

break to them his shameful tale? He took his place at the table, and tried hard to talk and act as if nothing unusual had occurred, but not one mouthful could he swallow. The tears would well up in his eyes, he hoped unnoticed.

"Let me make you some fresh toast," Ruth said cheerfully, suiting the action to the words, and Joyce's pressure of his hand under the table was almost too much for his composure. For the first time in his life he realised the gulf that separated him from his family. "Oh! if they only knew that his rightful place at that moment was a prisoner's cell."

With a heart almost too full for utterance he at last burst out with, "Mother, my own dear mother, and sisters, far too good to own such a brother, I have disgraced you all!" And then without attempt to hide or cloak his sin, he told the story of his downfall. His sisters listened in astonished, pained, awed silence. The mother's cheeks were flushed, but in the sweet face was a calm and even joyful expression, that relieved the girls' anxiety as to the effect the news would have upon her. For a time she seemed lost to her surroundings, and this her silent communing, "Lord, how can I sufficiently praise Thee that Thou hast brought Joe to his bearings? The shock, though rude, I know will be his making in Thy Hands. And now, Lord, be to me in this crisis in his life, 'mouth, matter, wisdom,' that I may not mar Thy work."

When left alone with his mother, he exclaimed, "Mother, speak to me. Say you love me and forgive me." "Joe, not mine, but God's forgiveness is your first need. God in mercy has spared you to this. Joe, ask it now." And Joe did. He knelt at his mother's knees as of yore and poured out his soul in deep contrition. Rising, he said, "I feel so unworthy to quote God's Word, but does it not say 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out?' "It does, Joe." Mother, I know that God has forgiven me. But can you and the girls ever forgive me for the disgrace I have brought upon your name? His mother sealed his forgiveness with a kiss. At the appointed time Joe was once more seated in his uncle's office. "Joe, I have heard from your mother, and I can see for

myself that you are not the same youth that left me three days since. I rejoice with you, that having received Christ as your Saviour, you are 'born from above.' John 3.3; John 1.12. "But, Joe, if you are to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, you must 'read, mark, learn and inwardly digest God's Word, day by day,' and live it. Now as to your prospects. You understand that your position has been forfeited and belongs now to the youth who has faithfully served me. In justice to all concerned the only thing I can do for you is to allow you to take the first rung of the ladder. 'The way of transgressors is hard,' Joe, and though we may have departed from that 'way,' we may be still followed by its consequences. But with God with you and for you, my dear boy, what has been, far from being a blight upon your life, may be a blessing in disguise."

To Joe no pain or humiliation could be anything to the suffering crowded into the past few days, and it was with gratitude he thanked his uncle for his clemency, and welcomed the chance "to make good" where he had failed.

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"I feel it is better to tell you the truth," the doctor said, laying his hand kindly on her mother's shoulder. The accident of the week before on her return from school, meant for Miriam a life of invalidism. How white and tense with pain looked Miriam's sweet face as she lay upon her bed. "It was too bad of me to give all my dear one's such a scare. But, mother darling, I have orders for my fancy work to keep me fully employed, and I can do some teaching at home, and you will not be so much alone," and Miriam's face brightened at the prospect.

Here Ruth interposed: "See," she said, "my first cheque for writing, five pounds, with a request for further contributions. So, precious sister, you are not to tire yourself. Why, if you were not so ill, what fun it would be to all be giving a push to the old family 'coach!'"

Standing in the background, overlooked in the family sorrow and deliberations as to plans and prospects, Joe stood. With a swift prayer upward he sprang forward, and in a few words that carried conviction, he assumed a

man's part to be the mainstay of the family.

"Here goes," he exclaimed, as flinging the bedclothes off the morning following, he sprang out of bed. His toilet completed, there followed a halcyon season of communion with his Lord, through the Word and prayer. Two dainty trays for mother and sister acted like a tonic, and Joe was rewarded by their bright smiles, and not one morsel left behind. When Joyce appeared she found everything in preparation for the morning meal, which meant that Ruth was set free to make a good repast, and set her work in order for her pupils. For the first time Joe noticed how fagged his sisters looked, and was always now at hand to ease a burden.

"Mother," exclaimed Ruth one day, "Is it not true 'God works in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform?' Who would have thought that He would have brought sweetness into all our lives through such dire happenings, Joe's declension, and our Miriam's accident? Though so helpless, dear Miriam does not suffer, and she earns good money. And as to Joe he takes such care of us, is so ready to bear the brunt of everything that we feel we must be careful that we do not trespass on his kindness."

"Yes, Ruth, God our Father has sweetened our cup of sorrow by giving me a son and you a brother, and to all whose lives He touches is realised that here is one indeed, 'A new creation in Christ Jesus.'"

GERTRUDE COCKERELL.

WORTH NOTING.

London and New York are nearly the same size. In 1917 both were under war restrictions, and the arrests for drunkenness were: London 19,027, and New York 14,182. New York went dry and London removed its war restrictions. Now the latest figures show that the arrests for drunkenness in London were 30,799, an increase of 61.84 per cent., while in New York they were 8165, a decrease of 57.5 per cent. Query: Does Prohibition prohibit? Evidently so, even in New York.