walled, with weedy beds, and strange guests unknown to upper air. Even the "Ancient Mariner's" weird voyage found a close, and though the winds baffled and the calms were long, the Petrel passed at last the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea with its many isles. Barbadoes, St. Lucia, and Trinidad faded behind them,

and the port of Para was reached at last. The wonders of dolphin-catching, and the feeding of birds that had wandered far from land, were lost in a new interest, when, some hundreds of miles from shore, a broad, briny flood parted the green waves of the ocean, and the Petrel floated on the unconquerable waters of the mightiest river in the world. Shoreward now straight on, the winds kindly favoring their course, the delta of the Amazon was reached, and south and west of Joannes Island, Para stretched along the bank of its river.

The vessel dropped anchor on Saturday evening. Tom collected the small amount of baggage our travellers allowed themselves, and the custom-house having been visited in due form, they were shortly established in a hotel, whereof it is enough to say it was Paranes and dirty, with owners, servants, and visitors of almost every nationality; that the windows were curtainless, and refused to shut properly, and that it was flanked on the

east by a gambling-stall, and on the west by a drinking-saloon. However, the hotel had a balcony; the night was the perfection of a tropic night; the sun was sinking behind the forests of the Amazon, which pressed close upon the town, and the call of birds, the chatter of disturbed monkeys, and the songs from the homes of these lively creoles, rose often above the bustle of the inn and the wrangling of the adjacent dens.

It had been a saint's day, — nearly every day is a saint's day in Brazil, — and, owing to the superabundance of saints, some days are blessed with three or four canonized names. This was a high saint's day, and the people were flaunting about town in their best.

Early next morning the brothers walked out, and as Henry spoke Spanish, and Cyril German, they were able to obtain all the information needed in this mongrel town, and found their way to a Protestant service, held in a gentleman's residence in a distant part of the city. The missionary, come from far to

speak of Christ, sat by a little table, a basket of tracts and Testaments in different languages by his side.

To Cyril the room seemed all doors and windows, for in Para all one asks of a house is shelter from the sun, and free ingress for whatever air may be stirring. The little gathering consisted of a few merchants and business men from the United States, a foreign traveller or two, a dozen Paranese of mixed races, and one or two invalids, like Henry, seeking health in the tropics. It was pleasant to these young men, thus to find, when far from home, part of God's scattered household band holding converse of their Father. They remembered that far to the north-west, the remnants of their family circle were now gathering in the house of prayer; that far from each other they were still near to God, sheltered by one potent arm, and sending their supplications in unison to the same gracious ear.

The service over, Henry and Cyril were

welcomed with that cordiality which exiles ever show to comers from the well-beloved land of their birth, and they were cordially urged to leave the comfortless hotel, and remain at the house of this American merchant. They promised to make the change next day, though they contemplated but a short stay in Para.

Thinking Tom needed the same religious advantages as themselves, and unwilling to leave him to the temptations of bar-room or gambling saloon, which despite the Sabbath were in flush of business, Henry had brought Tom with him; and, seated on the piazza just outside the open window, Tom had enjoyed the service, feeling quite at home in a city crowded with so many inhabitants of his own dusky color.

Returned to the shelter of the hotel, to pass as comfortably as possible the fierce noontide heat of this equatorial town, the brothers took their chairs and books by the open window; but their gaze more often rested

on the thirty miles' width of the Para river, rolling between themselves and Joannes, than on the open page. A monkey belonging to somebody clambered to the balcony railing, and sat chattering and grinning at them, much to the satisfaction of Tom, who, lying within call on the balcony, with true negro enjoyment of fierce heat, fed the little beast with nuts and fruits, and soon made friends with it. A butterfly, lost from some splendid band of brothers without the city, sailed into the room and lit on Cyril's book. The broad-winged, silent beauty sat slowly waving its purple-bordered, golden banners, and stretching out its curved antennæ, and Cyril, — alas for day and deed! — directed on its unsuspecting head a fine shower of ether from a flexible little bottle which he carried in his vest-pocket, and this, his first Brazilian trophy, waved its bright wings no more, but lay dead upon his book.

"For shame, Cyril!" cried Henry, "that butterfly coming to you on the Sabbath,

should have been as safe as an offender laying hold on the altar of the sanctuary !”

“ If I remember rightly, King Solomon took a delinquent even from there,” replied Cyril, entombing his prize in a paper box.

Here Tom gave a shriek, and thrust his head in the window declaring there was “ a nigger going up 'e street with a barrel of snakes up top of his head ;” and from that moment, cordially hating snakes, Tom hated Para, where they are more than plenty.

It rained half-a-dozen times at noon-day, as it always does at Para, these sudden showers dropping from a sky just now ablaze with sunlight, and directly blazing again as if no shower had come. Here in Para are no storms, no gales, no pelting rains ; month after month the same bright days with noon showers, and hour after hour the same fierce heat. Heat seemed to be life to Henry, and he grew better apace. Active business is done in the streets mostly by Indians and negroes, who bear about the products of the Brazilian

woods, all the growths and riches of the equator, which are to go to other lands; and the traffic goes on at the warehouses and wharves with little intermission for holidays or holy-days, saint's days or Sabbaths, — to work during the morning hours and dance and play at night being the general rule.

Finding pleasant refuge with their new friend, the merchant, Henry and Cyril passed a number of days in Para, Henry devoted to health-getting and Cyril to bugs, of which he soon had many specimens, which, having succumbed after short struggle to chloroform, were glued on cards and packed in boxes. Henry lounged in shady gardens, glittering with myriads of flowers, filled with fragrance, musical with birds, still during the mid-day hours, with that intense stillness known only to burning climes. Cyril, abominating quiet, mounted his horse at early sunrise, hung a tin box and a butterfly net to his saddle-bow, and thus equipped sallied forth the young and ardent knight-errant of entomology, Tom

reluctantly following him on a rawboned steed, his head thrust forward, and his knees pressing his charger's neck, in the fashion of Ichabod Crane riding furiously from the headless horseman. What was a fine, lively pace to Cyril was a steeple-chase to Tom. We can grow accustomed to almost everything, and Tom learned to bag butterflies neatly without hurting their lustrous wings, and to handle mighty centipedes, clad in armor of sheen, beetles arrayed in ruby and orange splendors, and nameless living things that shone like carbuncles and had any amount of possible bite in them. If Tom were to follow his young masters into the Amazonian forests, need were that he overcome all dread of the developments of animated nature, and inure himself to marmosets leaping on his back, and slimy snakes creeping into his boots. Fortunately our young negro, like all his race, was easily moulded; he had now no whiskey to pervert him, and in his out-door life got over the daintiness that had been fostered in

burnishing silver, washing glass, and keeping in order the china closet, and became a lover of the woods, an adept at making fires and cooking tourists' fare, recalled the learning of the Blennerhasset days in life's May morning time, and would have merited from Miss Tot's Solomon his master's title of "bug-ologist."

Up the Amazon run traders boats, to collect India-rubber, barks, dye-woods, and nuts from the natives. Travellers wishing to explore these primeval forests can go up the stream as far as they choose in these boats, and then return or strike out their own track with Indian guides, prows, and canoes, to visit nature in her most cherished solitude.

Henry found in Para a little Frenchman, wise in wood-craft, in bird-stuffing and insect-catching, who could talk broken English and perform wonders of "Indian doctoring," and, moreover, could speak the dialects of some of the interior Brazilian tribes. This man's company they secured, and now with their

baggage reduced only to the necessities of the traveller's life, with strong linen suits, boots of undressed leather, broad palmleaf hats, cloaks of water-proof, and woollen and rubber blankets for night, in Tom's keeping, with guns and rods and ammunition, and with the needful for Cyril's curiosity-hunting, these young men from the tawny, quiet Ohio turned their faces from Para, and went westward through the mighty forests, up the broad Amazon.

And meanwhile, how went life in that beloved and distant home? Beautiful as when disease and death had never disturbed its inner peace, the squire's house stood beside the river. Gray hairs fringed the gardener's head, as he wheeled his barrow, and carried spade and hoe along the paths and through the glowing beds of flowers, such as he had there nurtured for twenty years; still the fountain leaped up, and then in clear laughter dropped back among the shells, and peeping from fragrant bowers smiled marble nymphs,

as they would still smile on if all the house were dead.

Northward across the prairie-land went Estelle and "Uncle Doctor," toward the headwaters of the Mississippi, leaving to Vivra the self-imposed and difficult task of cheering two hearts which were well-nigh broken, — to reanimate a hope so often crushed by disappointment that it scarcely lived, and to ward off from her uncle the disease he daily tempted. This family, once folded in one home, were indeed "severed far and wide;" the north and the south held some who might return; the grave held others who should come no more. And, strange infatuation, the squire still daily worshipped at the shrine of that fell demon that had so unutterably cursed his home; that had spread death, and sorrow, and madness, and exile among his children, until now none of them could comfort his loneliness and failing health. The horrors of the night when he lost Leonard had whitened the squire's hair; his form was now bent;

the robust proportions of which he had boasted shrunk away ; his cheery voice grew harsh ; the light was gone from his eye ; his step was slow ; food tempted no appetite ; night long he tossed upon his bed, seeking the sleep which would not come, or finding with sleep wild, feverish dreams, and he would wake, calling the names of those whose ears were sealed to all earthly sounds, — of his far-off daughter, or of the sons, who, widely beyond the sound of his voice, were sleeping on one of the low-lying shores of the Amazon, with their camp-fire before them, their Indians about them, too weary with their day's adventures to dream, their rest only broken by the cry of some prowling jaguar or kindred beast, who, fearing fire and shot-guns, dared only stand afar and break the tenth commandment, circumstances compelling him to keep the sixth.

X.

"THE END THEREOF IS DEATH."

THERE were many health-seekers gathered at St. Paul, and when it was understood that Doctor Arnot was in the city he was at once thronged with patients; this good "Uncle Doctor" having, as we have said, no merely local fame, but being known far and near. Of all these patients there were few for whom the doctor had not more hope than for the one dearest to him. The healthful breezes of the north-west brought no health to Estelle; she suffered no pain, made no complaint; hers was no painful dying, but a fading, as the stars fade before the morning, or as the sunset fades to twilight surely but almost imperceptibly. Perhaps some strong tie between herself and those sister spirits who had

gone before drew her toward them, and when "Uncle Doctor" would surprise her sitting, her cheek resting on her hand, and her clear eyes fixed on some blue depth of distance, he would have a sudden fear that thus he might find her, the better part gone heavenward, and only the fair earthly casket left behind. Still Estelle was happy in her northern sojourning, and it was a satisfaction to the parents to have this effort made for their child's restoration; the heat was less trying at St. Paul's than at home, and so "Uncle Doctor" lingered there with his niece until all the summer passed away, and when the grapes were purpling under September suns, and all along the orchards the ripening peaches hung luscious burden on the trees, the two came home again, — Estelle for some short tarrying, until she sought a higher home than this.

Vivra had seen no need to call "Uncle Doctor" home on the squire's account, although it was evident that disease had fas-

tened upon him ; say rather, by a long defiance of the laws of nature he had fastened it upon himself. With all his attention drawn upon his own infirmities, the squire noticed no change in his daughter, and after a casual inquiry of "Uncle Doctor" as to how she had passed the summer, and an expression of pleasure that the journey had been taken, he entered into a long narration of his own distressing symptoms.

The mother's sight was keener ; *she* had no need to ask "Uncle Doctor" about her child ; but the grief, smothered before the squire and Estelle, must have some outlet, and to Vivra she poured forth her heart.

"Do you see how she fails, as Alice did ? Vivra, I must lose my child ;" and then going back, as grief is wont, to happier days, she drew the contrast between life's glad morning and this sad decline. "No one could have been happier than I was, Vivra, until Annie was two years old, and had that fall ; that was my first great trouble. Until then all

life had been happiness and success. Even after that there was so much to make me happy ; we had money, health, friends, home, affection, — nothing seemed denied us but strength to Annie, and she was so peaceful and so sweet, she was like continual sunshine in the house. O Vivra, where were such children as mine ?— so beautiful, so loving, so bright ! What a loving son was Leonard ! and who of all my friends had a child like Sybil ?”

Thus did this mother lament the days gone by, as Job, sitting in ashes, when the world was young, mourned friends and wealth and children taken from him, exclaiming, “ Oh that I were as in months that are past, as in days when God preserved me ; when his candle shined upon my head and by his light I walked through darkness !”

While troubles thus crowded upon the squire’s family, quiet and comfort were the inheritance of our friend Mr. Wittles. So pleased was the “ old gent ” by the kindness

of his daughter-in-law that he clung less devotedly to his shabby hat, permitted himself to wear a new one with a bombazine band, and being allowed to have his blue coat on every day, and unlimited opportunities of button-polishing, he even smiled when repairs were inaugurated, and the three cabins were straightened, had new roofs, new kitchen and new windows, and when new furniture added to the rooms both comfort and beauty.

This child of eighty, seated in his high-backed chair, would blink and bob and smile when "the young woman" sang merry ditties to him, and when, besides his beloved "treat," he was amused and refreshed by toasting bread and roasting apples on the point of a long stick. The "old gent" indeed kept up a slow, uninterrupted eating, all his waking hours, and, having spent the time from eight in the morning to six at night in filling himself, went to bed happy. Vivra called on "the young woman" sometimes, and always found the "old gent" with a clean collar and

kerchief, his thin hair well brushed, and a flower in his button-hole, "a gay old boy indeed," as Miss Tot remarked.

"Our old gent grows young again," said Mr. Wittles, cheerfully. "With our care for him, and my young woman's pleasant company, we think our old gent will see a hundred; and wouldn't that be worth telling of? The boys don't hector him now; for if he goes out *she* goes with him, and then he's all right, you see."

With the going away of the old year, Miss Tot's "legacy" went also away,—that reaper who goes about finding all seasons harvest-time to him, carrying off the poor rum-doomed idiot with the gleanings of the field.

The Arnot mansion had now undeniably two invalids in it, the squire and Estelle both going about the house still, but feeble and needing care, and having captious tastes and painful nights. Since Annie's death Susan had been Estelle's maid. Martha had married and gone away, and Nurse Henrietta had

retired on a pension. Estelle had a fancy to have Miss Tot for a nurse, and Miss Tot shut up her little dwelling, sent her flowers to Mr. Wittles and the squire's gardener, and came to help those who had always given her their friendship.

Out of reach of the fell shadow of their home the brothers, Henry and Cyril, wandered along the Amazon. They made long halts at Indian villages, where Cyril and his Frenchman stuffed bright-winged birds, — brilliant and songless creatures that they had brought down from tall trees, which perhaps had broken ground before powder and shot were invented. At various times Cyril sent his treasures down to Para to his merchant friend. Henry delighted in listening to the legends and traditions of the natives, told him as he swung in his hammock, or sat in the shade cleaning his gun; and nightly about the camp-fire of these adventurers gathered a dusky group, while the Frenchman sat with his rifle across his knees, and the firelight

bronzed half naked-Indians, and shone in the negro's wide-stretched eyes; and all were listening, as Henry led them in reading and in prayers; and the brothers waked the Brazilian solitudes with home hymns which they had learned at their mother's knee, and sung in Sabbath gatherings beyond the waters.

When Sabbath came to these wilds, albeit ushered in by no music of bells, and no church-going throngs, our wayfarers kept it holy to the Lord. On Saturday the canoes were drawn up on the bank of the Igarape, or bayou; under the palms the camp was made, the underbrush was cleared with the axe, blankets, flung over the festoons of monster vines that draped the giant rubber or moira trees, were easy hammocks; in holy time the butterflies feasted on the flowers unmolested, and blue and scarlet and orange birds screamed and chattered and darted high overhead, menaced by no well-aimed fowling-piece. On these days about their young leader came the black-haired, swarthy chil-

dren of the tropic, to learn of Israel's Hope. In tender language which these babes in knowledge could understand, Henry set forth the story of the sinner and his Saviour; and the equatorial macaw and paroquet, the darting humming-bird, a breathing jewel, or the oriole, gleaming in gold, filled up the pauses in the stories of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, and the Sower and his Seed, which first were breathed upon the air of Palestine, in the thoroughfares of Jewry or by the Sea of Galilee.

The climate of this great valley of the Amazon is mild. Leaving Para the heat lessens, and while cold is unknown, the breathless noontides of Para blast no more. Cyril, the Frenchman, and the hired natives lived much on the common food of the country, — nuts, turtle's eggs, dried monkey, and palm cabbage being chief articles of diet. For Henry more civilized food was prepared, — coffee, sugar, fruits, and preserved meats being among their stores. Henry, however,

soon refused to be considered in any wise an invalid ; he became capable of enduring fatigue ; his cheek was bronzed, his flesh was firm, his muscles hardened by exercise ; he fished in the bayous and dug for turtle's eggs in the sand, and the only deer and wild hogs which were added to the larder during the journey were Henry's trophies.

"Uncle Doctor" had said, and in letters which, sent by Para, had found his nephews in the depth of the forests, had repeated, "Do not come home at the first return of health ; remain until health has become a habit. Stay until these chill airs and damp winters can no longer conquer you ; stay, moreover, until the afflictions which follow our household shall not make you gloomy and morbid, and invite disease."

Obedying these orders, Henry and Cyril tarried until one year of their wild life had passed away, and until, returning for a season to Para for fresh purchases and for new supplies of money, Cyril had sent homeward some of

his collections, and a large manuscript of journal and carefully made observations. The year had not been wasted. Cyril had evidently found his appropriate niche in life, faintly tokened in childhood in the aquarium of tadpoles and duckweed, and the efforts to turn a cabbage-rose to a moss-rose.

Henry, seeking physical life, had taught others of the divine life; down the versatile Frenchman's furrowed face the tear of penitence had dropped, and some of the gentle natives of the forest, hearing in their palm-thatched huts of the heavenly mansions, and Him who there prepares his followers a place, had learned from this stranger to whisper orisons with the faith of little children.

The brothers were planning, in the second September of their exile, with the eager daring of youth, a journey across the continent; they would hire peons and canoes, and, crossing the Andean summits, stand at last on the Pacific shore; thence seek the gold land of the west, and homeward over

the plains, to that dear abode, where mother and sister waited to welcome them, and a father longed to hear the voices of his sons. They were stopping at a little Indian village not far from Pebas, where they had built a hut and surrounded themselves with all the comforts of uncivilized life, namely, a roof over their head, a row of earthen jars, a fireplace without a chimney, and some hammocks, which even Tom had now learned to sleep in cosily, though at first he was prone to fall out, as he remarked, "before he got in."

Tom and the Frenchmen were sent to Para, to purchase provisions, find one or two travellers who would venture from Para to Guyaquil, and to bring maps, books, and instruments, which their merchant acquaintance had ordered for them from New York. Tom was also to bring that most precious treasure, the mail.

At home the winter had fled, the spring had grown into summer, and in such a day of

June beauty as Alice had looked her last on earth, Estelle was following her sister; dying, because her life had been poisoned at its beginning; because her infant blood had been given fatal fire which burned out its vitality; and strength had faded like a lamp shining dimly and more dimly still, because its oil has gone. To her, all climes, all seasons, all nursing care had been alike; the principle of vigor had been deficient. This is the one most frequent curse to the liquor-drinker's child.

Yes, in all this June beauty and joyous life in nature, the last daughter of the Arnots went after her sisters across the river; another grave was myrtle-planted and lily-guarded, and about the stricken parents came Christian friends, who could bring no consolation but sympathetic tears.

There was no demon-worship in the family now; frequent use of liquor had conquered even the squire's strength; his state became such that his stomach could receive nothing

but the mildest liquid food. Brandy, wine, gin, and Jamaica were as so much cruel fire; nature so long imposed upon rebelled in dying. Passing through the home after Estelle had left them, "Uncle Doctor" opened the dining-room closet once more.

The decanter was half full of brandy; a bottle of Madeira, dusty and with the cork undrawn, stood beside it. The doctor shook the stone jug, and the "apple whiskey" gurgled within.

The doctor held his lamp within the closet; the wine-glasses and the punch-bowl and ladle shone in the light.

"Seed of death!" thought the doctor, — "poison that has filled our graveyard, emptied our home of mirth, and beggared us of dear faces and happy voices! Too late has the demon's banishment come; its reign is ended, but its kingdom is destroyed!"

The doctor locked the closet door and took out the key; he carried the key out of the house, across the garden, to the place

where was a deep but long unused well. He dropped it here, and heard it plash into the water, down among the stones; he came into the house again and went to his room, with an undefined thought that the house might one day be filled with some second generation of children, who must hear of crime and its penalty, of judgment long delayed, but falling heavily at last; and who, when tempted, and like to fall, should see and be warned by that demon in the closet whose sway had had such bitter consequences.

The evening was warm. "Uncle Doctor" got down his book and set open his door. As he read, there came to him low, tender notes of music. He listened; it was Vivra, in her aunt's room, winning sleep to the pillow where sorrow kept wakeful vigil. She was singing: —

" God is the refuge of his saints,
When storms of sharp distress invade."

As the low breathing came to him of that

stream that makes "glad the City of God," these years of woe seemed but a little space, the river of death a narrow stream, and the reward infinite that cometh after pain and toil.

The story of these June days, and the new bereavement they had brought, went over the billows, to the exiles in the realm of flowers. It came in that long-expected mail Tom was to carry from Para to the Indian village by the river of the South. Through the September days the faithful servant, with his stores, and the French *compagnon du voyage*, went slowly up against the strong current of the stream, making from eight to ten miles an hour; between shores set with giant palms, and a luxuriant growth of vines, and shrubs, and flowers; passing here and there small Indian villages set at long distances, and where sometimes their steamboat made long delay, bargaining for dye-woods and bark with the natives, and tempting them to trade by displays of calicoes, and, alas! also by great stock

of poison, such as was locked in the closet in Squire Arnot's home.

While waiting for Tom's return on the traders' boat, Henry was seized with an unconquerable weariness, a strange lassitude, and an oppression of breath, which would have alarmed a more experienced nurse than Cyril. The moon was at the full, and the palm-thatched hut, with its many crevices, was filled with light. Cyril, waking suddenly, perceived Henry's hammock swinging empty. He called his brother, and Henry answered from without the cabin. Cyril went to him. Henry stood under a palm-tree, the river flowing at his feet.

"Why are you here?" asked Cyril.

"I could not sleep," said Henry. "I was wide awake, and such a weight on my chest! The air seemed full of voices calling me, and I came out here to breathe. Did you ever see such a night? What a beautiful world this is!"

"I'm afraid you're going to have a fever.

I wish our men were back," said Cyril, anxiously, taking his brother's hand.

"It is nothing," said Henry; but as he did not wish to go in the hut again, Cyril brought two camp-chairs of Tom's construction, and they sat down together under the palm. They spoke of home.

"It seems near to-night," said Henry. "I can see just how it looks, lying there on the bank of that quiet river. I feel as if by a call I could make them hear me. Father, mother, and the girls, — I wonder if we shall meet again on earth. Those others seem near too, lying in the cemetery; and good 'Uncle Doctor,' what a comfort he has always been to us!"

"I wish he were here now!" cried Cyril, foreboding something, and troubled he knew not why.

"So do I; but not on my account, I am well enough; only it tires me so miserably to talk. You talk, Cyril; no, sing rather, some of the home hymns."

Henry leaned his head back against the palm, and Cyril began to sing : —

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah!"

As the strains floated under the tropic trees, a dusky face or two, thrust out of native huts, watched the brothers for a moment, and one old man, whose hair was thin and his form bent with age, — an "old gent" of the equatorial regions, — dearly loving the sound of a language he could not understand, crept from his lair of leaves, and sat down to listen, just below the brothers, on the bank.

So calm seemed Henry listening to Cyril's voice, and so did the hymns cheer and quiet the singer's heart, that when the first was finished, Cyril began : —

"Jesus who knows full well."

"Sing,

"There is a land of pure delight, —"

said Henry, when his brother was silent.

Just as the morning began to dawn the two retired to their hammocks, and Cyril, healthful and weary, dropped asleep.

"How do you feel?" asked Cyril of his brother, Henry having come out of the cabin, when Cyril was making the morning coffee by a fire on the bank.

"Well, only desperately tired, and tied up in my lungs."

"You must lie down; I'm afraid you're threatened with fever."

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Henry, as he drank his coffee and ate one of the crackers his brother toasted for him.

Henry did not wish to lie down, but kept his camp-chair out of doors, and Cyril, unwilling to leave him, sat by his side cleaning their guns, and setting in order the fishing-tackle. In the afternoon Henry said, if Cyril could find something to make some broth, he thought it would be good for him. Cyril took his shotgun, and set off, asking a kind native woman, whose hut was near their own, to notice that Henry did not want for anything. He was gone but about an hour, and returned, a bird or two in his hand, a couple of dead beetles

in his jacket-pocket, and a particularly nice fish swinging on a bent stick. Springing along the bank, refreshed and enlivened by exercise, his fears for his brother taking flight in his cheerful mood, he saw Henry lying on a blanket, the native woman wringing out a towel in the river, and Henry's clothing wet with blood, telling of an almost fatal hemorrhage. For one moment Cyril felt frozen with horror, then dropping all the implements and trophies of the chase, he darted to his brother's aid.

"He too bad, young man die!" said the native, who had picked up a considerable amount of broken English, and as she spoke she handed over the towel, which, obedient to signs from Henry, she had wet to lay upon his chest.

Cyril had "Uncle Doctor's" careful directions to follow, and needful remedies at hand. He soon succeeded in checking the flow of blood, and making his brother comfortable. As Henry did not wish to go in the cabin Cyril had his servants prepare a bed of leaves

and branches, and cover it with blankets ; then he placed Henry upon it, under an awning formed of calico, — the favorite and established payment of native services.

Two or three of their wild friends sat on the ground near by, and Cyril, at his brother's side, holding his hand, one moment applied himself to soothing the body, and next, with some passage read from the open Bible lying on the grass before him, sought to compose his mind. After the first startled moments of surprise and anxiety, Henry was as calm as the closing of that tropic day, of which the red sunset was even now flushing the skies above the towering trees.

A second hemorrhage at midnight destroyed Cyril's lingering hopes ; but to Henry seemed only like the "golden arrow, let easily into the heart," as the King's token he desired his child to see his face.

In the gray morning, the noisy little trading boat rushed into sight, and Tom, the Frenchman, and the luggage came ashore a

few rods from where Henry was lying. Cyril hastened to meet them with news of his brother's state. The excitable Frenchman flung himself on the ground and wept, then leaped up, to find several infallible native remedies, which he believed potent to heal the most desperate cases. If he could but save Henry!

Tom, choking, and with big tears rolling over his black face, plucked at Cyril's elbow. "O Mister Cyril, the bestest friend ever a poor fellow had; and what can his modder do? Oh, you nebber take him home, and her heart will break!"

How many times had Cyril thought this in the last dismal hours.

Silence reigned through that little village of huts next day, when the life of the young stranger who had come among them was passing away. Even the children were quiet, or took their sports far down the shore; and a little removed from Henry's couch hung a dusky band of those whom he had loved

and taught, and whose simple hearts his gentleness had won.

"O Henry, if it had only been at home!" moaned Cyril, flinging himself beside his brother.

"It is better so," said Henry, softly; "it spares them the pain of parting. Break the news gently to mother; she has but two of you left now."

Alas, but one; Cyril had in his pocket the letter telling that Estelle, also, was gone from them.

He had not told this to Henry, he would learn it soon where all is joy.

Henry took from near his head the Bible that Alice had given him; the velvet covers and gilded clasps were faded and tarnished by long use; it opened readily to many precious passages which had been most often read.

"Send this to mother, when you tell her I am gone," whispered Henry. "Tell her I needed nothing; that all was peace and com-

fort, and God was very near. Cyril, tell 'Uncle Doctor' I am glad I came here. I have done some good here, I think. I lived longer than I would at home; he must not blame himself. These have been happy days. Sebastian," he added, looking at the Frenchman, who, leaning on his gun, stood at the foot of the improvised couch, "you will meet me in heaven?"

"O Monsieur Henri," returned the old fellow, "you have shown me the way, and God he make it plain. I shake hands mit you one day higher up."

"And you, Tom? I have hopes of you lately," said Henry. Tom was kneeling beside Cyril; he sobbed so for a few moments that he could not answer. Sebastian pushed him with the stroke of his gun, saying, "Tom, you speakee Monsieur Henri, when he speakee you!"

Tom checked himself, and, grasping Henry's hand, responded earnestly: "Mr. Henry, I promise you I would be a sober boy, and seek

the Lord, and I'll keep the promise. Yes sir, I'll remember all you taught me, and I'll see you again — "

"God giving you grace," said Henry.

"Yes, sir; and I'll ask for it and seek it every day."

"The Master has some souls there," said Henry directing Cyril's gaze to his group of native friends.

He dropped asleep presently. It was growing evening again; a warm, still, balmy night coming on. The child of the North lay dying beneath the palm and moira trees. A great blooming creeper was looped high over his head, and a monkey ran down into one of these natural swings and swayed to and fro, looking on the group beneath with eager, curious eyes. A lizard, clad in armor of light, crawled up on the edge of the brown blanket, and lay unnoticed; a bird of the woodpecker family, gorgeous in colors as some barbaric king, clung to the palm, and his steady hammering echoed along the shore; a paroquet

dressed its scarlet plumage among branches never nipped by frost, but clad in perennial green.

Henry woke. "Cyril, do not risk your life by grieving over me; travel yet longer in these beautiful lands; you love them. Serve well your day. Give my father his son's best love. I see before you long and happy days, my brother."

A sunbeam pierced an opening in the trees, fell over the lizard which, startled, slipped away, reddened Tom's dark hands, and brightened the open page of Alice's Bible. A gentle bird, with low, tender note, swept by them to its rest.

"Sing

"Come, let us join our friends above,"

said Henry.

Cyril began the strain, Tom and Henry joined it, and the Frenchman hummed the notes:—

"One family, we dwell in Him,
One church above, beneath;

Though now divided by the stream,—
The narrow stream of death."

Henry's eyes, full of joyful hope, met his
brothers.

"Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now."

Henry grasped his brother's hand. One
instant the song on earth was ended, and a
new song begun in heaven.

They buried Henry near the Indian village,
beneath the palm.

Cyril, heavy of heart, had now no mind to
cross the continent and reach the further sea
at Guyaquil; he took the first boat that came
by for Para.

He had good friends in Para, who welcomed
him and comforted him. After some stay, he
joined a company who were going down to
Paraguay prospecting. A year from the
date of his brother's death he returned to
Para, ready to take a vessel for his northern
home.

Happy Cyril! the only one of seven who had

conquered the family curse; he had a strong, faithful heart, a sound mind in a sound body.

Developed to all Leonard's physical strength and beauty, with earnest purpose, indomitable will, a high aim in life, and a vigorous brain, the last of the Arnots showed what, but for one failing, they might all have been.

Loving his children devotedly, proud of them, hoping everything from them, Squire Arnot had sacrificed them, — doomed six out of the seven to an early death. In Cyril, the fight had not been with physical infirmities, but with a thirst, a natural thirst, for strong drinks, which, had not divine grace come to the rescue, must have inevitably doomed him. Over this propensity he had achieved a victory only by one mighty Name.

But, in dooming his children, Squire Arnot had doomed himself.

For a long year Vivra had been a constant attendant at her uncle's side. Tortured with incurable pain, food a torment instead of a comfort, hating his life and dreading to die,

destroyed as much by his own hand as if he had put a knife to his throat, — so we may sum up the history of the squire's last days. Too late he saw and deplored his immeasurable and unspeakable folly; too late he mourned the recklessness that had presumed upon his native strength, that had defied all warnings, and boldly measured all men by himself. Too late he cursed the day in which, when he was a free, prosperous, and hopeful young man, with all good possibilities within his reach, he had sold himself to a demon strong as death and cruel as the grave. Like Job, he was ready to cry, "Let the day perish, let it be darkness. Let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine on it." Too late! the day of recompense had come! The judgment, long delayed, had fallen on his house and scathed it. His money was stored in the bank; his children for whom he had gathered it lay in the grave. His home was beautiful; but he must leave it before his time, and the dear heads it should have shel-

tered were under the myrtle bloom in the last sleep of death.

The pale and patient wife, schooled in long affliction, the brother, lifelong friend, and the loving niece, who thought no care too great to bestow on those who had shielded her orphanage, on a stormy midnight closed Squire Arnot's eyes in death.

Perhaps there is nothing in this world more pitiful than an old man's grief. A child may weep and speedily smile again; but when one who has lived long and suffered much weeps some great woe that clouds his closing years, we reach new estimate of what life's bitterness may be. Above his brother's last sleep, "Uncle Doctor" remembered the dawn of his life, the gleefulness of boyhood, and the manhood, so noble but for one stain, and, bowing his gray head by the white hairs in the coffin, wept aloud.

Days passed, days of calm after tempest, of sunshine and of flowers; and the Arnot house, if silent, was peaceful. Over the sea

favoring winds brought the exile home. Bronzed and bearded the young explorer came to his mother and his home. Again Mrs. Arnot beheld her last and well-beloved child, — beheld him untouched by the curse that had pursued her elder children ; could look on him without a chill anxiety ; could hope and believe that this last staff should not be taken from her declining years.

"And now," said "Uncle Doctor" to his nephew, on a mellow autumn day when the reapers were busy bringing in the corn, "you will marry and settle down to make this place like a home again."

"'The sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation,'" said Cyril. "No, uncle, my business in life is to run about with scientific expeditions. I have found out what I am made for. I have one grand passion, as Miss Tot's Solomon told us in his wisdom ; it is 'bugology.' I shall drift here every now and then to rest and study ; to see my friends ; and write out my observa-

tions. You may think it small work to spend one's days in considering whether a beetle is decked with rings or spots, how many lenses are in a spider's eye, and what varieties of centipedes bless the earth; but it is much to me. Let us feel that the Arnot curse is ended. To Vivra, I say, all that I have is thine; take it, and be happy in a house where your goodness must bring a blessing. Take care of mother and 'Uncle Doctor,' and by times let me find refuge here where you welcome a tired adventurer cousin, to what shall be no more a Haunted House."

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